

# NELSON COUNTY, VA

## Comprehensive Plan Update



Joint Worksession #2 | January 18, 2023



# Meeting Objectives

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1. Review Process & Schedule
2. Chapter 2: Setting Our Direction (Layout Review)
3. Chapter 6: Protecting Valuable Resources (Content Review)
4. Chapter 8: Serving the Community (Content Review)
5. Next Steps



# Update Process & Schedule

# Meetings & Events

- Kickoff with Staff**
- Kickoff Worksession**
- Youth Art Challenge**  
(Summer 2022)
- Online Public Input Survey**  
(July 1- August 31)
- 4 Public Workshops**  
(Summer 2022)
- 4 Listening Sessions**  
(Summer 2022)
- Public Engagement Results Input Forum**  
(October 16, 2022)

- 4 Joint Worksessions**  
(October, January, March, May)
- County-Led Focus Groups**  
(December, February, April)
- Review by VDOT**  
(Summer 2023)
- Public Open House**  
(Summer 2023)
- Final Review Worksession**  
(Summer 2023)
- Joint Public Hearing & Adoption** (Fall 2023)



# Chapter 2

## Setting Our Direction

## People & Population

### Race & Ethnicity

The demographic makeup of Nelson has changed over time. Though demographic data shows a largely white population, it is important to understand that Nelson does have a diverse population and cultural story that is often under represented.

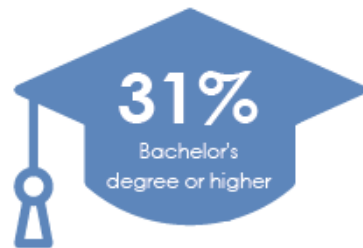
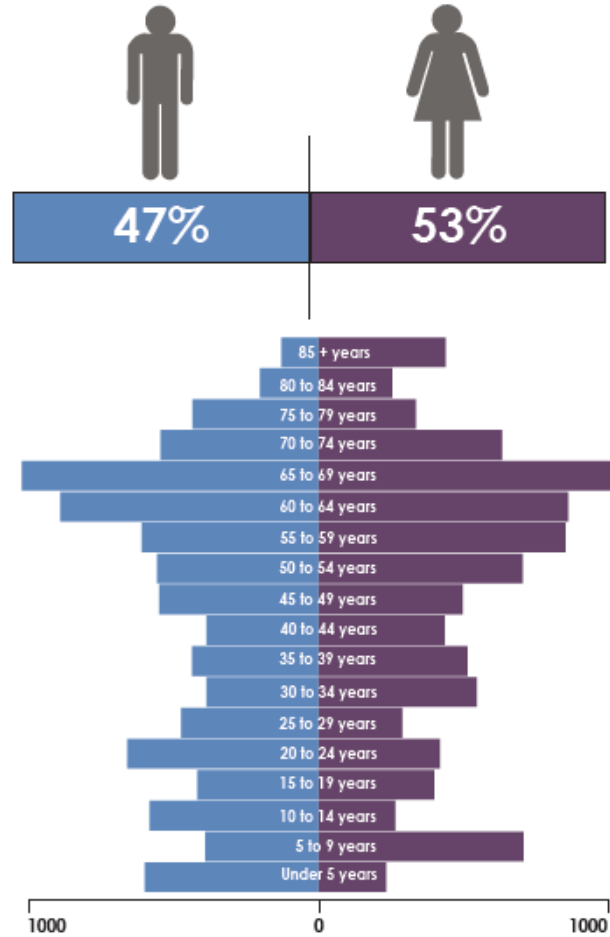
Nelson County and the surrounding region is the ancestral homeland of the Monacan people, who still live here. Like the rest of Virginia, enslaved Africans and free black homesteaders arrived with European immigrants. Over the last 20 years, the County's African American population saw a 20% decrease, but the American Indian and populations of multi-races has increased.

### Education

With a higher percentage of residents who have earned a bachelor's degree or greater compared to the Commonwealth (28% of Virginia residents have a bachelor's degree or higher), Nelson County citizens understand the importance of education. Even so, it will be important for the County to support the education and training of the community to help create a balanced and diverse workforce.

### Race & Ethnicity

Nelson	Virginia
85.1% White	68.8%
11% African American	20%
0.6% Native American	0.6%
4.8% Hispanic	10.2%

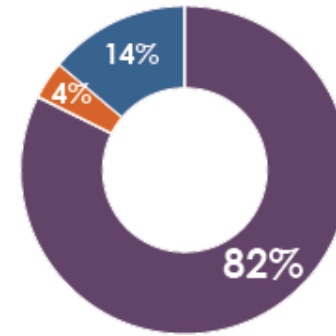


10,219

Total Housing Units

2,382

Housing Units in Seasonal Use (Including Short Term Rentals)



