
Grant County Plan

Developed by the Grant County Planning Commission

with the assistance of Aaron Costenbader, Kathryn Ferreira, & Vishesh Maskey

Under the direction of Michael John Dougherty, Extension Specialist & Professor

Adopted March 2011

Revised July 2013

Revised May 2023



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Introduction

Planning should guide the future. A plan should always be a dynamic instrument that is supplemented and complemented with information that supports the direction and focus of all community efforts. In designing a plan, Grant County recognizes the importance of using past history, experiences of other communities, professional expertise, and the desires of its residents in developing goals for the future. In other words, the plan should map out future directions for the community.

According to Merriam-Webster On-Line, the words **plan**, **design**, **plot**, **scheme**, and **project** all mean a method devised for making or doing something or achieving an end. The differences in these synonyms are in the details. **Plan** always implies mental formulation and sometimes graphic representation (plans for a house). **Design** often suggests a particular pattern and some degree of achieved order or harmony (a design for a new dress). **Plot** implies a laying out in clearly distinguished sections with attention to their relations and proportions (the plot of the play). **Scheme** stresses calculation of the end in view and may apply to a plan motivated by craftiness and self-interest (a scheme to defraud the government). **Project** often stresses imaginative scope and vision (a project to develop the waterfront).

A plan is merely the beginning of a call to action. The actions called for in the plan requires multiple and varied strategies. Some actions are clear and immediate steps are more defined. Some areas however, require further study to understand the distinct directions that should be pursued. This is the only way that the plan becomes a useful guide for leaders of today and tomorrow.

Overall, the end result of the plan is to provide an examination of the future of the community in a more positive light than that in which it is often cast. Still, there are concerns as to why a community should plan. The answers have to do with the “interconnectedness” and “complexity” of society today, according to John Levy’s standard text *Contemporary Urban Planning*. The size of the population and the scope of technology make the gains to be achieved from planning (and conversely the losses from the lack of planning) too large to ignore.

There is nothing unusual or special about the preparation of plans to guide future action. All the plan does is expand the scale of the activity. After all, everyone indulges in a certain amount of planning in their daily life in order to equate short and long-term desires with available resources. Without some planning, chaos would prevail.

The requirements of government are similar to those of the individual in that scarce resources have to be allocated to provide the highest level of return in the form of allocated services and benefits to the people. Government, being an instrument of the people, has the additional responsibility of determining and creating the kind of community that satisfies the needs of its citizens, and, therefore, is involved in matters pertaining to the development of its jurisdiction.

In the case of Grant County, the plan is being developed for two very specific reasons. The first is to provide a legal support and basis for the existing subdivision regulations that the county has enacted. The plan is a foundational document and all other regulations then must fall from it under the *West Virginia Code* (§8A-4-1). The second reason is to provide a common framework and frame of reference for all entities working in Grant County. There are the development authority, the board of education, and the two public service districts as well as other departments of the county government. There are state agencies for infrastructure, the environment, and other activities. There is the federal government. There are non-profit groups and private companies. All of these groups and others will benefit from the basic development outline set forth in this plan.

One thing this plan is not meant to be is a precursor or prelude to zoning or any similar land use regulation not already in place in Grant County. While it is technically correct that having a plan is a legal prerequisite for the county to put zoning in place, there is no need or desire for the imposition of such a regulatory control in the foreseeable future.

Plan Background

Grant County is one of 55 counties in West Virginia. The County Commission is authorized by the *West Virginia Code* to create by ordinance a Planning Commission to promote the orderly development of the county (§8A-2-1(a)). The state code defines the structure of the planning commission (§8A-2-5) as well as outlining its powers and duties (§8A-2-11). Among the duties of the planning commission are making recommendations to the county commission regarding planning (§8A-2-11(8)) and preparing reports, ordinances, and related materials on authorized activities (§8A-2-11(10)).

The development of a plan accomplishes both of these duties. Furthermore, state law states that planning commissions “shall prepare” such a plan (§8A-3-3(a)). The planning process works to establish the best and most appropriate future development of an area (§8A-3-1(b)). It should promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of residents (§8A-3-1(c)). The plan should set goals and objectives for land development, be internally consistent, help to coordinate activities among governmental entities, create favorable conditions, reduce waste of resources, protect valuable sites, promote sense of community and community identity, work toward efficient use of natural resources, rural resources, and agricultural resources, focus development in places already developed or appropriate for development, and promote cost-effective development of community facilities and services (§8A-3-1(d)).

To do this, the plan must include a written statement on land use (§8A-3-4(a)). It must have a statement of goals and objectives as well as associated timelines, action plans, financing strategies. It must encourage regional planning. It must include appropriate maps, charts, and descriptive materials (§8A-3-4(b)). It must include discussions on land use, housing,

transportation, infrastructure, public services, rural areas, recreation, economic development, community design, preferred development area, renewal or redevelopment, project financing, and historic preservation (§8A-3-4(c)). It can include discussions on history, environmental issues, tourism, conservation, safety, and natural resources use (§8A-3-5).

Finally, the plan is to cover all of the area within the territorial jurisdiction of the planning commission (§8A-3-1(a); §8A-3-3(a)). For a county, this means the unincorporated areas of the county – the places outside of the towns and cities. However, the municipalities may be considered when their inclusion is related to the planning of the unincorporated territory of the county as a whole (§8A-3-3(b)).

This set of requirements may appear daunting. In reality, they are in place to ensure that the plan developed is truly comprehensive. While land use is a major unifying element of the plan, it is only a necessary element of the plan, it is not sufficient to be the entire plan.

For Grant County, this has several implications. The plan has been developed around the mandatory components of a plan, as stated in state code (§8A-3-4(c)). As a result, there are 12 sections based on these elements: (1) Land use; (2) Housing; (3) Transportation; (4) Infrastructure; (5) Public services; (6) Agriculture and rural development; (7) Recreation and tourism; (8) Economic development; (9) Community design; (10) Preferred development areas; (11) Renewal and redevelopment; and (12) Historic preservation. The only required component not included in this list – financing – is included within each of the sections. Likewise, the six optional elements of a plan listed in §8A-3-5 (history, environmental, tourism, conservation, safety, and natural resources use) are embedded within these 12 sections.

The focus of the Grant County Plan is on the unincorporated areas of the county. This would be expected – and is generally legally required – for a county plan. Almost all (99.6 percent) of the county's land area – 425.27 of the 477.21 square miles of land area – is under the jurisdiction of the planning commission. However, with much of the population is concentrated in the municipalities, just about three-quarters (74.6 percent) of the county's population – 8,985 of the county's 12,047 residents – live in areas impacted directly by this plan (based on 2008 Census Bureau population estimates).

The plan also emphasizes four areas that emerged as the prime areas of concern during the plan development process. They are jobs, education, infrastructure, and health care. These receive special attention when setting priorities throughout the different areas of the plan. It is hoped by doing this that the county will become a place that is able to provide opportunity for all, providing those who wish to stay home or return to the area economic opportunities and the necessities of life.

Planning Process

Adoption of the *Grant County Plan* involved three different classes of students from West Virginia University as well as three different economic development directors.

The process started with discussions after the finalization of the 2005 Grant County Development Authority Strategic Plan as Ellwood Williams, then the development director, and Commissioner Jim Wilson, wanted to move forward with a plan for the county. During the 2006 spring semester, eight students from a WVU planning course developed some themes, goal statements, and basic directions for the future of the county. Soon thereafter, Williams retired and work on the project subsequently stalled.

Things restarted again in early 2008 under Bill Ross, who had then taken over as development director. He saw the need for the county plan to move forward, even before updating the development authority's strategic plan. He arranged for informational meetings with the planning commission as well as public input meetings to help solicit input for the plan. These took place in November and December in Petersburg, Lahmansville, and Mount Storm. He also had planning commission members draft introductory statements and outlines for different topics to be covered in the plan. At this stage in the process, three students in the planning studio course during the 2009 spring semester helped review information as well as provide background data and analysis to the commission.

However, Ross departed for personal reasons, resulting in a brief lull in the planning activities. But the down-time was only a few months. Ed Fischer took over as both development director and county administrator in the fall of 2009 and soon thereafter got the process back on track. Among his first actions to that end was to have the planning commission members resume work on their respective sections.

Then during the 2010 spring semester, the three students in the planning studio class – Aaron Costenbader, Kathryn Ferreira, and Vishesh Maskey – met with Fisher and the planning commission, toured the county using an itinerary that Fischer helped put together, and researched questions raised by the commission members. Using all of the information available – including the work of previous classes and the current development authority strategic plan – the students put together a draft of a complete plan for the county. That plan was presented to Fischer and Commissioner Wilson on May 3, 2010. The plan was then edited and updated and presented to the Planning Commission for comment and review at its meeting on June 24, 2010. Additional work was done on the plan during the summer and early fall. Three public hearings were held throughout the county in November at the same places as the public information meetings – Petersburg (Nov. 4), Lahmansville (Nov. 8), and Mount Storm (Nov. 9). This led to further refinements in the plan, which was passed by the Planning Commission on February 10, 2011. The Grant County Commission held its public hearing and adopted the plan on March 22, 2011.

During the spring and summer of 2013, starting in April, the Grant County Plan was presented to the planning commission for review and comments resulting in additions to the plan. These additions were a result of recent events in the county including near completion of Corridor H through the county and the completion of the Grant County Communication Center.

County Profile

Grant County is located in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia (Map 1). It was created in 1866 from Hardy County and named for Ulysses S. Grant. The county is bordered by Hardy County on the east, Mineral County and Garrett County, Md. on the north, Tucker County to the west, Randolph County on the extreme southwest corner, and Pendleton County on the south.

During the 20th century, Grant County generally saw slow but steady population growth (Table 1). The county experienced a population decline three times – 1920 to 1930, 1940 to 1950, and 1950 to 1960. Meanwhile, the population twice jumped by more than 10 percent – 1910 to 1920 and 1970 to 1980. Ironically, the decade immediately after that first large population jump, the county experienced its first (and largest) population decline. The combination of the small increases and declines over the next several decades meant that the county did not exceed its 1920 population until after World War II (1950).

The population gains of the 1970s resulted in the county having a recorded population exceeding 10,000 residents for the first time in 1980. Since then, the county has continued to gain population. It peaked in 2010 at 11,937 residents. However, between 2010 and 2020, the population significantly decreased by 8.1 percent.

Table 1: Historical Population

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Grant County	7,275	7,838	8,993	8,441	8,805	8,756	8,304
Percent Change		7.7%	14.7%	-6.1%	4.3%	-0.6%	-5.2%
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2021
Grant County	8,607	10,210	10,428	11,299	11,937	10,976	10,983
Percent Change	3.6%	18.6%	2.1%	8.4%	5.6%	-8.1%	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census and Vintage 2021 Population Estimates.

Table 2: Comparative Population Change

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
1990 to 2000	8.4%	0.8%	13.1%
2000 to 2010	5.6%	2.5%	9.7%
2010 to 2020	-8.1%	-3.2%	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census.

Between 1990 and 2010, the population of Grant County grew much more rapidly than the state as a whole (Table 2). The 8.4 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2000 ranked 11th among West Virginia counties. That rate of population increase was also more than 10 times the rate of population increase of the state as a whole. Conversely, it was somewhat less than the rate of growth in the national population, however. Also, it was substantially less than the population growth experienced by many of the counties to the east of Grant (Hardy Co., Hampshire Co., Morgan Co., Berkeley Co., Jefferson Co., and Frederick Co., Va.) which saw their populations grow by 15 to 30 percent over the decade. Grant County has had a population increase of 5.6 percent between 2000 and 2010. Again, this is much higher than the state but somewhat lower than the nation and the counties to the east of Grant. However, Grant County lost a higher percentage of the population than both the state and national between 2010 and 2020.

Projections show a slight population growth in Grant County is expected between 2020 and 2025 (Table 3) and a slight decrease in population growth between 2025 and 2030.

Table 3: Future Population Projections

	2010 POP	2020 POP	2025 BBER	2030 BBER	2030 UVA	2040 UVA
Grant County	11,937	10,976	11,405	11,228	NA	NA
County Change from 2020 Census	5.6%	-8.1%	3.9%	2.3%	NA	NA
WV Change from 2020 Census	2.5%	-3.2%	2.0%	1.2%	-2.1%	-6.9%
US Change From 2020 Census	9.7%	7.4%	NA	NA	8.0%	14.5%

Note: Population projection data has not been updated to reflect 2020 Census.

Both sets of projections were made prior to the decennial census data being available. In each case, the 2020 projected population was higher than the actual 2020 population. The WVU BBER projections had the Grant County population 5.7% higher (11,405) and the state population 2.4% higher; the UVA projections had the state population 1.0% higher and the national population 0.3% higher. These errors in the project base are compounded as time progresses, especially for local projections. Thus, it is highly likely the population projections for the county are higher than what will be experienced (even though the 2017 projections are several hundred persons lower than the 2014 projections, about 1,000 persons lower than the 2011 projections, and approximately 2,000 persons lower than the projections from 2007/2008 used in the previous plan).

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau.

WVU Bureau of Business and Economics Research, 2017 (county and state projections);

<https://business.wvu.edu/research-outreach/bureau-of-business-and-economic-research/data>

UVA Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2018 (stat and national projections):

<https://demographics.coopercenter.org/national-population-projections/?q=demographics/national-population-projections>

Roughly one-quarter of the Grant County population live in one of the two incorporated places in the county – the City of Petersburg and the Town of Bayard (Table 4). This has remained basically unchanged since 1980. Petersburg, the county seat, has experienced strong population growth since 1980. Furthermore, the Petersburg Urban Cluster, the most densely populated areas in and around the city, were home to 2,423 residents in 2000. Conversely, Bayard has almost half of its population since 1980.

Overall, this makes Grant County very lightly populated. The county's population density is roughly one-third that of the state and three-tenths that of the nation. There are less than 23 persons per square mile spread over the county's 477.21 square miles of land area (Table 5).

