

TOWN OF THE PLAINS, VIRGINIA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2 0 0 5

Adopted November 21, 2005



THE TOWN OF THE PLAINS, VIRGINIA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FINAL ADOPTED PLAN
Adopted by Town Council : NOVEMBER 21, 2005

Town Council

The Hon. Robert L. Gurtler, Mayor
The Hon. Mrs. Enid Adams - The Hon. John T. Deering - The Hon.
Blakeney Gallagher - The Hon. Mrs. Joyce Heflin-Pearson - The Hon.
Mrs. Barbara G. Moriarty - The Hon. Mrs. Lori Sisson

Planning Commission

Edward W. Goshorn, Jr., Chair
John T. Deering, Rep., Virgil L. Presgraves IV,
William P. Markey, Bruce LeLacheur

Plan Review Committee

David M. Roos, Chair
John Deering, Josephine DeGive, Werner Fleischer, Blake Gallagher, Ted Goshorn,
Joyce Heflin-Pearson, Georgia Herbert, Linda Hostetler, Bruce LeLacheur,
William Markey, Walter Munster, Mark Ohrstrom, Virgil Presgraves,
James Rutledge, Ray Snider

Consulting Team

Vladimir & Karen Gavrilovic, AICP
Paradigm Design
Reston, Virginia

Milton Herd, AICP
Herd Planning & Design, Ltd.
Leesburg, Virginia

Special Thanks to:

The Piedmont Environmental Council
Nancy E. Brady, Town Clerk/Treasurer
W. Todd Benson and Lori Langford, Town Zoning Administrators (former)

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i.
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND SUMMARY	1.
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1.
1.2 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	1.
1.3 PROCESS	3.
1.4 FORMAT	5.
2.0 BACKGROUND DATA AND PLANNING ANALYSIS	7.
2.1 POPULATION	9.
2.2 HOUSING	11.
2.3 BUILDOUT ANALYSIS	13.
2.4 TOWN VISION	14.
3.0 NATURAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES	17.
3.1 NATURAL RESOURCES	17.
3.1.1 WATER-RELATED RESOURCES	18.
3.1.1.1 SURFACE WATER	18.
3.1.1.2 GROUNDWATER	19.
3.1.2 TOPOGRAPHIC, GEOLOGICAL AND SOIL RESOURCES	21.
3.1.3 OPEN SPACE RESOURCES	26.
3.2: COMMUNITY RESOURCES	29.
3.2.1 HISTORIC RESOURCES	29.
3.2.2 EDUCATION	33.
3.2.3 LIBRARIES	34.
3.2.4 PARKS AND RECREATION	34.
3.2.5 PUBLIC SAFETY	36.
3.2.6 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	37.
3.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING.....	39.
3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	41.
4.0 LAND USE AND TOWN DESIGN	43.
4.1 BACKGROUND: PRESERVING SMALL TOWN CHARACTER	43.
4.2 OVERALL PLANNING PRINCIPLES	44.
4.3 GENERAL LAND USE	47.
4.4 LAND USE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES	49.
4.5 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN	50.

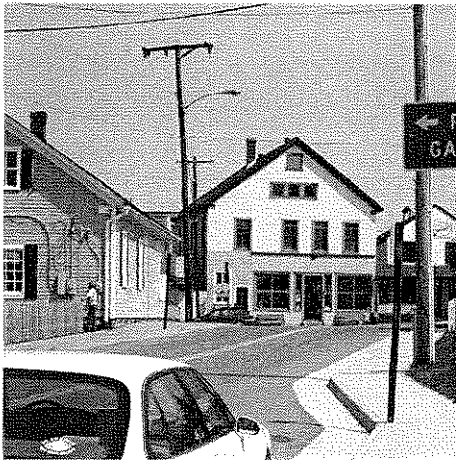
4.6 TOWN DESIGN	57.
4.7 CORRIDORS AND EDGES	58.
5.0 PUBLIC UTILITIES AND FACILITIES	61.
5.1 PUBLIC UTILITIES	61.
5.1.1 CENTRAL SEWER SYSTEM	61.
5.1.2 CENTRAL WATER SYSTEM	62.
5.2 TRANSPORTATION	64.
5.3 TOWN SERVICES	68.
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION	71.
7.0 APPENDICES	80.

- **Additional Analysis Maps**
- **A Vision for the Future of The Plains (Not included in this Draft)**
- **Future Land Use Plan (Enlarged Version)**

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan for The Plains is a policy guide for the physical growth and development of the Town, as well as a guide for conserving, maintaining and enhancing the Town's existing natural, cultural, physical and economic resources. This document is intended to act as a guide for sound public and private investment and to provide a consistent framework for decision-making that implements the ultimate vision of the future of The Plains articulated by residents, landowners and members of the business community.



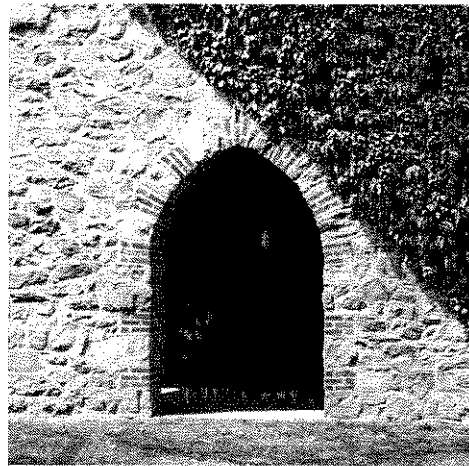
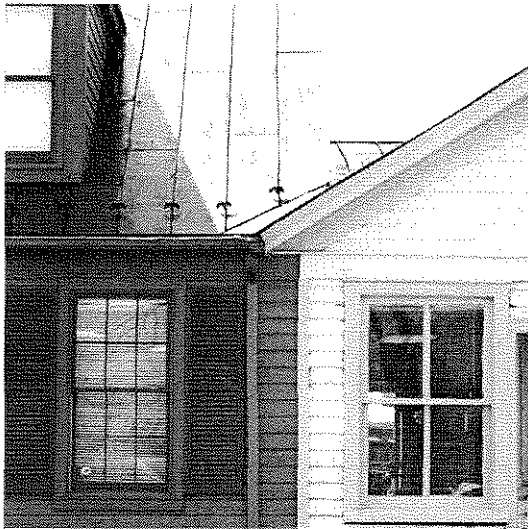
Intersection of Main St. & Fauquier Ave.

1.2 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

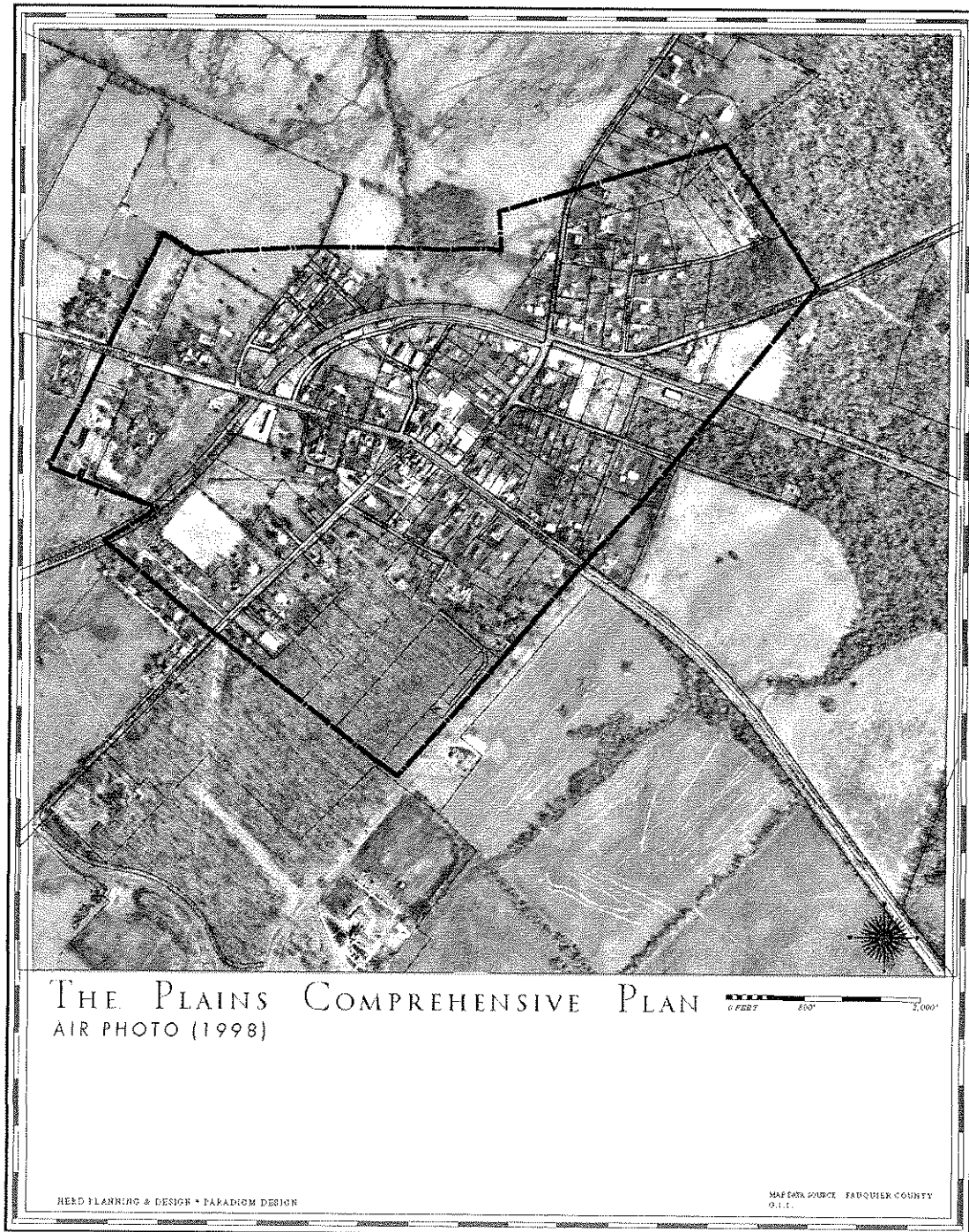
The Comprehensive Plan for The Plains is an official public document (to be adopted by the Town Council). The Town is required by Virginia law under Section 15.2-2223 to adopt a Comprehensive Plan "with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants." While the Comprehensive Plan provides a basic framework for long term future planning and should not change with each election cycle or incremental development decision, the plan is not intended to be a static document. The plan can be amended as appropriate to reflect new information or changing conditions or circumstances without straying from

the basic vision and goals of the Town. In fact, the Commonwealth of Virginia requires that local comprehensive plans be reviewed and evaluated at least once every five years.

Although the Comprehensive Plan sets the policies and priorities that guide land use decisions, it is not a development ordinance. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not change existing zoning or development regulations. However, the Plan is intended to establish the basis for the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances which regulate land use, subdivision and set development parameters. Therefore, the Plan may serve as a catalyst for amendments to the Town Subdivision, Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to ensure that the goals of the Plan are implemented through the regulatory process. Any amendments to regulatory documents based on the policies outlined in this Plan would be subject to public review, with mandatory public notice and public hearing, prior to adoption by Town Council.



Building details in the historic core

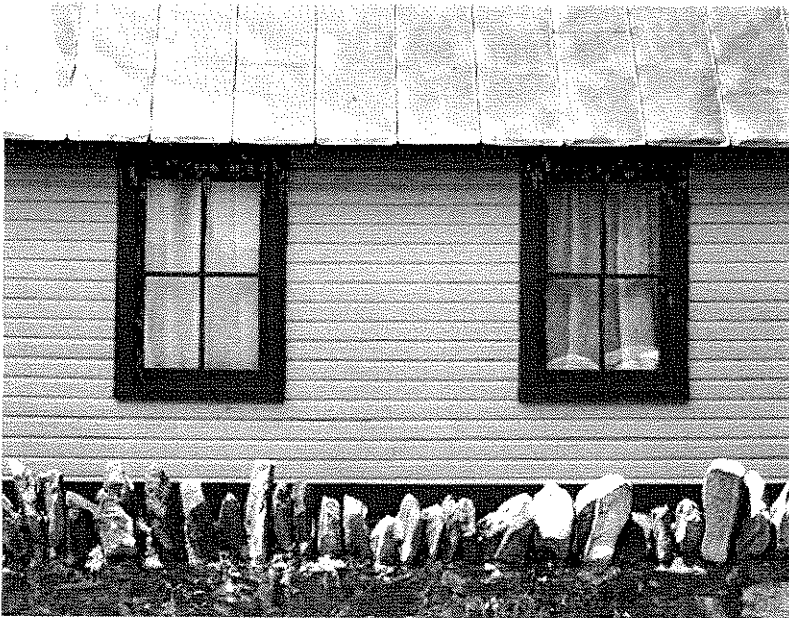


1.3 PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan for The Plains was updated in 2004 and 2005. The Plan is the product of meetings and participation from the citizens of the Town, the Plan Review Committee, Planning Commission and Town Council. It has been prepared with extensive citizen involvement – both through the participatory Vision process in the summer of 2004, and through a series of policy work sessions and Plan Review Committee meetings which were open to, and attended by members of the

public. Every effort was made to ensure that there was an opportunity for those interested in the Comprehensive Plan process to participate in it.

The overall spirit and many of the policy directions in this Plan are primarily based on the comments of the townspeople that were affirmed in the Town Vision process. Following the Vision meetings, the Plan Review Committee conducted regular work sessions, staffed by the Town Zoning Administrator and the Town's comprehensive planning consultant to analyze the results of the Vision process, review technical data and develop the Plan itself.



After the completed draft of the Comprehensive Plan was forwarded to the Planning Commission and Town Council, it was reviewed, evaluated and refined by these bodies and finally forwarded to public hearings for the public adoption process. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Town Council on _____. A brief summary of the Comprehensive Plan development process for The Plains is listed below

Phase 1: Review of Existing Plan & Policies: May - June, 2004

- Listening Session with Town Officials - *May 13, 2004*
 - Audit of Current Comp. Plan & Zoning Ordinance
 - Build Out Analysis
 - Recommended Public Input Process
- Work Session on Current Town Planning Context and Public Input Process - *June 10, 2004*

Phase 2: Public Input & Consensus Building: July – September, 2004

- First Public Forum to identify issues & priorities – *July 31, 2004*
 - Consultant briefings
 - Group exercises, Prepare Draft Vision Statements & Map
- Second Public Forum to define Vision for the future of the community – *August 4, 2004*
 - Participatory mapping & Visioning exercises
 - Affirmation of the Final Vision Statement and Plan
- Summary public document on “Town Vision”

Phase 3. Policy Work Sessions: September 2004 – February, 2005

- Work Session to develop Work Plan for Comp. Plan Revisions – *September 9, 2004*
- Four Policy Work Sessions with Committee – *One per month – October to January*
 - Natural & Cultural Resources – October 15, 2004
 - Land Use & Town Design – November 11, 2004
 - Public Utilities & Facilities – December 9, 2004
 - Summary Policy Framework – January 13, 2005
 - Town Edges & Corridors – February 10, 2005

Phase 4. Finalize Plan & Public Approvals: March, 2005 – November, 2005

- Work Sessions to review Draft Plan – March 10, 2005; April 14, 2005; June 2, 2005; June 28, 2005
- Public Input meeting on Draft Plan – May 12, 2005
- Public Hearings on Plan – *September 19, 2005 & October 17, 2005*
- Final Plan Approved – *November 21, 2005*

1.4 FORMAT

The Comprehensive Plan for The Plains is divided into six major sections. The first section, Introduction and Background Summary, deals with the context and the process for the Comprehensive Plan update. The next section, Background Data and Planning Analysis gives some fundamental inventory and analysis information for the Town, its historic growth trends and population and housing characteristics.

The next three sections, Natural and Community Resources, Land Use and Town Design, and Public Utilities and Facilities lay out the general policies that are the core of the Comprehensive Plan. The first part of each of these sections gives

general background information on each topic. These are followed by the broad policies that outline how the Town will address planning issues under each topic.

The final section, Implementation, contains specific recommendations for implementing the Plan. This section is organized in the same way as the policies, with specific implementation priorities detailed under each policy topic. The Plan also includes related documents and maps that are referred to in the Plan, in the Appendix section at the back.



The Plains Fire Volunteer Fire Department

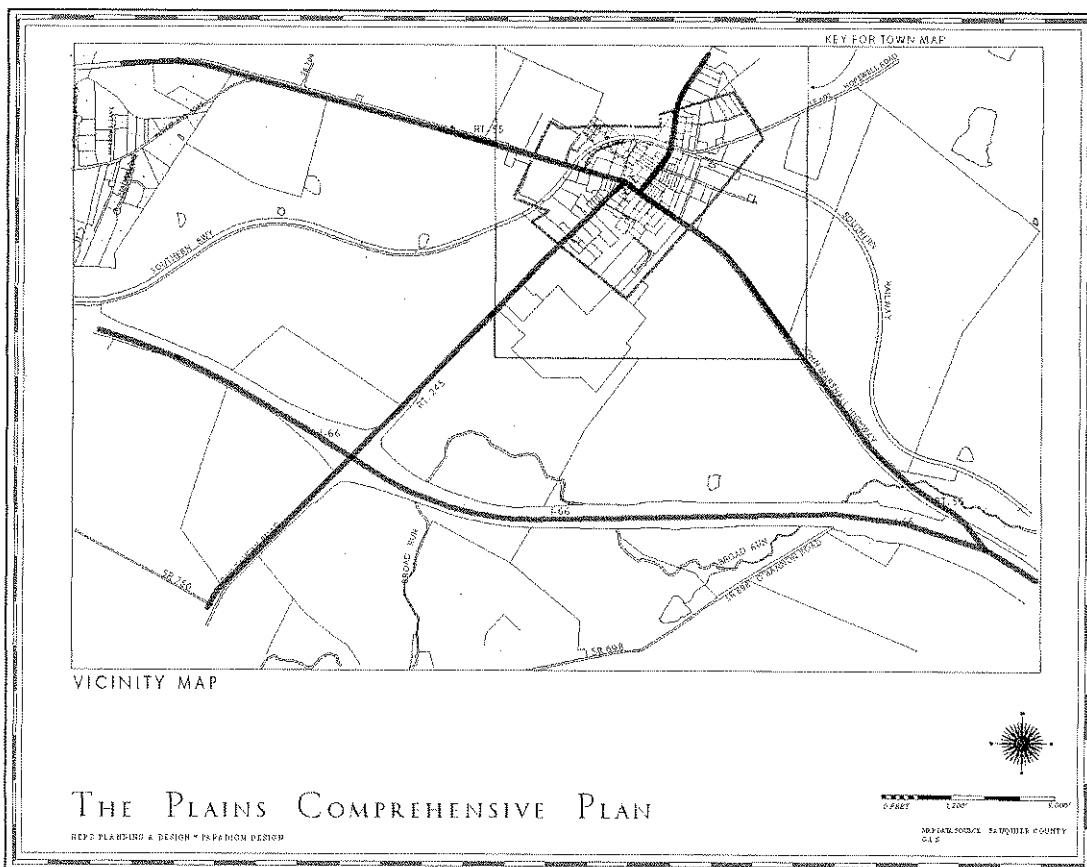


The Plains Baptist Church

2.0 BACKGROUND DATA AND PLANNING ANALYSIS

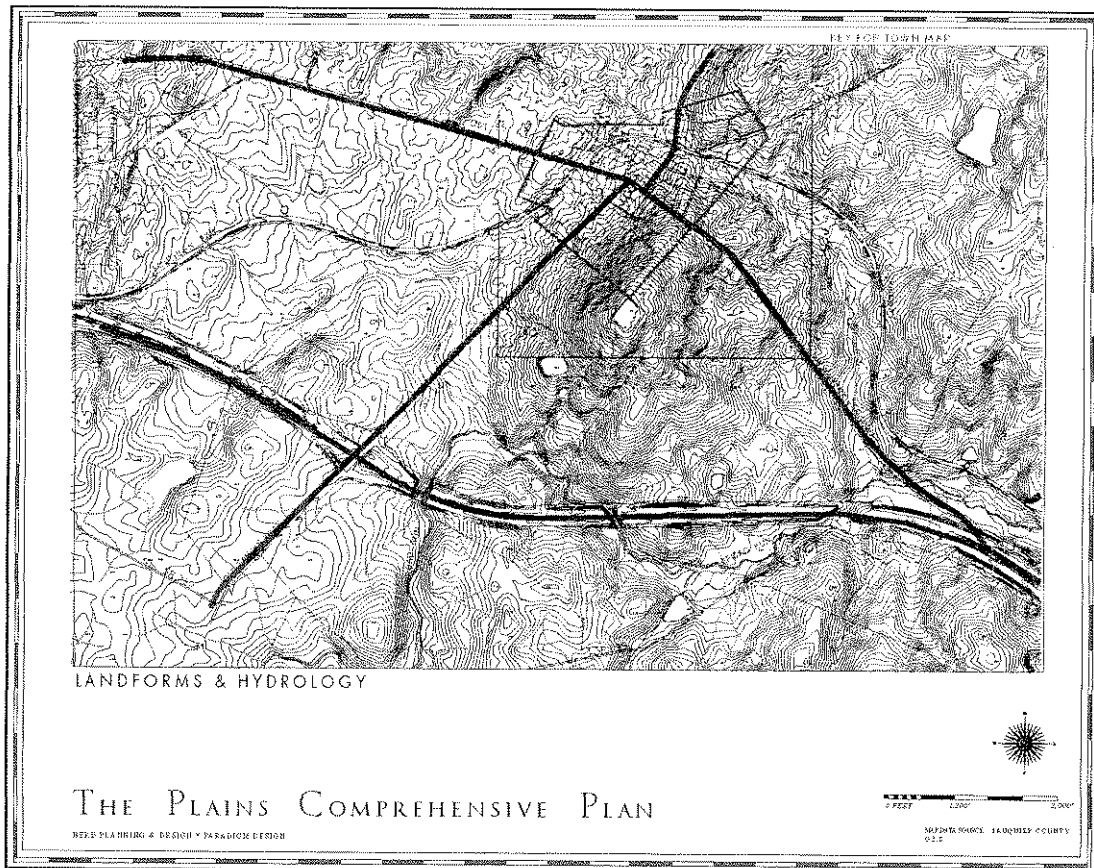
The Town's first and only Comprehensive Plan was adopted on April 17, 1978 and was prepared jointly by the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District Commission and the Piedmont Environmental Council. While it had been re-affirmed, it had not been updated to reflect changes occurring in The Plains over the past 25 years.

