

## Memorandum

**To:** Town of Mineral Planning Commission  
**From:** Logan Ende, Regional Planner  
**Date:** April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
**Reference:** Technical Memo – Mineral Comprehensive Plan Public Engagement

### MEMO: Public Engagement – Draft Goals and Objectives

#### **Executive Summary:**

This memo provides a summary of work from the recent Mineral Open House Public Engagement session on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, facilitated by the TJPDC. The memo summarizes community feedback in the form of comments and goal + objective prioritization.

**Background:** As part of the Town of Mineral's Comprehensive Plan update, the Planning Commission and the Town Council conducted a joint work session on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 facilitated by TJPDC staff to identify a set of shared visions, goals, and objectives for the Town. During the session, Councilors and Commissioners reviewed previously established goals, considered emerging issues and priorities, and discussed new goals and objectives for the Town with guidance provided by TJPDC staff. Subsequently, these shared objectives were used to create public engagement materials, namely large boards with which the public could interact through a dot exercise, informing community opinion and prioritization of the objectives. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, the TJPDC conducted a public engagement session with members of the Town Council and Planning Commission present.

**Vision:** The Town of Mineral aspires to become a thriving community that preserves and celebrates its historic character while fostering business and residential growth. The Town aspires to create an attractive, engaging downtown that is safe, accessible and an integral part of the surrounding area. The Town aspires to be an inclusive place where people live, work, play, and visit.

#### **Goals:**

In addition to the large display boards, the public were given the opportunity to provide input on the comprehensive plan goals. Participants were asked to provide a prioritization of the goals and any comments they would like to offer. The following list constitutes a weighted ranking of the goals based upon the feedback we received:

1. Support place-making inspired by the arts, nature connections, and local history.
2. Grow as a sustainable, walkable, accessible, and compact town.
2. Support Virginia's biodiversity by designing with native plants that create vibrant wildlife habitats, fostering connections and a sense of community through shared experiences in nature.
4. Make housing accessible and affordable to all.
5. Create a network of interconnected greenways and natural trails, fostering recreational opportunities and a sense of connection to the surrounding environment for residents.

5. Promote ecologically responsible development that prioritizes sustainable practices for water, energy, and resource management, ensuring a thriving community and a healthy environment for generations to come.
7. Foster small town connections and a sense of community by providing opportunities to gather.
8. Foster a strong economy and find paths to prosperity for all.
9. Improve urban design and beautification.

### **Objectives:**

Outputs from the objective boards are distilled below and include the objectives that were of the highest priority, ones that received red dots indicating disagreement with an objective, and objectives that received no dots at all. Objectives not included below accrued some level of support but were not highly prioritized.

### **Land Use**

#### Highest Priority

- ★★★★★ Encourage new commercial and residential development in the Town, while maintaining or expanding existing structures, in alignment with the character of the Historic Downtown Centre (defined as the federally recognized Mineral Historic District).
- ★★★★★ Eliminate physical and economic blight – implement strategies for renovating or removing blighted buildings. Develop a clear process for addressing blight and neglect in the Town by examining and updating relevant Town codes.

#### Red Dots

- Foster the economic development of existing businesses and promote new business in the Light Commercial and General Commercial zones and encourage development of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) location, in alignment with the Town’s Zoning Ordinance.

### **Historic Resources**

#### Highest Priority

- ★★ Foster and promote infill of commercial businesses, in accordance with the adopted Town Zoning ordinance, particularly along and within the Historic Downtown Centre, to support and provide services to the residents and visitors of the community.

#### Red Dots

- Promote and enhance the Historic Downtown Centre area by replacing existing streetlights with historic style streetlights that provide a flag display and effectively illuminate roads and sidewalks.

#### No Dots

- Update town ordinance to regulate signage placed on buildings in the Historic Downtown Centre.
- Update town ordinance to regulate murals and art drawings placed on the outside of buildings inside the Historic Downtown Centre while still encouraging the creation of these public murals.

## Transportation

### Highest Priority

★★★★★ Seek funding to build and improve pedestrian facilities.

★★★★ Seek funding to construct new sidewalks that connect gaps in the sidewalk network.

### Red Dots

●●● Seek funding to add bike lanes along Mineral Ave, East First Street, and Louisa Ave to better accommodate Route 76.

### No Dots

- Establish regular opportunities to discuss traffic concerns with VDOT and Louisa County.
- Explore the opportunity of establishing Mineral as an Urban Development Area (UDA) with VDOT to facilitate access to grant and planning/technical assistance.
- Improve the appearance of major gateways and roadways by creating landscaped buffers along major roadways. Explore grant opportunities such as the EPA Green Streets, Green Jobs, and Green Towns Grant.
- Ensure the diverse needs of a changing population are met (elderly, disabled, and LEP, persons lacking access to private vehicles).
- Work with developers to ensure transportation needs are targeted and addressed during site development in support of local land use priorities and in recognition of internal and external future traffic demands.
- Reduce the frequency of access points on major roads.
- Reduce the number and severity of bottlenecks.
- Improve access to transit for all users through Jaunt.