Table 4: Municipal Population

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
City of Petersburg	2,177	2,084	2,360	2,423	2,467	2,284
Percent Change		-4.3%	13.2%	2.7%	1.8%	-7.4%
Percent of County	25.3%	20.4%	22.6%	21.4%	20.7%	20.8%
Town of Bayard	475	540	414	299	290	201
Percent Change		13.7%	-23.3%	-27.8%	-3.0%	-30.7%
Percent of County	5.5%	5.3%	4.0%	2.6%	2.4%	1.8%
Both Municipalities	2,652	2,624	2,774	2,722	2,757	2,485
Percent Change		-1.1%	5.7%	-1.9%	1.3%	-9.9%
Percent of County	30.8%	25.7%	26.6%	24.1%	23.1%	22.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census

Table 5: Population and Housing Density

	Grant County		West Virginia		United States	
1990	21.9 P/mi ²	8.2 H/mi ²	74.5 P/mi ²	28.6 H/mi ²	70.4 P/mi ²	26.0 H/mi ²
2000	23.7 P/mi ²	12.8 H/mi ²	75.1 P/mi ²	35.1 H/mi ²	79.7 P/mi ²	32.8 H/mi ²
2010	23.0 P/mi ²	13.4 H/mi ²	77.0 P/mi ²	36.5 H/mi ²	87.4 P/mi ²	36.8 H/mi ²
2020	22.9 P/mi ²	14.1 H/mi ²	74.5 P/mi ²	37.1 H/mi ²	93.8 P/mi ²	39.2 H/mi ²

Note: P/mi² refers to persons per square mile. H/mi² refers to housing units per square mile.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census and American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

The population of Grant County is more homogeneous population and older than the nation as a whole or even the state (Table 6). Current estimates show 3.5 percent of the county's population is part of a racial or ethnic minority. This is slightly less diverse than the state's population and much less than diverse than the nation's population.

Meanwhile, the county appears to be going from having a somewhat older population to having one that is considerably older than other places. The median age of county residents in 2000 was 39.3 years – 0.4 years more than the state as a whole and 4.0 years more than the nation. Since then, the proportion of the county population under age 18 has decreased while the proportion of the population over age 65 increased substantially.

Also, the share of the county's population between the ages of 18 and 64 – the ages traditionally associated with reaching adulthood and retirement – fell 3½ percentage points between 2010 and 2020. This key segment of the population made up only 57.1 percent of all county residents in 2020, considerably less than what was found statewide or nationally. This marked a considerable change as the county, state, and nation were all about the same in the share of their respective populations between the ages of 18 and 65 in 2000.

Table 6: Current Demographics

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
2000 White Non-Hispanic	97.9%	94.6%	69.1%
2010 White Non-Hispanic	97.6%	93.4%	64.7%
2020 White Non-Hispanic	96.5%	91.5%	60.1%
2000 Under Age 5	6.3%	5.6%	6.8%
2010 Under Age 5	5.3%	5.6%	6.6%
2020 Under Age 5	5.1%	5.3%	6.0%
2000 Under Age 18	22.7%	22.3%	25.7%
2010 Under Age 18	22.1%	21.2%	24.4%
2020 Under Age 18	18.5%	20.2%	22.4%
2000 Ages 18-to-64 (Inclusive)	62.0%	62.4%	61.9%
2010 Ages 18-to-64 (Inclusive)	60.6%	63.0%	62.9%
2020 Ages 18-to-64 (Inclusive)	57.1%	59.9%	61.6%
2000 Age 65 and Over	15.3%	15.3%	12.4%
2010 Age 65 and Over	17.3%	15.8%	12.7%
2020 Age 65 and Over	24.4%	19.9%	16.0%
2000 Median Age	39.3 years	38.9 years	35.3 years
2010 Median Age	42.8 years	41.1 years	36.9 years
2020 Median Age	46.7 years	42.7 years	38.2 years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census and American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

An examination of the age cohorts helps explain this phenomenon. More than one-ninth of the population was between the ages of 55 and 64 in 2000 (Table 7). In the ensuing years, many members of this cohort have reached age 65 – increasing the proportion of the county population in this age group substantially. Meanwhile, the state and nation had less of its population in the near-retirement age cohort in 2000, so they did not experience such a substantial increase in the share of their respective age 65 and over populations.

Related to this, the 2000 Census found almost as many county residents age 55 and older (39.2 percent) are almost as the proportion of the population under age 25 (26 percent) or between the ages of 35 and 54 (24.1 percent). In other words, the county had almost as many people winding down their careers or already retired than it did people who are early in their lives or who are in the prime of their work life.

Table 7: 2020 Population by Age Cohort

	Under 5 Years	5-14 Years	15-24 Years	25-34 Years	35-44 Years	45-54 Years	55-64 Years	65-74 Years	75-84 Years	85 Years & Over
Grant Co.	587	1,154	1,266	1,247	1,241	1,546	1,706	1,646	874	298
Co. Percent	5.1%	10.0%	10.9%	10.8%	10.7%	13.4%	14.8%	14.2%	7.6%	2.6%
WV Percent	5.3%	11.4%	12.3%	11.9%	12.0%	12.9%	14.3%	11.8%	5.9%	2.2%
US Percent	6.0%	12.6%	13.2%	13.9%	12.7%	12.7%	12.9%	9.4%	4.7%	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

Income and poverty indicators for Grant County are mixed but generally low (Table 8). The median household income for the county was slightly less than the state average and substantially below the national average in both 2012 and 2020. The county did have a lower individual poverty rate than the state and national individual poverty rate in both time periods.

Table 8: Income and Poverty

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
2012 Median Household Income	\$40,250	\$40,400	\$53,046
2020 Median Household Income	\$43,313	\$48,037	\$64,994
2012 Individual Poverty Rate	14.0%	17.6%	14.9%
2020 Individual Poverty Rate	10.8%	17.1%	12.8%

Note: Data from 2012 is oldest comparable information available for Grant County.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

Likewise, the county lags in educational attainment – which might help to explain the lower income levels (Table 9). Just over 8 out of 10 county adults (age 25 and over) were high school graduates in 2020. This compares unfavorably to the state and the nation. Likewise, the county has a lower proportion of adult and young adult (ages 25 to 34) college graduates. What is most potentially problematic is that the county has a smaller proportion of younger adult college graduates than overall adult college graduates. It was very different from the state and nation, which had an increasing proportion of college graduates among younger adults.

Table 9: Adult Educational Attainment

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
2010 High School Graduates or Higher (Ages 25-and-over)	79.4%	81.9%	85.0%
2010 Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Ages 25-and-over)	11.5%	17.3%	27.9%
2010 Younger College Graduates (Ages 25 to 34)	10.7%	21.8%	31.0%
2020 High School Graduates or Higher (Ages 25-and-over)	82.5%	87.6%	88.5%
2020 Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Ages 25-and-over)	12.6%	21.3%	32.9%
2020 Younger College Graduates (Ages 25 to 34)	14.8%	25.7%	36.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

Land Use

This section of the plan provides guidance on future land use in Grant County. Most of the discussion is centered on existing conditions and recommendations are provided based on key planning priorities centered on community expectations.

Vision

A collective vision of the residents, property owners and county leaders were constructed utilizing the feedback received from different public meetings and site visits. It is hoped that this section can provide decision makers guidance toward how Grant County's land should be utilized so that the core value of the county population is preserved, the assets of the county are protected, and the county can move forward towards a better future for current and new residents of the county. This vision lays foundation for creating and achieving the goals, objectives, and strategies of the land use section:

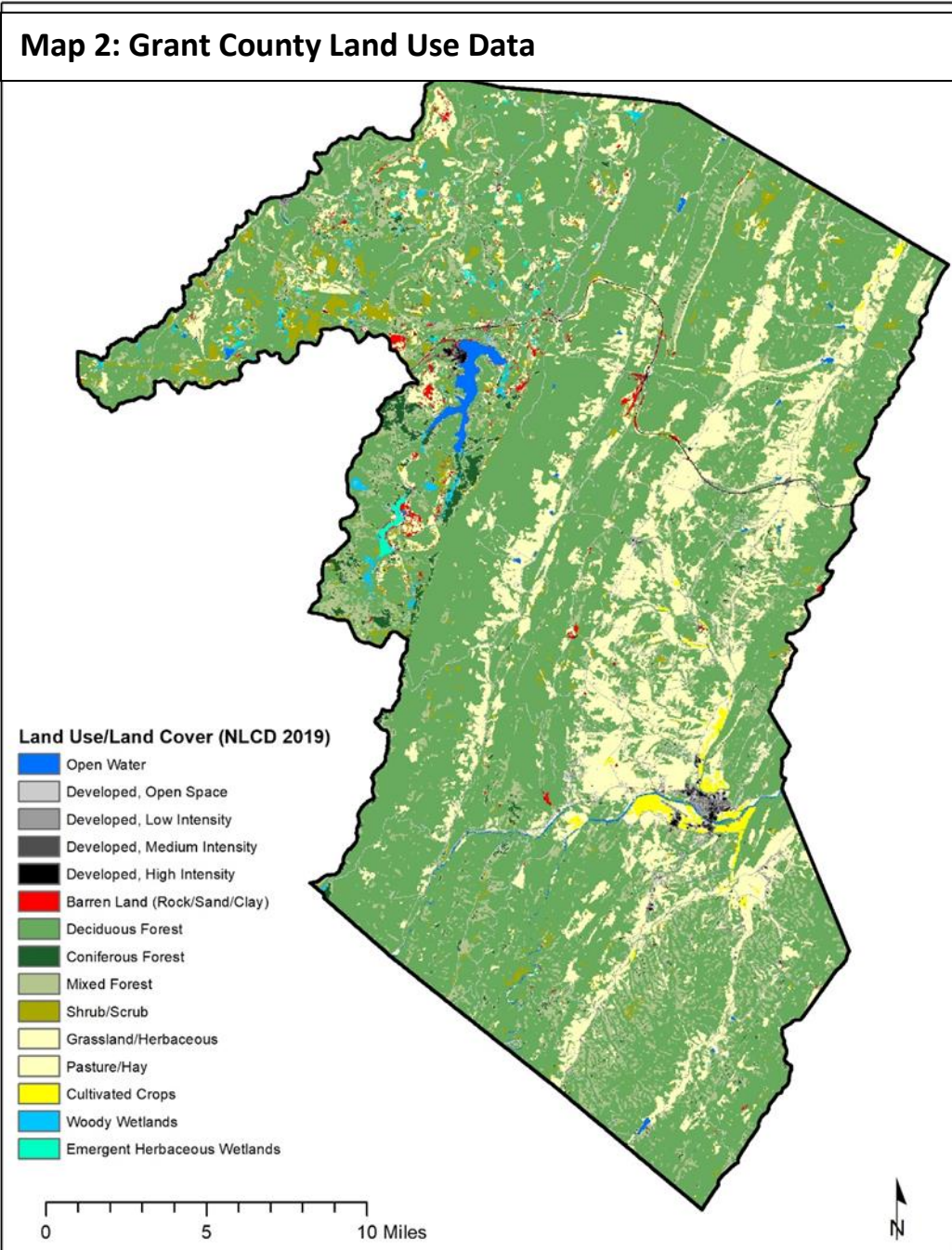
Grant County is a community where high quality of life prevails. With a heavy emphasis on agrarian lifestyle, diverse energy production and potential storage, outdoor recreation, small business and hardwood products, the County is well-positioned to encourage future growth. Grant County offers many opportunities for sustainable work and play because of growing broadband infrastructure, increased regional health care access for residents, the ability to work from home, and the Corridor H Highway nearing completion in the next five years. Grant County should revitalize its urban environments, continue to embrace and expand existing opportunities, expand and extend public utilities and embrace new technologies in order to encourage growth in businesses, housing, energy production and tax base and revenue.

Planning Context

Grant County is located in the Potomac Highland region and rich in natural resources and beauty. It occupies about 478 square miles of area that includes beautiful Potomac highland ridges that run parallel to the North and South and the fertile valleys that makes the agrarian society possible.

There were an estimated 12,047 people living in the county in 2008. They consider their quality of life and available infrastructure much higher than other rural communities.

Map 2 and Table 10 show land usage conditions and the area it covers in 2001 (the most recent data available). It based on the land cover data that was publicly available from the WVU GIS Technical Center. This data can be further categorized into the following groupings listed in Table 11. Other infrastructure-based land use information is listed in Table 12.



Source: National Land Cover Dataset (2019)

Table 10: 2019 Land Use/Land Cover

Type	Acres	Percent
Deciduous forest	195,487	63.6%
Pasture/hay	45,616	14.8%
Mixed forest	29,691	9.7%
Grassland/herbaceous	7,891	2.6%
Developed, open space	7,502	2.4%
Shrub/scrub	6,274	2.0%
Coniferous forest	3,645	1.2%
Developed, low intensity	2,279	0.7%
Open water	1,925	0.6%
Barren land (rock/sand/clay)	1,688	0.5%
Cultivated crops	1,603	0.5%
Developed, medium intensity	1,252	0.4%
Woody wetlands	1,198	0.4%
Emergent herbaceous wetlands	745	0.2%
Developed, high intensity	408	0.1%

Source: National Land Cover Dataset.

Table 11: 2019 Land Use by General Type

Area Type	Percent
Forest	76.5%
Agriculture	17.9%
Built-up; other	2.4%
Water, wetlands	1.3%
Built-up; low intensity	0.7%
Barren, mining	0.5%
Built-up; medium intensity	0.4%
Built-up: high intensity	0.1%

Source: National Land Cover Dataset.

Table 12: Other Infrastructure

Area Type	Acres
Wind Farm	7,680
Mt. Storm Power Plant	1,200
Fort Mulligan	6
Airport	8
Roads	1,418
Industrial Park	282

With most of the land being used by either forest or for agricultural purposes and a low population most of the challenges for Grant County community is providing the water and waste water treatment facilities in all locations given the sparse population and the rugged terrain and soil composition. It is important to protect our water sources for the Water Utility Companies which provide services for the wellbeing of the residents. Most of the population is centered on the city of Petersburg which makes it difficult for smaller nearby places like Bayard and Gormanian to have proper facilities. Since the charm of the county is its natural beauty there is definitely a hope to utilize the vast forest network to create a strong tourism economy and install good facilities in other less populated areas. In addition, the 2007 Census of Agriculture showed an increase in land area in farms from 107,653 acres to 108,839, an increase of 1 percent which should be taken as a positive boost to local economy.