When the 1978 plan was prepared, the extension of I-66 to The Plains had not been completed, and the County was in the midst of constructing the central sewer and water facilities that now serve the Town. The plan identified those infrastructure improvements as the key factors that would shape the Town's future through the year 2000.



While these infrastructure improvements did affect the Town somewhat, they did not bring a large influx of new residents. The Plains has maintained its traditional role as a rural town serving as a community focal point for an agricultural and rural hinterland. As the historic character of many towns and villages has disappeared from the Piedmont landscape, preserving the

small town character of places like The Plains has become a growing concern for residents and business owners who want to maintain the vitality of their towns without being overwhelmed by new development. The Comprehensive Plan update undertaken by The Plains was initiated to respond to similar concerns and to ensure that the Town's policies accurately reflect the desires of the community as it is today.



To develop a meaningful plan, it is important to take a look at the Town as it is - how it has changed since 1978 and how it has remained the same. A variety of factual information, in combination with citizen input, was used as a basis for the policies in this plan. The Town's Vision document, along with additional analysis maps, are included as an appendix to this document. Important trends, population data and other pertinent data are briefly summarized below as well as in the policy sections of the Plan.

2.1 POPULATION

Historically, the population of the Town of The Plains has been small, with only gradual changes. Population data indicates that the population of The Plains peaked in 1960 when the Virginia Division of Industrial Development estimated the Town's population at 484. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of The Plains was 266 in 2000, which is higher than the 1990 Census population estimate of 219, but well below the 1980 estimate of 384. The population density of the Town at this time, which is 166 acres in size, was 1.5 persons per acre.

Year	Population
1920 ¹	275
1930 ¹	414
1940 ¹	372
1950 ¹	405
1960 ¹	484
1970 ²	413
1980 ²	384
1990 ²	219
2000 ²	266

Sources: ¹ Virginia Department of Industrial Development and Planning, 1965.
² U.S. Census Bureau.

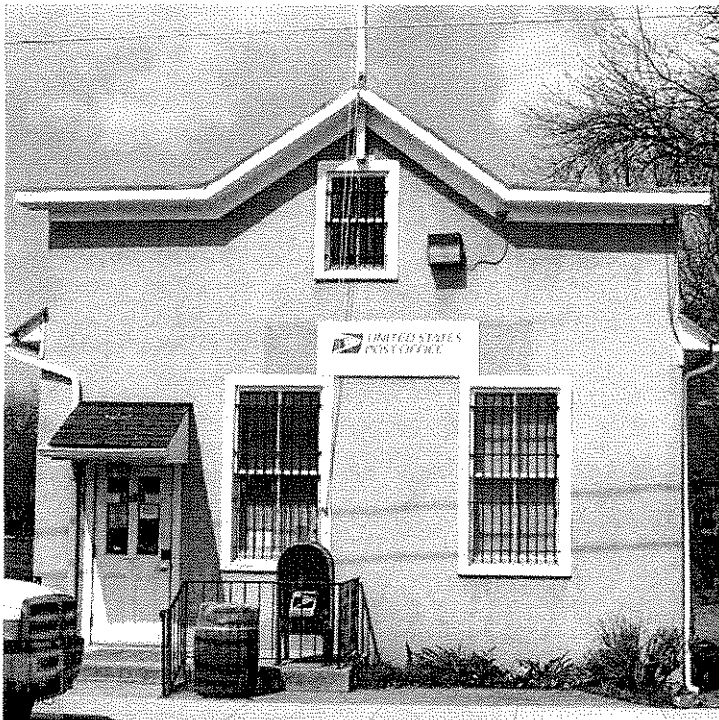
Indicator	The Plains	Fauquier County
Median Age	41.8 years	37.8 years
Population over 65	15%	10.2%
Persons Per Household	2.42 persons	2.75 persons
Median Household Income	\$43,750	\$61,999
Race		
White	89.8%	88.4%
Other	10.2%	11.6%
Median Single Family Home Value	\$138,400	\$162,700
Owner Occupied Housing Units	45.5%	66.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Between 1980 and 2000, the population of Fauquier County increased substantially from 35,889 to 55,139. The County experienced an average annual growth rate of 1.3% between 1990 and 2000. During that same timeframe, the Town experienced an 2.1% average annual growth rate. The

population increase experienced by the County is attributed primarily to in-migration of new residents as a result of new construction. Since new construction has been minimal in the Town, the increase in the population in the Town is most likely a combination of natural population increases (more births than deaths) and in-migration. This trend may continue since the median age of residents of The Plains in 2000, 41.8 years, is higher than the median age of 37.8 found that same year in Fauquier County. That same year, approximately 15% of the Town's residents were over 65, compared with only 10.2% of the County's residents. The higher proportion of older residents could increase the "turn-over" rate of houses in the Town.

Of the 266 people residing in The Plains in 2000, 89.8% were white. Comparatively, 88.4% of the County's residents were white. The average household size of residents of The Plains, according to 2000 U.S. Census data, was 2.42, compared with 2.75 persons per household in Fauquier County. U.S. Census data for the year 2000 also indicates that the median household income of residents of The Plains, \$43,750, was less than the median household income of residents of the County, which was \$61,999.



The Plains Post Office

2.2 HOUSING

The housing characteristics of a Town provide useful insights into its socio-economic characteristics. In 1970, Census data indicated that there were 149 total housing units in The Plains. By 1990, the U.S. Census data indicated that the number of housing units in The Plains had declined to 97 units. The decline in the total number of units was most likely attributable to the conversion of residential units to commercial use and the demolition or disuse of substandard or hazardous units.

In 2000, the Census counted 118 total housing units in The Plains, of which 110 were occupied and 8 were vacant. It is significant to note that out of these 110 occupied dwellings, only 45.5% were owner-occupied. The proportion of rental to owner occupied homes is much different from that found in the County where 66.2% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied units. The median value of an owner occupied single family home in The Plains was \$138,400 in 2000, as compared with the County's median single home value of \$162,700. Over 82% of the Town's housing units were built before 1940. The number of older homes in the Town is cited by its residents as one of the characteristics that makes the Town unique and contributes to its architectural variety. Only 8 new homes have been constructed in the Town since 1960.



Houses on Jackson Street

There are two measures of substandard housing that are readily available in Census data: units lacking some or all plumbing facilities and those units with more than 1.0 persons per room. In 1970, 34.2% of the Town's homes lacked some or all plumbing facilities, and 7.1% were considered overcrowded. By 2000, only 5.6%, or 6 units, lacked complete plumbing facilities and the same number of housing units, or 5.6% of the housing stock, were overcrowded. The decline in the number of substandard units is attributable primarily to the completion of the Town's central sewer and water facilities in the late 1970s.



Views of Main Street



2.3 BUILDOUT ANALYSIS

At the direction of the Plan Review Committee, A Buildout Analysis for The Plains was prepared by the Town's consultants in June, 2004 and was presented and discussed in both the Plan Review Committee meetings and the Town Meetings that were part of the Town's Vision process. This analysis showed the potential theoretical "buildout" for the vacant or underdeveloped land in the Town limits, under the current Zoning Ordinance, and under the 1978 Comprehensive Plan.

The theoretical Buildout Analysis was presented to the Plan Review Committee in June, 2004, and subsequently to the public in the first Town Vision meeting in July, 2004. The Buildout Analysis generated considerable concern and alarm over the development potential of the Town when it was presented to the public. However, it was helpful to the Committee and the public to understand the implications of the Town's previous Comprehensive Plan, and current Zoning Ordinance, in terms of land uses and densities that were embodied in these documents.



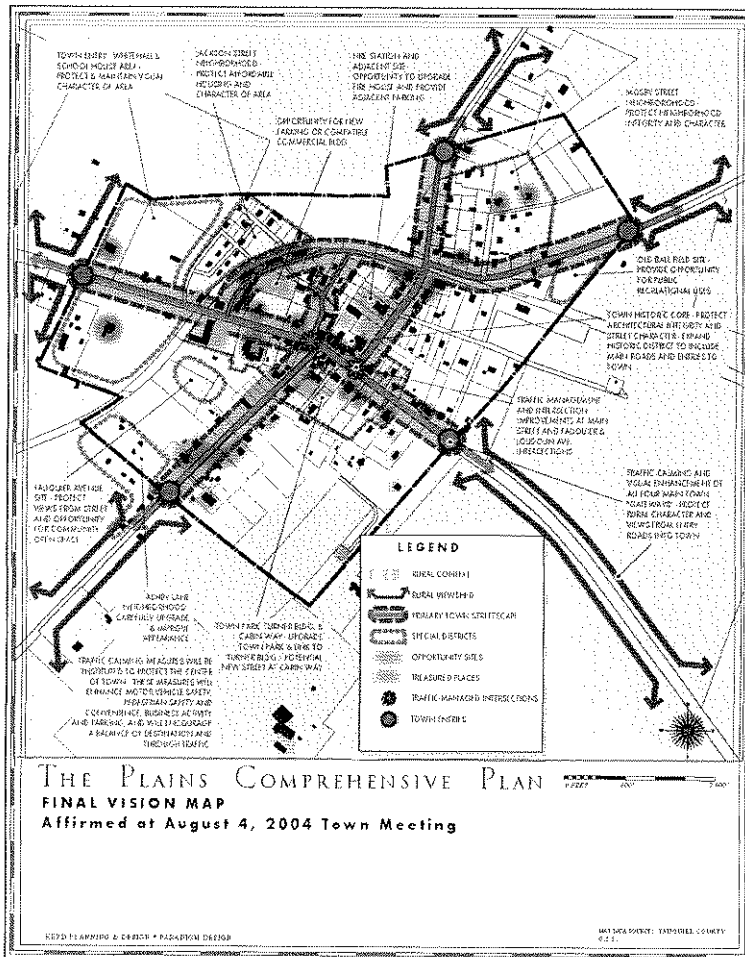
Town meeting during the Vision process

2.4 TOWN VISION

The Vision for The Future of The Plains was undertaken as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, initiated by the Town Council of The Plains in April 2004. The Vision process and Town meetings were completed

early in the comprehensive planning project in order to provide a solid foundation of citizen input and affirmation for the new comprehensive plan.

The Vision process, as well as the overall comprehensive plan update, was overseen and coordinated by a broad-based committee of citizens and Town officials appointed by the Town Council and called the Plan Review Committee. The Town also engaged the professional planning firms of Paradigm Design and Herd Planning and Design, Ltd. to facilitate the



community visioning process. The Vision for The Future of The Plains was developed by the citizens and stakeholders of the Town during two public Town Meetings conducted in July and August 2004 and acted as the cornerstone for the policies that were developed in the subsequent Policy Work Sessions. The recommendations of the townspeople, as embodied in the Vision Statement and Vision Plan, were incorporated in both the overall policies and in the Future Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. The final report for the Vision process is included as an appendix to this Plan.

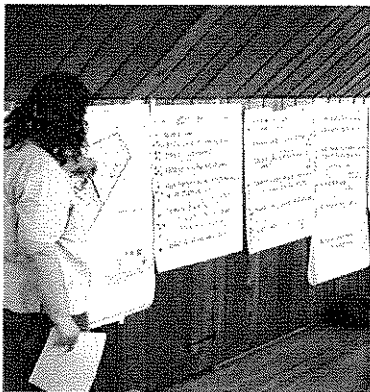
Note: A larger version of the above map is included in the Vision Report as an appendix to this Plan.



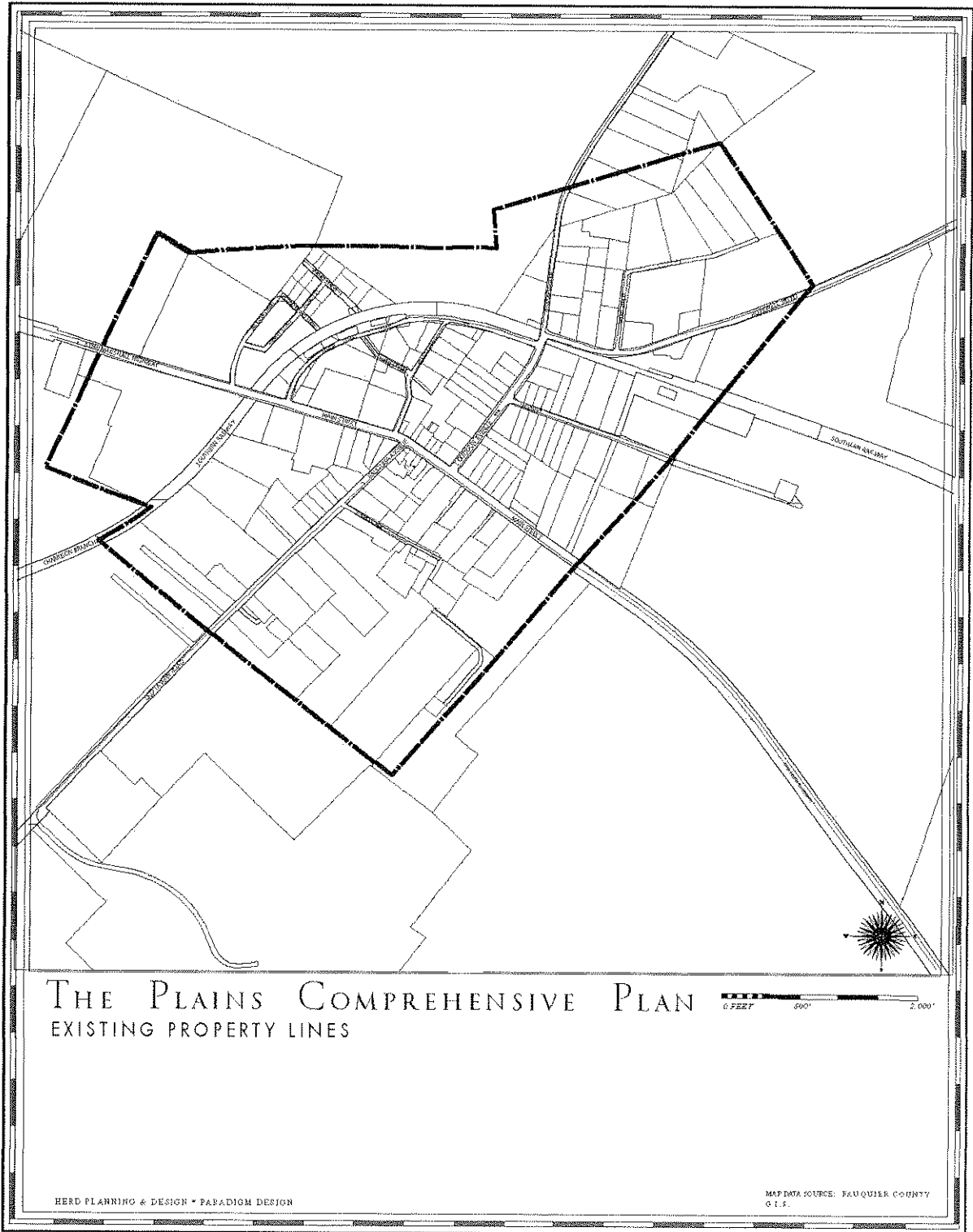
Mapping exercise during the Vision process



Mapping exercise during the Vision process



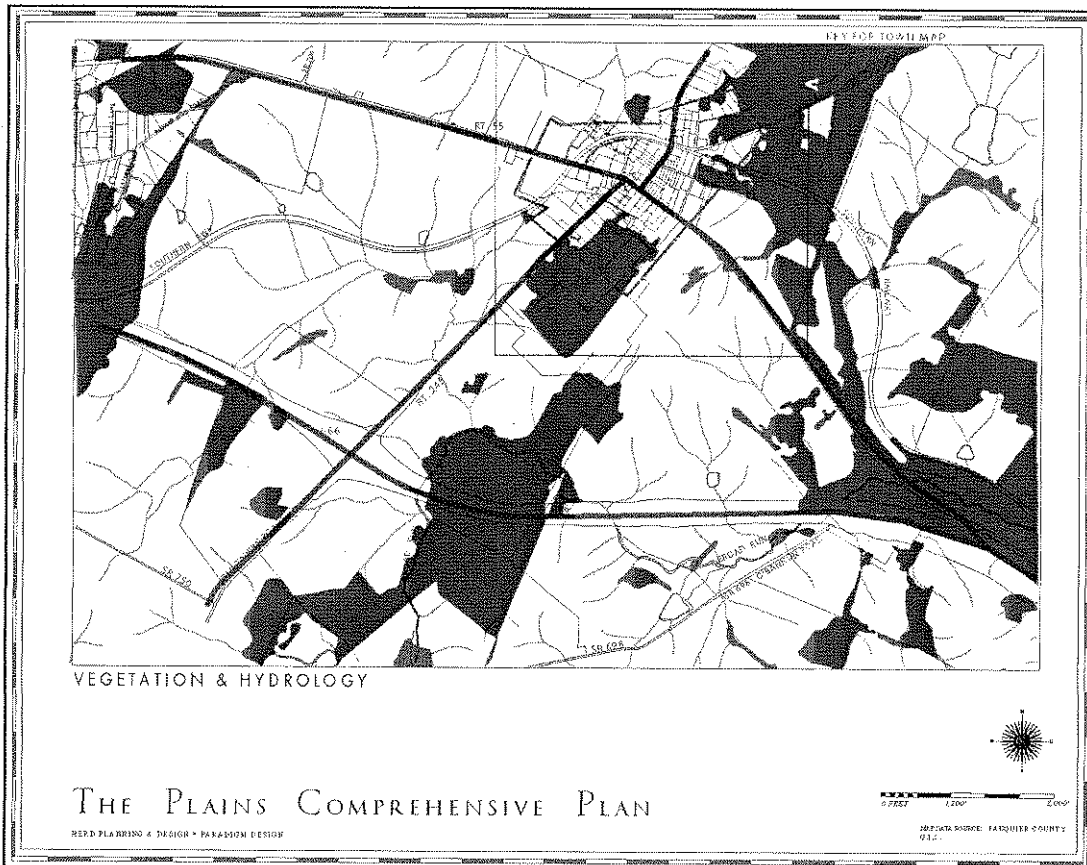
Presenting results of the small group exercises



3.0 NATURAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

3.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

Much of the discussion at the public visioning workshops in The Plains focused on the unique character of the Town and the quality of the built environment and its context within the surrounding landscape. This unique character emerged organically over many years and is unique in part because of the environmental and economic factors that shaped it. The "lay of the land" was, for many years, a key feature that determined where development occurred in the Piedmont region. Productive soils invited agricultural use, steep stream valleys and high points were left in a natural state because they were difficult to farm, roads built along ridge lines became arteries between places and crossroads became towns. The introduction of the railroad brought new growth to many areas but even then, the railway lines were located in the path of least resistance, in gaps between mountains or foothills.



Technological advances have overcome most natural constraints to development. New "towns" are built all at once, and once treasured views and open space around existing towns have turned into subdivisions. So far, new development of this type has largely bypassed The Plains, keeping its overall physical form and character much the same as it was 50 or 100 years ago. Because The Plains is not confronted with the range or scale of resource protection issues that must be addressed in larger communities or in areas where unusual natural features demand extra consideration, natural resource protection was not a stand alone concern for most Town residents. However, citizens of The Plains did recognize and emphasize the importance of natural resource protection as a means of maintaining open space and as a factor that contributes to the look and feel of the community. Protection and management of certain environmental resources is also a public safety issue. The following policies are intended to preserve, maintain and enhance the natural elements that contribute to the Town's beauty and viability.

3.1.1 WATER-RELATED RESOURCES

3.1.1.1 SURFACE WATER

The Plains drains naturally into two major watersheds. The watershed divide roughly follows Main Street, which sits atop Fishback Ridge. The area of the Town south of Main Street generally drains to the Broad Run, and ultimately to Occoquan Creek; the portion of the Town located east of Mosby Street, also flows to this area because of an abrupt change in the direction of Fishback Ridge. On the north side of Main Street, the Town drains to Little River, then Goose Creek and ultimately to the Potomac River. The larger watersheds are divided into five smaller sub-areas by minor ridge lines that create drainage swales within the Town's boundaries. These act as natural drainageways for stormwater run-off since the Town does not have an extensive stormwater management system. Maintenance of these natural drainageways and large areas of open space in and around the Town help protect both surface and groundwater quality.

Only one portion of the Town, adjacent to an unnamed tributary of Harrison Branch, which is located west of Fauquier Avenue next to the Southern Railway tracks, is currently identified as floodplain by the County (see Floodplain Map). Development within the floodplain is not currently regulated or addressed in the existing zoning ordinance. The Town's current zoning ordinance, subdivision and site plan ordinance provide little or no specific guidance about stormwater run-off, groundwater protection or surface water quality. Since the Town is small and its resources are limited,

the Town may wish to consider adopting appropriate regulations from the County's regulatory documents (zoning, subdivision, site plan and standards manual) to ensure regional consistency and to provide the Town with ready technical assistance if needed.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage preservation of floodplains (those areas identified as 100 year floodplains based on the current Flood Insurance Map issued under the National Flood Insurance Program) in their natural state to protect against floods and to function as an integral part of the town's network of open space.
2. Limited use of the floodplain for non-land disturbing activities such as passive recreation, open space or similar uses may be appropriate provided that such uses are developed in an environmentally sensitive manner that will not increase flooding off-site or degrade surface water quality. Agricultural uses will be permitted in the floodplain, provided that agricultural Best Management Practices are used to minimize non-point source pollution.
3. Encourage the preservation of a natural "buffer strip" adjacent to floodplain areas to enhance water quality and maintain wildlife habitat areas adjacent to stream corridors.
4. Roadway crossings of Floodplains will be discouraged.
5. Natural drainage ways should be preserved and used for stormwater management when possible. These drainage ways should be maintained in a natural state and used as a design feature when development occurs.

3.1.1.2 GROUNDWATER

The Plains is underlain by fractured volcanic greenstone, a very hard material that does not provide a reliable water table. Water pockets of varying purity are encountered at varying depths. Individual well depths in The Plains have varied from 1000 feet to just 5 feet. Shallow wells, in combination with soils that do not generally percolate or filter wastewater effectively, historically lead to widespread well contamination in the Town. In 1970, a County Health Department Study determined that 37% of individual wells in the Town were contaminated. To resolve this problem, the Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority obtained grant funding

to construct a central water system in The Plains. The central water system was completed in 1978 and serves a vast majority of town residents and businesses. Two public wells supply water to the central water system. Other potential sources of groundwater contamination in any settled area include improper disposal of hazardous household waste, leaking or abandoned underground storage tanks and undetained stormwater run-off that includes motor oil, antifreeze and road salt.

