

Introduction

Comprehensive Plans in General

The primary reason for having a comprehensive plan is to enable citizens, landowners, and local government officials to anticipate and to deal constructively with the changes that occur within our community and to guide these changes in order to achieve the type of community generally desired.

The comprehensive plan serves as both a planning tool and a vehicle through which citizens can express their goals for the future of James City County and through which county government can fairly, judiciously, and predictably work toward attaining those goals. The planning process clearly increases the likelihood that governmental decisions affecting the community's development will be based upon the aims and deliberations of the citizens, as opposed to narrow special interests, in conjunction with prescribed public services and anticipated extensions of those services.

James City County's 1997 Comprehensive Plan Methodology

In May 1995, the Board of Supervisors approved the methodology for James City County's update of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The process was modeled after the highly successful 1991 process and was viewed as a medium-scale update. The 1997 Comprehensive Plan update process proved to be an award-winner as well, honored with a NACo (National Association of Counties) Achievement Award in 1997.

The methodology divided the 18-month process into three parts—organization and data collection, public input, and plan drafting—although these parts overlapped each other from time to time. The organization and data collection period, approximately six months in length, allowed staff to research data and statistics on topics related to the Comprehensive Plan, such as population and economics. In addition, staff utilized this time to assemble citizen teams, train volunteer facilitators, develop a communications plan, create a citizen survey, and organize public meetings.

The extensive public input period started with the assembly of the Citizen Participation Team (CPT), a ten-member citizen group comprised of leaders throughout the community. With staff assistance, the CPT oversaw each of the three rounds of public meetings (ten meetings total) and took the lead in promoting the meetings in their communities. Volunteers facilitated small groups at each of the meetings, leading citizens through such initial questions as:

- What do you like about James City County?
- What do you dislike?
- What would you like to see in the future for JCC?

Subsequent meetings involved short presentations on top issues (water, schools, etc.) and question and answer periods. Later, citizens were asked to form a consensus on a series of specific questions. The citizen survey and other forms of public input were folded into the output from the public meetings. The CPT specifically approved the written summaries of citizen comments from each meeting.

The data and statistics gathered in the first part of the process, as well as the public input gathered in the second part, informed the third part of plan drafting. Staff wrote technical reports on each of the Comprehensive Plan sections using collected data and public input for background information and to shape the goals, objectives, and strategies (GOS). With the conclusion of the public input period, the CPT completed its work. At this time, the Steering Committee (SC), made up of four members of the Planning Commission, a Board member, and a CPT member, began meeting weekly to review the technical reports and ultimately, to approve the text of each section.

After the SC's work was completed, the draft Comprehensive Plan was presented to citizens in a public meeting, and then presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration. At both the Planning Commission and Board levels there was considerable public debate prior to adoption.

In terms of resources, this medium-scale update process was quite intensive. Over a period of 18 months, two staff planners and a principal planner spent nearly 75% of their time on the update; three other staff planners spent approximately 25% of their time on the project; and the Director of Planning, the Development Manager, another principal planner, and several unpaid interns devoted significant amounts of time to the update as well. Staff from the Communications office and Human Resources Division devoted resources to assist in various aspects of the plan. In addition to these staff resources, the Board approved a full-time temporary staff member, two paid interns (*total of three additional temporary employees*), and more than \$21,000 for advertisements, a transportation consultant, a survey, and publication of the plan.

Conclusions

The community made significant investments in developing the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and in building upon it during the 1997 review. Since that time, staff has been working diligently toward implementing the strategies of the plan such as revising the Zoning Ordinance and promoting growth management policies. Such work items as Purchase of Development Rights and the Open/Greenspace Plan continue to consume staff time and efforts.

As alluded in the cover memo, staff believes that an extensive update of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan is not necessary. No policies or strategies of the plan have been found to have fundamental flaws nor have these sections of the plan become outdated. In fact, many of the policies and strategies will take on increased importance as the County continues to grow in the new millennium. Example of these include recognizing agricultural and forestal activities as significant contributors to the local economy, recommending clustered residential development above one unit per acre, and generally recommending that growth and development decisions consider the sustainability and improvement of the County's resources and high quality of life.

For these reasons, staff concludes that in any future comprehensive plan methodology approach, the process should be shorter in duration and more tightly focused than in previous years. The review process would be a further fine-tuning of issues previously identified by citizens during the 1997 Comprehensive Plan as well as an opportunity to verify agreement on existing strategies. Simplification of technical reports and concentration of public input efforts would constitute some of the changes from previous processes. Carried over into the new review process would be a citizen survey, small group citizen discussions, and an emphasis on user-friendliness by continuing to make the plan available online and by limiting the length of the plan.

