

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1996 SESSION

## CHAPTER 585

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 15.1-427, 15.1-446.1 and 15.1-447 of the Code of Virginia, relating to comprehensive planning.*

[S 475]

Approved April 5, 1996

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 15.1-427, 15.1-446.1 and 15.1-447 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 15.1-427. Declaration of legislative intent.

This chapter is intended to encourage local governments to improve public health, safety, convenience and welfare of its citizens and to plan for the future development of communities to the end that transportation systems be carefully planned; that new community centers be developed with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; that the *need for mineral resources and the needs* of agriculture, industry and business be recognized in future growth; that residential areas be provided with healthy surrounding for family life; that agricultural and forestal land be preserved; and that the growth of the community be consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds.

§ 15.1-446.1. Comprehensive plan to be prepared and adopted; scope and purpose.

The local commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction.

Every governing body in this Commonwealth shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction by July 1, 1980.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

Such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan, including the location of existing or proposed recycling centers. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, *mineral resources*, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;

2. The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;

3. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;

4. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;

5. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;

6. An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, *mineral resource district maps* and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable; and

7. The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

§ 15.1-447. Surveys and studies to be made in preparation of plan; implementation of plan.

A. In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the local commission shall survey and study such matters as the following:

1. Use of land, preservation of agricultural and forestal land, production of food and fiber, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources,

historic areas, ground water, surface water, geologic factors, population factors, employment, environmental and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, transportation facilities, the need for affordable housing in both the locality and planning district within which it is situated, and any other matters relating to the subject matter and general purposes of the comprehensive plan.

However, if a locality chooses not to survey and study historic areas, then the locality shall include historic areas in the comprehensive plan, if such areas are identified and surveyed by the Department of Historic Resources. *Furthermore, if a locality chooses not to survey and study mineral resources, then the locality shall include mineral resources in the comprehensive plan, if such areas are identified and surveyed by the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy.*

2. Probable future economic and population growth of the territory and requirements therefor.

B. The comprehensive plan shall recommend methods of implementation and shall include a current map of the area covered by such comprehensive plan. Unless otherwise required by this chapter these may include but need not be limited to:

1. An official map;
2. A capital improvements program;
3. A subdivision ordinance; ~~and~~
4. A zoning ordinance and zoning district maps; *and*
5. *A mineral resource map.*

The requirement for the local commission to survey and study production of food and fiber in the preparation of a comprehensive plan shall not affect any comprehensive plan adopted prior to January 1, 1981.