POLICIES:

1. Continue to work with the Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority and the State Health Department to maintain and protect the quality of the existing public wells serving the Town by promoting well head protection, encouraging compatible uses on adjacent properties and discouraging the use of individual septic system where central sewer service is available.
2. Abandoned wells located within the Town shall be capped in accordance with Town, County and State standards.
3. Continue to work with appropriate County and State agencies to identify and address groundwater contamination issues. Such measures may include adoption and/or adherence to guidelines that address the removal or repair of leaking aboveground or underground storage tank, placement of new above ground or underground storage tanks or replacement of existing tanks.
4. Cooperate with its trash removal provider to promote proper disposal of household hazardous waste.
5. Strongly encourage the use of central utilities for any new development to protect public health and to reduce potential for groundwater contamination.
6. The use of pervious paving materials for parking lots and driveways will be encouraged in the town where feasible to maintain groundwater and surface water quality, and to reduce sheet flows from paved areas.

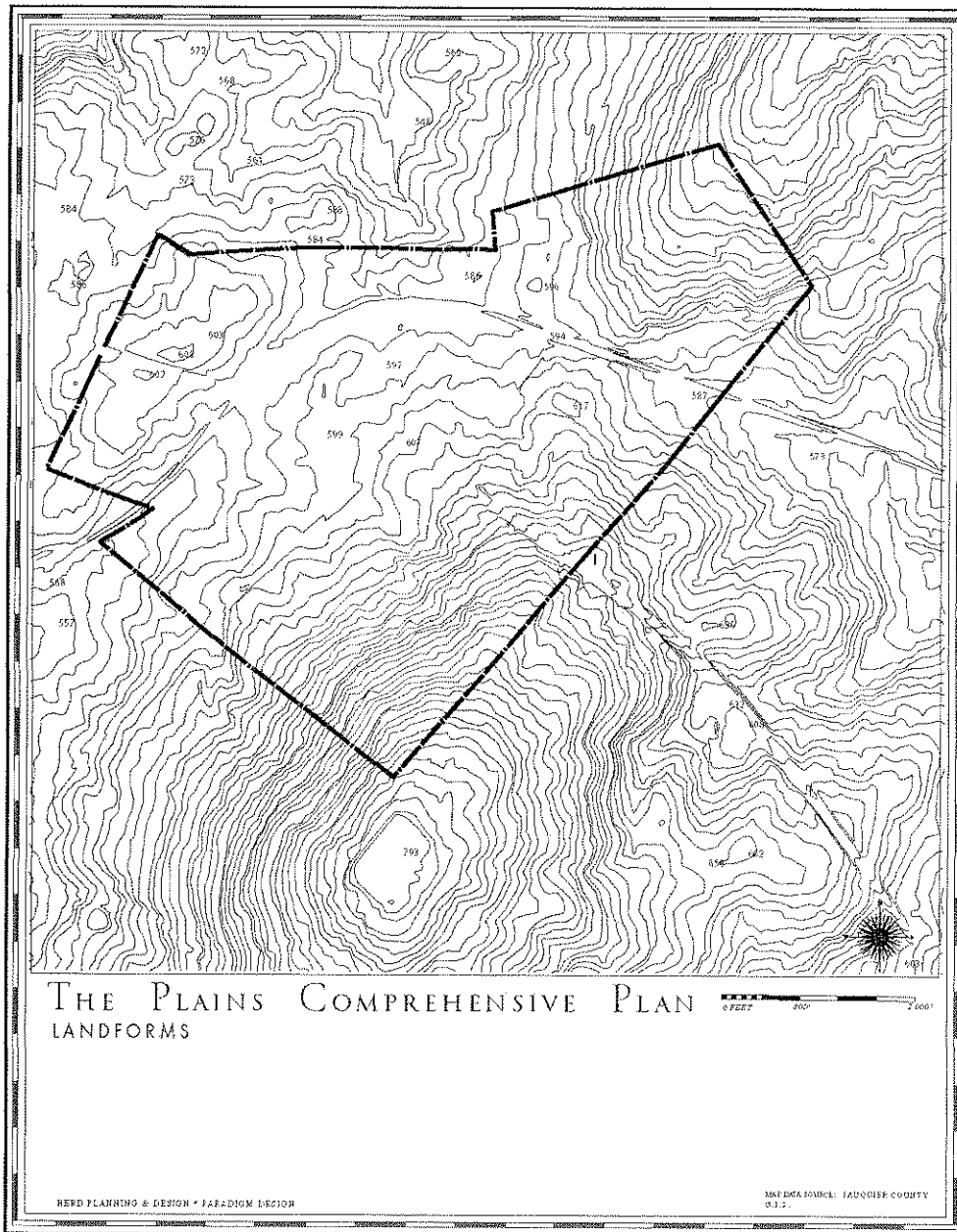
3.1.2 TOPOGRAPHIC, GEOLOGICAL AND SOIL RESOURCES

The terrain in The Plains ranges from the natural valley where the railroad tracks are located (570 feet above sea level), to Headache Hill (approximately 770 feet above sea level), in the southeast section of town. The central portion of Town, between Main Street, the railroad and Loudoun Avenue is generally flat, with slopes ranging from 0% to 10%. Because this land was the easiest to build upon as the town grew, it is also where most of the Town's developed land is concentrated. Even though The Plains does not have regulations to prohibit development on steep slopes, the Town's high points and its steepest slopes generally remain undeveloped and vegetated. Steep slopes of over 15% are found in the southeastern part of Town, on Headache Hill.

The Town is located in the Blue Ridge Anticlinorium geological province. As previously noted, The greenstone and quartz that are found within this province and underlying The Plains do not typically produce large amounts of water, although there is often sufficient water to supply individual wells. The geology of the area also is a factor in soil characteristics. Soils within the Town are not generally suited for development on septic systems since they do not percolate efficiently. This became evident in the 1970s when widespread contamination was found in individual wells serving homes in The Plains. Since the 1970s, most homes in The Plains have been connected to central sewer and water facilities to avoid such problems.

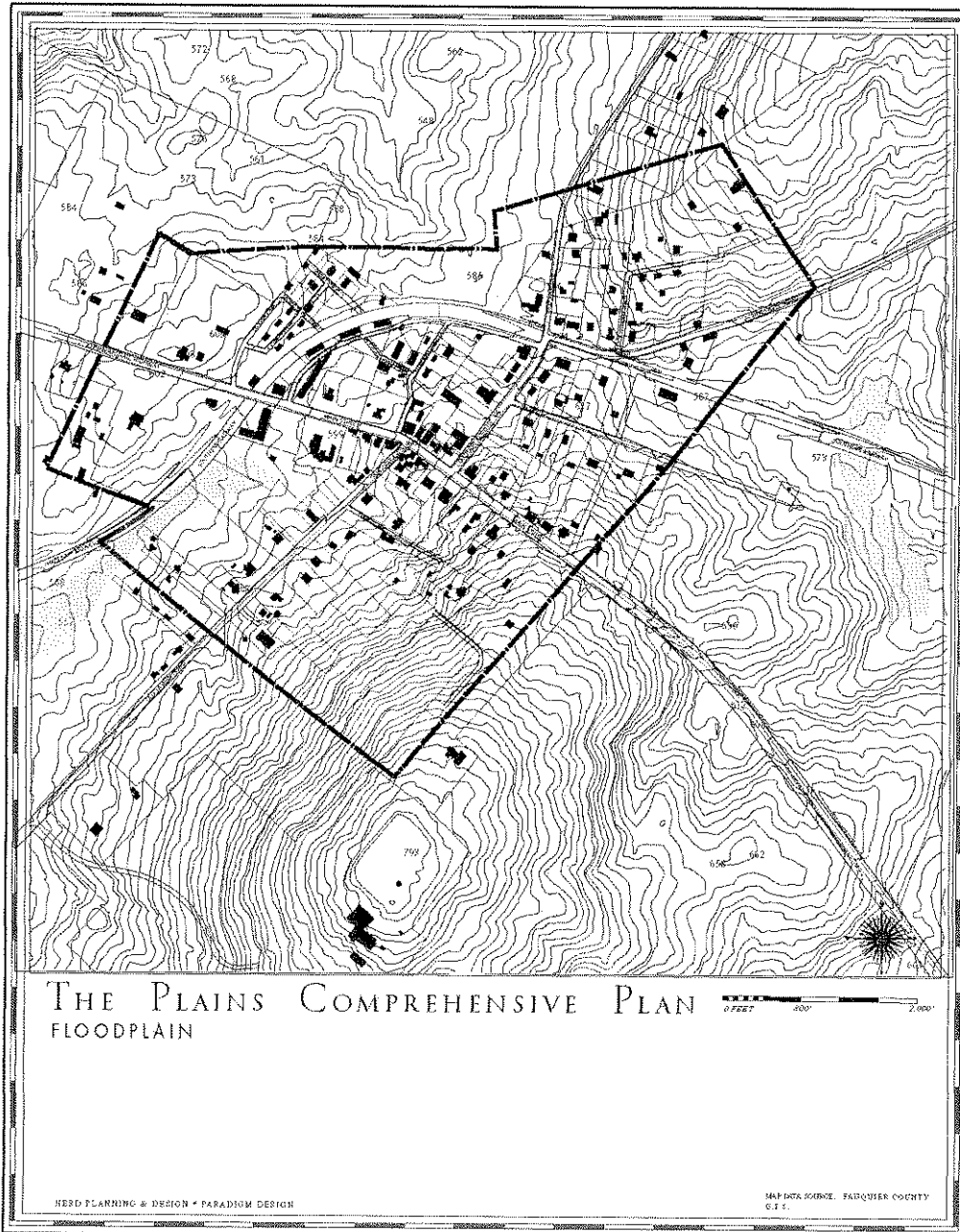


Surrounding rural context

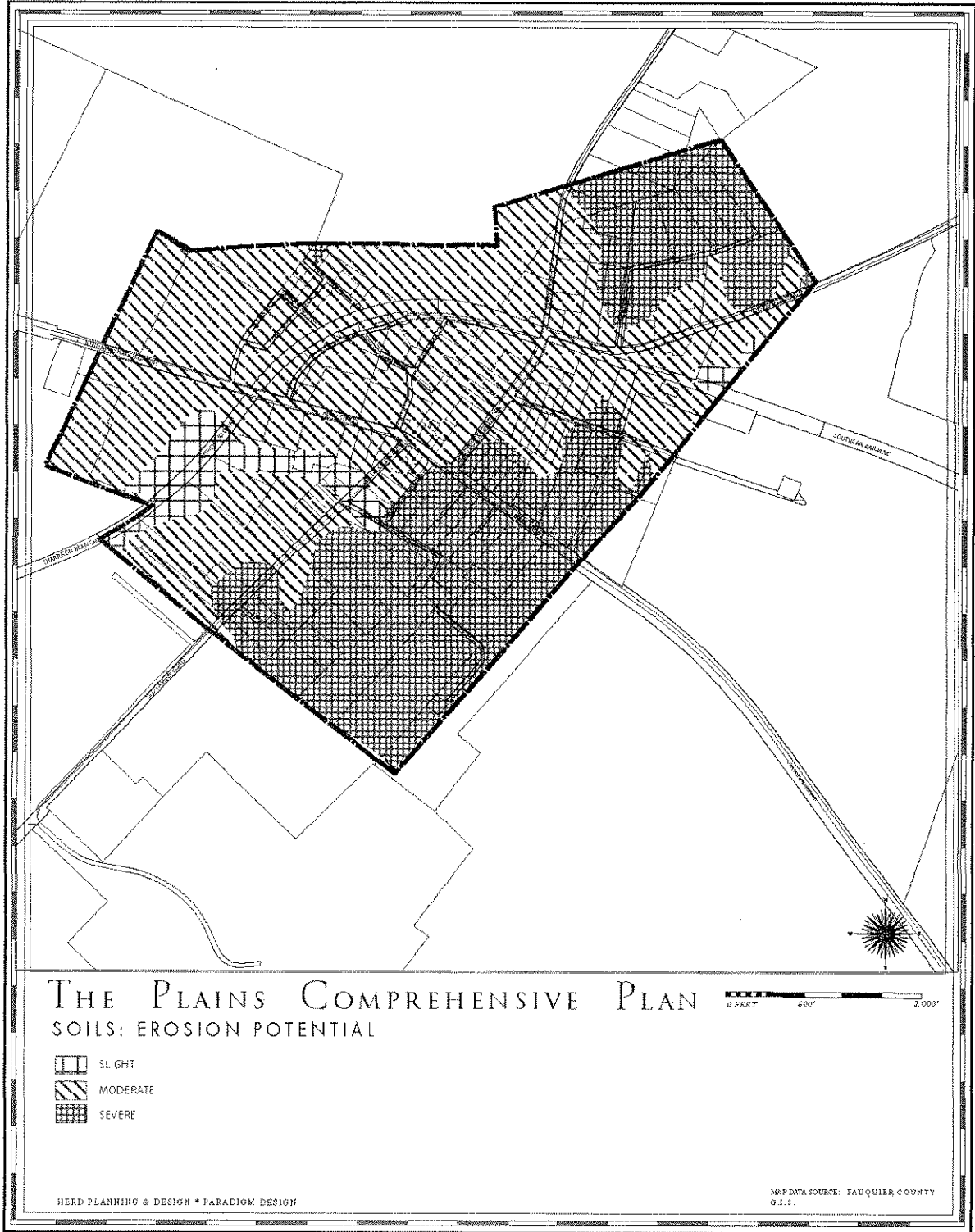


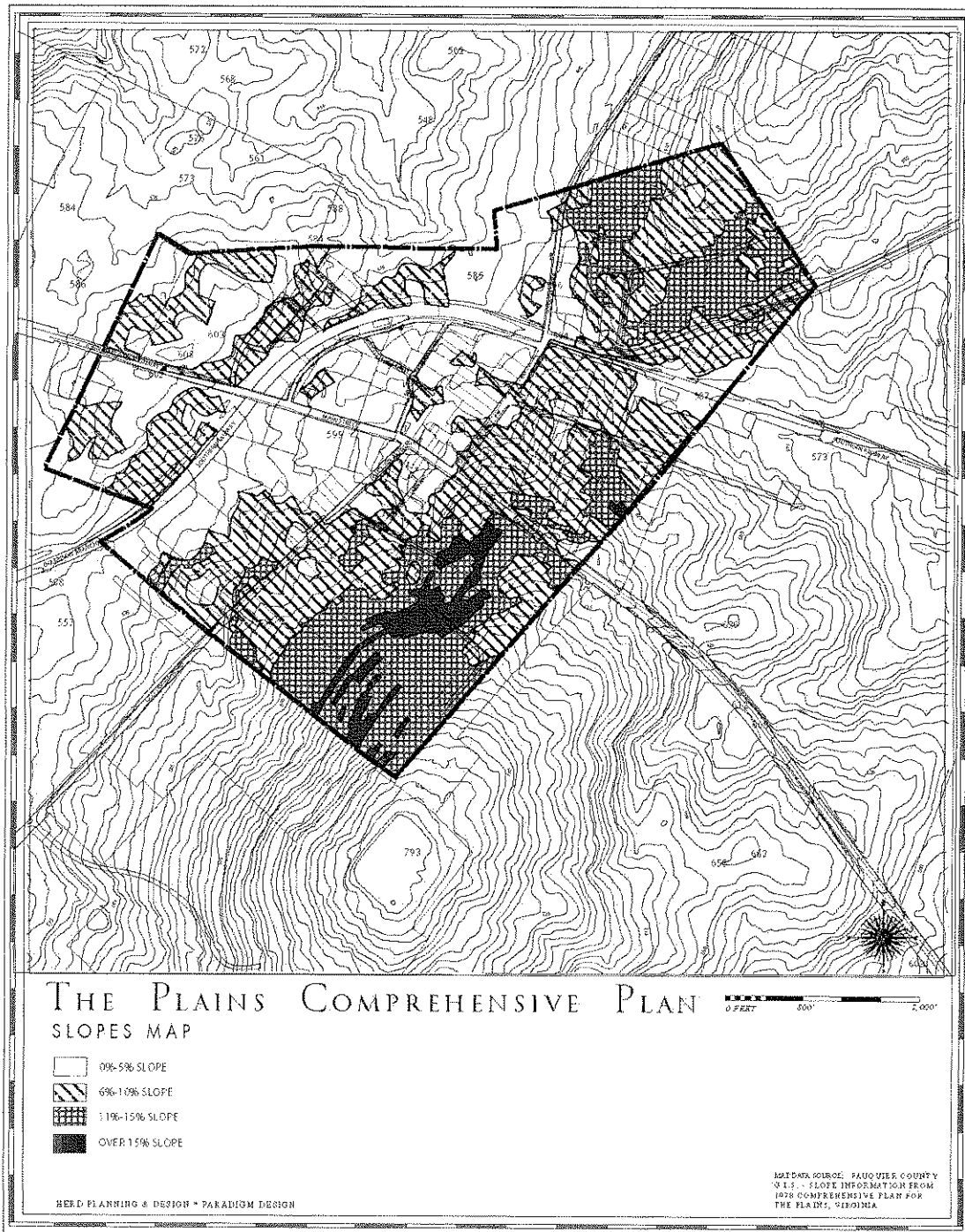
In addition to soil characteristics that limit the potential for safe development on individual well and septic, much of the Town is not well suited for development on central utilities. Limiting factors include low weight bearing capacity and high shrink-swell potential due to high water tables, steep slopes and rockiness. Other soils, particularly in low lying areas, are not well suited for development because they are prone to flooding. (Maps to be added) Obviously, since much of the Town is developed, soil constraints have not precluded construction of homes and businesses. However, these factors increase site preparation costs and the potential for

erosion, localized flooding, cracks in structures and foundations and other nuisances.



The Town's Zoning Ordinance does not address development on steep slopes or problem soils. The Town's Zoning Ordinance continues to permit development on individual well and septic system. However, the ordinance defers to the County Health Department to determine the appropriate minimum lot size for any new structure proposing to develop without central utilities.





POLICIES:

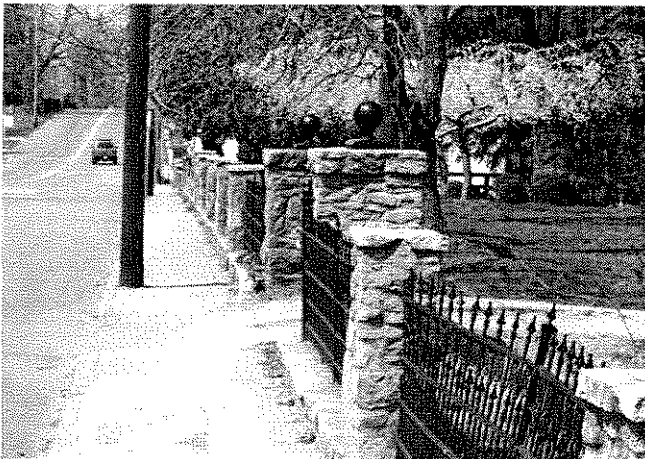
1. Discourage new development on slopes over 15% and should maintain these areas as open space in order to minimize erosion, downstream flooding and environmental pollution.

2. Ensure that new development on slopes over 10% but less than 15% incorporates retaining walls, erosion resistant plantings and careful site planning in order to minimize land disturbance and erosion potential in these areas.
3. Discourage new development on wet soils and highly erodible soils which are not well suited for development and that are typically associated with steep slopes and floodplains.

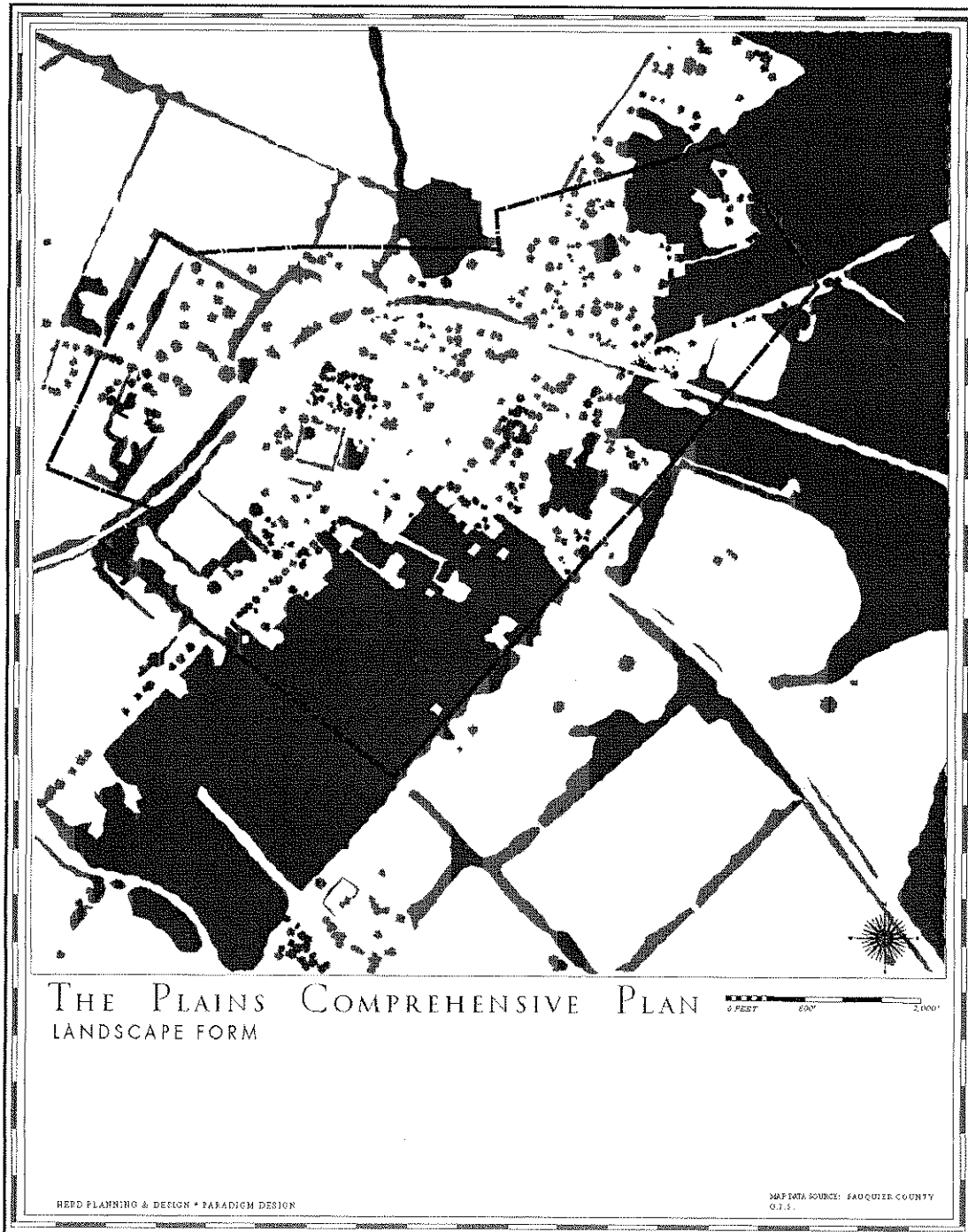
3.1.3 OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

There are a variety of open space resources in and around the Town that are important features in making up the Town's rural character and quality of life. Open vistas of rolling terrain and the combination of farms, meadows and woods are essential to the visual experience of moving through the Town and to the experience and satisfaction of living or working in The Plains. Participants in community meetings recognized the importance of the contrast between the Town and its surroundings.