Survey of Other Jurisdictions

Purpose

To obtain a wide perspective of what types of comprehensive plan methodologies other jurisdictions in Virginia are currently using, staff contacted the following localities:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Comprehensive Plan Methodology</u>
Albemarle County	Staff Driven
Chesterfield County	Staff Driven
City of Falls Church	Staff Driven
City of Hampton	Staff Driven
Loudoun County	Staff & Consultant Driven
City of Suffolk	Consultant Guided
City of Virginia Beach	Staff Driven
City of Newport News	Staff Driven
City of Williamsburg	Consultant Guided
York County	Staff Driven

The cities of Hampton and Newport News were selected because of the youth elements in their comprehensive plans, a section identified to be incorporated into James City County's next comprehensive plan. The City of Virginia Beach was selected because of its public input process while Loudoun County was selected because it is in the midst of its comprehensive plan update process. Other jurisdictions were selected because of their known work with consultants or for not working with consultants at all.

One interesting fact that was common in all jurisdictions is that there is a liberal interpretation of the State mandate that all comprehensive plans be reviewed every five years. Many of the jurisdictions that just updated their comprehensive plans in the late 1990's, for example the City of Falls Church, are not considering beginning the update process until five years after the adoption of their current comprehensive plans. James City County is the only jurisdiction that is discussing the update process prior to the State mandate that comprehensive plans be reviewed every five years. Several other jurisdictions are updating their comprehensive plans which are ten years old.

Another interesting issue common to many of the jurisdictions is that staff finds their current comprehensive plan to be too cumbersome to work easily with on a daily basis. This includes the City of Williamsburg and Chesterfield County, each of which are considering shortening their comprehensive plan in their next update.

Staff Driven Comprehensive Plan Examples

City of Hampton

The City of Hampton is currently in the process of updating its 1989 plan. The update began in January 1999 with a goal of adoption by December 2001. Staff is undertaking nearly 100% of the work effort, although a consultant is being used to provide guidance and training for facilitation of public input. Updating the Comprehensive Plan is the primary responsibility of four staff planners, and one planner estimates that they spend an average of 75% of their time on this responsibility.

Thus far, the city has no specific adopted methodology; however, the first element of the plan is nearing completion. The city is close to adopting a list of Core Community Values which will be used as an organizing element for the plan, and more importantly, as a filter for decision-making. Staff has drafted the list of values based on public input, tested the draft with focus groups, and is presenting the list at community group meetings.

One important element to the methodology will be a continuation of youth involvement in the plan. Since 1997, the city has employed two youth planners to coordinate this effort. Working 15 hours a week at a rate of \$10 an hour, these high school students perform many of the same duties as planners, including researching, writing, and preparing recommendations on youth planning issues. Their projects ranged from surveying teens on their use of public facilities to recreation programs and improving bikeway safety (which resulted in ordinance amendments). They will also be responsible for the Comprehensive Plan section on youth. The youth are supervised by a staff member and report to a 20-member Youth Commission. The youth planners created the commission, consisting of other youth, as a sounding board and source of input. City planners, the Planning Commission, and council members are enthusiastic about the youth planners, and their success has been recognized statewide with an award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association.

City of Virginia Beach

In November 1997, the City of Virginia Beach completed an 18-month comprehensive plan update process. The public input component of the plan was very strong and is believed to be one of the top reasons the Comprehensive Plan process received an annual award from the Virginia American Planning Association. Five comprehensive planners devoted approximately 60% to 70% of their time for one to two years to complete the plan, with strong involvement from the Chief of Comprehensive Planning and the Planning Director. No consultants were used.

The update process was launched with 17 public open houses sponsored throughout the city. Several additional stakeholder meetings provided input as well. The open houses typically started with a video entitled *Why Plan?* and participants were served light refreshments and listened to opening remarks from the area's Planning Commission member. Each person received a report card on which he or she could grade his or her satisfaction with various services or policies (land use, etc.). The citizens then broke into small groups where they discussed the following questions:

1. What are the top three reasons why you think Virginia Beach is a good place to live?
2. What are the top three reasons why you think your community is a good place to live?
(Community was purposefully not defined.)
3. What changes would you make?

The small groups reported back to the larger group before the close of the meeting. The stakeholder group meetings used a very similar format, only on a smaller scale.

Six to twelve months later, staff held four additional meetings in which they reported back the citizens' top five answers to the questions. From the previous input, staff prepared *A Shared Vision* and other documents to share with the citizens at these meetings. Also created was the *Agenda for Future Actions*, a list of 47 items for the city to undertake to implement the plan. Examples of actions included preparation of corridor plans and various provisions to protect open space. City planners consider this to be an essential part of the plan, and in fact, the agenda has been a focal point for staff effort since the adoption of the plan. The plan can be found on their website, and there are no immediate plans for another update.

Albemarle County

Albemarle County has been working on the update of its 1989 Comprehensive Plan since 1994. Staff has undertaken 100% of the workload, with the exception of a telephone survey which the Center for Public Service conducted. Four comprehensive planners and a division chief are the responsible parties for the update; however, their time has been largely shifted to current planning and other planning items.