Energy Resources

Grant County is rich in natural beauty and natural resources. With abundance of natural resources comes the abundance of energy sources. Grant County provides several sources of energy from wind farms, to coal fields and natural gas pockets. Currently the county is utilizing the wind farms and coal fields as two primary energy sources for its local economy.

Wind Farms

Grant County has been a forerunner on harnessing the wind power generation among the Potomac highland counties. It is evident by the large area occupied by the Wind Farms that are owned by Dominion and Shell Wind Energy Inc. Currently there are 132 wind turbines and there are 66 more turbines approved for installation in the county.

Coal Fields

Dominion Virginia Power (a.k.a. VEPCO) has a coal burning power plant located at Mount Storm. The facility has not only brought several jobs to the area but plays a vital role in powering the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This power plant should be in use for years to come therefore, there will be a need to continue mining coal for use in the plant. Natural gas could be used to heat homes as well as being sold to larger companies for consumer use. As for other natural resources, timber will be readily available. Because of the vast amount of natural resources, such as coal fields (Map 3), Grant County could become more industrialized which would bring more jobs and companies to this area.

Grant County also has parts of historic Monongalia National Forest in the southern part of the county. This area is known nationally for four-season recreational and retreat prospects (Map 4).

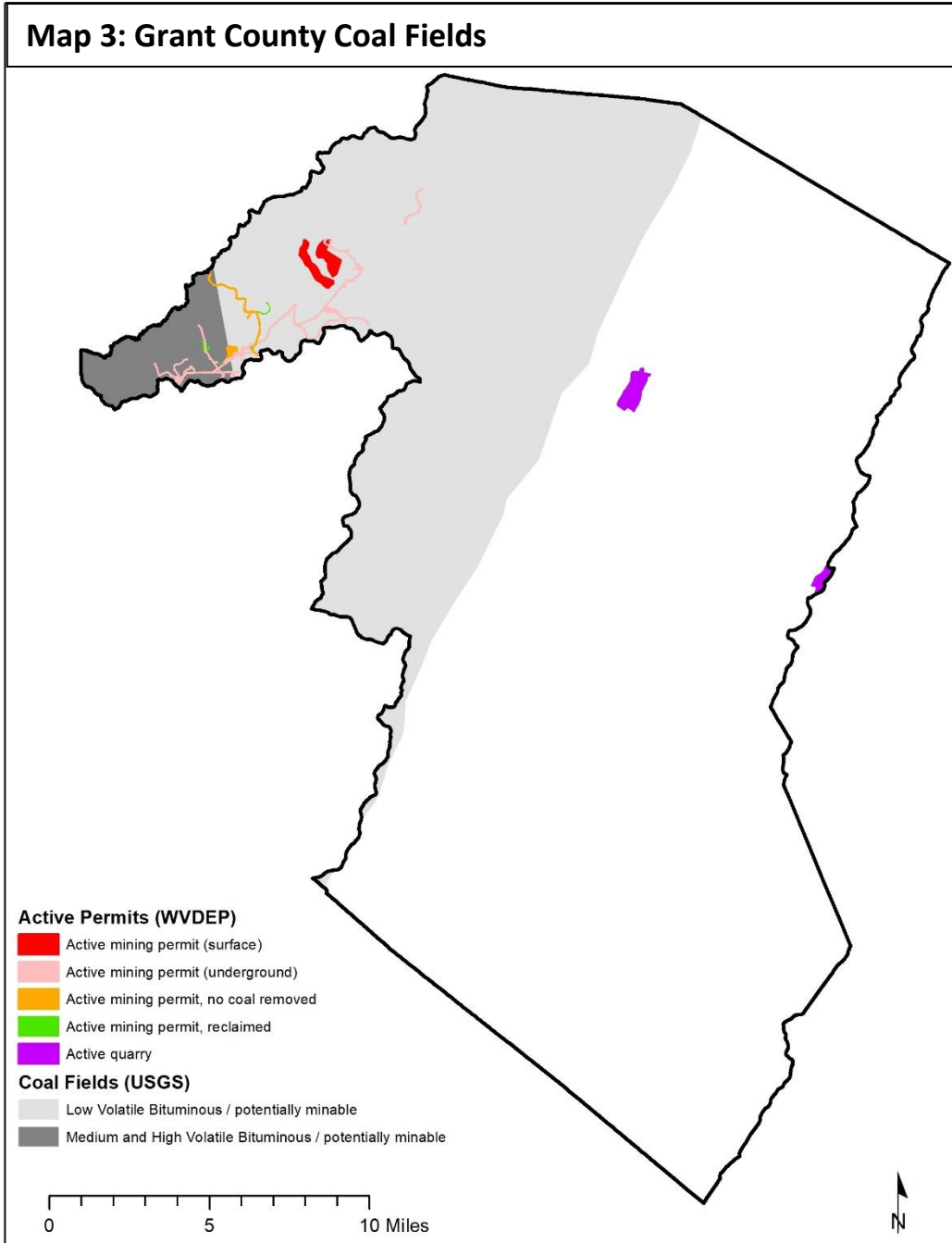
Issues

There are a few land use-based concerns in Grant County which have been voiced by the community and controlled through national or state level government agencies. There are flood prone areas that are centered on major populated areas of the County and flood levees have been installed and they are periodically monitored for quality. For any assistance needed from FEMA for any flood incidence a flood ordinance has to be approved and as of now the Grant County commission and floodplain administrator have approved an ordinance. Due to the mining of coal, there are some abandoned mine land issues that are being monitored over by West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection for possible reclamation and rehabilitation. This post mining development is addressed in the separate Land Use Master Plan. There are also other environmental hazards like toxic release and open dumps that have to be taken into consideration for future planning.

Floodplains

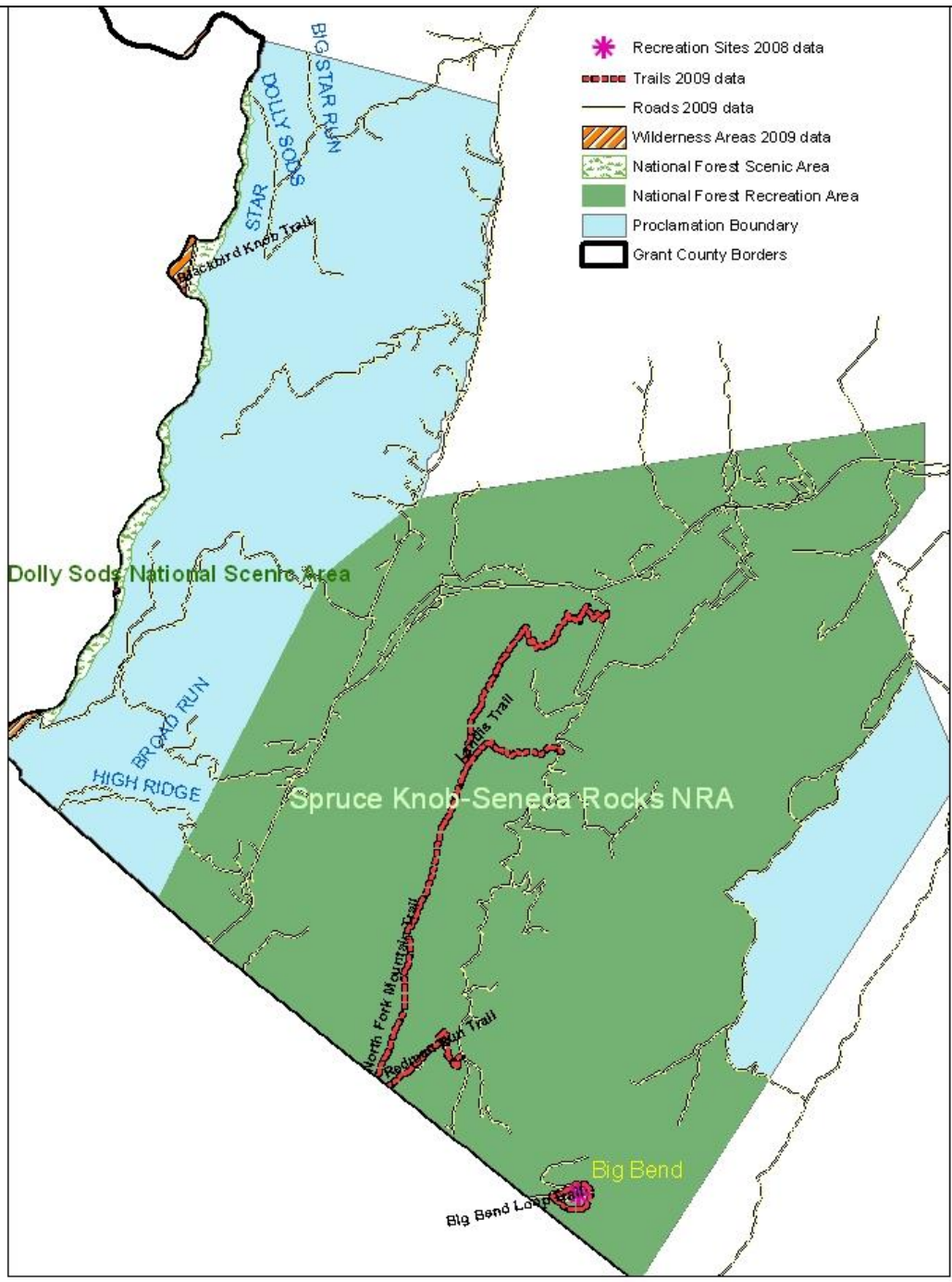
The floodplain maps for Grant County showing the 100-year flood level (Map 5) are available at the Grant County Health Department or on the internet. Some of the areas that fall within the 100-year flood level include the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac area, Petersburg, Bayard, Gormanian, Maysville, and along WV Route 42 heading towards Maysville. These are all areas that could flood during a 100-year flood event. Another vital resource in the protection of citizens from flooding in populated areas like Petersburg and Bayard is FEMA approved levee systems. The flood risk to various areas of the county is also documented (Map 6).

The West Virginia Conservation Agency together with Natural Resources Conservation Service oversees the dam and levee building projects which offer protection from flooding (Table 13).



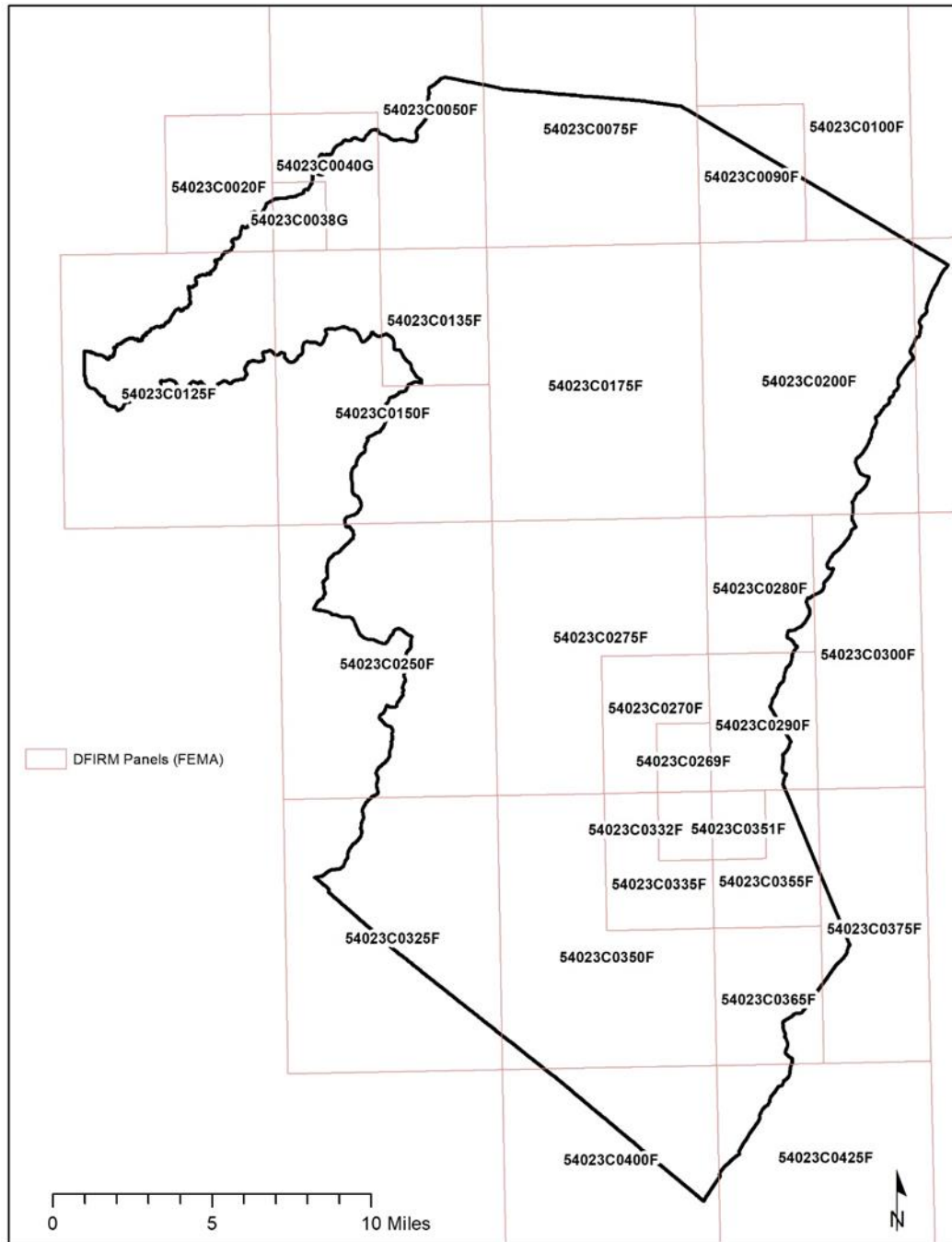
Source: WV Department of Environmental Protection, Permit boundaries (2022).