The interaction of built and open areas in the Town has evolved gradually over time, in concert with traditional building techniques, to produce a very consistent visual pattern in and around the settled area. Landscaped gardens, edged with iron or stone fencing or walls permeate the historic and densely built core of the Town. Significant trees, in some cases of considerable age and girth are disposed in an informal "park-like" arrangement throughout these gardens and soften the closer arrangement of buildings in the "downtown."



Walls and fences edging gardens on Main Street



Further away from the “downtown,” the gardens open up into meadows, pastures and woodlands, as a more country landscape flows into the settled parts of the Town. Finally, at the Town’s edges and periphery, the landscape opens up into a true “farmscape,” with distant views over rolling pastures and hayfields, punctuated by wooded copses and hedgerows. Many of the open spaces in The Plains, can be understood as “outdoor rooms” – stretches of open landscape bounded by natural “walls” such as wood lines,

hedgerows, fencing or structures. The specific pattern of these outdoor rooms and their sequence of open and contained views in the Town contribute greatly to the overall visual structure and character of the Town.

The open space policies in this plan are directed at preserving The Plains' unique natural setting, protecting visually and environmentally sensitive open spaces and maintaining the Town's relationship to its rural context. They offer a variety of approaches to ensure that the Town's distinctive relationship to its open spaces will be a permanent feature in the evolution of The Plains over time.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage the preservation of significant open spaces in the Town through a variety of regulatory and voluntary mechanisms, such as, clustering [to cluster permitted density, but not as a means of adding additional density], conservation easements and donations from philanthropic or preservation groups) and shall make the preservation of open space a priority in the evaluation of private or public development proposals.
2. Work to ensure a permanent greenbelt of open space around the Town.
3. Encourage the preservation of key open space resources, such as stream valleys, steep wooded slopes and other sensitive environmental areas as a distinct priority in the implementation of its open space protection policies.

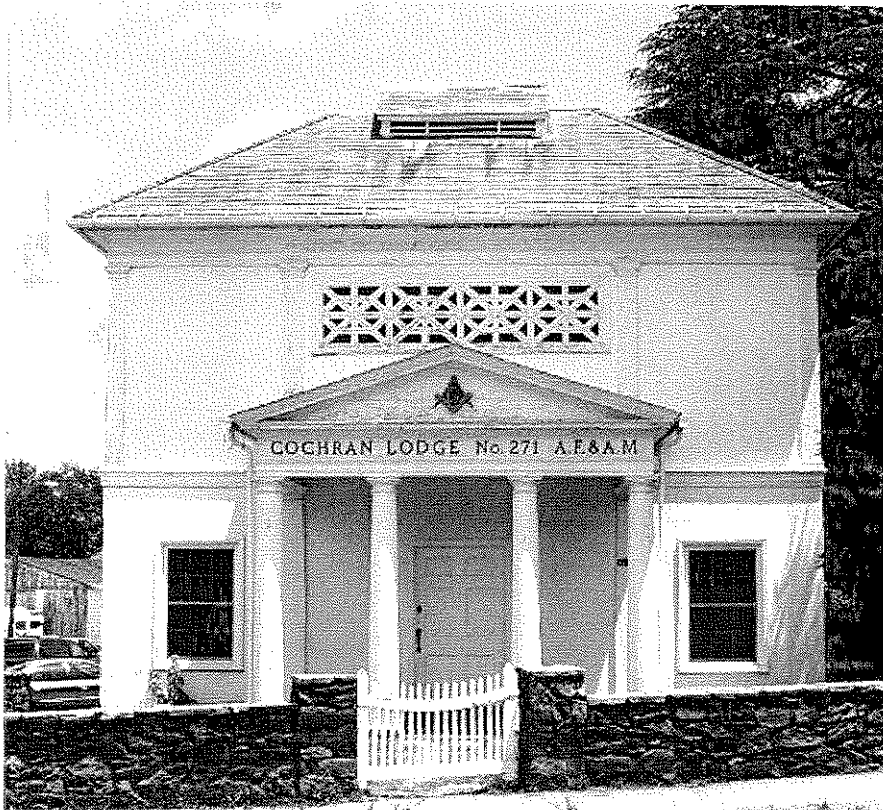


Gaps in the Town's built fabric allow views to open space

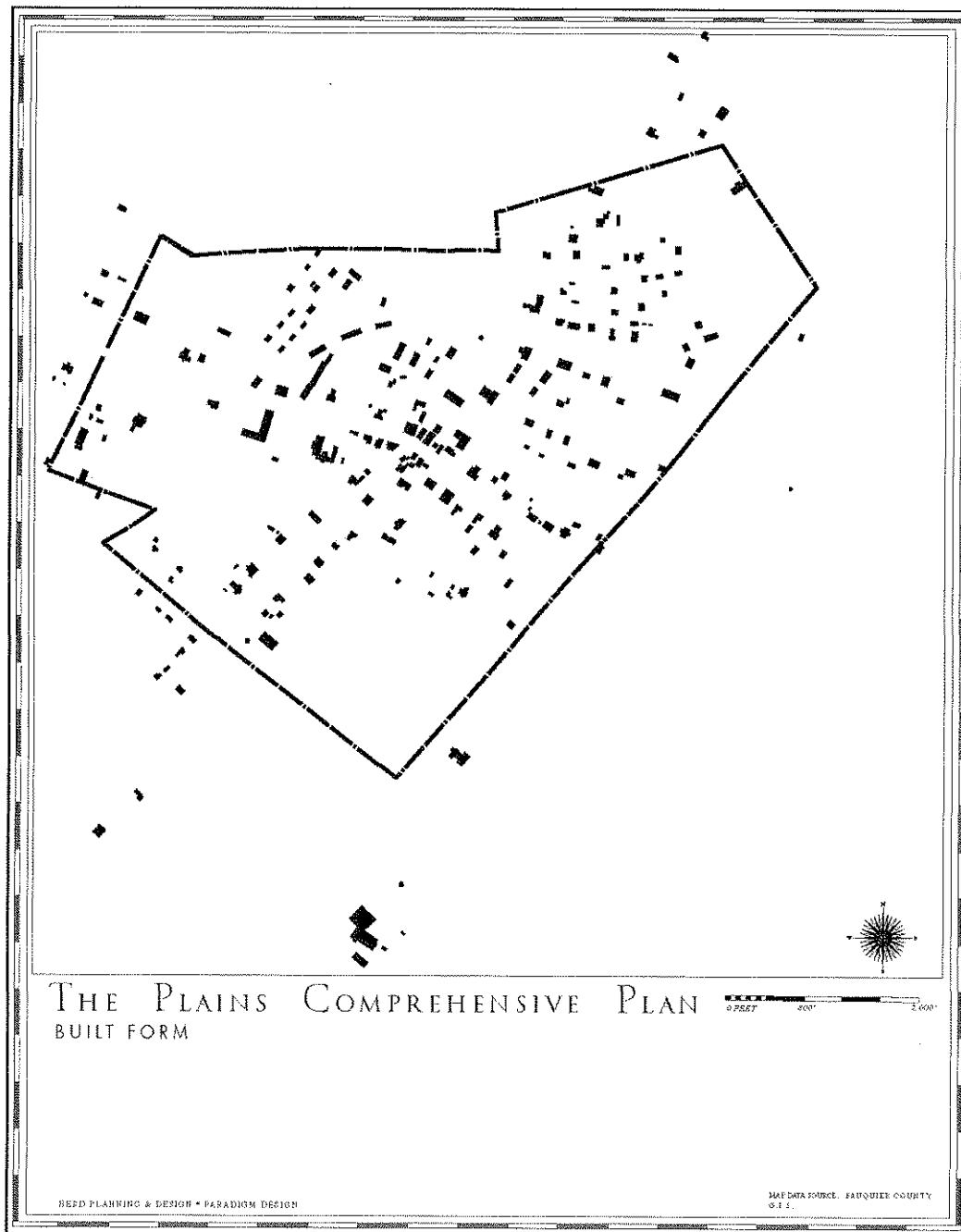
3.2 COMMUNITY RESOURCES

3.2.1 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Settlement in the area that became The Plains dates from the 1720s. The channel for settlement at that time was Thoroughfare Gap, which was the northern entrance to the area that includes Fauquier County. In 1831, the post office was established and there was one store and one house in the settlement. It developed slowly into a traditional Virginia Piedmont settlement that provided goods, services and a transfer point for the surrounding agricultural area. In 1852, the completion of the Manassas Gap Railway to The Plains made it an important local shipping location. Throughout the long history of settlement in The Plains, it has served primarily as an agricultural service center and has many classic elements of a small town in a Virginia farming community.



Masonic Lodge



The Plains also has a very rich and distinct architectural fabric with buildings of many different eras contributing to its traditional small town setting. The architectural heritage of the Town was recognized in 1982 with the establishment of a historic District and Architectural Review Board to administer historic design review within the district. The Town's historic district covers generally the older developed portion of the center of Town, although discussions have occurred through the years on the potential of extending the district to cover more extensive portions of the Town. The Town's Vision process resulted in a number of vision statements that

emphasized the importance of the historic character of the Town. Moreover, one of the implementation recommendations made by the citizens in the Vision process was for the extension of the historic district to protect all the major roadway "entrance corridors" in town. It should be noted, however, that efforts to expand the historic district in 2002 to include entrance corridors were not successful.

In general, the citizens of The Plains have rated its historic built form and architectural character as vital to maintaining the quality of life in the Town. This variety of buildings, according to many citizens, has helped retain the economic and social diversity of The Plains. With the potential for increasing development pressures over time, it is important that the integrity of these historic resources be maintained and that the overall traditional visual character of the Town be protected from incompatible development patterns over time.

POLICIES:

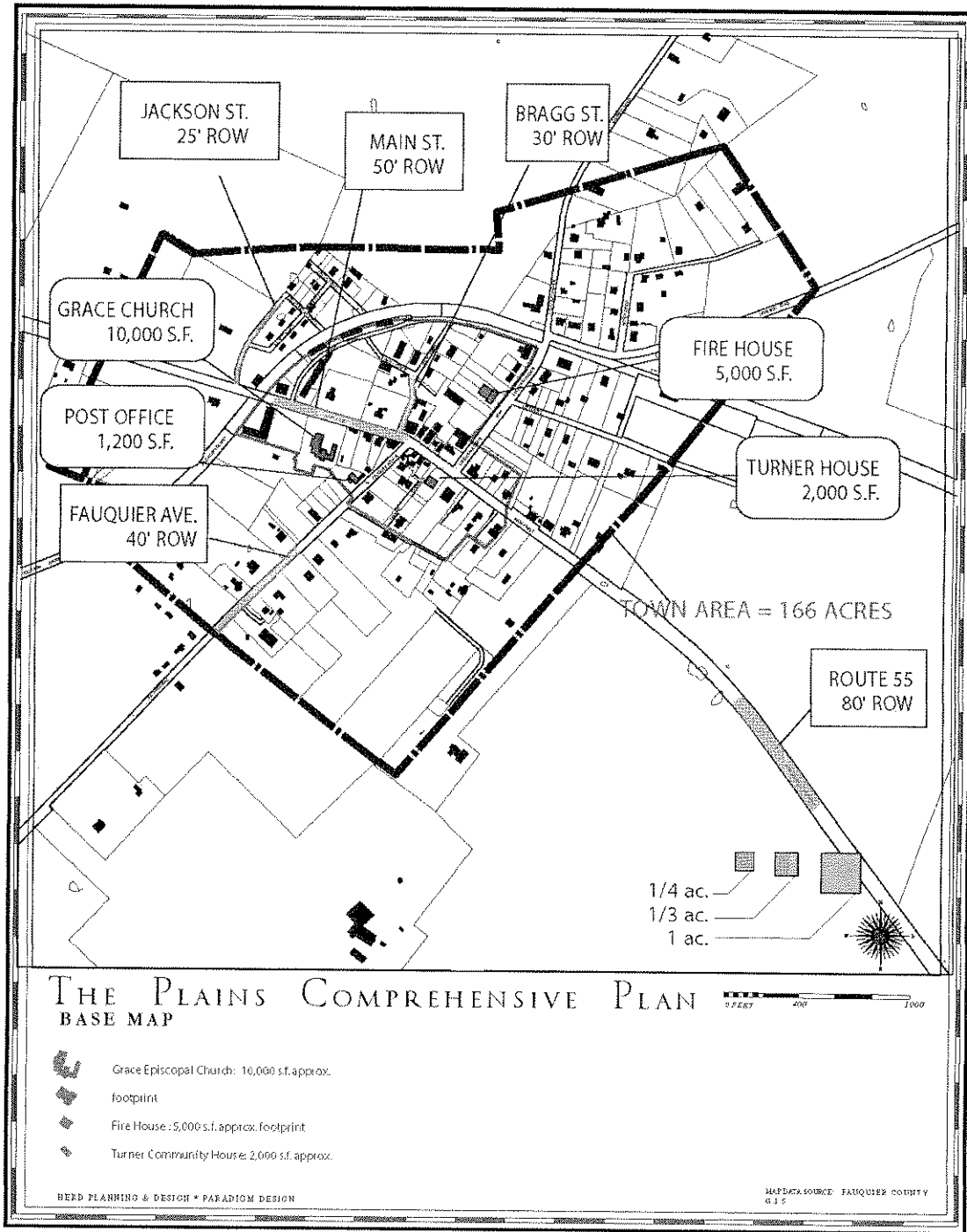
1. Maintain the current Architectural Review Board (A.R.B.) as a mechanism for design review and maintenance of the Town's historic character.
2. Encourage better understanding and education about the value of its historic resources and ways that they can be better preserved.
3. Encourage visual protection of the primary entrance corridors into The Plains, including:
 - Main Street/John Marshall Highway
 - Fauquier Avenue/Old Tavern Road
 - Loudoun Avenue
 - Hopewell Road
 - Stuart Street
 - Bragg Street
4. Discourage "knock downs" of existing structures (re-developing with bigger, out of scale homes) that would alter the integrity of the historical district and potentially compromise the Town's social and economic diversity.
5. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures.

6. Encourage the preservation of the “context” of historic structures, as well as the structures themselves- including their natural settings, contributing outbuildings, fences, hedgerows and other elements of the natural and historic landscape that enhance and frame the historic structure.

7. Evaluate and minimize the impact on historic structures from any publicly or privately funded road or streetscape improvements in the Town.



Pharmacy on Main St. and Fauquier Avenue



3.2.2 EDUCATION

The Plains relies on Fauquier County for educational services. There are no county schools located in the Town. Children living in The Plains attend W.G. Coleman Elementary School and Marshall Middle School, both located in Marshall. High school age children attend Fauquier County High School

in Warrenton. Fauquier County has experienced overcrowding in schools at all levels over the past two decades. The County is planning to construct four new schools over the next decade, including a new high school, and a new middle school and two new elementary schools. A site selection committee appointed by the School Board to evaluate locations for all four schools. Sites in central and northern Fauquier County are being considered for the proposed new middle school and one of the elementary schools however, until site selection is final, the impact on The Plains is unclear. The Plains is also served by several nearby private schools including Wakefield School with approximately 344 students (located just outside the Town) and Notre Dame Academy, Foxcroft School and The Hill School. Wakefield School and Grace Episcopal Church also offer preschool programs for local residents.

3.2.3 LIBRARIES

The Plains is served by the Fauquier County library system, which includes the main library in Warrenton and a two branch libraries, located in Marshall and Bealeton. The John Marshall library, located in the Marshall Community Center, is the library facility closest to The Plains. This branch opened in 1996 to serve the northern portion of the County. Recent renovations have resulted in the branch doubling in size to 3,200 square feet. A local non-profit volunteer community organization, The Plains Community League, maintains a 4,000 volume lending library in the Turner building.

3.2.4 PARKS AND RECREATION

Lack of recreational and community facilities for youth was identified as a concern by participants in the community workshops held in The Plains. There are currently no County operated recreational facilities in The Plains. Although additional park sites and facilities are planned, most of these facilities are located in the central and southern portion of the County where substantial new development is occurring.

Play structures, basketball goals, softball and football fields are found at Coleman Elementary and Marshall Junior High, 2.5 miles west of town. The Marshall Community Baseball Field is available 4 miles west of town. The Marshall Community center also offers recreational programs for children and adults. However, these facilities are not only located too far away for use by young children, but also they can only be reached via Virginia 55, a busy arterial which is unsafe for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. There is also

a ball field in Town, located behind Grace Episcopal Church, that has fallen into disuse.

There is also a Town park site on Fauquier Avenue that is currently undeveloped. The 31,500 square foot parcel was acquired by The Plains Park Authority with grant funds that were used to purchase the property in a below-market sale from a private citizen. The Plains Park Authority was created by the Town in 1998 and incorporated as a non-profit municipal authority in 1999. It is governed by a six-member board that is appointed to four year terms by the Town Council. As a municipal authority, it can accept tax deductible contributions from the public and non-profit organizations. Since there is no annual revenue source to assure maintenance of the property on Fauquier Avenue, the Park Authority has not made any improvements to the park site to date or developed a definitive plan for use of the park site. Acquisition of any additional property by the Park Authority must be authorized in writing by the Town Council. Participants in the Vision process expressed a desire to add some type of civic and recreational amenities to the Fauquier Avenue park site.



Park at Main Street and Fauquier Avenue intersection

3.2.5 PUBLIC SAFETY

The Town takes great pride in its award winning volunteer fire and rescue squads. Company 4 is one of thirteen fire and rescue squads serving Fauquier County and its service area extends beyond corporate limits, into a 44 square mile area. Located in the center of Town, on Loudoun Avenue, The Plains Volunteer Fire Station and, as noted above, is a hub of community activity. The fire and rescue company is staffed by about 30 volunteers, including four volunteer medics. Approximately 8 to 10 of these volunteers regularly take part in drills and respond to alarms. The County supports and augments the volunteer company with two to three paid firefighters/paramedics who staff the station Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The current fire and rescue station facility currently supports four firefighting vehicles and two ambulances. In addition to the two ambulances, firefighting equipment includes two pumper trucks, a tanker, a brush truck, a fire apparatus truck and a rescue squad equipment truck.

The volunteer fire and rescue squad is currently evaluating expansion and renovation of the existing structure to accommodate four to five additional vehicle bays and to provide additional resources to the County so that the existing career staff could staff the facility 24 hours a day. The proposed expansion is projected to cost between \$3.5 and \$5.0 million dollars. The Fire and Rescue Company is currently evaluating funding options to support the expansion.

Although the Town once provided its own police officers, Fauquier County now provides law enforcement services to the Town.



Town fire truck

3.2.6 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Religious, fraternal, and volunteer organizations provide cultural and recreational opportunities for the town's adult population. The John Turner Community House acts as a defacto community center, town hall and library. Four churches located in the immediate vicinity of The Plains serve most of the town's population. A small Masonic Lodge is located just inside town, although membership in the lodge has been declining. The firehouse is also a popular social meeting place for its members. Parties and town meetings are periodically held in this building. Participants in the Vision process felt that the spirit of the Town is largely defined by a strong commitment to volunteerism in the community.

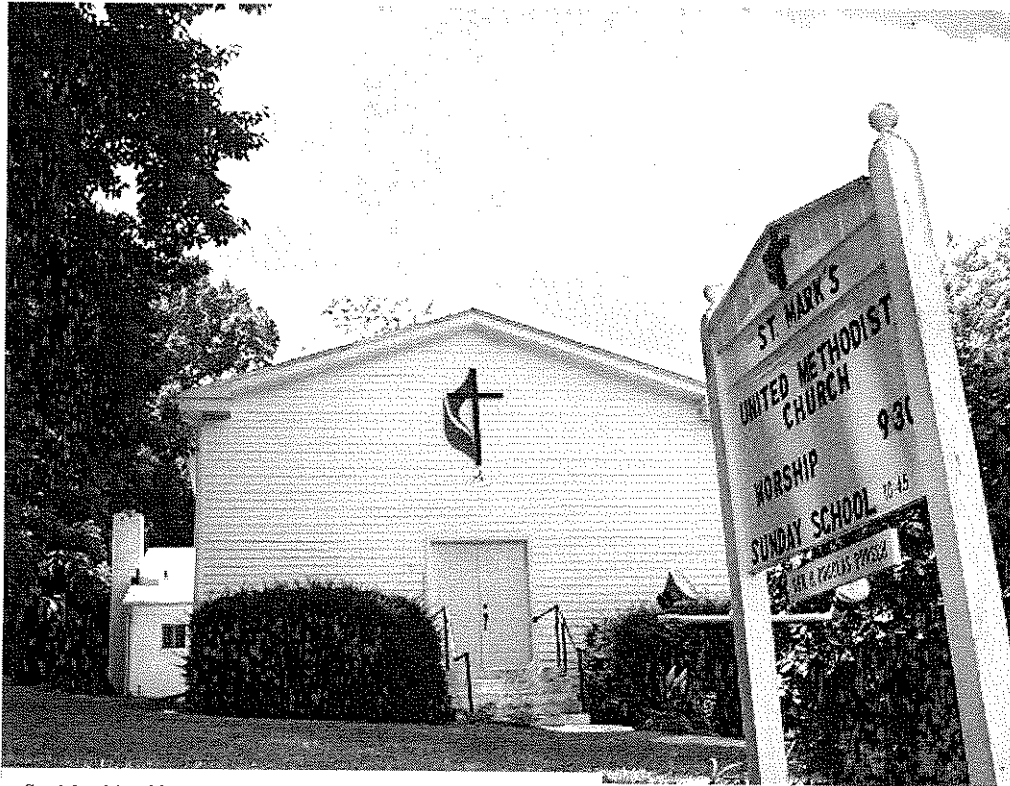
The Plains Community League is a volunteer organization that has been active in the Town since its founding in 1930. The Community League sponsors several seasonal and annual events to promote community spirit and to benefit residents of the community.