To make the update effort feasible, the process included limited public input other than the survey and a division of the plan into sections. The Planning Department is responsible for four sections (Land Use, Natural Resources and Cultural Assets, Rural Areas, and Development Areas Initiatives), while other departments are responsible for other plans (i.e., Human Services Plan), which are incorporated by reference. The Land Use section and Natural

Resource sections are the only ones adopted at this time; however, staff expects the Rural Areas section to be completed over the next year, with adoption occurring the following year.

City Of Falls Church

Falls Church is an independent city lying just a few miles from the national capital. This proximity has been a major influence on its development, especially over the last century. Falls Church is small in area (now 2.2 square miles) and population (9,578 in 1990), but its heritage predates America's colonial era.

The City of Falls Church adopted their comprehensive plan in 1997, but it was not published until 2000. Layout issues caused the delay because the 1997 Comprehensive Plan was a major update and the plan grew from 30 pages to over 300 pages. Consultants were used in the initial part of the comprehensive plan review process to help complete a city inventory. Approximately \$40,000 was budgeted from city revenues with an additional \$14,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation grant specifically allocated for the environmental section updates. This money was quickly used and staff wrote the majority of the comprehensive plan.

After talking to staff at the City of Falls Church, their opinion about their next update in 2002 was that consultants were useful during the initial phase for visionary thinking, but it was easier to write the plan with in-house staff. The learning curve for the consultants was cited as being too great. If the planning staff is focused on other projects at the time of the next rewrite, temporary contract workers will probably be hired to focus strictly on the comprehensive plan update.

Chesterfield County

In 1980, consultants developed Chesterfield County's comprehensive plan by subdividing the county into five land use planning areas. Current staff dedicated to long range planning, which includes the comprehensive plan amendments, has continually modified the plan. Each year the Planning Commission and planning staff review the comprehensive plan and update a section. For example, in February 2000, only the introduction was amended. According to staff, there are now twenty-five land use planning areas with conflicting land use plan definitions that have made the comprehensive plan a challenge to implement.

The most innovative aspect about Chesterfield County's comprehensive plan is that plans are underway to release the comprehensive plan on compact disc. The discs are produced in house, taking only a few minutes to make at a nominal cost. The disc will be on sale to the public for a fraction of what a printed copy of the Chesterfield County comprehensive plan costs. In addition to the environmental benefits, citizens, teachers and developers can access the plan on their own and it is easy to incorporate into computer-generated documents.

City of Newport News

The City of Newport News completed a major update to its comprehensive plan in 1993 after a 4 ½ -year process. The process, *Framework for the Future*, was largely staff driven, with citizen input coming from five 30-member task forces (including a youth task force) that directed the comprehensive plan sections. In addition, the city utilized an oversight committee with Planning Commission representation to tie the various pieces together. Four staff planners and two principal planners devoted an average of 60% of their time to the effort. Each staff planner was responsible for his or her physical division of the City as well as other assigned sections.

The Newport News planning staff is nearing completion of a 14-month update to the *Framework of the Future*. For the update, the task forces were resurrected and given the responsibility of reviewing and updating the sections with a schedule of one section per month. The final draft is being printed at this time and will be presented to the citizens, Planning Commission, and City Council this fall. Overall, staff's opinion is that their experience with the Youth Task Force was very positive. However, one of the staff planners commented that for the next comprehensive plan update, she like to draw more from Hampton's example and hire youth for a larger role.

York County

The Board of Supervisors adopted York County's comprehensive plan in October 1999 after a three-year minor update. Preliminary review of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan began in 1996 with the creation of a 16-member review committee comprised of citizens, Planning Commission members, and representatives from the business community, the School Board, and the Board of Supervisors. The committee oversaw the gathering of public input, which was accomplished largely through a citizen survey and four public meetings. After this six-month public input period, the review committee met weekly to revise the goals, strategies and policy statements. Staff then updated the narrative, compiled the new plan, and presented the plan for adoption.

Four comprehensive planners undertook nearly 100% of the work effort for the update, although a consultant was utilized for two of the public input meetings. Over the three-year timeframe, a staff planner estimates they spent roughly 10% to 80% of their time on the comprehensive plan update.

Staff and Consultant Driven Comprehensive Plan Examples

Loudoun County

Loudoun County is halfway through its yearlong process of updating their comprehensive plan. Due to unprecedented growth pressures from the county population nearly doubling during the last decade, environmental quality, traffic, public facilities and in particular, land use are key concerns to citizens, developers and government officials. To help deflect repetitive questions from the front office staff regarding the status of the update, there are direct links on the Loudoun County website about all aspects of the comprehensive plan review/update process. These links include general background information, smart growth principals, project timeframe, citizen input opportunities, minutes and conclusions from public hearing, and preliminary reports. One drawback about these links is that due to the set up and design of the website, some critical graphics and information from the site do not print. Additionally to help with communication between the planning staff, citizens and developers, there are various Comprehensive Plan update informational meetings repeated at different times and locations throughout the county.