Map 4: Mon National Forest Area



Data Source: West Virginia GIS Technical Center
Prepared by: NRAC 2010

Map 5: Grant County Floodplain Data

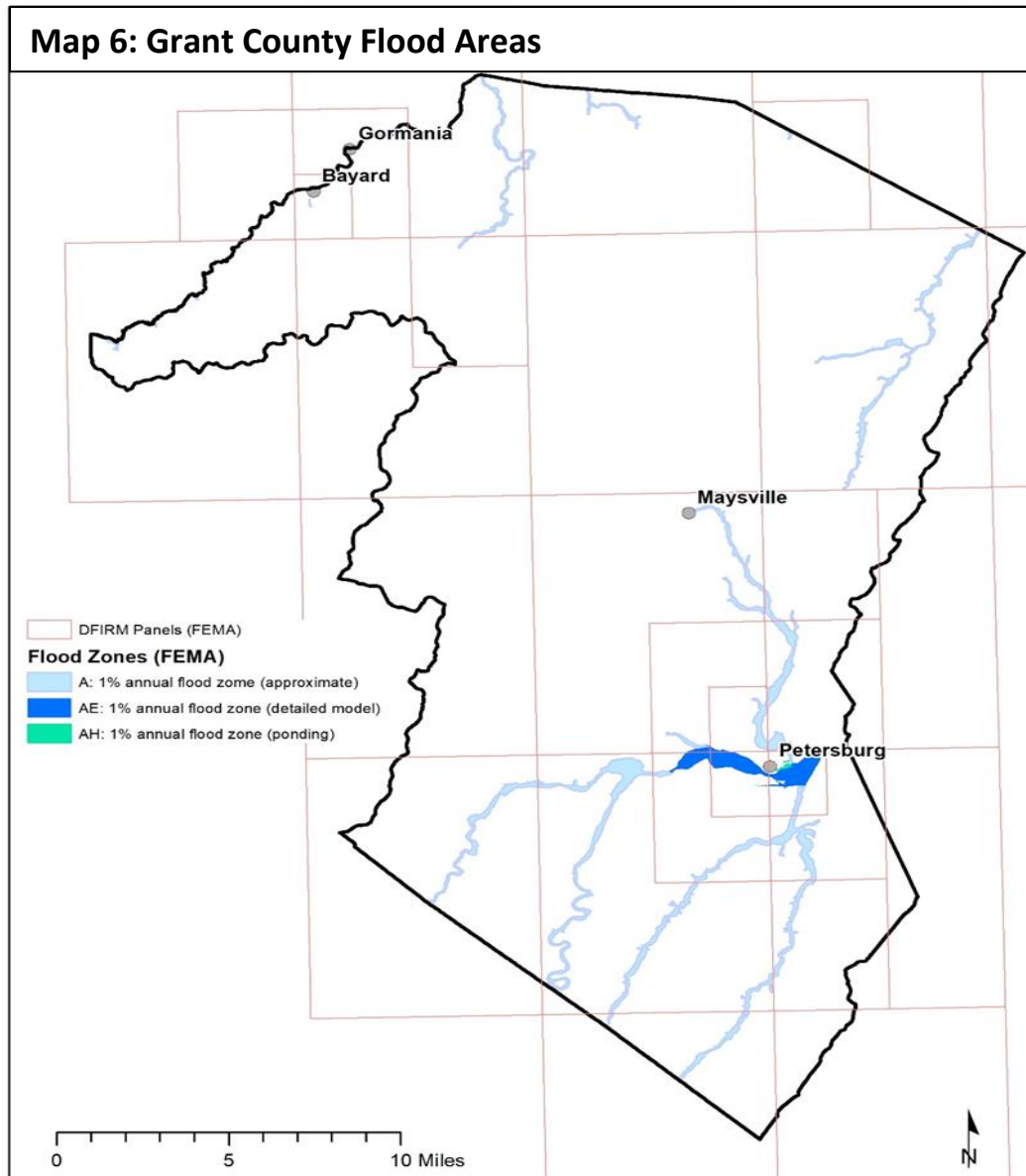


Source: FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (2022).

Table 13: Dams Locations

Project Name	Stream Location
Lunice Creek 11	Tributary of North Fork
Lunice Creek 9	North Fork Lunice Creek
New Creek 12	Tributary of New Creek
New Creek 14	Linton Creek
North And South Mill Creek 16	Gum Hollow Of North Mill Creek
North And South Mill Creek 3	Rough Run
North And South Mill Creek 4	Tributary of South Mill Creek
North And South Mill Creek 7	South Mill Creek
Patterson Creek 1	Tributary of Patterson Creek
Patterson Creek 12	Lower Thorn Run
Patterson Creek 13	Rosser Run
Patterson Creek 2	Tributary of Patterson Creek
Patterson Creek 3	Upper Thorn Run
Patterson Creek 4	Middle Fork
Patterson Creek 41	North Fork
Patterson Creek 49	Tributary of Patterson Creek
Patterson Creek 6	Elklick Run

Sources: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services (USDA-NRCS) and West Virginia Conservation Services (WVCS).



Source: FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (2022).

Environmental Hazards

Mining of natural resources have to go through a process before it is ready to be shipped or used. Sometimes after the mining is done if the mined land is abandoned many environmental concerns arise for the community and its future. West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) works with local government agencies to identify and manage such issues. The post mining development of these areas will include re-forestation as part of the Grant County Land Use Master Plan.

Corridor H

Corridor H, which will connect Virginia and West Virginia, is predicted to bring big changes to Grant County. An in-depth analysis is done in the transportation section of how and what this change would mean to the county. However, preparation of the type of land use that can be predicted with this new gateway would only benefit the county and its citizens. Since much of the section of the highway is still under construction all portions in Grant County have been completed. This means people can already commute a larger distance that was not possible before and hence a rise in a residential area on the Corridor H area continues. This means water and utilities supply needs are increasing. There is a small residential community development that continues to increase outside the Petersburg area.

Business Resources

Grant County has three industrial parks, one business and technical center and two multi-tenant buildings to promote and provide support for business growth (Table 14). South Valley Railroad provides rail services to Petersburg and the CSX line provides service to the Mt. Storm area. Grant County Airport is a full-service facility with 5,000-foot paved, lighted runway, automated weather reporting and instrument landing capability. Corridor H currently reaches Grant County and is planned to eventually link to with Interstate 81 and Interstate 66 to the east in Virginia.

Table 14: Industrial Locations

Area	Facility
Grant County Industrial Park	100 Acres Less than 1 mile from Airport Rail Access All utilities supplied by Petersburg (Gas-propane)
Borrow Site Industrial Park	34 Acres 1 mile from Airport Electricity, Water and Sewage available
Mt. Top Industrial Park	135 Acres 21 miles to Airport Electricity, Water and Sewage available
Business & Technology Park	50 Acres 1 mile from Airport Electricity, Water and Sewage available
Industrial Building	3.3 Acres (17,500 square feet) 1 mile from Airport Electricity, Water and Sewage available
Multi-Tenant Building	12,240 square feet 1 mile to Airport Currently occupied by County Hospital Electricity, Water and Sewage available

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Support agriculture, outdoor recreation and business development while harnessing natural energy to diversify, support and strengthen county's economy for current and future residents. Pursue all economic opportunities in the future to advance and keep the county an exciting place to visit, live, work and play.

Potential Partners

- Clearway Energy
- Solar Energy Companies
- Dominion Power
- Grant County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Grant County Chamber of Commerce
- Grant County Economic Development Authority
- City of Petersburg
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- West Virginia Natural Resource Conservation Service

Objectives

- Identify growth areas such as Corridor H and National Forest area and provide infrastructure to support tourism and new business
- Encourage growth in areas where there are plans of implementing waste water management such as the town of Bayard
- Harness energy and protect those areas for future growth

Strategies

- Support additional wind farms and new solar and energy storage farms and extraction of natural gas (Continuous)
- Work to ensure development activities do not compromise the quality and availability of water resources (Continuous)
- Strengthen local economy by promoting small business using incentives of using existing infrastructure (within 6 months)
- Support beautification, clean-up, and litter control efforts throughout the county (6-12 months)
- In Petersburg, encourage the City of Petersburg to pass and enforce ordinances to have property owners repair or demolish dilapidated, unsightly and dangerous structures (6-12 months)

- Promote tourism by taking advantage of the scenic beauty of the Monongahela National Forest by creating rail-trails and recreational areas that add to the currently available amenities (6-12 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenues streams
- Increase revenue by selling excess energy produced in the county
- Increase revenue by promoting tourism, new business and investing in its new infrastructure development
- Seek financial assistance from state and federal agencies to expand water and sewer access and improve the Potomac highlands area and increasing National Recreational Area
- Utilize existing business resources and promote new areas of businesses to fill existing infrastructures

Housing

One of the purposes for creating a plan is to provide a framework for assuring the housing needs of all Grant County residents are met by the community. These needs are expressed in terms of quality, affordability, location, and access to public utilities and amenities.

Vision

The plan confirms the county's commitment to clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods, the elimination of residential blight and suggested solutions to the problem of substandard housing. The plan recognizes that neighborhoods where people would want to live are safe, free of debris and illegally parked and stored vehicles; that maintain health and sanitation standards; that do not suffer from excessive traffic and the noise and pollution such traffic brings; and that have (where appropriate) sidewalks, public spaces and streets in good condition.

Planning Context

In 2020, only about 72 percent of the homes in Grant County were occupied (Table 15). This was much lower than what was seen statewide or nationally. Conversely, more than 80 percent of occupied housing was owner-occupied. This was very high compared to the national average. Houses were also more affordable in Grant County than in other places. The median value of an owner-occupied house in the county is \$140,900. This compared favorably to the median house prices of \$229,800 nationally. Such low prices would provide an incentive for out-of-county residents who would prefer to travel over expensive housing.

Table 15: 2020 Housing Occupancy and Ownership

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
Homes Occupied	72.0%	82.2%	88.4%
Home Ownership Rate	80.9%	73.7%	64.4%
Median Value Owner-Occupied Units	\$140,900	\$123,200	\$229,800
Median Monthly Cost Units with Mortgage	\$900	\$1,058	\$1,621
Median Monthly Cost Units w/o Mortgage	\$307	\$331	\$509
Median Monthly Rent	\$544	\$732	\$1,096

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

Notes: Homes Occupied is as a percentage of Total Housing Units.

Home Ownership Rate is a percentage of Occupied Housing Units (not Total Housing Units).

The occupied housing units in Grant County were generally found to be in good condition. Both the owner-occupied and renter-occupied units tended to be newer than what would be found statewide or nationally (Table 16). The size and characteristics were about the same as what was found elsewhere, with the exception of a slightly higher proportion of county residences not having telephone service. Also, a much smaller share of the occupied housing stock in the county was in multi-unit structures, compared to the state or the nation.

Table 16: 2020 House Characteristics and Household Size

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
Median Number of Rooms	6.1 rooms	5.8 rooms	5.5 rooms
Housing Units in 3-or-more Unit Structures	5.3%	10.0%	18.3%
Percent Housing Units Built Before 2000	83.9%	84.5%	80.2%
Percent Housing Units Built Before 1950	18.6%	23.0%	17.2%
Occupied Units Lacking Kitchen Facilities	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%
Occupied Units Lacking Plumbing	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%
Occupied Units w/o Telephone Service Available	1.2%	2.1%	1.6%
Occupied Units Not Using Heating Fuel	0.2%	0.3%	1.1%
Average Household Size	2.36 persons	2.40 persons	2.60 persons
Average Household Size Owner-Occupied	2.38 persons	2.45 persons	2.69 persons
Average Household Size Renter-Occupied	2.28 persons	2.25 persons	2.45 persons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

From this, the main point of concern regarding the housing stock is that the data showed that more than 25 percent of housing units in the county were vacant. Nearly half (about 48 percent) of these structures were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Conversely, the reason that three-eighths of these houses are vacant (37.5 percent) is not clear, except that is not because of seasonal use or occupancy transition (units that were for rent, for sale, or waiting to be occupied made up the other one-eighth of the vacant housing stock). This could mean a lot of those vacant units may be sub-standard or abandoned structures.

The data also explains the need of updating substandard housing and eliminating and renovating abandoned houses and businesses. The plan recognizes the involvement of the Grant County Housing Authority and the role to be played by landlords in meeting/solving recognized

shortcomings in the local housing “mix.” The plan also recognizes a variety of housing types must be available to residents, and that there are various regulatory and avenues to achieve affordable housing and housing for all residents. Adoption of policies and action strategies in this plan will promote the image of Grant County as a good place for residential and non-residential investment. It will also be necessary to watch the area around Corridor H to see if residential development occurs in the area in the near future.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Revitalize or create clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods. Eliminate residential blight and update substandard housing and abandoned houses and businesses. Keep public spaces clean and keep air and noise pollution to minimum.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Housing Authority (GCHA)
- Grant County Commission
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Region 8 Planning and Development
- Citizens of Grant County
- The Town of Bayard
- The City of Petersburg
- Mt. Storm Public Services District
- Local Rental Owners
- Grant County Recreation and Parks
- Developers
- Grant County Development Authority
- Department of Health and Human Services

Objectives

- Create clean, safe and attractive neighborhood
- Remove substandard and abandoned housing and businesses
- Keep public spaces clean
- Control vehicle traffic and air and noise pollution that comes with it

Strategies

- Consider waste management and cleaning services when planning residential areas (Continuous)
- Monitor air and noise pollution with respect to meeting EPA standards (Continuous)
- Identify, locate, and remove abandoned houses and businesses (12-36 months)
- Plan neighborhoods and residential areas with trees and other amenities (24-48 months)
- Work to remodel substandard housing with current trend and technology (36-60 months)
- Develop a Meth House Remediation Plan and any resulting ordinance (12-24 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Use fines and court costs from derelict building and open storage ordinance violations
- Seek financial assistance from state, federal or non-governmental agencies
- Create attractive residential area near growth area such as Corridor H

Transportation

The various transportation options in Grant County are relatively good for a rural county. The accessibility to public transportation through the Potomac Valley Transportation Authority, the small airport, Corridor H and the railway which goes through Petersburg offers a level of accessibility to the county's residents as well as potentially new industries and businesses.