The Plains is home to regional cultural facilities and non-profit organizations as well. The African American Museum, History and Genealogical Resource Center of Fauquier County is located in the Town. The museum houses 21 exhibits focusing on Fauquier County and The African Americans from Slavery to the Civil Rights Movement. The museum's reference library contains over 1,600 titles and the genealogy center houses resources that document free and enslaved early African Americans in Fauquier County and surrounding counties. The American Bird Conservancy, a non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas, also has an office in the Plains.

POLICIES:

1. Promote and further develop The Plains' strong tradition of volunteerism and community involvement.
2. Promote partnerships between existing businesses and non-profits in Town to fill "gaps" in services, cultural activities and community outreach and interaction.

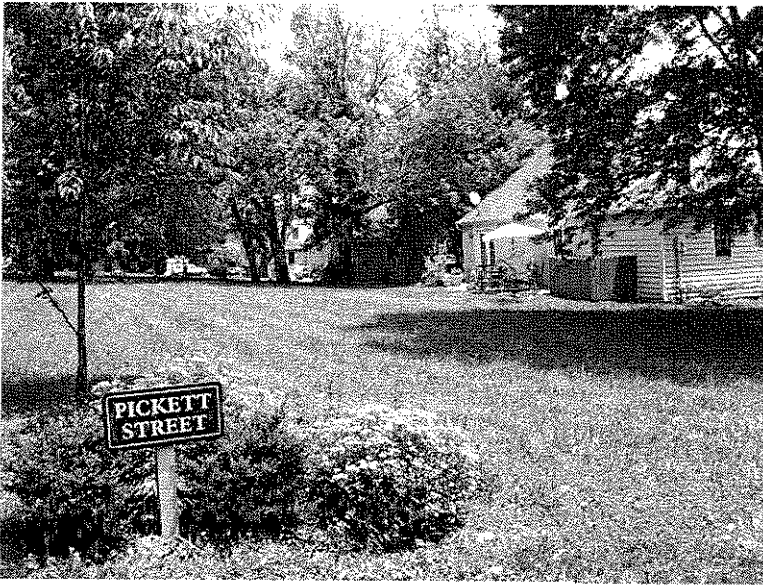
3. Promote community and economic development to strengthen tax base and reflect Town rural culture.
4. Promote the continuance of its traditional role as a hub for the surrounding rural area and will establish an effective relationship with residents in unincorporated areas adjacent to the Town.
5. Encourage the continued enhancement of community services and facilities for the townspeople, and take steps to ensure that they continue to be compatible with the Town's historic small town character and way of life.
6. Work with the State and the County to ensure that the provision of any new public facilities in The Plains or its immediate vicinity will be done in concert with the Town and be supportive of its future Vision and the policies in this plan.



St. Mark's Church

3.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Relatively affordable housing and a diverse mix of housing types and prices were mentioned as important issues for the Town in the Vision process work sessions and public discussions. The Plains has experienced recent trends that have upgraded the overall housing stock, and significantly decreased the number of affordable housing opportunities in the Town. In addition, regional housing market trends point toward sharp rises in housing prices, at the same time that the need for affordable housing continues to grow in society.



Houses on Pickett Street

Preserving The Plains' diversity of housing stock and an appropriate range of housing for different income groups will be challenging in the coming years, and will require diligence and proactive policies that aggressively address the issue of affordable housing.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage the maintenance, conservation and improvement of existing housing stock in a manner that will support a wide range of housing opportunities for a variety of income groups.
2. Consider adopting a series of standards that better define "affordable housing," based on local income levels and accepted definitions used by other jurisdictions.

3. Providing affordable housing should not be a Town government function and it should be undertaken by the private or non-profit sector, with encouragement from the Town.
4. Consider a combination of incentives for the development of affordable housing in the Town, such as density bonuses, fast tracking development applications and waivers of certain fees. Appropriate incentives will be evaluated and will be implemented only by a decision from the Town Council.
5. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances shall encourage the provision of a wide range of housing options, including affordable unit types such as small lot single family, accessory units and attached housing and second-story rental apartments to foster affordable housing.



Houses on Adams Lane

3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An important concern voiced during the Town Vision process was that The Plains should remain a “working town,” and that business activity in Town needs to be maintained to provide a tax base and prevent it from turning into a “bedroom” community. In general, there was a desire to maintain and add to the Town’s mix of small local individual service businesses and shops. There was also a clear preference against large commercial enterprises and franchised or chain stores.



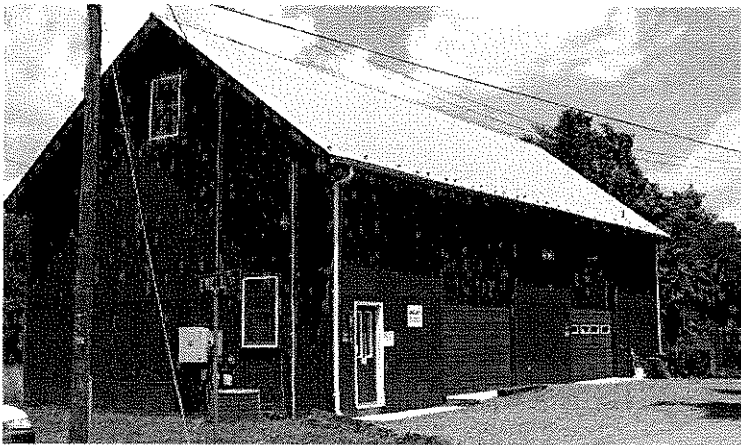
Old Train Station

POLICIES:

1. Support the continued viability of the existing commercial downtown and its mix of commercial uses.
2. Consider, in cooperation with the County, working to attract compatible new businesses to Town through a combination of incentives, such as fast tracking development applications and waivers of certain fees. Appropriate incentives will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will be implemented only by a decision from the Town Council.
3. Promote efforts to retain existing uses and attract new uses that are compatible with the Town’s unique character. Appropriate uses may

include traditional, rural service businesses, as well as, more regular, day-to-day service oriented businesses such as a restaurant, bookstore, bakery, breakfast/lunch place.

4. Encourage work-at-home independent contractors.
5. Support the current mix of business uses and will work to revise its zoning ordinance so that these businesses are made legal, conforming uses under any new zoning ordinance that is developed in the future.
6. Prohibit large-scale retail establishments and “big-box” retail uses in or around the vicinity of the Town.
7. Work with the County to support agriculture in the area surrounding the Town. Small-scale farms and alternative agricultural operations should continue to be supported in the rural landscape around the Town.



Industrial building



Parking behind shops on Main Street

4.0 LAND USE AND TOWN DESIGN

4.1 BACKGROUND: PRESERVING SMALL TOWN CHARACTER

Much of the discussion at the public visioning workshops in The Plains focused on the unique character of the Town and the quality of the built environment and its value in contributing to the “Small Town Character” of The Plains. This authentic character has developed over many years and is unique in part because of the environmental and economic factors that shaped it. At the same time, there was much discussion about the current Town plans and codes, and how they relate to the Town’s singular design character. There was a general consensus, as expressed in the Vision work sessions that the Town’s current ordinances do not encourage or even allow the type of traditional and historic development pattern that has made The Plains what it is today.

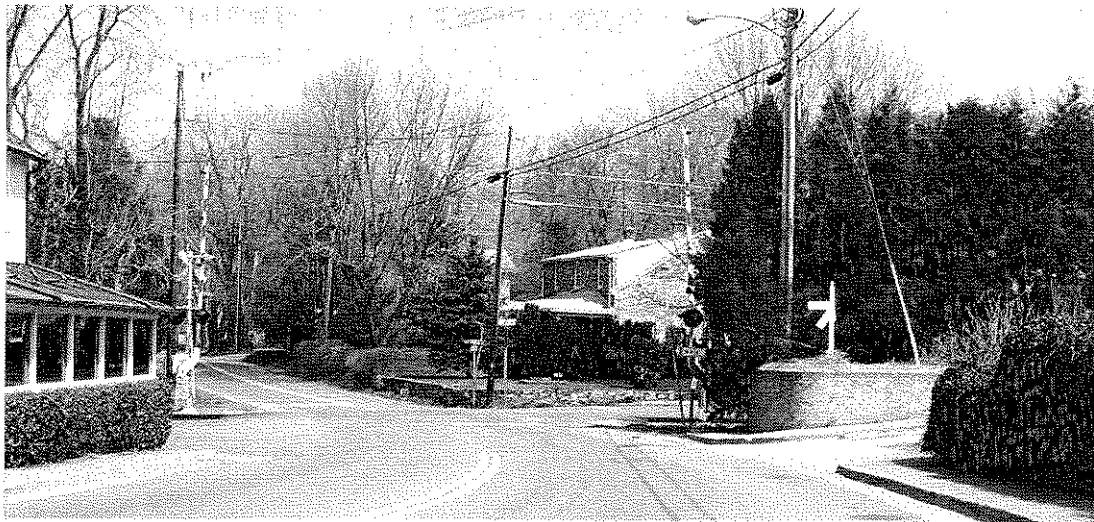


House on Main Street

The Plains has recently seen renewed interest in renovation and infill development, after years of very slow building activity. Much of this renewed interest is based on the particular ambiance created by the combination of traditional design elements, such as historic architectural details, pedestrian-scaled environments, small scale streets in a connected, grid pattern, and ample, park-like greenery and landscaping. However, the

current policies and ordinances in the Town would not permit an effective continuation of many these character-defining elements. The current standards are oriented more towards conventional “suburban” style development patterns, than the more traditional “village” development patterns that are evident in the Town’s existing built form.

Any attempt to revise the current Town standards and bring them more in line with its historic character, must be based on a set of clear land use and design policies in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan revision. The following policy recommendations are intended to implement the townspeople’s desires, as expressed in the Town Vision and the Plan Review Committee meetings, for protecting the Town’s special design character through new land use and design standards.



Railroad crossing at Loudoun Avenue

4.2 OVERALL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Throughout the public meetings and discussions during the Comprehensive Plan update process, a number of common threads or themes have emerged. These themes form the cornerstone of the planning process and the source of the fundamental policy direction adopted by the Plan. Many of these themes are directly concerned with basic land use and Town design issues, such as preserving historic character, maintaining the integrity of views and entrance corridors and protecting the Town from incompatible development patterns in the future. Others are less tangible but equally important and relevant to planning, such as keeping The Plains’ small town quality, its spirit of neighborliness and volunteerism, and maintaining the social and economic

diversity that makes The Plains a “real” town, rather than a bedroom community.

These themes can be summarized and elaborated into a series of “Overall Planning Principles” that give guidance and direction to the more specific land use and design policies that follow. The overall planning principles most important to the development of the Comprehensive Plan are:

A. Preserve The Plains’ Small Town Identity and Character

The essence of The Plains is its small town way of life and its historic physical character. It is a place where people know their neighbors and interact with them through a network of familiar relationships within a comfortable and well-designed setting. It represents a built environment and a quality of life that is “authentic” and doesn’t need to be recreated by new development with neo-traditional design elements.

This essence is what draws visitors and residents to The Plains in the first place. It is also a remarkably fragile resource and, as authentic small town character becomes more and more scarce throughout Virginia communities, one consequence can be to attract more pressure for change and growth in The Plains. In order to prevent the destruction of the very small town character that is so well loved by the townspeople, The Plains must avoid large lot and sprawl development, out-of-scale and incompatible new development or improvements, exclusively auto-oriented street environments, and “enclave”- type neighborhoods that separate themselves from the Town’s social fabric and make fellow townspeople feel unwelcome. Most importantly, The Plains should continue to preserve the essential small town character that is valued today - not by avoiding any change - but by managing and guiding change so that it remains compatible with the existing Town.

B. Preserve and Enhance The Plains’ Historic Core

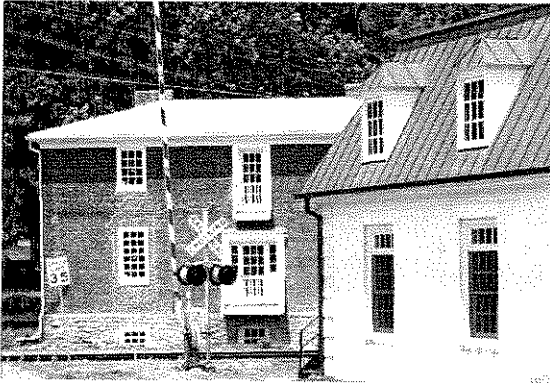
The compact historic core of The Plains has always been part of its charm and contributed to the quality of life of its residents. This small “downtown” is generally where the Town’s commercial activity is centered. It includes both the shop fronts on Loudoun and Fauquier Avenues and Main Street and the small workshop and service industrial use clustered around the Railroad tracks and Stuart Street. This historic core is a valuable asset whose visual quality needs to be carefully maintained, while its vitality is enhanced through new and compatible businesses, façade improvements and sensitive infill.

However, one of the essential qualities of The Plains is its mixture of uses and its lack of rigidly defined “zones” of activity. Planning for the future of the Town should include opportunities to maintain the informal scattering of small commercial opportunities throughout the Town, as well as housing over, next to and integrated with the shops and businesses of the Town.

C. Maintain Substantial Open Space and Scenic and Natural Resources

Open spaces and scenic views, both in and around the Town enhance the quality of life for all townspeople and visitors in The Plains. The Town should take steps to preserve its valued natural assets, such as woodlands, farmland and meadows and landscaped gardens. In addition, protection of sensitive environmental resources, such as waterways, steep slopes and groundwater should be of primary importance in planning for the future of the Town.

Furthermore, the Town should work with the County and local landowners to protect the scenic rural countryside around the Town. This rural context contributes to the Town’s essential “sense of place,” and the beauty and scenic quality of its edges and entry corridors.



Old and new buildings at the Railroad crossing

D. Ensure that Growth and Change in The Plains is both Gradual and Compatible with The Town

The pace of change and growth in The Plains has been moderate and gradual over time, with periods of decline and rebirth throughout its long history. This “organic” rate of growth has left its stamp on the Town’s physical form, through a diversity of historic styles and building types, that is well integrated into an overall scale of streets and built fabric that is “pre-automobile era”. It has also allowed new residents to be gradually

integrated into the community, into the local commercial activity and into its religious and social life.

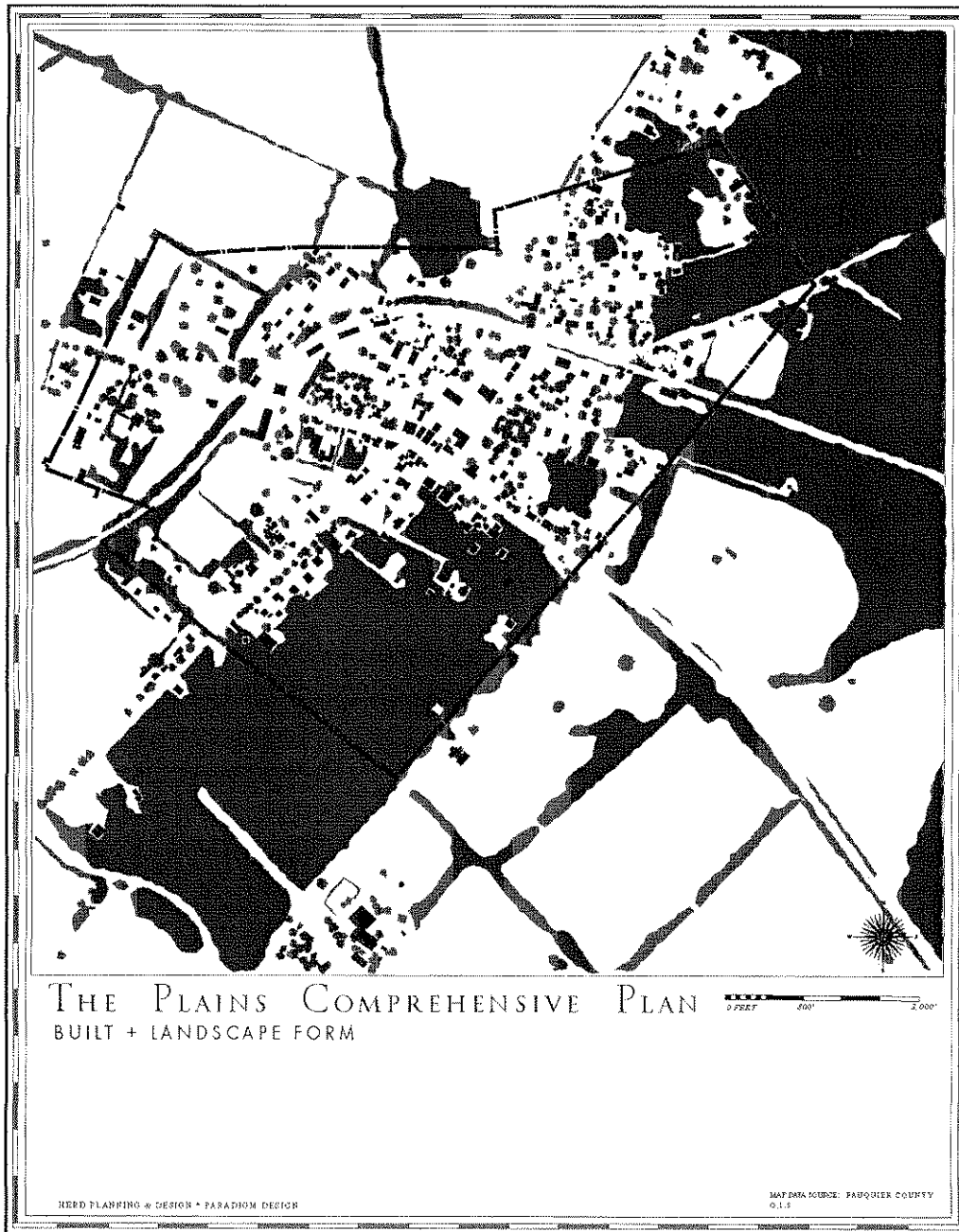
It is vital to avoid the type and rate of growth or change that will dislocate the small town way of life and the community cohesiveness that The Plains has built up over its centuries of existence. The Comprehensive Plan and Ordinances of the Town should seek to encourage only that type of growth or change that is compatible with the Town and its traditions. Most importantly, growth and change must be managed so that it occurs at a pace that new residents and businesses can be assimilated into the life of the Town.

4.3 GENERAL LAND USE

General land use policies are designed to take into account the overall pattern of existing development and built form in the Town and accommodate the Town's vision and desires with respect to new development, redevelopment and the potential of land use change in the future. The land use policies below seek to address the concerns voiced at the Town meetings during the Vision process, about maintaining the Town's unique, compact, small town character and avoiding the type of suburban-style sprawl development that has overtaken many Virginia small towns. In addition, the policies seek to minimize the negative aspects of change and growth on the existing Town fabric over time.



Grace Episcopal Church



POLICIES:

1. Encourage a balanced mixture of residential and employment uses, generally consistent with the current land use mix, in order to ensure a balanced tax base and retain the Town's diversity of homes, businesses, shops and services.

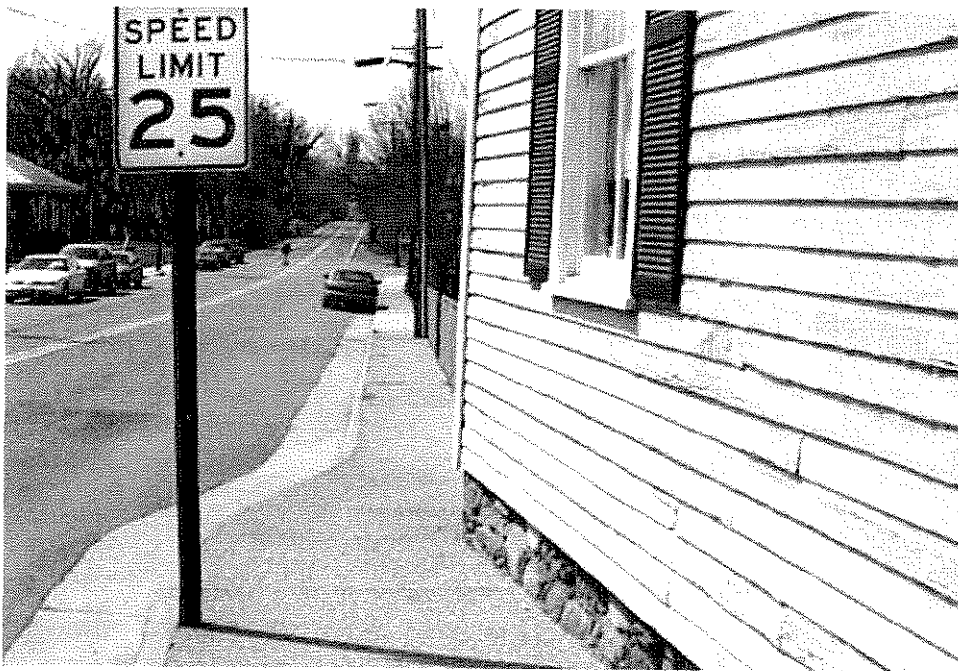
2. Promote traditional development forms and settlement patterns, as currently found in the town, including the relatively compact historic core, the open landscape and rural character of the town edges and the scenic qualities of the main roadway corridors.
3. Any future revision to the Land Use Plan will encourage densities and development patterns that generally follow existing conditions in the Town. It should encourage opportunities for small infill and incremental growth, but should discourage large-scale suburban-style development or major redevelopment of the existing built fabric of the Town.
4. Ensure that the Town's Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that all future changes to the Zoning Ordinance and/or the Zoning Map are also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
5. The principle of mixing uses, similar to the current land use pattern in the Town shall be encouraged, including residences combined with shops, combined live-work buildings, workshops with residential components and combined small-scale retail and production facilities.
6. Work cooperatively with the County and landowners adjacent to the Town to establish a protected "greenbelt" of rural landscape around the Town. Encourage the County's use of a variety of techniques such as conservation easements, acquisition of development rights and zoning and subdivision modifications should be considered as ways to implement the greenbelt concept.