Loudoun County's last comprehensive plan was approved in 1990, which included a citizen survey. For the 2000 Comprehensive Plan review, three public forums were held instead throughout the county that achieved similar results as the 1990 citizen survey. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan Review contains a minor update of some sections while other sections are essentially being rewritten, in particular the controversial land use policies for Loudoun County's Rural, Suburban and Transition areas.

The workload is fairly evenly split between consultants and staff. However, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors recently approved six additional positions to help with increased workload so that now there is a total of 35 positions in the Planning Department. The three consulting firms hired to focus on specific areas include Kellerco, Strategic Land Planning, Inc. and Herd Associates. Since the review process is currently on going, the consultant costs are not available at this time. There has been some criticism from local developers about wasting money on consultant fees. Among the staff, there is no conclusive opinion as of yet about the quality of work being done by the consultants or if consultants will be used in the future reviews.

Consultant Guided Comprehensive Plan Examples

City of Suffolk

The City of Suffolk completed its review and update of their comprehensive plan in 1999 utilizing consultants for nearly the entire project. L.D.R. International Consultants from Columbia, Maryland was the primary consulting firm utilized, but they in turn hired other sub-consultants for specific sections of the plan, for example transportation. Planning staff credits their success with using consultants because of the close interaction between the two. Elected officials and staff guided the consultants through the process, and were clear on their goals of rewriting key sections about growth control and public facility usage. In turn, the consultants were adaptable to the changes in the plan as they developed. Staff was pleased with the broad breadth of knowledge that the consultants brought to the project and would recommend using primarily consultants to update their next plan.

City Of Williamsburg

The City of Williamsburg has used consultants to update the majority of their last five comprehensive plans. The Cox Company was hired to update the majority of their comprehensive plan in 1989 as well as their most recent update approved by the City Council on July 9, 1998. However, it was not until the summer of 2000 that the comprehensive plan document was finalized and released to the public. According to Reed Nester, Planning Director, there were some issues with the consultants that delayed obtaining the release as well as the time-consuming process of computerizing and updating the City Maps. An intern from Jamestown High School was used to complete the mapping portion on AutoCAD. Consultant fees for the most recent update exceeded \$125,000.

During conversations with Reed Nester, he offered several other opinions about the most recent comprehensive plan. First, the current comprehensive plan is too cumbersome at over 400 pages. The City charges \$65.00 per copy. A summary report is currently being compiled that is approximately 50 pages and will cost \$10 to \$15 per copy. The summary plan will be posted on the Internet after completion and approval. Mr. Nester hopes to reduce the next comprehensive plan to approximately 100-150 pages by shifting the focus of the comprehensive plan to a general guide instead of the current plan's tendency to detail every land use possibility for specific areas within the city. Additionally at the time of the next review, the City of Williamsburg will essentially be developed with a new focus on redevelopment.

Mr. Nester is also considering not using consultants to update the majority of the next comprehensive plan. Instead he is considering hiring a planner on a temporary contract whose primary responsibility would be to guide the comprehensive plan through a structured two-year start, approval, and publication process. Mr. Nester believes that using consultants can provide new alternatives to old issues, but the use of computers and Internet has diminished this benefit. Finally, interns would be utilized more for the next comprehensive plan update.

Three Options for James City County Comprehensive Plan Methodology

Introduction

We have identified three options for James City County's comprehensive plan methodology that are based on varying degrees of work completed by the Planning staff and consultants. The three options are explained and critiqued on the basis that the update process would begin in November of 2001 and there would be a full-scale review of the comprehensive plan, similar to the 1997 update. Each option would incorporate a Citizen Participation Team that would report to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. **The three Comprehensive Plan methodology options are:**

- I. Staff Driven Comprehensive Plan**
- II. Equal Combination Of Staff/Consultant Driven Comprehensive Plan**
- III. Consultant Guided Comprehensive Plan.**

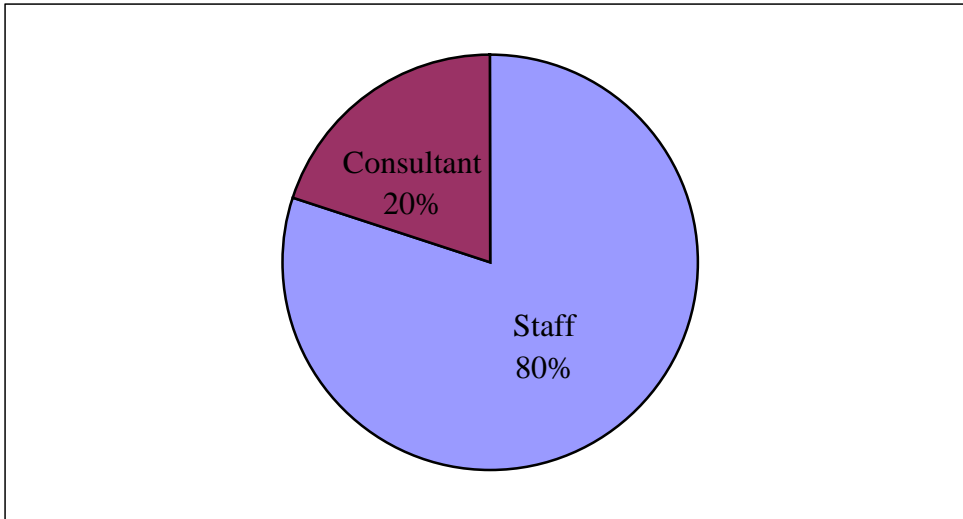
Each proposed methodology is explained on the following pages using a series of graphs and charts on the following topics:

- Workload Ratio
- Workload Division
- Estimated Cost
- Benefits & Challenges
- Proposed Methodology Score

This format will allow for easy comparison between the methodologies.

Proposed Methodology I: Staff Driven Comprehensive Plan

Workload Ratio:



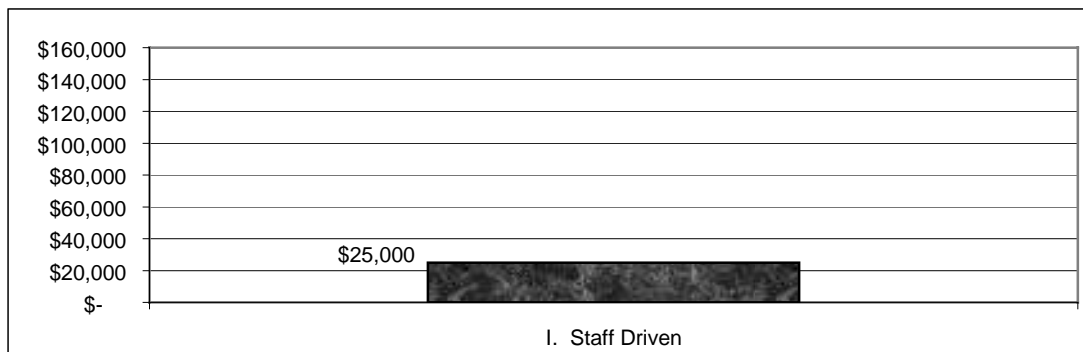
Workload Division:

Staff: Existing planning staff would have the primary responsibility of conducting public hearings, guiding the community participation team, staffing and presenting materials to the technical team, and writing the comprehensive plan. Additional temporary staff would be needed.

Consultants would complete some of the more technical sections of the comprehensive plan such as the transportation section.

Citizen Participation: The Planning Commission would appoint a Community Participation Team (CPT) that would be responsible for overseeing citizen participation during the review process. The CPT would report to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee composed of four Planning Commission members, one Supervisor from the Board and one citizen member from the CPT.

Estimated Consultant Costs:



**Based upon actual costs for the 1997 James City County Comprehensive Plan update.*

Proposed Methodology I: Staff Driven Comprehensive Plan, continued

Benefits & Challenges

Benefits

1. Utilizes the experience of a senior staff of which each member has lived in the County and worked for the County for over ten years.
2. Allows for more immediate, direct influence by citizens, developers, and elected officials.
3. The County would save on consultant fees as compared to other methodologies.

Challenges

1. By not utilizing the expertise of consultants, some unique and innovative ideas might not be incorporated into the comprehensive plan.
2. Staff has biases based on previous experiences.
3. Enormous time constraints would be placed upon the existing planning staff to update the comprehensive plan and maintain the current level of customer service expected on current planning projects.
4. Due to the high demand of staff time, **virtually all of the other planning projects would be put on hold until the update was completed.**
5. As evidenced by the staff driven proposals of other jurisdictions explained in this report, it is very challenging for staff to maintain a commitment to updating the comprehensive plan. Any number of internal priorities can shift and new tasks are regularly given to the internal staff which frequently delays completion of longer term projects.

A benefit or challenge depending on your point of view:

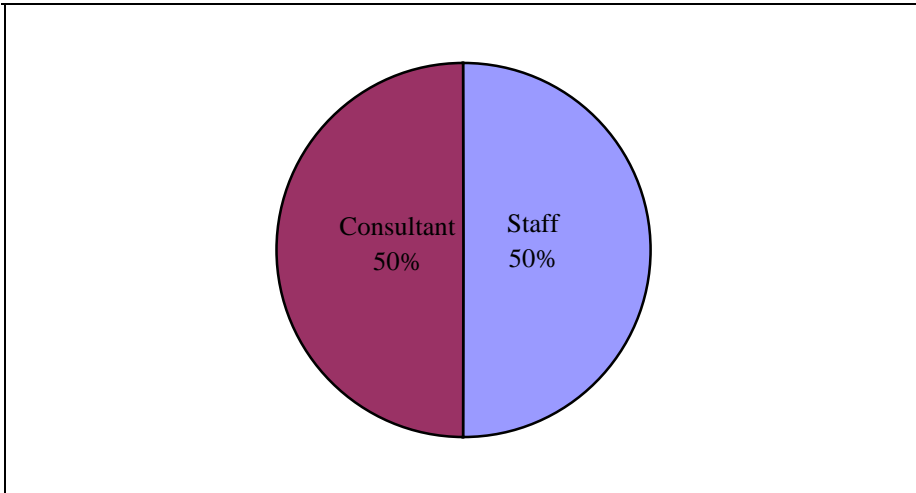
1. The quality of the final product.
2. The consultant may be more objective.
3. Planning staff is more politically attuned.

