



**PLANNING COMMISSION
2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

Executive Summary

The Bowling Green Planning Commission completed a productive 2025 with a focus on three strategic priorities: (1) mobile food vendor regulatory framework development, (2) Comprehensive Plan update initiation, and (3) technical infrastructure improvements, including GIS implementation and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act compliance. The Commission held ten regular meetings, conducted community surveys, facilitated public hearings, and advanced multiple land-use policy initiatives that position the Town for sustainable growth.

Organizational Leadership

February 2025: Conducted annual officer elections; Scott Seigmund elected Chair, Lisa Gattie elected Vice-Chair. Welcomed new Commissioner Lauren Griemsman. Approved 2025 meeting schedule with regular third-Thursday meetings at 6:00 PM; June meeting moved to June 12; July and December meetings cancelled per approved schedule.

Staffing Continuity: Following the June vacancy in the Director of Community Development position, the Commission operated with consulting support The Berkley Group (Darla Odom) and the Town Manager from August through year-end, ensuring project continuity and technical expertise.

2025 Annual Workplan

February 2025: Commission reviewed 2024 accomplishments and approved 2025 Annual Workplan encompassing three major initiatives: (1) Zoning Map Update with GIS integration, (2) Comprehensive Plan Update for state code compliance by 2026, and (3) Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act ordinance amendments.

March 2025: Amended workplan to incorporate tiny homes housing analysis at Town Council request, establishing February-April timeline for policy research and feasibility assessment.

June 2025: Expanded workplan scope to formally integrate food truck regulations and tiny homes analysis as planning priorities, ensuring alignment between regulatory development and long-range planning processes.

Mobile Food Vendor Regulatory Framework

June 2025: Initiated food truck regulatory research following Town Manager referral. Reviewed comparative analysis of municipal policies from similar Virginia localities, examining permit structures, operational requirements, and enforcement mechanisms.

August 2025: Authorized distribution of dual-track community survey targeting business owners and residents. Survey designed to capture distinct stakeholder perspectives on food truck operations, competitive impacts, preferred locations, and regulatory preferences.

September 2025: Analyzed survey results from 36 respondents (18 businesses, 18 residents). Key findings: strong community support for year-round operations; concerns about waste management and parking; preference for commercial district locations; support for discretionary permitting over strict numerical caps. Directed staff to draft ordinance language and permit application incorporating survey input.

October 2025: Reviewed draft zoning ordinance text amendment establishing "Temporary Mobile Vending Vehicles" as permitted uses in B-1 and B-2 Business Districts. Refined regulatory language, including a 100-foot restaurant separation standard, \$100 permit fee structure, and enforcement protocols. Authorized public hearing advertisement for November 20, 2025.

November 2025: Conducted an advertised public hearing on zoning text amendment and reviewed comprehensive permit requirements, including property owner permission, VDH licensing, fire inspection certification, \$1 million liability insurance, residential separation standards, operational day limits (3 consecutive days, 5 days per month per property), meals tax compliance, and waste management responsibilities. **The Commission voted to recommend approval to the Town Council with a** targeted December 2025 adoption and January 2026 implementation.

Comprehensive Plan Update

March 2025: Received briefing on Town Council Strategic Planning Retreat land-use priorities. Reviewed Capital Improvement Plan updates; provided a favorable recommendation to the Town Council.

May 2025: Conducted detailed policy analysis on tiny homes housing format, examining taxation implications, Town Code compatibility, utility service provision, and Virginia State Building Code Appendix Q requirements. Discussion on informed housing element development for the Comprehensive Plan.

September 2025: Town Manager briefed Commission on Comprehensive Plan update requirements per Virginia Code. Identified priority revision areas: geographic data updates, historical trends analysis, housing element development, economic development section separation from tourism component, and state statutory compliance. Assigned individual Commissioner SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses with an October 8 completion target.