4.4 LAND USE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the Plan Review Committee and the citizens and elected officials of the town considered the findings of the Buildout Analysis that summarized the land uses and potential densities contained in the current Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance of the Town. Reactions to the Buildout Analysis, and general concerns about the form and intensity of future development in the Town were discussed extensively during the Town's Vision meetings.

The policies below address the citizen comments that were expressed in these meetings regarding the buildout potential embodied in the 1978 Comprehensive Plan, by recommending a Future Land Use Plan and development pattern to better protect the valued historic character of the

Town. These policies are intended to ensure the maintenance of the special historic built environment and qualities of the Town, which make it culturally, visually and economically attractive to both residents and visitors. These policies are only Comprehensive Plan elements and do not alter the underlying property rights to develop land at a given density, as these are set by the Zoning Ordinance, and not the Comprehensive Plan. However, they include recommendations for future reconsideration of the Zoning Ordinance standards, based on the fundamental land use and density principles that are established in this new Comprehensive Plan update.



Looking south on Fauquier Avenue

4.5 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The following map (Future Land Use Plan) represents potential land uses and development densities as part of the Comprehensive Plan. It is important to note that this map only address basic density and land uses, not detailed design issues. However, this Future Land Use Plan proposes land use designations and districts that are designed to support the policies and traditional neighborhood design principles desired by the Town, as summarized below in the Town Design section.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to preserve the traditional settlement pattern of The Plains. Overall, the guiding principle is to mirror and extend the existing historic pattern of development in the Town as it grows and

changes over time. The Future Land Use Plan continues to allow for new development at the edges and infill development in the existing downtown core and residential neighborhoods. However, the Plan strongly reinforces the current form of the Town, with higher density and mixed uses in the center, moderate density in the neighborhoods and lower density and a more rural character at the edges.

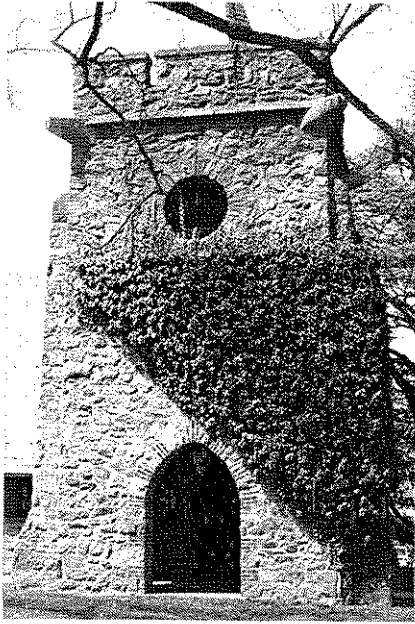
In particular, the Future Land Use Plan describes a set of proposed development densities and land uses to achieve the following purposes:

1. preventing congestion in the public streets;
2. facilitating the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; facilitating the provision of adequate police and fire protection, transportation, water, sewerage, flood protection, and other public requirements;
3. protecting against destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas; protecting against the overcrowding of land, undue density of population in relation to the community facilities existing or available, obstruction of light and air, danger and congestion in travel and transportation;
4. encouraging economic development activities that provide desirable employment and ensure a balanced tax base that retains the Town's diversity of homes, businesses, shops and services;
5. providing for the preservation of agricultural and forestal lands and other lands of significance for the protection of the natural environment;
6. protecting surface water and ground water resources; and
7. promoting the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

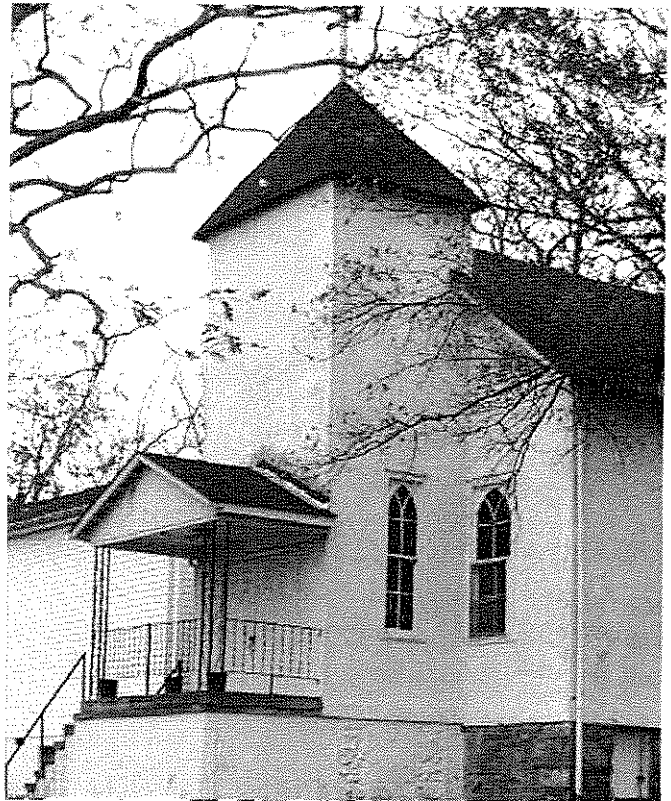
The basic concept of the Future Land Use Plan also derives from the public comments in the Vision process that showed a strong preference for the existing form and character of the Town, and a dislike of the higher density and more suburban settlement patterns that were embodied in the 1978 Comprehensive Plan.

As part of the analysis for developing the Future Land Use Plan, the Plan Review Committee studied the existing densities in the Town's current neighborhoods. These are summarized on the following map, and were

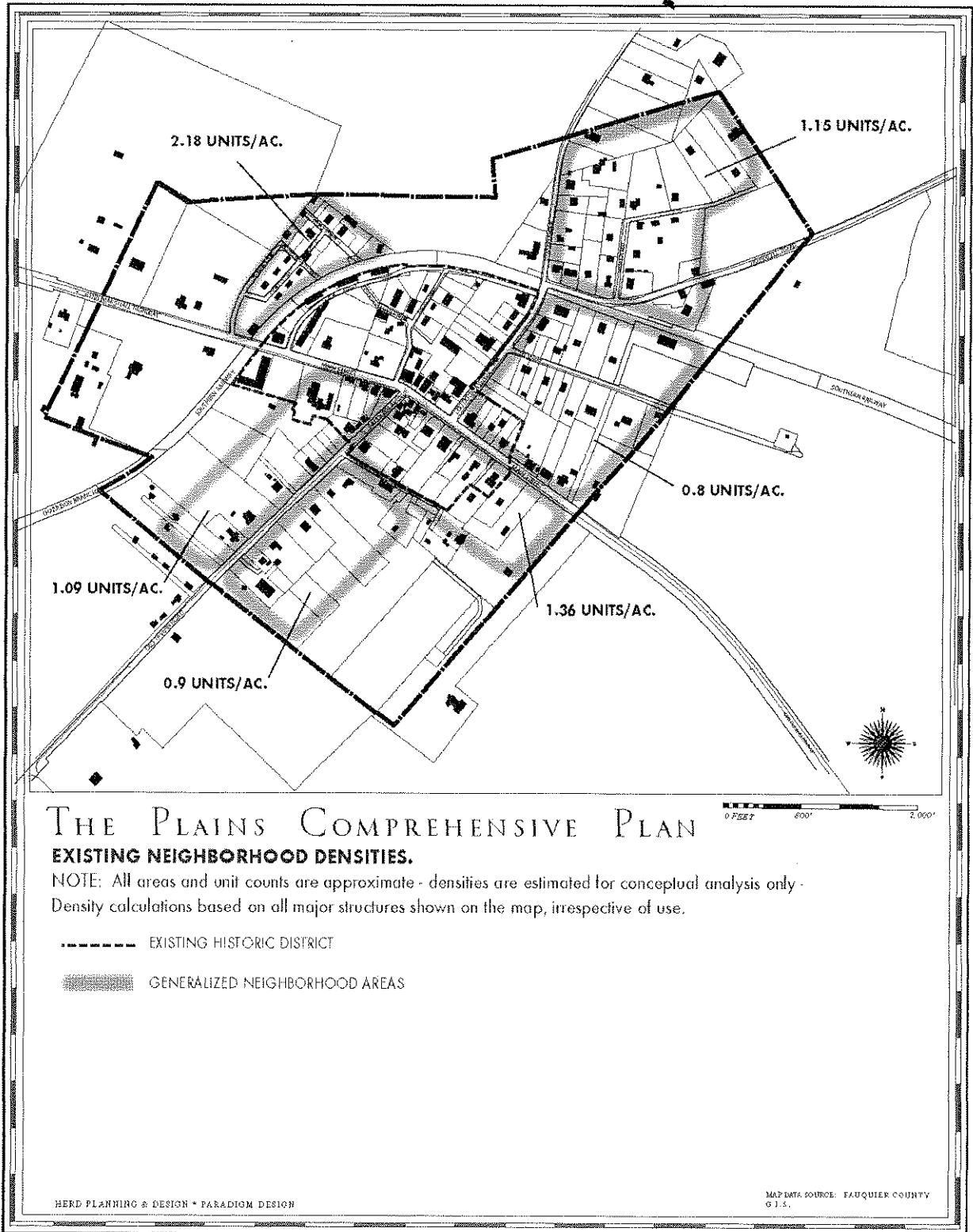
used as a basis for establishing a range of proposed densities and development patterns into the existing neighborhoods and undeveloped land at the Town's edges.

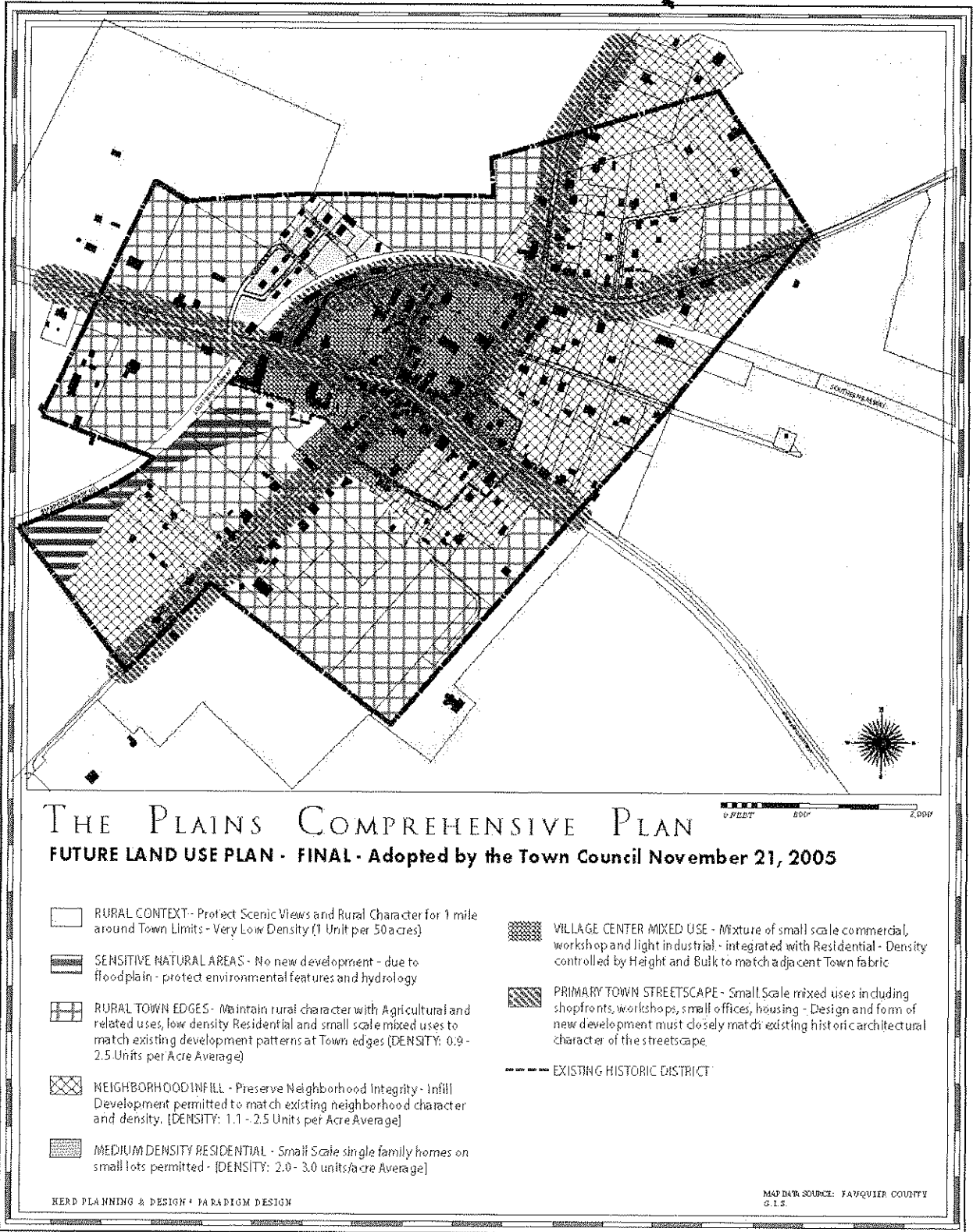


Grace Episcopal Church



First Baptist Church





FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DISTRICTS AND POLICIES:

The policies for each district are listed on the Future land Use Plan and are summarized below:

RURAL CONTEXT - Protect Scenic Views and Rural Character for 1-mile around Town limits - Very Low Density (1 Unit per 50 acres)

SENSITIVE NATURAL AREAS - No new development recommended due to floodplain - protect environmental features and hydrology of area

RURAL TOWN EDGES - Maintain rural character with Agricultural and related uses, low density Residential and small scale mixed uses to match existing development patterns at Town edges (DENSITY - 0.9 to 2.5 Units per Acre Average)

NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL - Preserve Neighborhood Integrity - Infill Development permitted to match existing neighborhood character and density. [DENSITY - 1.1 to 2.5 Units per Acre Average]

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL - Small Scale single family homes on small lots permitted - [DENSITY 2.0 to 3.0 units/acre Average]

VILLAGE CENTER MIXED USE - Mixture of small scale commercial, workshop and light industrial uses - integrated with Residential uses and home occupations - Density controlled by Height and Bulk requirements to match scale, form and design character of adjacent Town fabric

PRIMARY TOWN STREETSCAPE - Small Scale mixed uses including shopfronts, workshops, small offices, housing - Design and form of new development must closely match existing historic architectural character of the streetscape

POLICIES FOR DENSITY RANGES:

Three of the districts shown in the Future Land Use Plan (Rural Town Edges, Neighborhood Infill, and Medium Density Residential) call for a range of proposed average densities. The Future Land Use Plan may be implemented by the Town in various ways.

As the Town implements the Comprehensive Plan, future zoning revisions should incorporate the following policies in determining the appropriateness of densities for development in the Town.

1. Provision of affordable housing units (defined as dwellings priced so that rental or mortgage payments require not more than 35% of the median household income of Town residents, and/or dwellings of 2,000 square feet or less each);
2. Preservation of the Town's historic character, that is consistent with the traditional massing, proportion and architectural style of traditional and historic buildings in the Town;
3. Compatibility with adjacent built fabric, including similarity of placement on the lot, similarity of scale, massing, material, architectural character and overall visual harmony with adjacent structures;
4. Preservation of the Town's scenic streetscapes and significant viewsheds, including open, rural and natural areas, and views to the adjacent rural landscape;
5. Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas including groundwater resources, steep slopes, significant vegetation and sensitive soils;

A key implementation recommendation of this approach would be to revise the Zoning Ordinance to better match the structure and districts proposed in the Future Land Use Plan. To implement the plan fully would entail reducing the density of the properties outside the historic core to maintain the current development pattern. In general, this approach is most conducive to the adoption of a Traditional Neighborhood Ordinance, as has been done in many historic communities seeking to revise their zoning to better match their traditional built form.

4.6 TOWN DESIGN

The current development standards in The Plains do not allow for the continuation of the traditional development patterns of the past. Such traditional design elements as buildings that front on the street (no setback), narrow streets, and homes above shops are not currently permitted in many of the zoning and subdivision standards in Town. The policies below are primarily intended to encourage the continuation of the building character and style that exists in The Plains today. They attempt to establish context-sensitive design as a fundamental policy directive of the new Comprehensive Plan. However, it is important to note that they are merely policies and carry no force of law. The implementation recommendations explore various ways that these policies can be realized through voluntary or mandatory design standards and/or review processes.

POLICIES:

1. Infill development or renovation within established neighborhoods should be compatible with adjacent structures and the neighborhood as a whole.
2. New development in undeveloped areas should match the prevailing style and character of traditional buildings in The Plains. The scale, massing, colors and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town's historic architectural fabric.
3. The developers and builders of new structures and significant rehabilitation projects on existing structures should discuss their development plans with the Town and adjacent landowners and residents. The Town should seek to implement this policy through joint meetings with the developers and property owners prior to and in addition to the formal application process.
4. Townhouse and duplex structures are not appropriate in The Plains, except for the provision of affordable housing.
5. New development should not block scenic views or vistas, particularly from public roadways. Careful siting and design of new structures shall be used to maintain open vistas from adjacent properties.
6. New construction should be done in a way that minimizes disruption of existing landforms and removal of existing vegetation, particularly significant specimen trees or wooded groves in the Town.

7. New development or rehabilitation should be designed to preserve sites of historic archaeological, historic or cultural value and their environs. Significant features may include traditional elements such as stone walls, spring houses, building foundations and grave sites.

8. The scale and character of the existing roads should be maintained and protected from incompatible public or private improvements in the right of way or on the road frontages. New roads in the Town should be of a pattern, scale and design that matches the traditional roads of Town. New roads should connect to the existing Town street grid and cul-de-sacs should be avoided.

9. Review the current Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to support current uses and businesses and affordable housing in a pattern that continues to contribute to the Town's quality of life .

4.7 CORRIDORS AND EDGES

In order to address the importance of the Town's Streetscape and the "view from the street," the Town's key road corridors have been designated as Primary Town Streetscape districts on the Future Land Use Plan. These are areas of high visual quality. They include the street frontages of:

- Main Street/John Marshall Highway
- Fauquier Avenue/Old Tavern Road
- Loudoun Avenue
- Hopewell Road
- Stuart Street
- Bragg Street

The preservation of the historic architectural character of these road frontages should be a key priority of the Town in its planning actions and its review of future development proposals.

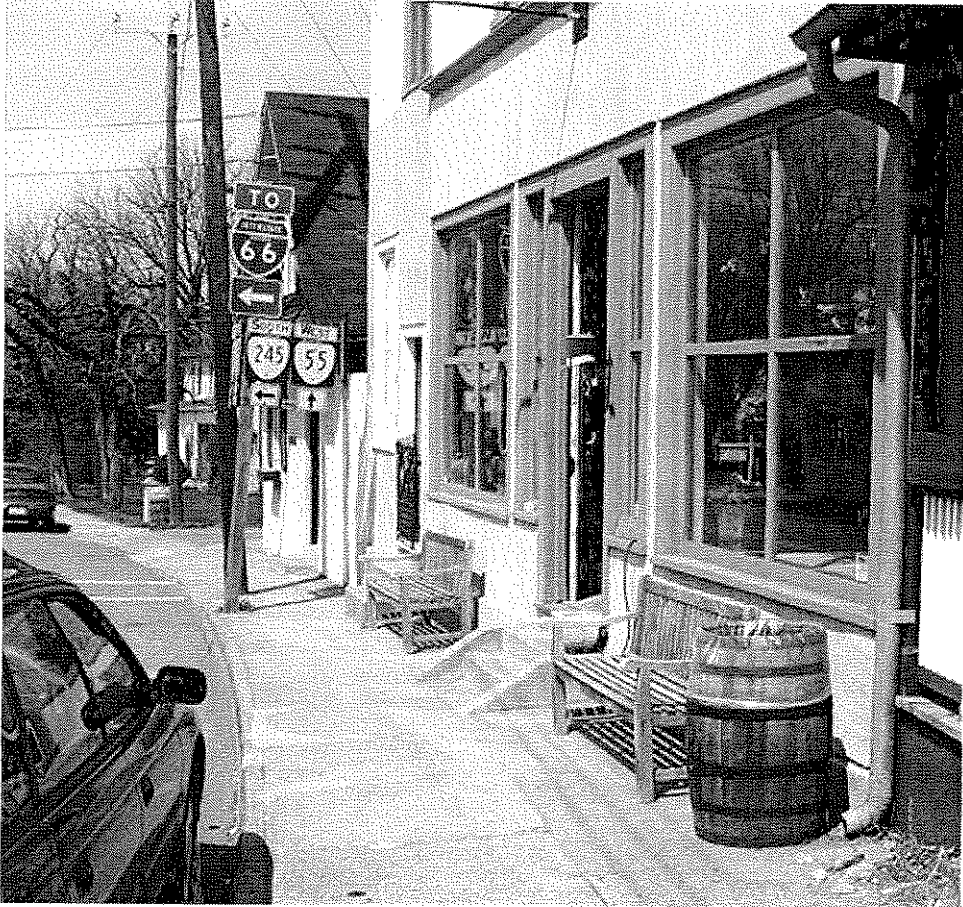
In addition, the locations where these roads cross the Town boundaries should be considered the primary "Gateways" to the Town and these areas should also receive special attention in any future planning or development proposals. In particular, these should be where traffic calming improvements to manage the speeds of vehicular traffic entering the Town are installed in the future. The maintenance of the small-town, understated design character of these gateways should be a high priority to the Town.

Finally, the areas around the Town edges have the greatest potential for change from future development and these also merit special consideration. The Town should ensure that any new development in the undeveloped rural fringes maintain the historic integrity of the Town's built form, and that new development generally match the scale, form and architectural character of existing neighborhoods in the Town.

POLICIES:

1. The primary road corridors in the Town should be the focus for special design attention and review to ensure that their historic architectural character is maintained. The prime road corridors are:
 - Main Street/John Marshall Highway
 - Fauquier Avenue/Old Tavern Road
 - Loudoun Avenue
 - Hopewell Road
 - Stuart Street
 - Bragg Street
2. Traffic calming and management improvements that are designed to be compatible with the Town's traditional streetscape should be incorporated into each of the Town's vehicular entrances or "Gateways" into town.
3. Consider special zoning and design review controls, such as form-based zoning, along the primary town streetscape Also consider requiring special approvals for any demolition of structures within these corridors, in order to prevent indiscriminate destruction of their built fabric.
4. Work with the County to implement a "greenbelt" of at least one-mile around the Town boundaries. The Town should have approval of any development projects in the greenbelt area and should be able to manage the rural character and density of this area as the primary viewshed from the Town.
5. There is ample undeveloped land within the Town boundaries to accommodate the desired growth for the Town. Land should not be annexed by the Town solely to allow for future development or expansion and growth. The Town may consider annexations or future additions to the Town area only for the following specific purposes:
 - To provide better control of the rural "greenbelt" and viewshed around the Town, provided that this area is to remain as an undeveloped agricultural buffer zone around the older built portions of the Town.