Planning Context

Transportation in Grant County is important to the future of the county. The ability for residents to travel around the county and to basic amenities is essential. The construction of Corridor H has increased accessibility to current residents, while also having the strong potential to attract new businesses and people.

Given the rural nature of Grant County, it is necessary to drive from one location to another in almost all situations. Additionally, most of the travel in Grant County is by private vehicle. As a result, it takes time to get from one point to another and commuting times in the county in 2022 were longer than what was experienced statewide or nationally (Table 17).

Table 17: Commuting Time

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
2010 Commuting Time	25.2 minutes	25.4 minutes	25.2 minutes
2020 Commuting Time	22.6 minutes	26.1 minutes	25.5 minutes

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 5-Year Averages.

All of the roadways in Grant County were two or three-lanes (two lanes with an uphill passing lane), undivided, and with little to no access control. For the most part, traffic has been light in the county, with main roadways, averaging 3,000 vehicles per day or less. (Table 19). The only roads with higher traffic counts were those in and around Petersburg, the county seat.

Potomac Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) is the only public transportation available. PVRTA provides short and long-distance transportation for residents. The PVRTA provides transportation for workers traveling into Hardy County to work at the poultry processing plants and to the wood manufacturing plants. It also takes residents to various shopping points within and outside the county. Overall, 12 routes serve Petersburg. Two routes stop in the city while travelling between other places and 10 routes have the city as a terminus (beginning/ending point).

The Grant County Airport just outside of Petersburg is an excellent asset to the county and should be marketed and maintained as such. It has a 6,000-foot asphalt runway, making it accessible to private planes and small jets.

The county has railroad service through the South Branch Valley Railroad, a spur-line with connects to CSXT. South Branch also hosts the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad on its track.

Table 18: Traffic Counts

Highway/Road	Station ID	General Location	2014	2017	2020
US 48	477503	Tucker County Line	*2,101	NA	*2,132
US 48	126586	East of Laurel Dale Road	NA	1,996	NA
US 48	123050	N of Laurel Dale Access Rd	2,394	1,739	2,558
US 48	1220500	S of Laurel Dale Access Rd	1,764	NA	NA
US 48	123051	S of Laurel Dale Access Rd	2,028	NA	NA
US 48	1220501	At Knobley Road	1,996	NA	NA
US 48	123052	SE of Knobley Road	2,061	NA	2,384
US 48	123053	West of Forman	2,293	NA	2,916
US 48	123054	Eastern edge of county	2,294	NA	2,886
US 50	123045	Gormanian	1,545	NA	NA
US 50	126067	Union Ed. Complex	1,783	1,989	1,642
US 50	123046	Mt. Storm	1,985	NA	NA
US 50/WV 42	126066	Wyroff Run	1,384	1,238	1,181
US 50/WV 42	123047	Abrams Creek	1,257	NA	NA
WV 42	126065	Mt. Storm	1,706	1,552	1,810
WV 42	126585	South of Little Creek	1,664	1,481	1,780
WV 42/WV 93	121005	NW of Sheer	1,095	NA	NA
WV 42	123004	Near Brick Church Spring	1,339	NA	NA
WV 42	123005	South of Maysville	2,233	NA	NA
WV 42	123049	Near Norman Run	3,532	NA	NA
WV 42	126072	Petersburg	4,940	5,258	5,273
WV 28/WV 55	126584	Petersburg (Keyser Ave.)	10,458	10,428	10,219
US 220/WV 28/WV 55	126071	Eastern Edge Petersburg	5,122	5,240	4,745
US 220/WV 28/WV 55	123048	Petersburg (Virginia Ave.)	6,243	NA	NA
US 220	123006	South of Petersburg	2,792	NA	NA
US 220	WS20	Near North Mill Creek	1,426	1,497	1,433
US 220	126587	Near North Mill Creek	NA	NA	1,314
US 220	123007	Southern county edge	1,007	NA	NA
WV 28/WV 55	126583	Petersburg (Town Hill)	7,314	6,989	6,800
WV 28/WV 55	126074	Near Smoke Hole Caverns	1,920	1,619	1,846
WV 28/WV 55	123008	Southern county edge	1,527	NA	NA
WV 93	126059	New Creek/Lincoln Creek	2,116	1,563	1,611
WV 93	126060	North of Sheer	994	698	757
WV 93/WV 42	121005	NW of Sheer	1,095	NA	NA
WV 93	126062	Mount Storm	2,788	615	823
WV 93	126063	West of Bismark	2,181	568	619
WV 90	123002	Gormanian	813	NA	NA
WV 90	126068	Bayard	717	672	633
WV 90	123001	Southern county edge	376	NA	NA
CR 9	123012	South of Petersburg	1,914	NA	NA
CR 5 (Paterson Creek Road)	123030	Patterson Creek	558	NA	NA
CR 5 (Peterson Creek Road)	123029	Lahmansville	1,591	NA	NA
CR 5 (Peterson Creek Road)	126069	North of WV 42	1,550	1,797	1,803
CR 1 (Greenland Gap Road)	123037	Old Scheer Road	887	NA	NA

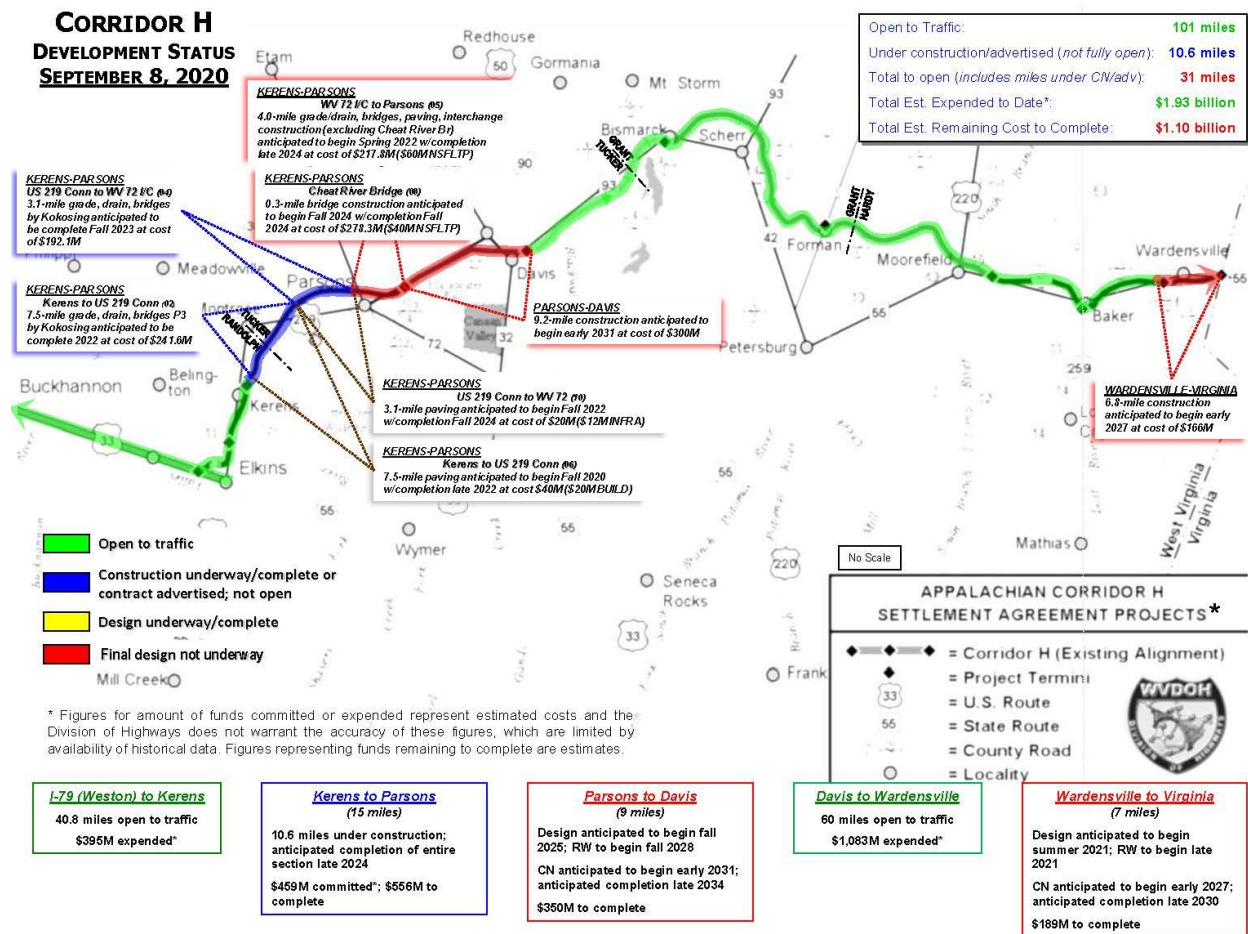
Note: Data at US 48 counter at Tucker County Line from 2015 and 2021 (rather than 2014 and 2020 respectively).

Source: WV Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, GEOCOUNTS.

Corridor H

It is in the final stages of completion and all contracts have been awarded. The road will connect the county’s rural area with points west, e.g., Parkersburg and Ohio, with points east, e.g., Virginia and Washington, D. C. This corridor is viewed as a potential evacuation route for residents in the Baltimore/Washington area if some future disaster warrants evacuation of those areas. The corridor is a four-lane access roadway with a speed limit of 65 miles per hour.

Map 7: Corridor H in Grant County



Source: WV Department of Transportation (2020).

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Increase accessibility to amenities with transportation and road maintenance. Maintain existing county roads and aviation accessibility.

Potential Partners

- Department of Transportation (Division of Highways)
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Route 50 Corridor Coalition
- Federal Aviation Administration
- CSX Transportation
- PVRTA
- Region 8

Objectives

- Maintain and improve existing county roads, particularly during the winter season
- Greater accessibility to amenities for all residents, particularly those in the Mount Storm area
- Maintain Potomac Valley Transportation Authority services in Grant County
- Maintain rail service and rail spurs in the county
- Continue expansion of the runway to 6,000 feet
- Encourage business development in the Mountain Top Business Park and along the Corridor H parcels in Grant County.

Strategies

- Collaborate and work with the PVRTA to maintain affordable fare and to ensure their continued routes throughout the county (Continuous)
- Collaborate with the Region 8 transportation plan (Continuous)
- Work and collaborate with neighboring counties in regards to shared roads and maintenance (within 6 months)
- Prepare for winter weather with appropriate equipment to clear roads in a timely manner for *all* residents living within county limits (within 6 months)
- Propose more PVRTA routes and/or stops through the Mount Storm area (6-12 months)
- Preparation for water and sewage expansion will be key in attracting development in proximity to Corridor H (12-36 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek financial contributions from related state and federal agencies
- Seek general county revenue funds
- Seek out grants related to rural communities
- Seek out grants related to public transportation

Infrastructure

Grant County infrastructure includes water and sewage, utilities and various sources of communications including but not limited to, telecommunications and data communications services.

Planning Context

The infrastructure in Grant County is relatively good for both a rural county and the population of approximately 12,000 people. For the county to continue to grow, prosper and attract and retain businesses and residents there are several areas that can be both enhanced and improved upon guide the future vision of the county.

Water and sewage is an important issue for the future of the county. The services and availability need to be expanded to reach more people throughout the county. The majority of water is coming from Petersburg. The availability of potable water has continued to expand within the county both through extensions of the existing distribution system and through partnerships with adjacent counties. Thus, the vast majority of county residents have access to public water (Table 19). Nevertheless, additional water is needed in some unincorporated areas of the county experiencing growth pressures, particularly the Scherr and Lahmansville areas. Related to this, the Petersburg water system needs larger mains to allow higher volume users and the Grant County Public Service District (PSD) – which currently purchases all of its water from the city – needs an alternate supply. To satisfy this need, the City of Petersburg and the Grant County Public Service District continue to work together on expansion of the water system.

Table 19: Water Systems

System	Total Customers Served	Est. Pop. Served	Max. Daily Capacity	Avg. Daily Use	Source of Water	Sell to Others Systems?
Mountain Top PSD	875	2,360	300,000	185,000	Spring	No
Grant County PSD	2,700	6,560	NA	500,000	Other system	No
City of Petersburg	1,370	2,573	1,700,000	829,900	River	Grant Co PSD

Source: Region 8 Planning and Development Council.

Meanwhile, wastewater services are generally not available outside of Petersburg, except for some places around Mount Storm (Table 20). Thus, an expansion of sewer services could be beneficial to the county. The Water Treatment Plant was upgraded in 2019 to meet the new guidelines from the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In addition, a scan density to identify old lead pipes has been completed and a replacement plan is being developed.

Table 20: Sewer Systems

System	Total Customers Served	Est. Pop. Served	Max. Daily Capacity	Avg. Daily Use	Discharge Point
Mountain Top PSD	387	1,044	110,000	44,500	North Branch (Potomac)
City of Petersburg	1,370	2,573	1,350,000	700,000	Lunice Creek

Source: Region 8 Planning and Development Council.

Solid waste disposal occurs under the auspicious of the Region VIII Solid Waste Authority. Private and municipal haulers serve the county. The Southern Transfer station near Petersburg serves Grant as well as Hardy and Pendleton Counties. Waste is collected there and taken to the Tucker County Landfill for final disposal. Limited expansion into recycling and related activities has started and will continue to evolve.

Broadband

Availability of broadband internet is important for the future of the county. Accessibility is important not only for current residents, but also for retaining and attracting business and industry in the county. For years, broadband services have been limited depending on location, with Petersburg having the most availability. In 2021, the Grant County Commission established a Broadband Committee tasked with facilitating the expansion of services within the county.