Staff Driven Comprehensive Plan Score

	Low	Medium	High
Staff Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additional Costs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depth of Detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Proposed Methodology II:
Equal Combination of Staff/Consultant Driven Comprehensive Plan**

Workload Ratio:



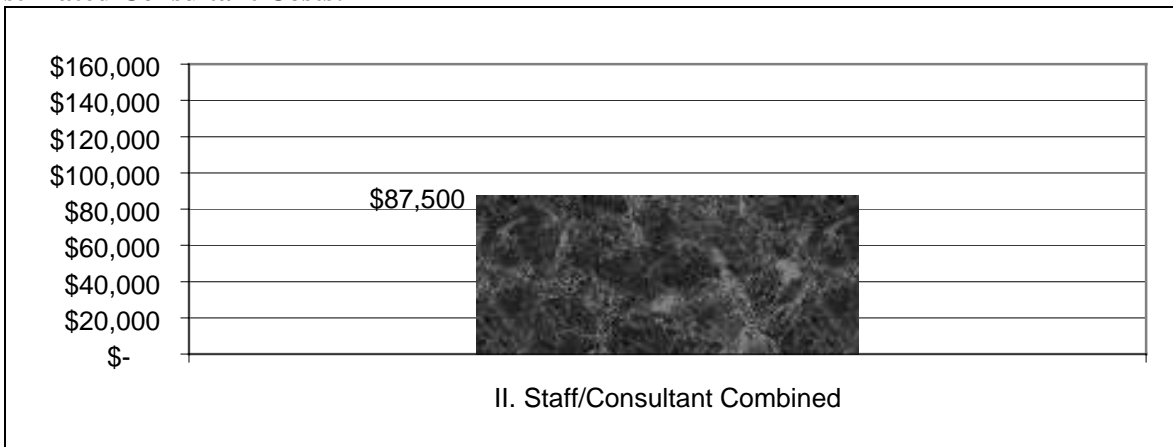
Workload Division:

Staff: Existing planning staff would split their time between managing consultants and writing sections of the comprehensive plan such as rural lands and land use.

Consultants would orchestrate the citizen survey; conduct public meetings; work with youths as well as write the more technical sections of the comprehensive plan such as transportation, environment and economics.

Citizen Participation: The Planning Commission would appoint a Community Participation Team (CPT) that would be responsible for overseeing citizen participation during the review process. The CPT would report to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee composed of four Planning Commission members, one Supervisor from the Board and one citizen member from the CPT. A consultant management subcommittee composed of citizens appointed by the Planning Commission and Planning staff would work directly with consultants on a day to day basis, and representatives would report to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Estimated Consultant Costs:



**Average of Methodology I & III estimated costs.*

**Proposed Methodology II:
Equal Combination of Staff/Consultant Driven Comprehensive Plan, continued**

Benefits & Challenges

Benefits

1. Utilizes the experience of senior staff in key sections of the plan.
2. Utilizes the expertise of consultants on specific topics, but still allows for direct input from citizens, developers and County officials.
3. Part of the planning staff would be able to remain focused on current planning.

Challenges

1. Combination of staff and consultants working together could be very ambiguous with no clear responsibilities or a definitive leader.
2. Staff time would be split between overseeing consultants, coordinating consultant/citizen meetings as well as updating portions of the comprehensive plan.
3. Due to the demands on staff time, **most other planning projects would be put on hold until the update was completed.** The limited list of projects to be completed while updating the comprehensive plan would need to be carefully reviewed and prioritized by the Board of Supervisors.
4. Increased time educating the public as to who is working on what sections with risks of complaints due to this confusion.
5. Increased consultant costs as compared to Methodology I without clear benefits, such as significantly freeing staff time to work on current planning or other projects.

