

## Chapter Two: Community Values

Every plan must be based on a set of values – those things the community believes are the things that set it apart from all the others. Those values usually take the form of a community vision or series of vision statements. Past comprehensive plans have contained a concise set of vision statements. Those vision statements were used as the basis for the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies found in those plans.

The Charlottesville Planning Commission decided that for this plan, rather than a vision statement, it would use neighborhood input to create a set of guiding principles to set the direction for their planning effort. The Guiding Principles will be those factors that provide the framework and direction for all decisions found in the plan. The Guiding Principles were developed after comparing the 1995 Comprehensive Plan vision with the elements of an ideal community identified in the February kick-off meeting. Because these seemed to form a consensus of community values, they were used to formulate the guiding principles. Community residents validated the principles at the June community meeting. The 1995 Comprehensive Plan Vision, the elements of an ideal community, and the guiding principles are outlined below.

### 1995 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

**STATEMENT OF VALUES:** We value a community made up of diverse individuals and groups who recognize the community's unique history and culture; who adhere to principles of justice, equity and respect; who practice stewardship of the natural and built environment as well as human resources; and who make public decisions through an open democratic process.

**LAND USE/ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE:** We visualize our community as one that balances the natural and built environments and that has a vital urban core surrounded by a rural area that remains predominantly green and open.

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY:** We visualize our community as one that has a strong diversified economy with opportunities for local businesses and meaningful jobs.

**GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES:** We visualize our community as one that has open and accessible governments which cooperate to provide quality services economically.

**SOCIAL WELL BEING:** We visualize our community as one where each individual is valued and where all can live affordably and safely.

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY:** We visualize our community as one that values and provides quality education for all ages, vocations, and abilities.

This vision statement was consistent with statements in previous plans. It seemed to form the essence of those things that Charlottesville residents value in their community.

### SUMMARY OF IDEAL COMMUNITY FACTORS

- A recurrent theme of all groups was support for mixed-use development with a healthy balance of residential and commercial
- Economic opportunity for all residents including job diversity, higher wages, and inclusion of all was a common concern.
- Affordable housing and availability of all types of housing throughout the City in all styles and price ranges was a primary concern.
- A large number of the participants focused on the ideal that an idea community should have strong neighborhoods with identifiable centers and strong associations. There should be diversity in a neighborhood, both in its physical characteristics and in its residents. There should be mixed uses and the

neighborhoods should be self-sufficient.

- A common thread through all the groups was an emphasis on good schools. A reference to good strong neighborhood schools rose to the top of several of the groups.
- Accessibility was mentioned in some form by almost all groups. This accessibility includes accessibility to public transportation, availability of alternative modes of transportation and interconnected pedestrian and bicycle access to all parts of the community. Traffic safety was also an item highlighted by several of the groups.
- Trees, parks and greenspace are an important asset to many of the attendees at Saturday's meeting. In some way, most groups made a mention of the desirability of greenspace and bio-diversity as important elements of their ideal community.
- In lesser numbers reported by the breakout groups, was an emphasis on affordable housing, day care for working parents, neighborhood safety and economic opportunities for all residents.

The ideal community statements summarize those things identified by citizens at the February kick-off meeting. They represent the factors that were named by a majority of those residents in attendance.

### **Development of Guiding Principles**

After the kickoff-meeting, the Planning Commission began to review the ideal community factors to determine if there was a theme or a consensus of ideas that were being raised by the majority of the residents. It became readily apparent that the factors identified closely mirrored the vision statements from 1995. Because it is believed that "guiding principles" more accurately reflect the fact that these are the factors that will lead all plan decisions, it was decided that rather than a vision their plan would be based on those "Guiding Principles".

The principles outlined here represent the values and the vision of the people of Charlottesville and what they want their community to be. They show a consistency and a steadfast direction that has led this community to greatness over the past 200 years.

### **Guiding Principles**

The Charlottesville Community...

...has strong neighborhoods with identifiable centers that are diverse in their physical characteristics and residents.

...has accessibility to safe public transportation, alternative modes of transportation, and interconnected pedestrian and bicycle access that creates self-sufficient neighborhoods.

...puts a value on trees, parks, greenspace and biodiversity as adding to the appearance and livability of the City.

...values and provides quality education for all ages, vocations, and abilities.

...is one where housing opportunities are available to all with a diversity of style, scale, price, financing and location and are located in safe and affordable neighborhoods.

...has open and accessible governments and institutions which cooperate to provide quality services economically and operate through an open democratic process.

...has a strong diversified economy with opportunities for local businesses and meaningful jobs.

...balances the natural and built environments and practices sustainability in its decisions.

...is made up of diverse individuals who adhere to principles of justice, equity, and respect and who practice stewardship of the natural and built environment as well as human resources.

...has progressive schools that provide quality education for all citizens.