- To bring existing neighborhoods that are currently outside, but contiguous to, the Town boundaries into the corporate limits of The Plains (such as the neighborhoods along Adams Lane and Loudoun Avenue).



Shop fronts

5.0 PUBLIC UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

5.1 PUBLIC UTILITIES

There was little discussion of public water and sewer facilities during public meetings in The Plains. Citizens did express concerns, however, that too much new development, especially if it occurs too quickly, could potentially overwhelm the Town and change its fundamental character. The lack of discussion about sewer and water facilities at public meetings is likely due to the fact that water and wastewater issues that plagued the Town through the mid 1970s have been resolved. Because there has been relatively little new development in the Town over the past three decades, the existing sewer and water facilities have easily accommodated the new development that has occurred. Since there is a direct link between the potential for new development and the availability of sewer and water services, however, it is critical for the Town to evaluate how utility service may influence future growth and how much growth the existing system can theoretically accommodate.

5.1.1 CENTRAL SEWER SYSTEM

Central sewer service has been available in The Plains since 1977, when the Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority (WSA) completed its Marshall wastewater treatment plant. The WSA wastewater treatment plant in Marshall is a state of the art facility, providing advanced secondary treatment of effluent. Wastewater in The Plains is collected by a system of 4 inch gravity lines which feed into a 6 inch force main that parallels Route 55 to Marshall. The system also includes two small lift stations, both located within corporate limits, and a major pump station located on Route 55.

In 2002, there were 566 sewer connections to the WSA system that serves both Marshall and The Plains. According to WSA records, 140 of these customers, which includes residential and non-residential users, are located in The Plains. Census data from 1990 (the last year for which such data is available), indicates that 72 occupied housing units within the corporate limits of the Town were connected to public sewer, 28 units relied on septic systems and 9 units used "other means" of sewage disposal.

In July 2004, the WSA completed an expansion of the Marshall treatment plant that doubled its treatment capacity, bringing the plant to the maximum capacity currently permitted by state regulation. The expansion increased

the plant's treatment capacity to 0.64 million gallons per day (mgd). As a result of the expansion, the WSA expects to have 800 available sewer connections by 2005. These new sewer connections will be available on a "first come, first served" basis for new construction in the sewer service area. None of the new taps have been specifically reserved for The Plains.

The number of future sewer taps available will have an impact on development in The Plains since poor soils has limited the use of septic systems within the Town. If development occurs rapidly in Marshall, it will reduce the number of taps available for infill or additional development in The Plains. The Marshall Service District Plan, adopted in November 2003 by Fauquier County as part of its Comprehensive Plan, states that the residents of Marshall would like the community to grow to an ultimate size of no more than 6,000 residents. Development at this scale in Marshall would require sewer capacity beyond what is available, even with the most recent plant expansion. However, ultimate development in the Marshall area is not projected to occur until well beyond 2020. Phasing scenarios included in the Marshall Sewer District Plan predict gradual development over the next 15 to 20 years and suggest that even with an annual residential growth rate ranging between 4 to 5.5%, and with additional commercial and industrial uses, the sewer treatment plant capacity will not be reached until sometime after 2020. Therefore, there should be ample capacity, from a sewer treatment standpoint, for development in both The Plains and in Marshall over the next 10 to 20 years.

5.1.2 CENTRAL WATER SYSTEM

Since 1978, The Plains has been served by a central water system that is owned and maintained by the Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority (WSA). The system includes two high quality production wells, a 125,000 gallon storage tank, a pump station, a network of 6 inch water mains with hydrants, and 4 inch distribution lines. Water from the public wells is chemically disinfected and treated to reduce corrosive effects on distributions pipes.

The two wells that serve the Town, one located on Route 55 and the other on Lee Street, produce 50 gallons per minute (gpm) and 25 gpm respectively. The wells are drilled deep into the bedrock underlying the Town; one is 250 feet deep, the other is 450 feet deep. Water service is currently provided to 140 customers in the Town. The existing water system can accommodate approximately 30 to 40 additional users without additional improvements. The WSA has allocated \$80,000 in its CIP to conduct a study to locate an

additional well to service the Town. This study is expected to start in the Spring of 2005. According to the WSA, a new well pumping 50 gpm could accommodate 100 new users. Bringing a new well on-line would take approximately three years. In addition to locating a new well, improvements to the existing pump station would be required to accommodate the increased water capacity.

Like sewer taps, water taps are available on a "first come, first served" basis and are allocated by the WSA rather than the Town. It should be noted that development on individual wells is not precluded by the Town's Zoning Ordinance. However, given the Town's history of well contamination and its underlying geology, development on individual private wells is likely to be limited by natural constraints.



Gate House

POLICIES:

1. Encourage the use of central utilities for all new construction; use of individual well and septic systems will be discouraged.
2. Work very closely with the WSA regarding improvements to the Town's central water facilities.
3. Sewer and water facility improvements will be considered in context with the ultimate Vision for The Plains. The primary purpose of utility improvements and extensions will be to promote public health and quality development, rather than to encourage growth in the Town.
4. Discourage new development that could potentially deteriorate wellheads and wells or reduce the capacity and quality of future groundwater resources.
5. Discourage the extension of water and sewer utilities to serve areas outside the Town boundaries, unless they are indicated as potential development areas in the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Construction of sewer and water facilities and improvements to serve the Town will be financed by the WSA, and reimbursed through connection fees; however, the Town may choose to assist in funding sewer and water improvements that will directly benefit Town residents.

5.2 TRANSPORTATION

There was considerable discussion about traffic concerns in the Town at both community visioning forums. Discussions ranged from traffic calming measures to road improvements and road realignments that would improve current traffic patterns in the Town. While traffic volumes on main streets through the Town were considerably higher prior to the opening of I-66, traffic volumes on Route 55 and Route 245 remain a concern for the Town. The potential impact of traffic associated with new development in the vicinity of The Plains, the speed at which vehicles travel through town and the design character of new roads were identified as concerns for the future.

Primary highway access to The Plains is provided by Virginia Route 55 (Main Street), which runs east-west through the Town and forms the "spine" of the community. Route 245 running North-South, which provides access to Interstate 66, is also classified by the Virginia Department of Transportation

as a primary road. Secondary roads within the Town include Route 601 (Hopewell Street), Route 626 (Loudoun Avenue), Route 784 (Lee Street) and Route 804 (Stuart Street). Participants in the workshops were accurate in their perception that traffic volumes within The Plains have generally increased over the past few years, particularly on Route 55 and Route 245.

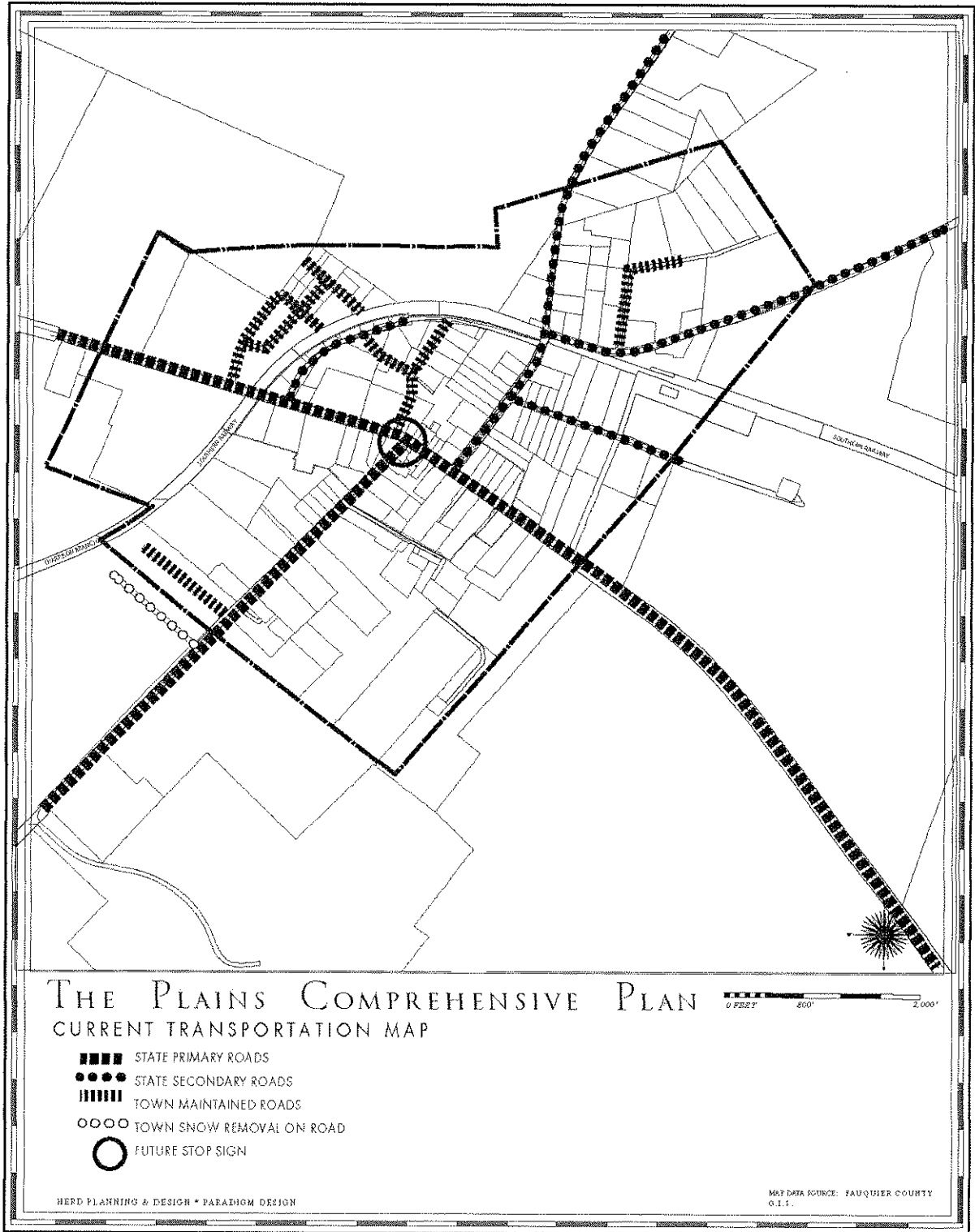
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUME: The Plains			
	2001	2002	2003
Route 55 - Main Street (W. corporate limit to Route 245)	2,300	2,400	2,500
Route 55 - Main Street (Rt. 245 to the E corporate limit)	1,400	1,500	1,500
Route 245 - Fauquier Avenue (S. corporate limit to Rt. 55)	3,200	3,400	3,500
Route 601 - Hopewell Road (Rt. 626 to E. corporate limit)	480*	480*	480*
Route 626 - Loudoun Avenue (Route 55 to Hopewell Rd.)	2,400	2,500	2,500
Route 626 - Loudoun Avenue (Rt. 55 to N. corporate limit)	1,800	1,900	2,000
Route 784 (Rt. 626 to E. corporate limit)	100*	100*	100*
Route 804 (Rt. 55 to Rt. 626)	220*	220*	220*

* Last available count is dated 2001

It is interesting to note that average daily traffic volumes on Route 55/Main Street averaged between 5,000 and 7,000 vehicles per day through the mid-1970s, before Interstate 66 was completed. The increasing traffic volumes on Route 626 and on Route 245 indicate that as development occurs in outlying areas, traffic is passing through The Plains to reach I-66.



Main Street Shops



The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintains and makes improvements to all primary and secondary roadways within Town. VDOT also maintains sidewalks in the Town that are located adjacent to these roads. VDOT's six-year road improvement plan does not include any

improvement projects in The Plains. However, the Town is working with VDOT to install stop signs at the intersection of Route 55 and Route 245. The proposed stop signs would create a three way stop at this intersection.

VDOT and the Town are also working together to implement sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in the Town. In 2002, the Town was selected to receive a federal TEA-21 grant in the amount of \$250,000 for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in the Town. The purpose of this project is to provide uniform 66" concrete sidewalks in the Town along Main Street from the Town's eastern corporate limit to its western corporate limit. The project also includes the installation of brick crosswalks at Route 55 at Fauquier Avenue and at Loudoun Street. The Town is also working with VDOT to consider options for lowering speed limits on Route 55 in Town as a means of reducing the impacts of through traffic.

Although VDOT maintains all secondary and primary roads, The Plains maintains .7 miles of local streets. Jackson, Mosby, Bragg, Ewell and Ashby Lanes are currently repaired and maintained by the Town. The Town also provides snow removal for these streets. In FY 2004, the Town allocated \$6,500 for local street repair and maintenance. The Town continues to maintain these local streets because they do not meet the minimum right-of-way criteria required for acceptance into the State roadway system.

There is one other major transportation facility located in The Plains, the Norfolk and Southern Railroad. The railroad ceased passenger service to The Plains in 1941 and freight service to the Town ended in 1948. The Norfolk and Southern railroad continues freight service throughout its east coast distribution system, passing through The Plains daily.

POLICIES:

1. The pedestrian nature of Town will be maintained and improved by integrating traffic planning with site planning and architectural designs, so that the public streets are comfortable and safe places for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as for motor vehicles.
2. Traffic calming measures will be instituted on Route 55, Route 245 and Route 626 to protect the center of Town. These measures will enhance motor vehicle safety, pedestrian safety and convenience, business activity and parking, and will accommodate a balance of destination and through traffic.

3. The major entrances to Town will be enhanced and defined with careful, understated design features to provide a clear sense of entry into Town, in conjunction with the "traffic calming" measures.
4. A network of walking paths, trails and sidewalks shall be established to tie the Town together.
5. Continue to seek transportation grant funding for street enhancement and improvement projects.
6. All new roads constructed within the Town will be built to sufficient standards to be eligible for acceptance into the state roadway system. However, all such roads should conform to the community design standards established in this plan in terms of scale, character, location, alignment, environmental impact and "context-sensitive design." The Town will request and encourage VDOT to be flexible and supportive of pedestrian-sensitive and traditional street design.
7. New roads and road improvements required to serve new or infill development in the Town will be financed by the developer of the project requiring such improvements.
8. The eclectic, interconnected fabric of the street network will be extended where practical. Cul-de-sacs will be avoided and streets will be designed as narrow as possible to meet basic functional and safety requirements.
9. Seek to maintain on-street parking on Main Street, Loudoun and Fauquier Avenues as a means of encouraging vehicles to travel more slowly through Town. Additionally, the Town will work with VDOT to lower speed limits where appropriate in Town.

5.3 TOWN SERVICES

As an incorporated Town, The Plains shares responsibility for the provision of services with Fauquier County. Residents of The Plains pay property taxes, automobile taxes and business taxes to the County. In return, residents benefit from the County's school system, library facilities, social services, emergency services and parks and recreational facilities, and general County services.

The Plains has its own taxing authority for services provided within its corporate limits. Currently, The Plains provides the following municipal

services to Town residents: trash collection, street lighting, street cleaning and limited street maintenance (discussed under Transportation). The Town provides for weekly individual trash collection to residents and businesses through a private contractor. In 2004, the Town budgeted \$32,000 for weekly trash collection and for Spring and Fall clean up events. The Town's annual budget for periodic street cleaning was \$5,700. Street lighting is installed on every roadway in the Town. Virginia Dominion Power owns the actual street light fixtures, which are generally located within VDOT right of way. The Town pays for operation of the lights which is approximately \$350 to \$450 per month. Other municipal expenditures include two part-time employees - a part-time Zoning Administrator and a part-time Town Clerk/Treasurer, and outside contracts for services as needed, such as legal advice, engineering services or planning services.

The Town maintains control over land use activities through implementation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Both the Town's appointed Planning Commission and the elected Town Council review and evaluate land use proposals within the Town's Corporate limits. The Town has the authority to accept proffers for capital improvements through the conditional rezoning process. The Town has not exercised this authority to date, in part because the services currently provided by The Plains are generally operational in nature. Improvements requiring capital expenditures are typically funded by the County, the WSA, VDOT or through grant money.

POLICIES

1. Continue to rely on Fauquier County for the provision of capital intensive public services such as schools and libraries.
2. The location of any new County-owned public facilities within corporate limits or within one mile of the Town's corporate limits will be reviewed and coordinated with the Town.
3. Work with Dominion Power to explore the potential of undergrounding existing power lines. Developers of new properties will be encouraged to group and bury utility lines to the greatest possible extent.
4. Additional streetlights and lighting on private property will be subtle, low, and scaled to the comfort of pedestrians walking along the street at night.

5. Review the Town sign ordinance provisions for conformity with the policies in this Comprehensive Plan and make any necessary adjustments to the ordinance.
6. Promote timely and expedited review of all land use permits and applications.



Houses and out buildings

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan for The Plains is a living document. It is intended to be implemented through a series of strategies and actions to be pursued by the Town in the coming years. These implementation steps link the Plan to the Town's other codes and ordinances and integrate it into the ongoing planning process of the Town.

As part of the Town's Vision process, the townspeople identified a series of implementation priorities and these were recorded in the Vision report. These priorities were expanded upon and added to by the Plan Review Committee in its work sessions on individual policy issues. The final list of implementation priorities is listed below. They are directly related to the policies described in the plan and they serve to guide the Town's planning work in the future. However, implementation actions are not the same as policies. It is understood that some of the following actions may be undertaken and others may be modified, as the Town, explores more effective ways of addressing the basic policy framework set out in the Plan. Taken together, though, they represent an action strategy that the Town should actively pursue to fulfill the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

3.1.1 WATER-RELATED RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include a Floodplain Overlay District.
2. Review the current subdivision, site plan and zoning ordinance regulations with the intent of updating standards and best management practices for stormwater management, lot coverage, impervious surface ratios and to allow the use of pervious materials in parking areas to encourage use of environmentally appropriate standards.
3. Develop guidelines and criteria for evaluating rezoning and special use permit applications that promote and provide incentives for the preservation of natural features to enhance and maintain surface water and groundwater quality on individual sites.

3.1.2 TOPOGRAPHIC, GEOLOGICAL AND SOIL RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Review its current subdivision, site plan and zoning ordinance regulations to restrict new development on slopes over 15% and provide standards and best management practices for new development on slopes of 10% to 15%.
2. Consider revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to require the use of central utilities within town limits in commercial and higher density residential districts.
3. Encourage clustered development away from slopes and potential problem areas and will require new development on problem soils to provide appropriate engineering measures to ensure against potential geotechnical hazards .
4. Develop an environmental review checklist for new development to be used by the Town and applicants to identify potential environmental impacts of public and private development proposals.



Typical residential architecture

3.1.3 OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the County, the State and private landowners to develop a permanently protected greenbelt of open rural landscape around the Town. The greenbelt should be of sufficient size to protect the open rural viewshed around the Town and incorporate any significant natural resources such as stream valleys and large areas of woodland.
2. Consider preparing an inventory of critical open space parcels within and outside corporate limits to assist in focusing open space preservation efforts.

3.2.1 HISTORIC RESOURCES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Consider the development of detailed design guidelines for compatible new development and redevelopment within the historic district. The design guidelines can provide a user-friendly manual for Townspeople considering alteration of existing structures or adding new structures. They can also guide the decisions of the Architectural Review Board and provide greater consistency and predictability in the administration of the historic district ordinance over time.
2. Update the A.R.B. regulations and procedures to incorporate the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and to provide effective enforcement tools for the A.R.B. and Zoning Administrator.
3. Include a thorough evaluation of the impacts on historic structures in the design phase of any privately or publicly funded transportation, utility or streetscape project in the Town and work with Federal, State or County agencies to ensure that these projects include adequate safeguards for important historic structures that may be affected.
4. Evaluate key vacant parcels in and adjacent to the historic district to identify appropriate and desirable land uses.

- 3.2.2 EDUCATION
- 3.2.3 LIBRARIES
- 3.2.4 PARKS AND RECREATION
- 3.2.5 PUBLIC SAFETY
- 3.2.6 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Establish a Town committee to enhance the Town's pedestrian network and the public park property into a civic "town green," through the provision of amenities such as a gazebo, walkways, seating and children's play area.
2. Establish a Town committee to celebrate various arts and events such as concerts, shows and artisan events.
3. Maintain and increase the strong level of volunteerism in Town – document the level of effort and its positive impact on the community.
4. Work collaboratively and proactively with the County and State on any proposed new community facilities in or near the Town to ensure that they are designed in concert with the Town's wishes and plan policies.
5. Encourage Park Authority efforts to develop an improvement program and evaluate operating fund options for the Fauquier Avenue Park Site.
6. Work with The Plains Fire and Rescue Company and the County to support and promote appropriate and compatible expansion of the Fire and Rescue Station at its current location.

3.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Promote the expansion of previous studies of affordable housing needs and options in the Town, that includes the development of a working definition and standard of "affordability" appropriate to the Town.
2. Include affordable housing considerations in any future comprehensive revision of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. Zoning

elements that encourage a diversity of affordable housing options will be emphasized in new Town codes.

3. Future zoning ordinance revisions will consider encouraging affordable housing through mechanisms such as density bonuses appropriate to the zoning district.

3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Consider conducting a survey of existing Town businesses to determine their needs and concerns, and the key issues related to their continued operation in Town.
2. Work with the County and its Economic Development department to articulate the Town's vision for economic development, both in the Town and the surrounding rural area, and will participate in joint initiatives to attract compatible businesses to The Plains.
3. Conduct a survey of the non-conforming uses currently in the Town and consider rewriting the Zoning provisions to make these uses conforming.

4.3 GENERAL LAND USE

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Review its current zoning ordinance regulations and consider re-mapping or revising the zoning districts to better match the uses and densities in the Land Use Plan.
2. In reviewing potential zoning ordinance revisions, the Town will consider implementing the proposed average densities shown on the Future Land Use Plan through new zoning districts with density ranges that are tied to performance criteria in the Rural Town Edges, Neighborhood Infill, Medium Density Residential and Primary Town Streetscape districts.
3. Explore various innovative planning tools such as easements, landowner compacts, acquisition of development rights and community land trusts in

seeking to implement permanent open space protections for key open spaces and view sheds in and around the Town.

4. Review the Zoning Ordinance to determine if there are existing nonconforming uses which should be made legal conforming uses.