A benefit or challenge depending on your point of view:

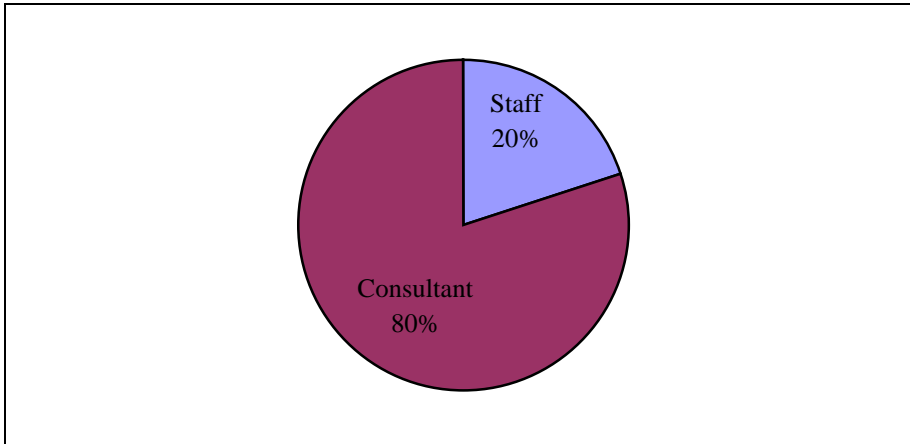
1. The quality of the final product.
2. The consultant may be more objective.
3. Planning staff is more politically attuned.

Staff/Consultant Driven Comprehensive Plan Score

	Low	Medium	High
Staff Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depth of Detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Methodology III: Consultant Guided Comprehensive Plan

Workload Ratio:



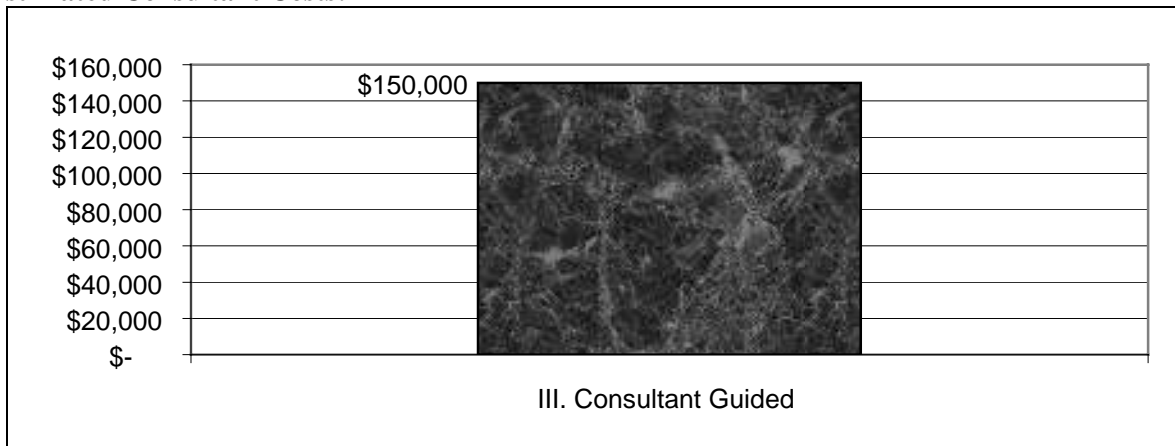
Workload Division

Staff: Existing planning staff would primarily hire outside consultants and coordinate their work.

Consultants would conduct a citizen survey, organize public meetings and write the majority of the comprehensive plan update including transportation, youth element, rural lands, economics, community character and land use sections.

Citizen Participation: The Planning Commission would appoint a Community Participation Team (CPT) that would be responsible for overseeing citizen participation during the review process. The CPT would report to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee composed of four Planning Commission members, one Supervisor from the Board and one citizen member from the CPT. Multiple consultant management subcommittees composed of citizens appointed by the Planning Commission and Planning staff would work directly with the various consultants on a day to day basis with representatives reporting to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Estimated Consultant Costs:



**Estimate based upon the City of Williamsburg's comprehensive plan update costs.*

Proposed Methodology III: Consultant Guided Comprehensive Plan, continued

Benefits & Challenges

Benefits

1. Utilizes a combination of consultants who are experts in their given fields who would be able to provide a fresh perspective on old issues. Senior County staff would make suggestions, but the final product would be done by the consultants.
2. Staff time would largely be devoted to supervising the consultants, ensuring that contractual obligations were met, and reporting on overall progress to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Challenges

1. Managing and controlling the quality of the final product.
2. Does not ensure the experience of senior staff will be utilized or reflected in the final product.
3. Citizens may be more skeptical and/or more critical of the final plan generated by consultants who do not live in their unique community.
4. Due to the demands on staff time for consultant management, **some of the other planning projects would be put on hold until the update was completed.** The list of projects to be completed while updating the comprehensive plan would need to be carefully reviewed and prioritized by the Board of Supervisors.
5. The high cost of updating this comprehensive plan as compared to previous updates may be objectionable to citizens especially give the current level of staff resources and the previous success of the internally prepared comprehensive plan updates.

A benefit or challenge depending on your point of view:

1. The quality of the final product.
2. The consultant may be more objective.
3. Planning staff is more politically attuned.