Upon establishment, the committee hired The Thrasher Group, Inc., a West Virginia engineering firm to assist in GIS mapping, planning, and implementation of grant writing for grants. With this assistance, specifically the GIS mapping, the county now has a clear path for broadband deployment contingent upon matching funds and grant awards. Various public-private partnerships have been formed with local internet service providers (ISPs) to submit applications to the West Virginia Broadband Investment Plan, a grant funding mechanism administered by the West Virginia Department of Economic Development Office of Broadband. The committee is consistently looking at other funding streams for broadband deployment, as well as opportunities to collaborate with other counties, organizations, or ISPs to expand internet capabilities throughout Grant County.

Cellular Service

Cellular telephone coverage is good in and around Petersburg depending on service provider. Service is intermittent at best throughout the rest of the county. Improving in some cases establishing service coverage is important for the county moving forward. As the Broadband Committee works toward deployment, cellular service improvement is always considered. The Grant County Commission has also taken a proactive step toward expanding coverage as towers already located throughout the county for emergency services will be upgraded to also allow collocation of cellular carriers, contingent upon grant funding and equipment availability.

Cable Television

Cable television is only available in and around Petersburg. Other county residents must rely on satellite television services or only receive television signals from over-the-air broadcasters. While cable is not a necessity, it is important because it can provide a variety of communications services to current and future residents.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Allow access and availability to safe drinking water and sanitation through system improvements for all county residents. Establish accessibility to broadband to all residents of the county. Increase access to cell phone coverage outside the City of Petersburg.

Potential Partners

- Neighboring Counties
- Grant County PSD
- Mount Storm PSD
- City of Petersburg
- Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Region VIII Solid Waste Authority
- Telephone companies
- Cellular telephone providers
- Internet Service Providers
- Emergency Services operations

Objectives

- Improve and expand existing water resources and sewage system
- Prepare for infrastructure needs for development around Corridor H
- Make recycling options available to county residents
- Expand cell phone coverage outside of the City of Petersburg
- Gain access to Broadband Services.
- Develop laws and regulations which allows enforcement of proper use of the water and sewage systems.

Strategies

- Work and partner with neighboring counties providing water and sewage services (Continuous)
- Determine the specific water and sewage needs to be self-sufficient (6-12 months)
- Work with providers to establish broadband in the City of Petersburg and eventually other parts of the county (6-12 months)
- Determine where cell phone coverage is needed i.e., county roads, Corridor H, residential areas (6-12 months)
- Continue to explore the possibility of partnering with current cell phone carriers in the area in addition to Emergency Service towers (12-24 months)
- Work with Region VIII Solid Waste Authority to create recycling options for county residents (18-36 months)
- Develop and actively pursue a water and sewage plan to better serve and support current residents as well as future businesses and industry (24-48 months)
- Secure and raise funds from the federal, state and local level to pay for water and sewage expansion (36-48 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek financial contributions from related state and federal agencies
- Seek general county revenue funds
- Seek out grants related to rural communities

Public Services

The public services are excellent for a rural county. The accessibility to healthcare services is generally good for those living near the Petersburg. The public school system has facilities throughout the county.

Planning Context

Public services are a vital part of any community for existing residents as well as the ability to attract new residents and businesses.

Currently Grant Memorial is the only general and surgical hospital in the region. The hospital is a 25-bed facility and has 24-hour physician staffed emergency room. New services have been added including digital mammography, MRI, MRA, computed Tomography and Nuclear Medicine. Also, the new Cancer and Infusion Center is operating five (5) days a week offering nine (9) infusion bays with advanced provider on site. Services include blood transfusions, chemotherapy, injections and port care and other services based on the diagnosis. Grant County Memorial Hospital is an excellent public service resource in any rural community. Accessibility to the hospital is important for the residents and the hospital itself. Additionally, the state as a whole has a large elderly population and Grant County is no exception. Thus, as residents transition into needing daily care facilities need to be available.

Emergency services are one of the most important public services to be offered in the Grant County community. This includes protecting people and property as well as getting the police, fire, and rescue personnel to where they are needed in a timely and efficient manner.

Grant County has two (2) elementary schools (Maysville and Petersburg), the Union Educational Complex (all grades), Petersburg High School, the South Branch Career and Technical Center. An extension campus for Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College should be one of the premier priorities for the county. Exceptional educational systems are important for a variety of reasons. The first is for the residents of the county, the second is to be able to stand out amongst other rural counties in the state and nation, the third is to be able to attract families who are re-locating to the county, regardless of the reason.

Finally, one activity where there could be some improvement is getting information out to county residents. This should not be interpreted that the county does not fulfill its legal obligations or use the media available in the county. Rather, it is the result of the county being large (land area of 477.2 square miles) and rural (population density of 25.2 persons per square mile). Finding mechanisms to post notices, such as some strategically-placed kiosks around the county, could help alleviate the disconnect some residents currently feel from county news and activities.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Effectively provide emergency services, healthcare accessibility, educational opportunities, and information to county residents.

Potential Partnerships

- Grant County Schools
- Town of Bayard
- City of Petersburg
- Neighboring counties
- WV Division Department of Highways
- Grant County 911
- Grant County Sheriff's Department
- State Police
- Grant County Development Authority

Objectives

- Support and help improve business at the Grant Memorial Hospital
- Expand assisted living and nursing home facilities options
- Support the volunteer fire departments across the county
- Continue to fund and support the Grant County Office of Emergency Management
- Continue to fund and support the EMS ambulance services county wide
- Continue to support and improve the county's public schools
- Collaborate with the Board of Education at the county and state level to meet and exceed Federal educational standards
- Establish alternative means to provide important information to county residents living in remote parts of the county in a timely manner
- Promote development and expansion of "flight for light" and medical flight transport facilities near the Grant County airport

Strategies

- Determine the need for assisted living facilities and work to expand options available (Continuous)
- Determine the need of nursing home beds and secure funds to expand current facilities (Continuous)
- Coordinate and collaborate with the Board of Education (Continuous)
- Collaborate with neighboring counties for emergency service needs (6-24 months)
- Determine the current and future need in terms of number of beds for nursing home facilities (12-60 months)
- Develop a system of kiosk information booths at appropriate locations around the county (18-36 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue services
- Seek additional county general revenues.
- Charge appropriate service and related fees for new and existing activities.
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities with whom work is jointly done.

Agriculture and Rural Development

This section of the plan is devoted to maintaining and protecting the diverse agricultural and rural development aspects found within Grant County. It is intended to assist the competitiveness of Grant County's numerous agricultural enterprises and protect the farmland base that is fundamental for a thriving agricultural economy.

Planning Context

Agriculture is prevalent in planning due to the need to maintain farmland in the midst of development. Overall, Grant County ranks fourth in the state in the total market value of production. While new expansion activities may enter the communities of the county, agriculture is an operation with close ties to the people and organizations that depend upon it.

The unique lay of the land found within Grant County is characterized by a series of ridges running parallel to the north and south. The beautiful valleys carved in between are areas so fertile that they play an integral part to the County's economy. Small farms in the 1940s and 1950s eventually gave way to larger farms utilizing more acreage with modern equipment. In 2017, Grant County had over 120,000 acres in 522 active farms (Table 21). Both represented an increase over 2012. The county also had extensive grasslands and timber lands. The majority of farms are still family-owned but are now often operated by part-time farmers with supplemental incomes.

Table 21: Farm Profile

	2012	2017	Change
Number of Farms	486	522	7.4%
Acres of Land in Farms	112,365	119,850	6.7%
Market Value of Production	\$51,272,000	\$57,064,000	11.3%

Source: *Census of Agriculture* (National/West Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service), USDA.

Current Status

Large numbers of farms focus on production of poultry, beef cattle, sheep and goats (Table 22). It ranks fourth in the state in production or livestock and poultry inventory in these categories. Also, there is a trend towards increasing aquaculture as Grant County ranks as one of the top three counties in the state for sales of the commodity. As a community heavily invested in agriculture, the future of the industry must be assessed to ensure its presence later on. Youth involvement and enjoyment in agriculture is sought-after as the average age of principal farm operators within the county edges closer to retirement age. This assurance of agricultural interest in younger generations is means to maintaining the over 120,000 acres of vast farmland spread out throughout the county.

Grant County's agricultural dedication is also well represented in its establishment of a Farmland Protection Board. As only the 11th county in West Virginia to do so, it was launched as a method to ensure farmland will remain farmland forever by purchasing easements. Also contributing to their valuable land supply is the 11 percent of National Forest area found within the county.

The County's contemporary farmers are implementing more technology to ensure better returns and work hard to preserve their resources. Proactive safeguarding efforts such as fencing streams, planting shrubbery, and working alongside State and Federal agencies contribute towards resource protection initiatives. Today's farmers and county residents agree that agriculture in Grant County is vital to preserving the beauty and quality of prime land, as well as the rural way of life defined by the agrarian lifestyle.

Table 22: 2017 Ranking of Farm Activities

	Value or Number	State Rank	State Percentile	National Rank	National Percentile
Total Market Value	\$57,064,000	4	93 ^d	1,654	46 th
Crops	\$1,733,000	24	56 th	2,710	12 th
■ Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	\$158,000	16	70 th	2,409	17 th
■ Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sw. potatoes	\$191,000	15	72 nd	1,293	54 th
■ Fruits, tree nuts, berries	\$70,000	32	40 th	1,421	48 th
■ Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	\$135,000	21	70 th	1,375	47 th
■ Other crops and hay	\$1,179,000	17	70 th	1,722	43 ^d
Livestock & Poultry Products	\$55,330,000	4	93 ^d	885	71 st
■ Poultry and eggs	\$47,543,000	3	94 th	265	91 st
■ Cattle and calves	\$6,770,000	7	87 th	1,506	51 st
■ Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	\$225,000	8	85 th	709	76 th
■ Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	\$27,000	26	50 th	2,063	31 st

Note: Only products with at least \$10,000 in disclosed sales included.
Percentiles are approximates.

Source: *Census of Agriculture* (National/West Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service), USDA.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Protect the integrity of agriculture within the county to maintain its status as a valuable land use.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Commission
- West Virginia Legislature
- West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia Farm Bureau
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- Citizens of Grant County
- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- United States Legislature
- United States Department of Agriculture
- Grant County Farmland Protection Board
- WV Farmland Protection Board

Objectives

- Work for continued and expanded State and Federal funding for conversion of Grant County farmland to easement protected farmland.
- Support agriculture and rural lifestyle in Grant County by ensuring that farmers have a voice in county government.
- Pursue agricultural research grants and entitlements to help fund and support agriculture within the county.
- Cooperatively work with farm bureaus and other agricultural organizations to help local farms better market their products and become more productive.
- Encourage youth involvement and engagement in agriculture through community-based programs like 4H and FFA.
- Actively promote and encourage agricultural easements to ensure that strategic farmland parcels are conserved in a thoughtful manner.

Strategies

- Maintain and support the actions and activities of the Farmland Protection Board.
- Cooperatively work with farm bureaus, the Development Council, and other agricultural organizations to help local farms become more productive (12-24 months)
- Support the creation of an Agricultural Consortium that includes farmers and a diverse group of community officials (36-60 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek additional state, federal and county revenues
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities with which work is jointly done

Recreation and Tourism

This section of the plan is devoted to the importance of the numerous outdoor and community offerings that are assets to all members of Grant County. While serving a dual role as a sector with close ties to local quality of life, the numerous sites, activities, and attractions also draw tourists to the area. This portion of the Plan is meant to inventory the recreational and community-based offerings available and recognize their shared importance to the community.

Planning Context

The diverse and impressive range of activities in Grant County can be seen through the listing of its fields and facilities (Table 23).

Table 23: Recreational Facilities

Facility	Number
Outdoor Stages	1
Campfire Areas	1
Baseball/Softball Fields	10
Volleyball Areas	3
Basketball Courts	4
Fishing/ Boating Lakes	3
Hiking Trails (miles)	38.3
Museums/Art Galleries	2
National Forests	1
National Park/Recreation Areas	2
Swimming Pools	1
Tennis Courts	4
Walking Tracks	4
Picnic Pavilions	32
Playgrounds	7
Recreational Rivers	2
Boat Ramps	3
Firearms Ranges	1
Trap Shooting Field	1

Sources: Grant County Parks and Recreation; Workforce WV.

While the numbers above illustrate the quantity of recreational opportunities in Grant County, it is also important to highlight further opportunities that are present. Among these opportunities is the impressive public park system run by the Grant County Parks & Recreation Department and considered one of the best in the state. The nine (9) public parks dispersed in the area are home to numerous community events held throughout the year. Vernon W. Welton Park, site of the annual Christmas display, attracts hundreds of visitors each season. City Park in Petersburg is also home to the yearly Independence Day celebration while Turner Park is popular for its unique public firearms ranges. Besides the park system, Grant County annually hosts the Spring Mountain Festival, numerous special event train rides and has land dedicated to the Tri-County Fairgrounds. Mount Storm Lake is considered one of the more popular local destinations due its swimming, boating and fishing activity options. Involvement in neighborhood activities and support from county governance is testament to the community dedication and involvement present in Grant County recreational activities.

Grant County works hard at tourism promotion through the work of the Grant County Convention and Visitors' Bureau. Headquartered in the historic South Side Depot, the bureau seeks to promote the diverse and impressive range of activities catered towards tourism. Of the many attractive assets is the Monongahela National Forest, including Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, Smoke Hole Caverns, and the Smoke Hole Canyon. It makes the area a valuable amenity to outdoor enthusiasts interested in hiking, biking, camping, fishing, hunting and boating. While those attractions lure visitors which account for substantial tourism spending, it is also important to expand accommodations towards overnight travel. Limited overnight options often force overnight visitors to nearby counties, resulting in lost potential revenue.

Despite this limitation, travel spending in the county almost doubled between 2000 and 2008 (Table 24). According to a study for the West Virginia Division of Tourism, the Potomac Highlands region had a total direct spending amount of \$291.4 million in 2008. Most telling of is that \$146.4 million was spent on hotel and motel overnight accommodations. These travel revenues also resulted in the creation of 140 new jobs. Visitor spending in the area also accounted for \$57.6 million in food and beverage services and \$33.6 million in arts, entertainment and recreation, and local government revenues totaled over \$3.4 million. Together, this information shows a healthy and substantial market for tourism and tourism-catering industries within Grant County. Petersburg and Grant County are part of a ten (10) town Mon Forest Town Partnership (MFTP) governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to build a sustainable recreational economy while preserving our natural assets. Other partners involved include USDA Forest Service, WVU and Woodland Associates. More information can be found on the Grant County Convention and Business Bureau's website.