- Single-Family, Detached
- Single-Family, Attached
- Multi-Family

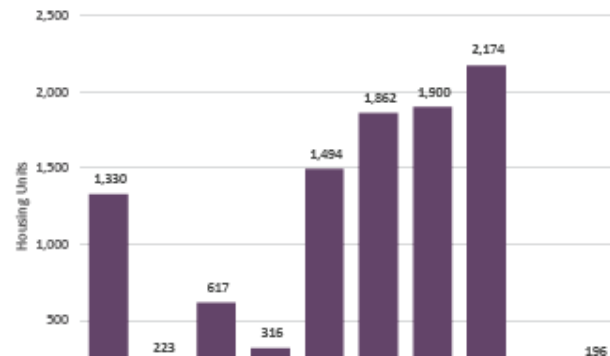
Median Home Value  
\$233,400  
Nelson

\$335,198  
Virginia

Median Gross Rent  
\$834  
Nelson

\$1,326  
Virginia

### Age of Housing Stock



## Housing

Housing in Nelson County is predominately single-family, detached houses — making up over 80% of the entire housing stock. The remaining 20% of the County's housing stock is primarily composed of manufactured housing with some multi-family dwellings, such as apartments or condominiums.

Nearly 40% of the County's housing stock is 30 years old or older. Production of new homes hit its high point between the years 2000 and 2009, after which construction of new homes drastically decreased in the County.

The combination of lack of dwelling types and new home construction has contributed to a housing shortage in the County and put additional financial strain on residents with housing insecurity. Primary among those are residents who do not own their home. Even though median rents in Nelson are lower than the rest of the state, nearly 40% of all renters in Nelson are cost-burdened (compared to roughly 30% statewide), meaning that the rent they pay makes up over one third of their household income.

Due to the aged housing stock in the County, many houses have fallen into disrepair and are no longer habitable or occupied. Of the over 10,000 housing units in the County, 3,821 of those are considered vacant housing with 2,328 housing units considered vacant and being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The remaining vacant units are either for rent, for sale, for migrant workers, or otherwise unoccupied. Due to the surge in popularity of tourism to the County, these unoccupied homes have increasingly been utilized as short-term rental homes as lodging for the County's many visitors.

Housing is further discussed in Chapter 5

## Our Vision

*Nelson is a thriving destination where people come for the natural beauty and stay for the opportunities and quality of life.*









# Chapter 6

## Protecting Valuable Resources

# Chapter Goal

*Nelson County will preserve its rural character and agricultural heritage by sustainably protecting and stewarding its natural and historic resources for future generations.*

# Big Ideas & Highlights



## Plan & Provide Equitably for Everyone

- Maintain environment for equal access by all



## Diversify & Bolster the Local Economy

- Sustain natural resources for tourism & agriculture



## Improve & Expand Vital Community Services

- Natural hazard mitigation & climate change resilience
- Water & sewer infrastructure that protects natural environment



## Protect & Connect to Our Rural Environment

- Environmental protection policies
- Invest in public trails & recreation
- Protection of ambient resources

# Focus Areas

## 1. Protect the Natural Environment

- a) Landscape & Geography
- b) Natural Habitats & Ecosystems
- c) Water Resources
- d) Ambient Resources

## 2. Preserve Rural Character & Heritage

- a) Agricultural Heritage
- b) Protected Landscapes
- c) Historic Resources

## 3. Plan for Resilience & Sustainability

- a) Climate Change
- b) Hazard Mitigation
- c) Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Sources

# Strategies

## Protecting the Natural Environment

### Landscape & Geography

1. Limit development on steep slopes to maintain balance between soil erosion and vegetation. Where disturbance is unavoidable, enforce erosion control measures to prevent unnecessary degradation.
2. Avoid the use of septic systems on steep slopes and unsuitable soils.

### Habitats & Ecosystems

3. Direct development and infrastructure away from ecologically environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Implement green infrastructure principles to preserve and connect habitats to support native species and wildlife.

### Water Resources

5. Support the use of low impact development and stormwater management practices to reduce nonpoint source pollution in local waterways.





# Chapter 8

## Serving the Community

# Chapter Goal

*Nelson County offers superior community services and facilities that serve all segments of the community, support economic development, and ensure community health and safety.*

# Big Ideas & Highlights



## Plan & Provide Equitably for Everyone

- Enhanced public safety, medical, & educational services
- Diverse recreation opportunities for all



## Diversify & Bolster the Local Economy

- Expanded educational & training opportunities



## Improve & Expand Vital Community Services

- Expansion of infrastructure services



## Protect & Connect to Our Rural Environment

- Improved trail networks
- Protect water resources



# Focus Areas

## 1. Enhance the Effectiveness & Transparency of County Government

- a) Governance
- b) County Administrative Facilities
- c) Public Safety

## 2. Improve Infrastructure to Support Sustainable Growth & Development

- a) Water & Sewer
- b) Refuse & Recycling
- c) Electricity & Natural Gas
- d) Telecommunications