Consultant Guided Comprehensive Plan Score

	Low	Medium	High
Staff Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Depth of Detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conclusions & Recommendations

General Conclusions

- 1) The current James City County comprehensive plan is not broken philosophically nor is in need of a major overhaul at this time. It is a fundamentally solid plan with much consideration, thought and work put into its development. The majority of citizens support the current Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) The comprehensive plan is a long-term growth management tool. For the comprehensive plan to work most efficiently, it needs time for the standards and guidelines to be implemented through various programs, policies and current zoning cases. Staff will soon be bringing more of these programs forward to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. By adhering to a rigid five-year schedule in the past, staff has had at most, three years to implement the Comprehensive Plan strategies between updates. Most of this interim period has been consumed by updates to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance. A longer period of time would allow other critical strategies to be implemented.
- 3) James City County is not behind other jurisdictions in updating its plan. In reality, we are one of the leaders in the Commonwealth for consistently updating the comprehensive plan.
- 4) Many other localities use a liberal interpretation of the state code requiring a five-year review of the comprehensive plan. Few complete a major review in five years and none that staff is aware of complete a major update in less than five years.
- 5) There is a higher workload on the Planning staff right now between the large current planning caseload, Comprehensive Plan projects that need to be implemented, annual Planning projects, special requests by the Board of Supervisors, and other projects with which the Planning Division becomes involved. These projects include:

1997 Comprehensive Plan Projects to Implement

- 1) Architectural Inventory
- 2) Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department (CBLAD) Plan Amendments
- 3) Development Potential Analysis
- 4) Greenways Master Plan
- 5) Open Space Acquisition Program
- 6) Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)
- 7) Reservoir Protection Overlay District (RPOD) Ordinance
- 8) Rural Lands

Annual/Ongoing Planning Projects, Programs & Commitments

- 9) 2020 PATS Plan
- 10) Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) Advisory Committee
- 11) Board of Zoning Appeals
- 12) Budget
- 13) Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
- 14) Historic Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 15) Historical Commission
- 16) HRPDC Transportation Technical Committee
- 17) Landscape Planning Projects
- 18) Primary Roads Plan
- 19) Secondary Roads Plan
- 20) Strategic Management Plan

- 21) Traffic Counts
- 22) Virginia Association of Zoning Officials (VAZO)
- 23) Williamsburg/Jamestown Airport Committee
- 24) Workload Indicators/Performance Summary Report
- 25) 2000 Census

Other Projects the Planning Division Is Involved in, Including Board Of Supervisor Requests

- 26) 3rd High School Site Selection
 - 27) Big Box Retail in James City County
 - 28) Cash Proffer Policy
 - 29) Jamestown Subarea Study in conjunction with Jamestown 2007
 - 30) Powhatan Creek Watershed Management Plan
 - 31) Route 199 & Jamestown Road Intersection Study
- 6) A full scale comprehensive plan review is expensive both in staff time and costs. Regardless of the number of consultants used, there are basic tangible expenses that will be incurred such as:
- 1) Staff salary
 - 2) Temporary Staff/Interns
 - 3) Printing
 - 4) Advertising

Additional intangible costs include staff time and citizen interest. In the list above, there are other multiple projects that can be completed in the next year that would have immediate results seen by the public. An immediate full scale update of the comprehensive plan would delay many of these projects.

Recommendations

- 1) Staff recommends that there not be a full-scale update similar to what was done in 1991 or 1997, but instead a shorter revisit to update the Comprehensive Plan. The revisit would take approximately six to nine months depending on the scope of work and the number of consultants used.
- 2) Staff recommends that the revisit would not officially begin until November of 2001; with some advanced legwork beginning earlier, such as the CBLAD plan requirements. This proposed timeline would allow for staff to complete work on other critical projects such as PDR, RPOD, and the Greenways Master Plan, and for the U.S. Census Bureau to release the 2000 Census data. The 2000 Census data needs to be incorporated into the next compressive plan not only because it will be the most accurate data available, but the data is expected to contain important information such as changes in socio-economic characteristics and commuting patterns.
- 3) Staff recommends a focus on these critical elements during the revisit:
 - ◆ Citizen participation would remain a priority but would be more concentrated through a citizen survey, a single round of community conversation meetings, and by citizens serving on some committees.

3) Continued:

- ◆ Using a combination of staff and/or consultants the following sections would be incorporated into the comprehensive plan:
 - ◆ Youth Element
 - ◆ Rural Lands
 - ◆ Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
- ◆ There would be Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Citizen Participation Team and some consultant subcommittees determined by the number of consultants hired.
- ◆ General update of all statistics in the comprehensive plan based upon the 2000 Census.
- ◆ General update of the transportation element of the comprehensive plan based upon the current PATS plan.

4) Staff recommends the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors decide if there is one model they prefer for the next comprehensive plan methodology: staff driven, half and half, or consultant guided. Furthermore, staff recommends that it be given an opportunity to then fine-tune the selected model and return to the Planning Commission with a more thorough version for final action. The Planning Commission would give direction on the scope of work at that time.