Table 24: Visitors' Impacts

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018*
Travel Spending (\$ millions)	8.9	12.9	15.8	14.4	15.0
Earnings (\$ millions)	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.4	2.5
Employment (jobs)	140	140	150	150	140
Local Government Revenue (\$ thousands)	9	10	91	90	73
State Government Revenue (\$ thousands)	788	888	1,071	1,003	1,020

Note: Most recent data available is 2018 (preliminary)

Source: Dean Runyan Associates.

Still in its early stages of development, Grant County is continuing expansion of activities by taking part in the statewide “Rails-to-Trails” program. When complete, the conversion of land into trails dedicated to hiking and biking will again expand the impressive number of recreational assets all found within Grant County.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Provide residents and visitors of Grant County with options of recreational and leisure activities for their benefit and enjoyment.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Parks & Recreation Department
- Grant County Convention and Visitors' Bureau
- South Side Depot
- Grant County Arts Council Inc.
- Landes Arts Center
- West Virginia “Rails-to-Trails” Council
- Citizens of Grant County
- Grant County Hotels, Motels, and Bed and Breakfast Properties
- WVU, USDA Forest Service and Woodland Associates

Objectives

- Maintain parks and recreational facilities to preserve for future generations
- Expand the activities and programs currently offered by the Parks & Recreation Department
- Increase revenues to broaden and improve earned income from tourism
- Further develop Grant County into a recreation and leisure destination by way of increased hotel and motel options

- Create tourism sample itineraries that encourage guests coming to the area to see all of our existing natural resources

Strategies

- Encourage continued and improved communication and coordination among the entities, agencies, and organizations involved in recreation and tourism activities (Continuous)
- Support efforts to protect and promote existing recreation and tourism-related activities (Continuous)
- Work with private sectors to establish support businesses to embellish the tourist industry in Grant County (12-24 months)
- Utilize the draw of the Monongahela National Forest including Dolly Sods and its recreational offerings as a source for tourism (12-24 months)
- Continue to support and promote the existing “Rails-to-Trails” project while in its early concept stage (12-24 months)
- Establish information booths or kiosks for travelers at key county entry points and at Corridor H interchanges (18-36 months)
- Undertake additional advertising campaigns to attract tourists to Grant County, concentrating on the Washington D.C., Baltimore, Northern Virginia and Pittsburgh metropolitan areas (5-10 years)
- Work for increased and expanded overnight accommodation options present in the county (5-10 years)
- Promote local and regional events that could be of interest to casual travelers

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenues streams
- Explore impact/development fees to supplement existing revenue streams
- Create traditional and innovative measures for increased money flow for facilities improvements, expansions, and program development (e.g., fundraisers, auctions, pavilion rentals, and special event fees)
- Work in conjunction with local, county, state, and national entities to develop revenue flow for the increased development of recreational and tourism offerings (e.g., grants, gifts, and low interest loans)
- Utilize payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to fund improvements
- Draw on resources and grants from the MFTP

Economic Development

This element of the plan provides guidance on improving the economic capabilities of Grant County. To maintain and enhance the overall quality of life for years to come, an established economic base is essential to implement many of the recommended strategies found throughout this Plan. It is intended to supply the county with a reasonable foundation to base sound decisions pertaining to their future economic viability.

Planning Context

Throughout the history of Grant County, influential community leaders and elected town officials have championed economic development in the area. In order to retain the rural lifestyle unique to Grant County, the load of economic challenges it faces must be addressed in order to create new job opportunities, provide integral services to its citizens, increase its tax base, and support its numerous cultural amenities.

The state of the county's current economic situation centers on the deep need of increased work opportunities. With approximately half of the labor force traveling outside the county and the state for employment, the county does not have the financial benefit of a strong non-residential tax base.

With the foresight to recognize the need of a unified official entity to oversee economic expansion, the Grant County Development Authority (GCDA) was formed in 1973. The primary goal of the GCDA is to recruit industry partners for job creation, as well as promote and enhance the economic well-being of Grant County. Under their direction, today Grant County is proudly home to the wind energy Capital of West Virginia and has another national distinction as the largest hardwood producer in the United States. The South Branch valley location of Petersburg, houses a regional medical center with a newly opened cancer center, airport, and transit system.

The deep potential for future economic expansion is evident by community support for such growth. Grant County still recognizes the need to support and assist existing businesses. These efforts are aimed at increasing the economic well-being of the area while not devaluing the importance and understanding of Grant County's character and values. There is future potential to leverage the business park through utilization of high-speed broadband and telecom. Such facilities are prospective locations for back-office operations such as data storage facilities and emergency secondary business centers. Other relative target industry lists include energy, plastics and specialty chemicals, metal working and machinery, business services, information technology, material storage, wood products, outdoor recreation and tourism.

With the abundance of potential industry locations, the citizens of Grant County also understand the importance of the beautiful and plentiful natural resources. With all these factors in mind, Grant County looks for a balance between economic development and preservation. The area's abundance of natural resources makes it a prime destination to promote tourism. As one of the cleanest revenue producing industries, it often has a multiplier effect on a community's economy. Overall, the impact of tourism on the local economy can be significant and was discussed in the previous section.

As character and quality of life continues to be a priority issue for Grant County residents, the issues of rural design, parks, schools, and public services are also priorities for businesses and their employees. Preserving and enhancing these aspects of the county will enable it to retain existing businesses and residents, as well as appeal to new businesses and residents who share similar values.

Energy Development

In line with the state's "All of the Above" approach, Grant County should continue to support new and repowered energy facilities and development in Grant and adjoining counties to diversify the energy economy, create construction and long-term jobs, increase the tax base, provide royalty income to landowners, and stimulate indirect economic activity that will benefit Grant County residents and businesses.

Wind

Wind energy is one of the primary sources of renewable energy and is typically developed in West Virginia on mountain ridges where the wind blows strong. There are several wind power plants currently located within Grant County, which leads West Virginia in wind energy generation, including:

- Clearway Energy Group owns three wind power plants:
 - 1) Black Rock Wind Farm (spanning Grant and Mineral Counties), commissioned in 2022 with 23 wind turbines and producing 115 MW of energy;
 - 2) Pinnacle Wind Farm (spanning Mineral County), which comprises 23 wind turbines and produces 54 MW. Pinnacle was commissioned in 2012 and powered with new equipment in 2021; and



- 3) Mount Storm Wind Farm (formerly NedPower), which contains 132 turbines along a 12-mile string and produces 264 MW of energy.
- Enbridge also owns the 103-megawatt New Creek Wind Farm, which came online in 2016 and counts 49 turbines.

Siting wind energy facilities has been challenging but successful in preserving existing visual integrity, scenic vistas, and minimizing environmental impacts. Tourists come to see the windmills and the tax base and revenue to the County has and continues to be significant, as energy facilities tend to be among the largest, most consistent taxpayers. Renewable energy companies have also created community benefit funds that voluntarily support nonprofit organizations in the region.

Solar

Solar energy is another primary source of green energy and includes two different types that can be developed in the County:

- Distributed Solar – Involves “behind the meter” power generation directly connected to an end user. Power is produced by solar panels on-site or near where the power will be used. Panels are placed on a roof or a small array on ground mount adjacent to buildings. Residential production is up to 25 kW and commercial (which includes agricultural-based solar arrays) can be up to 5 MW.

Since 2018, Petersburg Elementary School operates off the Largest Net Metered Solar Array in West Virginia (without batteries) which produces 558,000 KWh annually and is on course to \$1M in utilities savings.



- Utility Scale – Involves power generated in front of the meter and the power is fed directly into the utility grid - not connected to a specific end user. These projects produce more than 5 MW of energy. 1 MW of production requires 5-10 acres of solar panels. These projects are either owned by the utility or are owned by utility scale solar companies who lease or purchase land from owners and sell power to the utility or the wholesale market. Utility Scale Solar benefits from economies of scale, generating power at the lowest cost.

The locations within the County in which utility-scale solar installations are economically feasible are limited. The proximity to transmission lines, floodplains, wetlands, and steep topography are critical factors that eliminate much of the County's land as suitable for these types of developments. Utility-scale solar facilities are land intensive so responsible development standards must be followed; however, solar is one land use that is intended to return the land to its pre-development state after the project is decommissioned. In Grant County there are reclaimed strip and other mine properties that would be well-suited for utility scale solar installations. This type of development would take land that is now pasture or un-used and turn it into a viable tax base and source of energy production, creating income for landowners and the County.



The West Virginia Government has implemented requirements for decommissioning solar projects, assuring the proper removal of all equipment, restoration of the land, and maintaining of funds to pay for the decommissioning of projects. Solar energy is a passive land use and an important renewable energy technology that must be developed responsibly within Grant County to continue to diversify the energy economy, increase tax base and revenue, and create more jobs for Grant County residents.

Energy Storage

Keeping the supply and distribution of electricity reliable, affordable and clean will be a critically important task for the County for years to come. It is also clear that achieving that goal is going to be challenging without energy storage.

Energy storage systems are devices that enable energy generated by power plants –including coal, natural gas, wind and solar – to be stored and then released when customers need power most. Storage technologies including batteries, flywheels, compressed air storage, hydropower and more. Lithium-ion batteries, which are used in mobile phones and electric cars, are currently the dominant storage technology for large-scale plants to help electricity grids ensure a reliable supply of energy.

Reliability of the electric system is a concern in West Virginia and energy storage systems could help address this issue. The siting of energy storage systems is more flexible than renewable power plants because good sun and wind resources are not required. Thus, energy storage systems could present a good opportunity to put underutilized land to work to generate additional County taxes and landowner royalties. There may also be new opportunities to host an energy storage training facility in the County, at Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College's Petersburg campus, which is home to the only wind power technician training program in the state.

Current Situation

Grant County has seen a decrease in population in recent years. But that has not translated into an increase in the workforce. Two possible explanations for this are an aging population and a lack of job opportunities. The demographics discussion detailed how the county population was getting older. Meanwhile, other data show that the county has some deficiencies in its local economy.

Table 25: Population, Jobs, and Workforce

	2010	2020	Change
Population	11,937	10,976	-8.1%
Civilian Labor Force	6,120	5,970	-2.5%
Total Employment	5,530	5,580	0.9%
Non-Farm Payroll	3,860	3,410	-11.7%
Unemployment Rate	9.8%	6.5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Workforce WV.

The worker flow data showed the county did not produce sufficient jobs for everyone in the Grant County who worked. The county exported of a net 1284 workers. Overall, 3,558 county residents worked in the county, 1,384 people came into the county from other places for employment, and 1,735 left the county for employment.

Table 26: 2019 Workflow Data

Workplace of Residents	Count	Percent	Residence of Workers	Count	Percent
Grant Co. WV	1,814	37.5%	Grant Co. WV	1,814	51.0%
Hardy Co. WV	964	19.9%	Hardy Co. WV	368	10.3%
Mineral Co. WV	192	4.1%	Mineral Co. WV	234	6.6%
Garrett Co. MD	116	2.4%	Pendleton Co. WV	188	5.3%
Allegany Co. MD	104	2.1%	Garrett Co. MD	94	2.6%
Fairfax Co VA	92	1.9%	Tucker Co. WV	79	2.2%
Pendleton Co WV	91	1.9%	Hampshire Co. WV	78	2.2%
Alleghany Co MD	75	1.5%	Randolph Co. WV	66	1.9%
Tucker Co WV	75	1.5%	Berkeley Co. WV	50	1.4%
Hampshire Co WV	67	1.4%	Monongalia Co. WV	50	1.4%
Montgomery Co MD	66	1.4%	Allegany Co MD	43	1.2%
All Other Locations	1,284	26.5%	All Other Locations	537	15.1%
TOTALS	4,842	100.0%	TOTALS	3,558	100.0%

Note: The bases used were 4,842 county residents working and 3,558 persons working in the county – meaning the county exported a net 1,284 workers in 2019.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map.

Additionally, the employment composition in Grant County is different than what is found statewide or nationally. The county only had about three-quarters of its employment in the private sector, compared to four-fifths for the state and nearly six-sevenths for the nation in 2008 (Table 28). The county was surprisingly strong in goods producing employment, especially in the construction and natural resources and mining areas. However, its service producing employment made up a much smaller share of the local economy. Every meta-sector except for jobs in trade, transportation, and utilities was substantially less than what was found throughout the state or the nation. It was particularly surprising that the county had fewer jobs in education and health services than would be expected given the presence of Grant Count Hospital and Grant County Nursing Home. Similarly, the smaller share of overall jobs in leisure and hospitality was unexpected, given the increasing importance of tourism in the county.

The dominant position of public sector employment can be seen in the most recent list of the county's largest employers (Table 27). Three of the top six "companies" are governmental or government-owned entities. Among the private sector companies, there were three goods producing firms (including two manufacturers) and four service producing firms (including two utilities). This represented a change from 2004 when there were there were three goods producing firms (including two manufacturers) and four service producing firms (including two utilities). Not coincidentally, the two firms that were on the list five years ago that are no longer among the top 10 employers were both goods producing entities. The mining company was replaced by another mining company, but the manufacturer was replaced by a business and professional services (engineering) firm.