4.6 TOWN DESIGN

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

In order to implement the above policies on Town Design, a number of alternative approaches may be considered. The key decision point, in general, is the degree to which any kind of standards or guidelines would be voluntary or mandatory in their application. The alternatives below are three conceptual approaches to implementing design controls, ranging from completely voluntary to mandatory or prescriptive.

1. Voluntary Guidelines or "Design Manual"

Prepare a well illustrated design manual or "pattern book" that describes the elements of traditional architecture and design elements in The Plains. This manual would be distributed to all townspeople and especially to anyone considering new building or redevelopment in the Town. Town officials would work with the applicants to encourage development in accordance with the design manual - however, there would be no mandatory compliance provisions included in the Town Code.

2. Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Ordinance

Revise the Town's Zoning Ordinance so that it is based on Traditional Neighborhood Design principles, as has been done by a number of Towns through the country, such as Stephen's City, VA and Davidson, NC. This comprehensive approach includes standards for those design elements that can be quantified, such as front porches, roof pitch, alleys and detached garages, etc. It does not address design elements that are non-quantifiable or subjective, such as architectural style, color or historic character. Under Virginia enabling legislation, these more subjective standards must be reviewed by an Architectural Review Board.

3. Architectural Review Board

Expand both the scope and detail of the Town's current A.R.B. and Historic District review process. Specifically, the Historic District may be expanded to include other parts of the Town, such as the primary road corridors or gateways to Town. In addition, the review process could be made more consistent by providing detailed guidelines that define the essential qualities of the Town's historic character and set standards for elements such as massing, scale, windows, materials, signs and lighting.

5.1 PUBLIC UTILITIES

5.1.1 CENTRAL SEWER SYSTEM

5.1.2 CENTRAL WATER SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Revise Town ordinances to require that new development be on public water and sewer and to allow well and septic only for existing uses and upgrades to existing uses.
2. Work with the WSA to develop a process by which the Town is informed of and approves requests for sewer and water taps to serve property located within the Town.
3. Develop policies to encourage the use of available sewer and water taps for infill development, and for non-residential uses that will bring economic vitality to the Town, rather than for extensive new residential development at the edge of the Town.

5.2 TRANSPORTATION

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

1. Revise Town zoning and subdivision ordinances to encourage traditional street patterns, connected streets and to discourage suburban cul-de-sacs in order to allow the Town to develop in its current (traditional) pattern.

2. Establish a community organization to work with VDOT for traffic calming and more compatible roadway standards in the Town.
3. Hire a traffic calming specialist to assist with design, communication and implementation of traffic calming solutions.
4. Prepare a detailed streetscape plan for placement, design and materials of sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and signage along main entry streets in Town (including undergrounding of utility lines).
5. Work with VDOT to implement its Vision for streetscape and traffic calming improvements.
6. Wwith VDOT to evaluate options that would make it feasible for Town - maintained streets to be accepted into the state roadway system.
7. Amend its Zoning Ordinance to require the submission of a traffic study for major new developments.

5.3 TOWN SERVICES

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

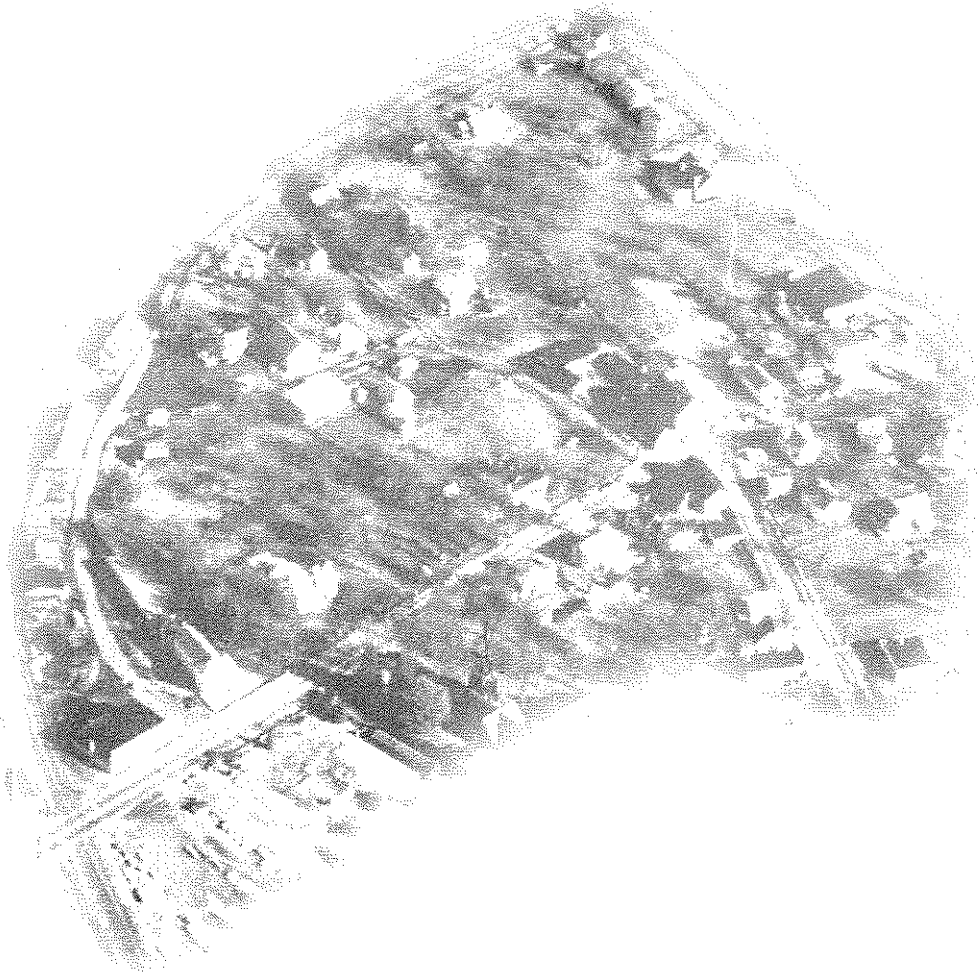
1. Revise its subdivision , site plan and public facilities regulation to establish design guidelines for Town lighting-intensity and streetlights and will consider implementing a “dark sky” ordinance to control the intensity and design of outdoor lighting systems in the town.
2. Establish and maintain a means of regular, formal communication and referral process with the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on planning matters relevant to both jurisdictions.



Pharmacy entrance and intersection

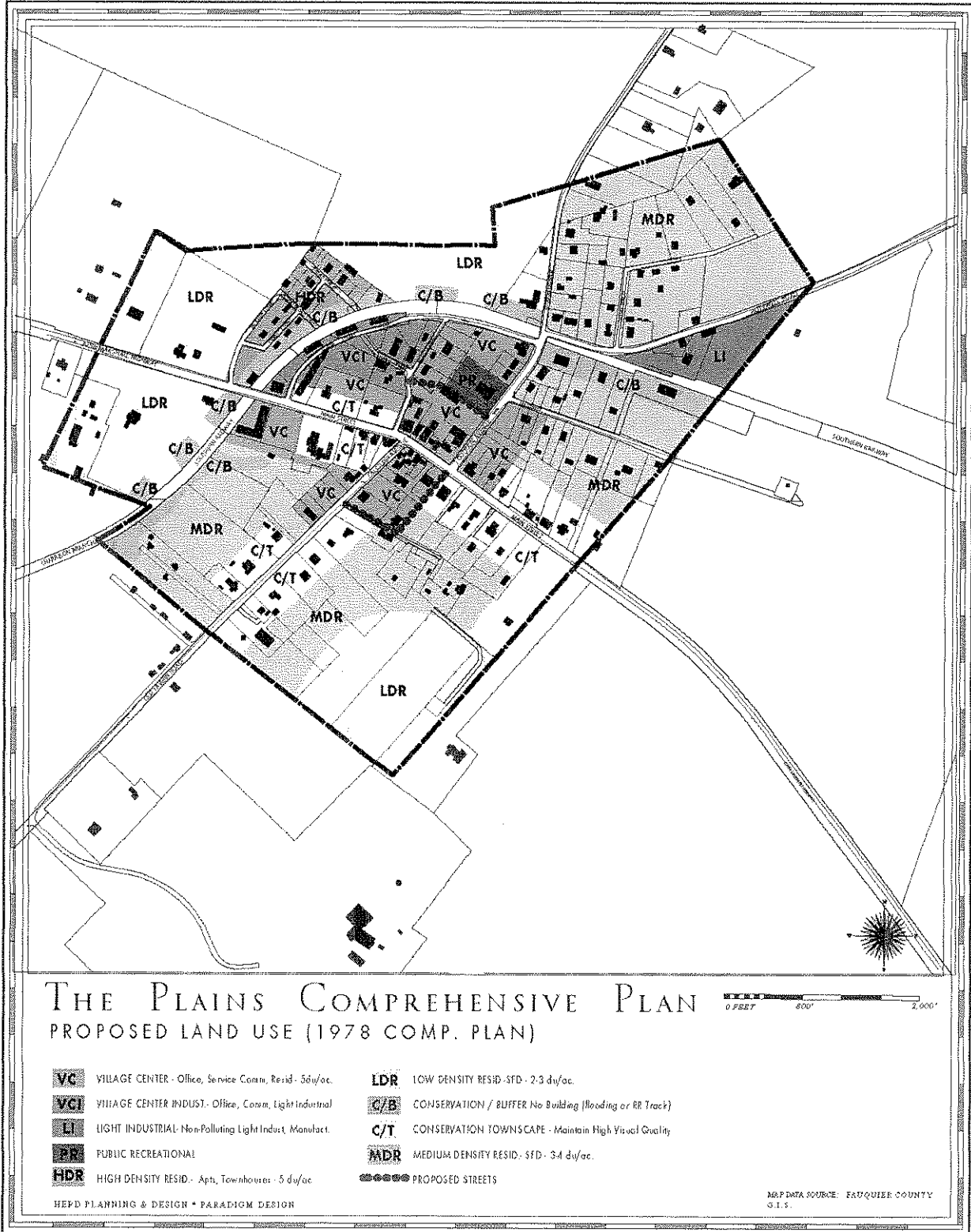
7.0 APPENDICES

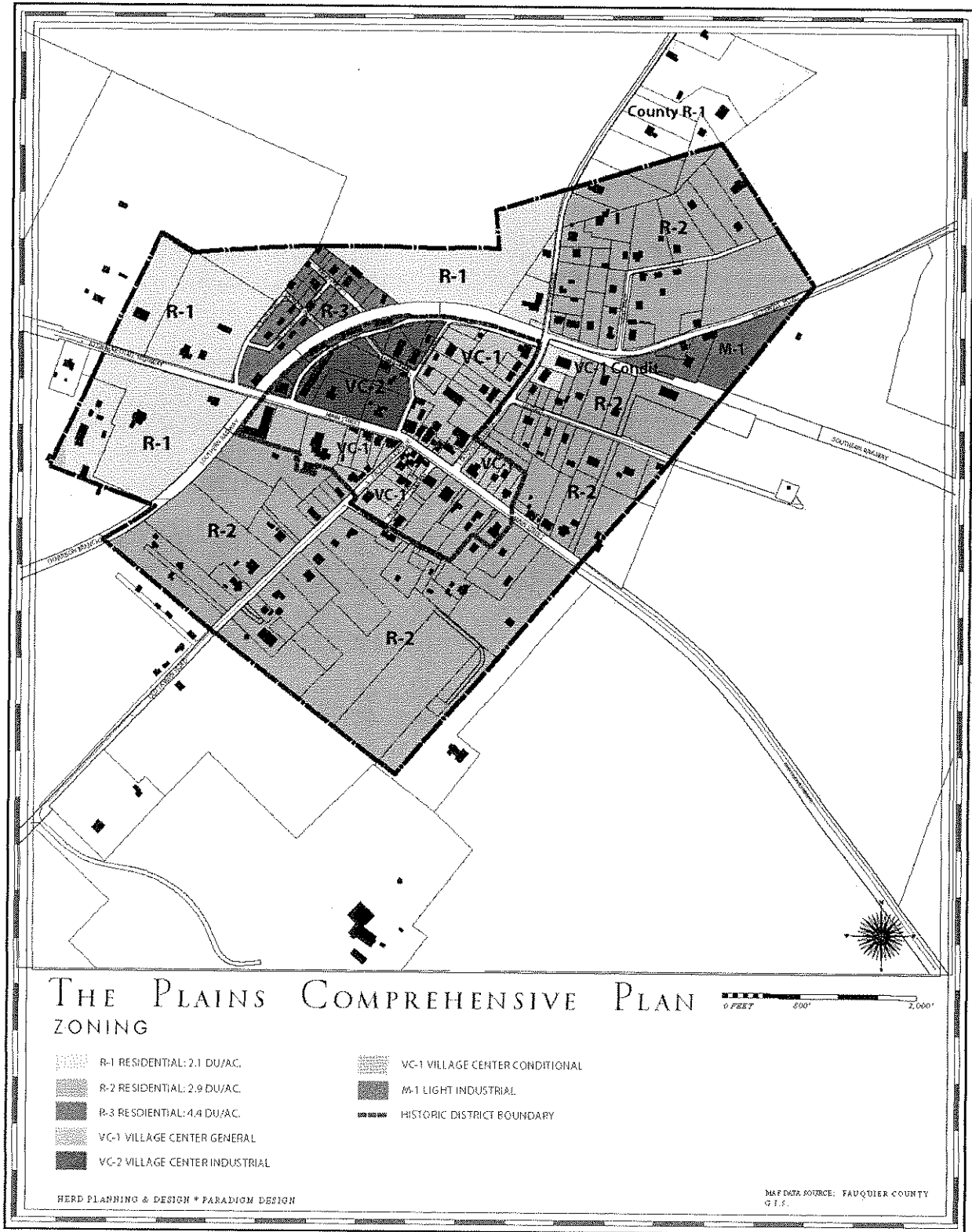
- Additional Analysis Maps
- Future Land Use Plan (Enlarged Version)
- A Vision for the Future of The Plains
[Not included in this draft]

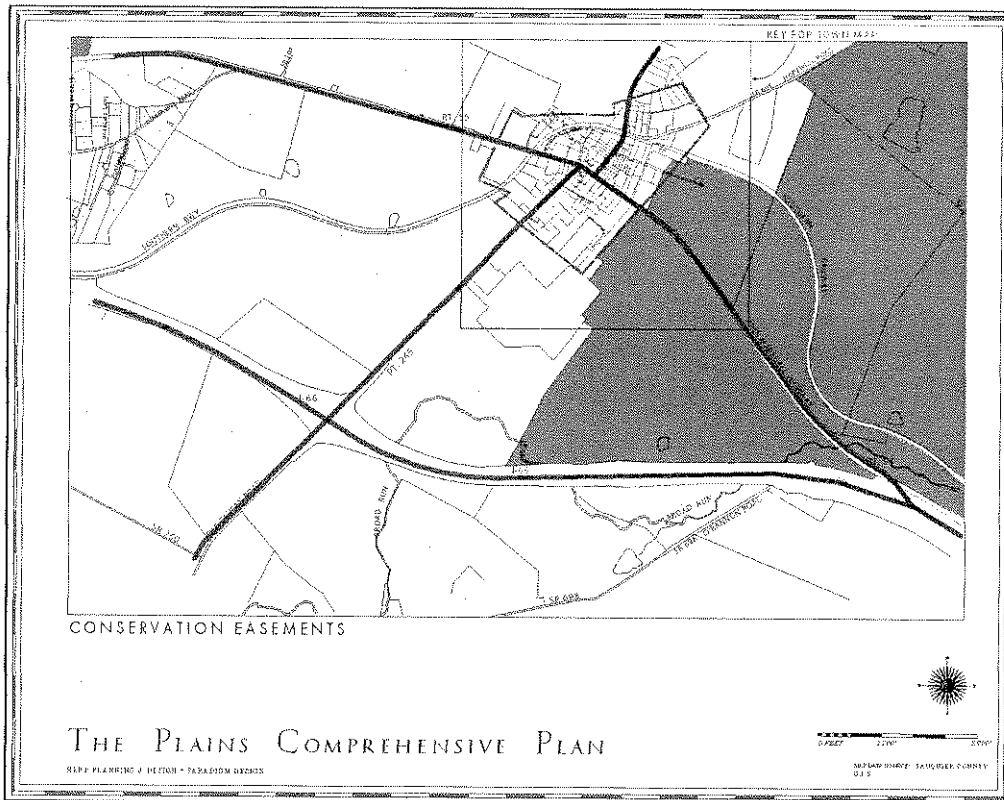
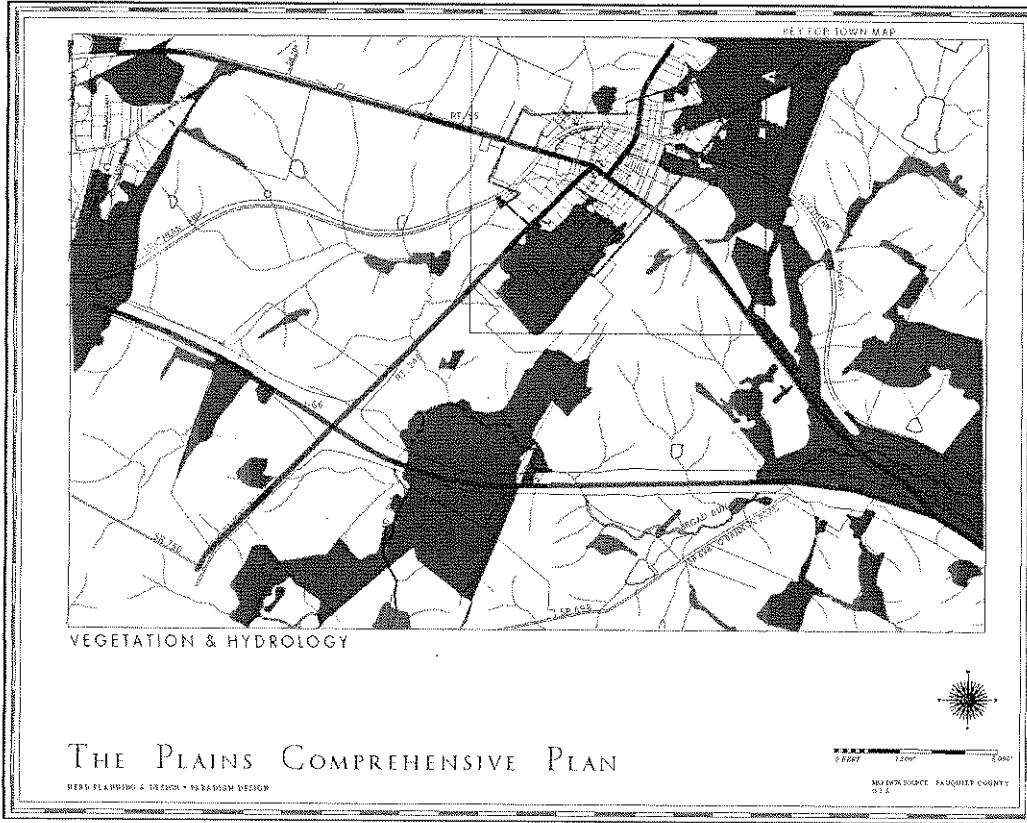


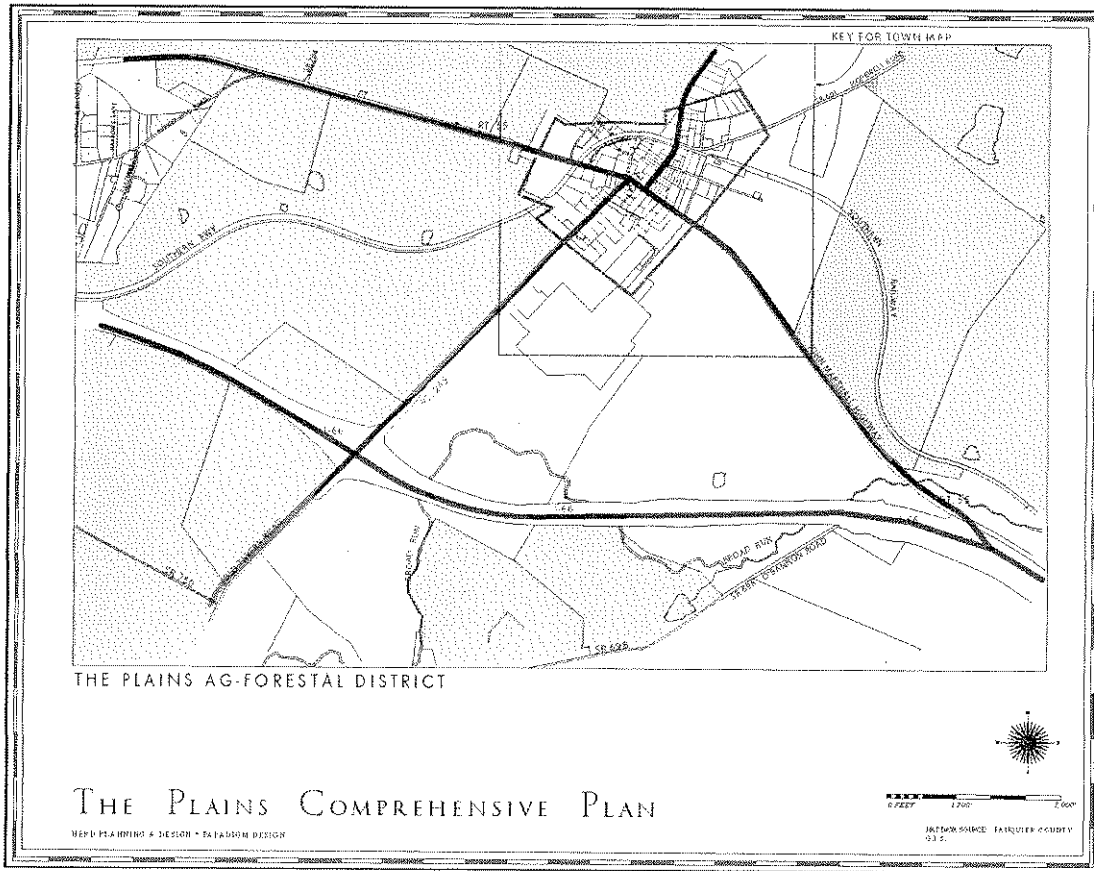
Aerial view of The Plains from the 1970's

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS MAPS:









FUTURE LAND USE PLAN (ENLARGED)

