

What is Important to YOU? IMPACTS OF GROWTH!



What are the hot topics and what do we do with them?

For the past six months, in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan update, the Community Participation Team has been collecting your thoughts and ideas on the issues facing James City County. We have read all the input received, which is available for you to examine at www.jccplans.org, and have developed a list of hot topics that are on your minds. Hot topics were strongly related and many comments crossed categories, but generally included the impacts of growth, community character/quality of life, transportation, economic climate, environment, housing, population needs, and water. We are going to highlight the topics on a regular basis leading up to the second round of Community Conversation meetings. **Impacts of growth will be discussed at the Community Conversation on Wednesday, August 13 from 6-9 p.m. at Lafayette High School, 4460 Longhill Road.**

What do we mean by “impacts of growth”?

The most talked about topic so far has been the impacts of growth and development within the County. You're concerned about the cumulative impacts of growth on the County's infrastructure, specifically the water supply, school facilities, roads, and decreasing open space. There is a call to balance a booming population with natural resources and provision of services. Generally, there were varying viewpoints with regard to the preferred speed of growth in the County. Several people who responded think residential growth is moving too fast and that both the residential and commercial/retail markets are saturated. However, some people were interested in increased growth of commercial development, if it was of the right type to benefit the County and its citizens, and increased affordable housing. Rather than building new commercial centers, many people in the Community Conversations would like to see the redevelopment of vacant retail and office buildings. Finally is the question of density, or the number of people or dwelling units in a certain area of land. Several comments mentioned permitting higher density development in targeted areas to increase the efficiency of public transportation and open space protection, but this was countered by a strong resistance to any new growth at all.

How do the impacts of growth affect my daily routine?



Growth impacts everyone who lives and works in the County. The addition of new residents and businesses can lead to the addition of more vehicles on the road, increased water usage, and higher demands on emergency services and schools. As a result, too much growth can stress a locality's infrastructure. But growth can also provide benefits including more choices for housing, closer shopping, more job opportunities, and more tax revenue. Smart growth in the right areas can also save you gas money by encouraging improvements in public transportation and sidewalk and bike lane connections.

How did we get here and how would the Comprehensive Plan address the issue?

Probably the quickest way to get a sense for how much the County has grown in the past decade is to take a look at a few key statistics. For instance, in the last eight years it is estimated that the County’s population has grown by nearly 14,000 people (from 48,000 in 2000 to 62,000 in 2008).

Likewise, the number of households within the County has grown from 20,558 in 2000 to approximately 27,061 in 2008, with additional residential projects approved but not yet constructed. This increase in population leads

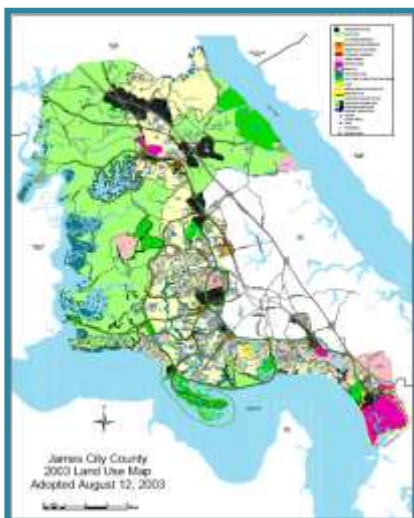
James City County Population Growth		
Year	Population	Percent Increase
1970	17,853	N/A
1980	22,763	27.5%
1990	34,970	53.6%
2000	48,102	35.6%
2010	67,947	41.3%
2020	77,500	14.1%

to more demand for services such as schools and water. For example, in 2003 the County operated 12 schools. Since that time, a new middle and high school have been built and a new joint elementary and middle school is slated to open in 2010.

Growth management has been a strong component of past Comprehensive Plans. Included in growth management is a set of tools to address the timing, character, and location of development so that growth occurs in an orderly and efficient manner. Growth management, however, does not seek to stop growth and the Code of Virginia provides guidance that counties must reasonably plan for and accommodate growth. The principle way James City County has incorporated State guidance and promoted efficiency in the delivery of public facilities and services is in the creation of the Primary Service Area (or PSA). The PSA defines areas presently provided with public water and sewer, and high levels of other public services, as well as areas expected to receive such services over the next 20 years.

As the 2008 Comprehensive Plan update slogan “Historic Past, Sustainable Future” indicates, staff will be looking for ways to encourage development to occur in a sustainable manner. Sustainability involves ensuring that the County is left in good shape – economically, socially, and ecologically – for future generations and spans every chapter of the plan from transportation to environment and community character.

An important tool in analysis of growth and its impacts within the County will be a model which will analyze County infrastructure under different growth scenarios. This analysis examines the development that has been approved or is in the review process, but has not been built yet and projects how many individuals, school children, vehicle trips, etc will be added. The primary component of the analysis is a look at the capacities of existing roadways, what kinds of improvements may be required when traffic from these developments is incorporated, and whether the land use for undeveloped properties needs to be changed so that fewer roadway improvements are necessary. The analysis can potentially be expanded to include other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan including land use, public facilities, the environment, and utilities.



Finally, the land use model will help in staff’s evaluation of land use designation changes. The Land Use designation, in conjunction with County development guidelines, guides how you may be able to use your property in the future. Land Use designations and development standards are used when the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors consider certain development proposals, such as rezonings and special use permits. The Land Use map helps determine what kind of growth will occur in the County and where. Zoning is a separate layer which legally determines the actual uses, building and structure placement, and design that can be done on a property today. Zoning can also ultimately implement the vision of the Land Use map. Land Use applications received will be posted on www.jccplans.org this fall and will be available at the second round of Community Conversations in August and September for interested individuals to review and comment.

Where can I go for more information?

-2003 Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.jccegov.com/government/administration/comp-plan.html>.

-JCC fast facts: <http://www.jccegov.com/environmental/facts.html>

-JCC demographics:

-<http://www.jccegov.com/government/development-management/demographics.html>

-<http://www.jcceaconddev.com/labor-resources/index.html>

-James City Service Authority: <http://www.jccegov.com/jcsa/index.html>

-Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) groundwater site: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/>

-NOAA Smart Growth and Low Impact Development:

http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/issues/impacts_indepth.html

-EPA smart growth site: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/about_sg.htm

-Center for Environmental Excellence by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO): http://environment.transportation.org/environmental_issues/indirect_effects/

Information on sustainability

-United Kingdom's Sustainable Development Unit and their definition and components of sustainable communities: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/index.asp>,

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/Annex%20A.pdf>

-Sustainable measures: <http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/Sustainability/index.html>

- Brundtland Commission report- *Our Common Future*: <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>