Table 27: 2019 Employment Composition by Super Sector

	Grant County	West Virginia	United States
Total Employment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
- Private Employment	72.9%	80.4%	85.3%
-- Goods Producing	NA	15.3%	15.0%
---Natural Resources & Mining	1.8%	3.4%	1.3%
--- Construction	8.2%	5.2%	5.0%
--- Manufacturing	6.0%	6.8%	8.6%
--Service Producing	NA	65.1%	70.4%
--- Trade, Transportation, Utilities	14.6%	18.2%	18.6%
--- Information	NA	1.2%	1.9%
--- Financial Activities	3.2%	3.6%	5.6%
--- Professional & Business Services	1.9%	10.0%	14.3%
--- Education & Health Services	17.3%	18.2%	15.6%
--- Leisure & Hospitality	7.6%	10.9%	11.1%
--- Other Services	2.7%	2.9%	3.1%
Unclassified Establishments	NA	0.0%	0.1%
Unaccounted (Disclosure Rules)	9.5%	NA	NA
- Public Employment	27.1%	19.6%	14.7%
-- Federal Government	1.4%	3.5%	1.9%
-- State Government	2.2%	6.0%	3.2%
-- Local Government	23.5%	10.0%	9.6%

Notes: NA means data is not available (because of disclosure rules) or not applicable.
Based on available information, 16.0% of Grant County employment appears to be Goods Producing While 47.4% appears to be Service Producing. The classification of the remaining private employment is unknown. 2019 is last year with complete data available.
Percentages may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Workforce West Virginia. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 28: March 2021 Top Ten Employers

Rank	Employer	Industry Sector Category	NAICS
1	Grant Memorial Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance	62
2	Grant County Board of Education	Educational Services	61
3	Dominion Transmission	Utilities	22
4	A.L.L. Construction Inc.	Construction	23
5	Grant Rehab. & Care Center Inc.	Health Care and Social Assistance	62
6	Grant County Commission	Public Administration	92
7	Select in Home Services, Inc.	Health Care and Social Assistance	62
8	Waco, Inc.	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	54
9	Potomac Highlands Mental Health Guild	Health Care and Social Assistance	62
10	Allegheny Wood Products, Inc.	Manufacturing	31

Source: Workforce West Virginia.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Uphold and enhance the economic vitality of the county, while preserving the unique charm and character of the county.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Commission
- West Virginia Legislature
- West Virginia Development Office
- West Virginia Economic Development Council
- USDA Rural Development
- West Virginia University Extension Service
- United States Congress
- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- Grant County Public Service District
- Mt. Storm Public Service District
- The Town of Bayard
- West Virginia University
- Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College
- Potomac State College
- Grant County Schools
- Citizens of Grant County
- Grant County Development Authority

Objectives

- Continue to support existing industries and businesses within Grant County in retention and expansion activities
- Continue to seek and recruit new industries and businesses in order to provide stable and profitable employment opportunities to the citizens of Grant County
- Improve the community's understanding of the Grant County Development Authority (GCDA) and its activities
- Promote local accomplishments in local and regional media sources

Strategies

- Encourage continued and improved communication and coordination among the entities, agencies, and organizations involved in development-related activities. (Continuous)
- Support and promote business community and climate. (Continuous)
- Actively promote ongoing and established community events and festivals (within 6 months)
- Support efforts to enhance and promote existing tourism-related activities and businesses (12-24 months)
- Support a status study to determine the appropriate land use consideration along Corridor H as advised by the Corridor H Highway Authority. (12-24 months)
- Develop Grant County into a supplier of quality agricultural products, thereby stimulating the local economy (12-24 months)
- Continue efforts of expansion of broadband, phone, cable, and other technology-based infrastructure as set forth by the Grant County Broadband Initiative and Grant County Commission. (Continuous)
- Engage in collaborative marketing efforts with the Grant County Development Authority, Grant County Commission, and the WV Development Office (36-60 months)
- Encourage the creation of a business base to support other business, such as food service, recreation facilities, outlet shops, rental properties, and other amenities (36-60 months)
- Target employers who are interested in expanding to a rural environment within a reasonable commuting distance to a major metropolitan area (5-10 years)

Fiscal Considerations

- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage desirable economic development
- Utilize grants and low-interest loans
- Support efforts to create a revolving loan fund to enhance development efforts and opportunities
- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources
- Use existing revenue streams

Community Design

This section is a critical part of the implementation of the Grant County vision which identifies the need to keep high quality and affordability while promoting the beauty of the community. Community design includes the management and design of physical characteristics and placement of areas for residence, business, recreation like hunting and fishing while preserving the way of life, natural resources and historic sites.

Vision

Grant County is bestowed with unique natural beauty, landscape and heritage. In addition, a predominantly farming and energy industry creates a dynamic and strong local economy. The vision of community design is to preserve the high quality and affordable living that exists and enhance the quality of schools, roads, businesses in the area that would uplift and give a sense of a strong and beautiful community and character that would represent the people of Grant County.

Planning Context

The strength of Grant County is its recreational area that can be used for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. The county has numerous designated and known recreational locations. These include (but are not limited to):

- Monongalia National Forest
- Dolly Sods National Recreational Area
- Big Bend Recreational Area
- Beautiful local parks
- Historic sites

These areas could use some improvement or enlargement to accommodate larger amount of people. There are cabins and trails that are already being used in popular destinations like Dolly Sods however much can be done to improve access to these and other areas. A park in Petersburg that ends at the line of Hardy County is beautiful and can be expanded. Existing industrial parks can also expand as recently Region 8 Planning and Development Council added 70 acres to Grant County Industrial Park and added a rail spur in Petersburg.

Substandard and Abandoned Housing

As noted previously, 25 percent of housing in Grant County is vacant, half of which are seasonal or vacation homes. Substandard and abandoned housing should be eliminated to create residential areas that have high quality and affordable living while keeping in sync with the County design. Elimination or improvement of abandoned houses also discourages crime and improve the beauty of the location. These areas then would need to have waste water and utilities available to them. With industries that generate ample amount of energy from various resources only the infrastructure development would need to be addressed.

Public Safety and Welfare

A vibrant community cannot excel unless public safety and welfare is given the foremost priority and consideration. There needs to be a sufficient access to public facilities such as health care sites, grocery stores, and shopping via public transportation. Grant County does have a need for public transportation.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

The community has to be designed to be functional and provide a sense of community. Old and abandoned housing and business have to be eliminated or renovated to protect from crime.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Commission
- Grant County Development Authority
- Citizens of Grant County
- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- City of Petersburg
- Town of Bayard
- Grant County Public Service District
- Mt. Storm Public Service District
- WV Department of Transportation
- Potomac Valley Transportation
- WV State Rail Authority
- State Highway Department
- State Police
- WVU Extension Service

Objectives

- Provide a sense of similarity
- Eliminate or update old and abandoned housing and businesses
- Provide public transportation
- Create street design for improved circulation and traffic flow
- Reduce air and noise pollution
- Provide access to public facilities

Strategies

- Increase the flow of existing public transportation to cover all public areas and between nearby towns (12-24 months)
- Work to reroute heavy trucks travelling through built-up areas to control noise and air pollution (12-24 months)
- Find traffic congested areas and widen the roads or implement traffic restrictions (24-36 months)
- Work with municipalities to promote adoption of Dilapidated Buildings Ordinance

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenue streams
- Seek financial assistance from state or federal agencies
- Use income from renovated and new residential and business areas

Preferred Development Areas

This section, along with the sections on Land Use and Community Design, delves into the uplifting existing areas of Grant County to create a clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods and business and generate a sustainable economy for a long-term growth while maintaining the desired characteristics of an agrarian society.

Vision

Citizens of Grant County desire for a balance in development. Select development areas to create a community that prides in the quality and affordable living while creating opportunity for business growth and create more jobs.

Planning Context

Grant County has all the raw materials that can be consolidated and managed such that the vision of the county can be achieved. The strength of the county where development can be prioritized can be listed as follows:

- Tourism industry
- Energy Industry
- Wood Products
- Plastics
- Health Services
- Small business support
- New residential areas with small housing units

Grant County has beautiful landscape and national recreational area and a rich history that can be capitalized as all season tourist destinations. Grant County already has industries that harness Wind and Coal Energy and it can be expanded to create more jobs and income. Small business support could definitely generate much needed professional jobs that can keep the young generation in the county and create more diverse population.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Manage and update existing tourism and energy industry and support small businesses to create more jobs and keep young generation in the County. Provide affordable residential area near Corridor H and new development sites and old and abandoned sites.

Potential Partners

- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- Grant County Housing Authority (GCHA)
- Grant County Commission
- Citizens of Grant County
- The Town of Bayard
- The City of Petersburg
- Mt. Storm Public Services District
- Local Rental Owners
- Grant County Recreation and Parks
- Developers
- Grant County Development Authority

Objectives

- Develop new tourist sites and update existing ones
- Increase output of energy industry
- Support small business incubators
- Add new residential areas
- Add waste water treatment facility

Strategies

- Encourage appropriate development of all types around Corridor H (36-60 months)
- Create small business incubators to attract small business which creates professional and some blue-collar jobs (36-60 months)
- Develop new residential areas with affordable and small housing units that can be owned or rented (36-60 months)
- Develop waste water treatment facility to manage the growth in population (5-10 years)

Fiscal Considerations

- Use current revenue stream
- Updated tourist sites and residential area generates income
- Small business generate higher income

Renewal and Development

Grant County is a rural county with a variety of assets. Moving towards the future it will be important to clearly identify and market these assets. Grant County should focus and play on the “small town feel.” Developing a main street aesthetic can aid in this small-town approach. The small-town feel can be used to market and attract weekenders from nearby metropolitan areas looking to get away. The small-town approach can be implemented in all areas of the county as a way to celebrate their uniqueness and character.

Planning Context

Along the same aesthetic line consider developing procedures for vacated and dilapidated houses and businesses throughout the county. Removing eyesores throughout the county will enhance the beauty of the rural community and desire for the *thriving* small-town feel.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Attract and retain new business and industry, while providing support for existing businesses and improving the overall aesthetic.

Potential Partners

- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- Grant County Housing Authority (GCHA)
- Grant County Commission
- Citizens of Grant County
- The Town of Bayard
- The City of Petersburg
- Mt. Storm Public Services District
- Developers
- Grant County Development Authority
- West Virginia Development Office
- USDA Rural Development

Objectives

- Attract and retain new business and industry in the county
- Gain occupancy of industrial parks
- Develop economic development marketing plan to reach out to target industries

- Develop procedures to address abandoned houses and buildings for both safety and aesthetic purposes
- Continue to seek new industries and businesses in order to provide honest employment opportunities to the citizens of Grant County.
- Provide assistance to local emerging entrepreneurs
- Continue to support and assist existing industries and businesses in Grant County

Strategies

- Work with realtors to market commercial buildings and the industrial sites (6-12 months)
- Identify funding opportunities through grants for aesthetic changes (12-24 months)
- Develop a marketing plan for the county from an economic and redevelopment standpoint (12-24 months)
- Coordinate economic development needs and other activities to address aesthetic issues and abandoned building issues (24-36 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Apply for grants
- Use existing revenue sources

Historic Preservation

This component of the plan is dedicated to protecting the unique history of Grant County. In order to adequately preserve the past identity of the county, it is necessary to implement a proactive approach to retain the pride and heritage that the county shares.

Planning Context

In relation to planning, maintaining the deep-rooted history of Grant County is important as upcoming growth may impact the characteristics of the area. In reaction to potential future changes to land development which may impact the rural nature of the community, applying a tactic to recognize its history is essential.

Local History

Named in honor of General Ulysses Simpson Grant (1822–1885), Grant County was created out of conflict resulting from the Civil War. Originally included in parts of Hardy County, Grant County came into its own charter pending an act of the state legislature on February 14, 1866.

Prior to European settlement the land of present-day Grant County was grounds for competition between the Hurons and the Iroquois Confederacy (then consisting of the Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida, and Seneca tribes) during the 1600s. The Hurons were eventually driven north while the Iroquois relied on the land as hunting grounds. Later on in the 1700s, West Virginia's Potomac Highlands region continued to be used as hunting ground for the Delaware, Mingo, and Shawnee tribes.

There is some disagreement as to who the first European settler was of the area, but it is believed to be either James Coburn or Jacob Peters, whom the city of Petersburg was named after. Peters was met in 1746 by Thomas Lewis and his surveying party including Peter Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson's father. They were traveling through the Potomac Highlands to establish boundaries of Lord Fairfax's land holdings. This surveying party placed the Fairfax Stone, which still today marks the extreme western corner of present-day Grant County.

National Register Properties

According to the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, seven sites within Grant County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and remain intact:

- Fairfax Stone Site, North of William at corner of Grant, Preston, and Tucker counties
- Gormanian Presbyterian Church, Mabis Avenue, Gormanian
- Grant County Courthouse, Virginia Ave, Petersburg
- Hermitage Motor Inn, Virginia Ave, Petersburg
- The Manor, North of Petersburg off of WV 42, Petersburg

- Noah Snyder Farm, County Route 5, Lahmansville
- Rohrbaugh Cabin, Smoke Hole Road, Petersburg

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goals Statement

Protect, preserve, and recognize the historic and cultural fortunes of Grant County for current and future generations.

Potential Partners

- Grant County Historical/Genealogy Society
- Grant County Landmarks Commission
- West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office
- Citizens of Grant County

Objectives

- Encourage the preservation, protection and enhancement of historic and cultural resources and their context
- Promote education, participation and involvement in the county's history
- Establish guidelines for care and management of certified landmarks
- Educate the general public on the importance of preservation of landmarks
- Seek and accept gifts, bequests, endowments, and funds to accomplish goals

Strategies

- Discourage the destruction of architectural, historic and cultural resources in the county (Continuous)
- Encourage the identification of structures, buildings, monuments and sites of historical and cultural significance as a means of enhancing economic value to the county (12-24 months)
- Encourage restoration and active use of historical sites as potential for tourism development (36-60 months)

Fiscal Considerations

- Minimal cost is anticipated as much of the work will be through regulation and policy decisions
- Use existing revenue stream
- Additional needs may be met with donations, grants and special funding

Information Sources

- Dean Runyan Associates
- Grant County Development Authority
- Grant County Planning Commission
- Region 8 Planning and Development Council
- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics
- United States Census Bureau
- United States Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia Conservation Services
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- West Virginia Division of Culture and History
- West Virginia Division of Highways (Department of Transportation)
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (Department of Commerce)
- West Virginia GIS Technical Center
- West Virginia University Natural Resources Analysis Center
- Workforce West Virginia (Department of Commerce)

References

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