## 3. Provide Quality Services that Improve Community Livability

- a) Education
- b) Parks & Recreation
- c) Community Centers
- d) Libraries
- e) Healthcare



# Strategies

## Goal Statement

Nelson County offers superior community services and facilities that support the community, support economic development, and ensure community

## Strategies:

Enhance the Effectiveness and Transparency of County Government

### Governance

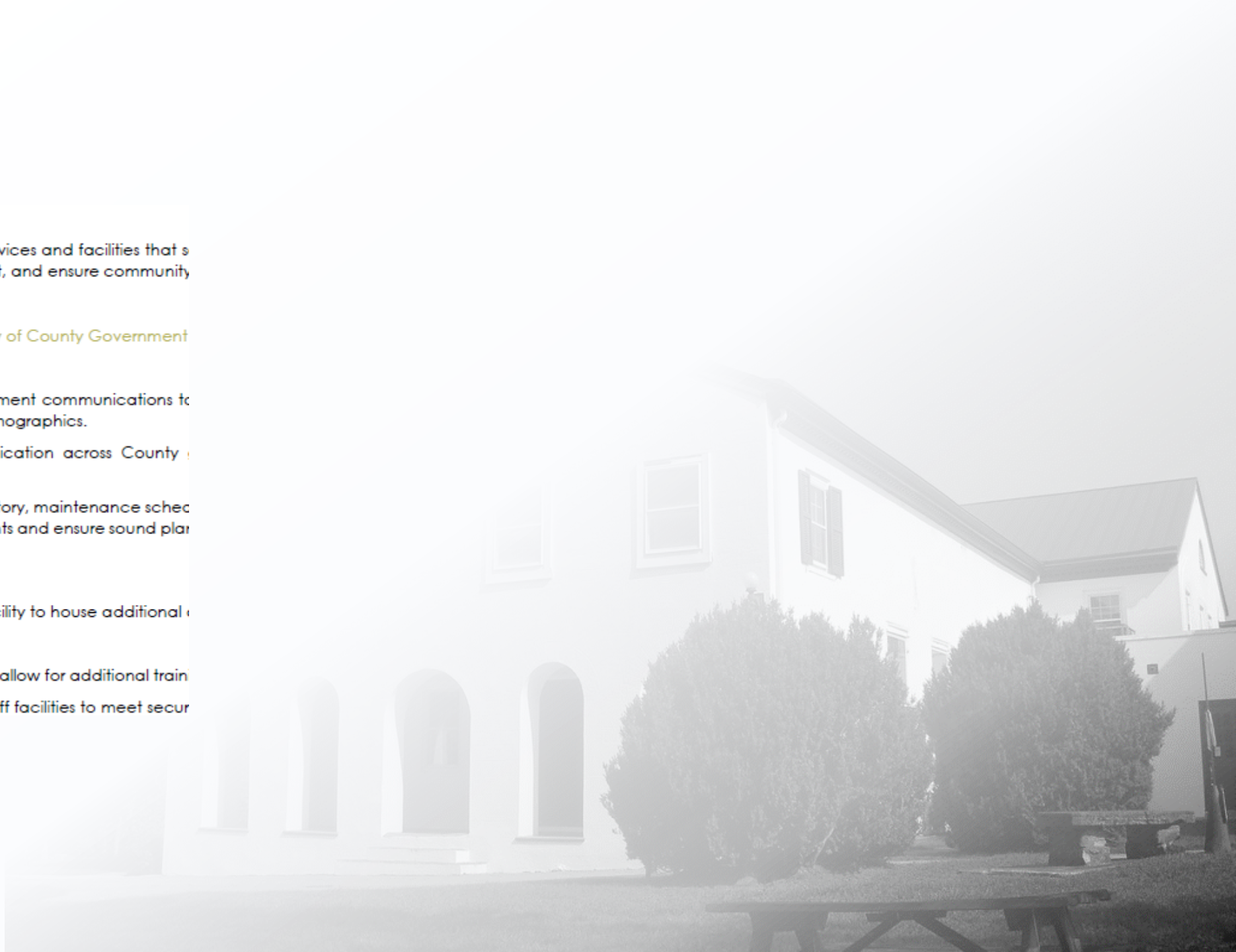
1. Expand and improve external government communications to increase transparency and public participation across all demographics.
2. Enhance interdepartmental communication across County Government to improve efficiency between the various public boards.
3. Create a comprehensive facility inventory, maintenance schedule, and standards to protect existing investments and ensure sound planning for future facility improvements.

### County Administrative Facilities

4. Construct a new, centrally located facility to house additional county administrative offices.

### Public Safety

5. Construct additional Sheriff facilities to allow for additional training and equipment.
6. Renovate and modernize current Sheriff facilities to meet security and operational needs.



# Next Steps

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Edits for Ch. 6 & Ch. 8, comments by  
1/27/2023



Worksession #3 on March 15



Review layout of Ch.6, Ch. 8  
Review content of Ch. 5, Ch. 7