## Parks and Recreation

### Highest Priority

★ All potential objectives were prioritized equally with one star.

### No Dots

- Identify and catalog current uses for properties and facilities and consider opportunities for expanded usage, such as the establishment of a formal system for residents to sign up to use facilities.

## Housing

### Highest Priority

- ★ Evaluate areas for multi-family dwellings: expand areas where multi-family dwellings are allowed by code or by conditional use permit and consider reworking the PUD contract to allow for a more inclusive set of residents, in accordance with fair housing law.
- ★ Improve communication with residents: it is important that the citizens are informed and updated consistently through email, electronic message boards, and new resident information resources. Establish a Town Emergency Alert System and coordinate with local PSAP.
- ★ Explore funding opportunities for repurposing vacant, underutilized, or Town-owned structures for housing.

### Red Dots

- Explore funding opportunities for repurposing vacant, underutilized, or Town-owned structures for housing.

### No Dots

- Leverage existing financial resources to lower barriers to the creation of new affordable housing and create new funding mechanisms, such as a regional trust fund, to expand the capacity for creating and preserving affordable housing.
- Promote the use of existing local and regional resources that provide retrofit and rehabilitation support services.
- Promote the use of the Accessory Dwelling Unit implementation guide/toolkit developed by the TJPDC to promote the mutual affordability benefits of ADUs to homeowners and renters and promote grant programs targeted to ADU creation.
- Work with regional partners to advertise and promote homebuyer education courses, resources, and financial and homeowner literacy, to either provide additional funding, directly assist in loan program promotion, or general homebuyer education. Encourage the development of a satellite program that is attended locally.
- Participate in the regional Housing Needs Assessment to be undertaken by the TJPDC.
- Promote existing household budgeting and financial literacy programs to increase awareness of the long-term costs of homeownership and better prepare residents.

## **Economic Development**

### Highest Priority

- ★★★★ Ensure that capital improvements and maintenance for the Town's essential public water and sewer systems are planned and budgeted adequately. Encourage self-sufficient operations and maintenance of those systems. Developers within the Town should be expected to participate in and/or to fund future expansions to the water and sewer systems.
- ★★★ Explore grant opportunities to promote small business growth in the Town, including the development of a formal economic development plan and a formal marketing plan.
- ★★★ Ensure adequate and quality water supply.
- ★★ Promote and encourage broadband/high speed internet access and availability to ALL residents and businesses within the town limits. Assist with the availability of a cell tower and fiber optic for ALL residents and businesses.

### No Dots

- Amend PUD to require the completion of commercial development prior to housing development completion.

## **Natural Resources**

### Highest Priority

- ★★ Ensure new and increased water pollutant loads are offset by implementing stormwater best management practices.
- ★★ Create a greenway of nature trail throughout the town that connects local recreational opportunities.

### No Dots

- Encourage open space retention, particularly as part of the PUD design for communal spaces.

- Incorporate hazard mitigation plans into community plans.
- Develop comprehensive local engagement strategies. Clearly articulate organizations responsible for community programs, such as: developing materials to promote and encourage individual action towards pollution reduction; or environmental educational opportunities in partnership with other organizations.
- Engage partners and community members on strategies to implement rain gardens, natural buffers, and other ecosystem services; educating the public alongside partners.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

### Highest Priority

- ★ Identify a gathering location, potentially at Luck Field, and install a park bench, trash receptacle, and planters to be used by pedestrians.
- ★ Promote increased and improved communication between the Town and the Louisa County Public School administration and establish shared beneficial resources. Leverage relationship with school system to promulgate additional training and learning experiences for students to gain job skills and experiences from local businesses.
- ★ Work with TJPDC, Louisa County, and any/all other resources necessary to determine how to fix the long documented and thus far unsuccessfully corrected GPS street address numbering errors that exist in the Town of Mineral, affecting package delivery and other issues.
- ★ Pursue and evaluate the placement of electrical lines underground along the three Historic Downtown Centre streets.
- ★ Ensure all houses have clear address signage, easily visible during storms and other emergency situations.
- ★ Install emergency generator for wells.

### No Dots

- Add reflective markers to fire hydrants for large snowstorms.

## **Community Comments**

“Curbing St. Cecilia” – listed as a note under objectives related to stormwater management and parking at Luck Field.

Referencing the comprehensive plan goal to make housing affordable and accessible for all, one participant wrote, “in a way not to devalue property”.

Referencing the comprehensive plan goal to improve urban design and beautification, one participant wrote that the goal was, “vague”.