October 2025: Facilitated a comprehensive SWOT workshop examining:

- **Strengths:** County seat designation, data-informed planning capacity, historic preservation efforts, proactive growth mindset, connectivity infrastructure, increased community momentum
- **Weaknesses:** Aging infrastructure, public safety capacity questions, Comprehensive Plan formatting challenges, outdated demographic data, missing housing element, insufficient economic development focus
- **Opportunities:** Enhanced community engagement, regional partnerships, town identity definition, Main Street branding, Fort A.P. Hill collaboration, and Architectural Review Board potential

- **Threats:** Regional competition from Ladysmith/Carmel Church growth, housing affordability concerns, infrastructure funding gaps, unfunded state mandates, aging system constraints

SWOT findings compiled for integration into draft Comprehensive Plan revisions. The update process continues into 2026, with public hearings and technical revisions, with adoption targeted for late 2026.

Technical Infrastructure and Zoning Compliance

March 2025: Advanced Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act local compliance review. Received updates on zoning map modernization project, including zoning designation change requests coordinated with Caroline County for Town parcels.

August 2025: The Town Manager/Zoning Administrator secured a partnership with SERCAP for Geographic Information System development at no cost to the Town valued at \$70,000. The GIS system provides a digital asset management foundation and supports infrastructure planning.

Throughout 2025: Continued technical work on zoning map updates, CBPA ordinance amendments, and GIS implementation, establishing infrastructure for improved land-use administration and long-term asset management.

Regional Coordination

Participated in the VDOT Route 301 Smart Scale Project public engagement process for \$14 million state-funded transportation improvements. Coordinated with the George Washington Regional Commission on regional economic study participation. Supported the Mobilizing Main Street program survey on downtown revitalization strategies.

2025 Accomplishments Summary

1. **Mobile Food Vendor Framework:** Completed research, community survey (36 responses), draft ordinance, permit application, public hearing; recommended approval to Town Council with January 2026 implementation target
2. **Comprehensive Plan SWOT:** Completed strategic assessment identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats to guide plan revisions
3. **Organizational Leadership:** Elected Chair and Vice-Chair; welcomed new Commissioner; approved and implemented Annual Workplan
4. **Policy Analysis:** Conducted feasibility assessments on tiny homes, food trucks, zoning map updates, CBPA compliance

Pending Actions for 2026

1. Complete Comprehensive Plan update with consultant support; conduct public hearings; forward recommendation to Town Council
2. Finalize Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act ordinance compliance amendments
3. Continuing the tiny homes feasibility analysis for housing element development

Commission Membership (2025)

Scott Seigmund, Chair

Lisa Gattie, Vice-Chair

Matthew Benjamin, Commissioner

Lauren Griemsman, Commissioner

Jeff Voit, Councilmember/Commissioner

Staff Support:

J.C. LaRivere, Jan-May

India Adams-Jacobs, MPA, ICMA-CM, Town Manager/Zoning Administrator

Darla Orr, July-December

Jeffrey Smith, Deputy Clerk

Conclusion

The Planning Commission maintained focused, collaborative work throughout 2025, balancing immediate regulatory needs with long-term strategic planning. The Commission's systematic approach—combining benchmarking research, community engagement, policy analysis, and public hearings—produced well-developed recommendations that advance Town Council priorities while ensuring broad stakeholder input. The foundation established in 2025 positions the Commission to complete the Comprehensive Plan update, implement new regulatory frameworks, and continue supporting Bowling Green's role as Caroline County's government center and a thriving historic town.

Respectfully submitted,
Bowling Green Planning Commission

Chair

Vice-Chair

FINAL 2025 Workplan

| 2025 Planning Commission Annual Workplan | |
|---|---|
| Timeframe | Action Items |
| February- April | CBPA Ordinance Changes Zoning Map Research Comprehensive Plan Discussions |
| May- July | Zoning Map Adoption Comprehensive Plan Discussions |
| | <i>Tiny Homes</i> |
| | <i>Food Trucks</i> |
| August- October | Comprehensive Plan Discussions Comprehensive Plan Hearings Food Trucks/Mobile Vending |
| November | Comprehensive Plan Recommendation to Council Food Trucks/Mobile Vending Public Hearing-approved and forwarded to the council |
| December | Comprehensive Plan adopted by Council No December Meeting |