

Community Vision

The Comprehensive Plan helps Town officials make decisions today with an eye towards the future. A compelling vision that represents the desires of our community is therefore a critical component of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. The community vision below represents how we together envision Abingdon in the year 2040, and from it flow the goals, policies, and actions laid out in this plan.

Abingdon in 2040

Abingdon will be a community where residents want to stay and visitors want to return. Through the cooperative efforts of citizens, businesses, and government the Town in 2040 will be:

- ☀ **A Small Town with Big Quality of Life:** Abingdon will have a diverse economy with plenty of jobs that support a family because we have focused on creating a high quality of life, which attracts talented people and prosperous businesses.
- ☀ **Southwest Virginia’s Intersection of Arts and Nature:** Abingdon will continue to support its arts and cultural institutions, while growing and promoting outdoor recreation, to attract more tourists and enrich the lives of residents, young and old.
- ☀ **A Town that Helps Businesses Start Up and Soar:** The Town will support businesses through its regulations, operations, and marketing, becoming a magnet for entrepreneurs and a place where they prosper for the long-term.
- ☀ **A Place that Embraces Preservation and Progress:** Abingdon will be both historic and renewed. The Town will encourage well-planned development to provide spaces for new business and activities, and resources needed to maintain historic sites.
- ☀ **A Connected, Walkable and Bikeable Small Town:** Abingdon’s streets will be well connected, well served by public transit and safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages, and everyone will have easy access to nature via an extensive trail network connected to the Creeper Trail.
- ☀ **Providing Housing for Every Stage of Life:** The Town will have a wide range of housing types and most growth will be accommodated through infill development close to shops and everyday needs, which reduces traffic.
- ☀ **A Town of Complete Neighborhoods:** Abingdon will have a thriving downtown, and will be known for more than Main Street. We will have distinct neighborhoods with a mix of land uses, allowing people to learn, play, and work near their homes.
- ☀ **A Place where Everyone Feels Welcome and Included:** People will feel connected to their neighbors, have ample opportunities to participate in the Town’s governance, and feel confident that nearly anything is possible in Abingdon.

Goals

The Town’s goals, summarized in this section, build on Abingdon’s vision for 2040 and expand the vision into a series of ideal end states that the Town aims to achieve by 2040. The goals and vision together are critical lenses for evaluating policies the Town may adopt and actions it may take to ensure that they are all heading in the same direction and building towards the long-term desired future.

The goals and vision are closely related, although the latter is more general and aspirational in spirit. The goals describe **what** Abingdon wants to accomplish; the vision describes **why** Abingdon wants to take steps to accomplish these goals. Goals can also be accompanied by objectives, which are more specific and measurable statements of what the Town is aiming to accomplish. Finally, the vision and goals also shape the policies and actions that are listed throughout this plan. Policies and actions together are **how** the Town will accomplish its goals and realize its vision. The figure below explains each of these critical pieces and how they fit together.

Table 1 – Relationship between the Vision, Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Actions in a Comprehensive Plan

WHY	WHAT	HOW
Vision – An aspirational and big picture statement of what the Town wants to be in the long-term.	Goals – General descriptions of what the Town aims to accomplish by 2040	Policies – Rules or guidelines for decision making that help the Town achieve its goals.
	Objectives – More specific and measurable statements of what the Town aims to accomplish between 2020 and 2040.	Actions – Steps the Town may take to achieve its goals.

The Town developed the vision and goals described in this chapter based on the values and concerns expressed by citizens through a citizen survey in early 2019 and during a community meeting on May 7, 2019. A project steering committee developed the vision statement and goals using this public input and recommended the draft versions of each to the Planning Commission and Town Council for adoption.

The Town has established goals for each element of the Comprehensive Plan. The subsequent chapters for each Comprehensive Plan element lay out more specific policies and actions for achieving the goals. It is important to emphasize the role of partnerships in achieving these goals. The Town will rely on public-private partnerships; a committed citizenry; and civic, business, and government leaders to accomplish these goals.

COMMUNITY ELEMENT	GOALS
<p>People, Neighborhoods, and Land Use</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abingdon will achieve well planned, steady, orderly growth by building on our assets of a walkable town and high quality of life. 2. Abingdon’s neighborhoods will be attractive, safe, and offer a range of housing types that meet the needs of people across the income spectrum. 3. New development will be compatible with Abingdon’s traditional architecture and design character by employing traditional town design principles that encourage walkable neighborhoods and a mix of land uses. 4. Abingdon will accommodate most new growth through infill development of vacant or underutilized parcels, and reuse of existing buildings. 5. The Town’s significant historic structures will be preserved and occupied by new uses that have helped to make their preservation economically viable while contributing to a vibrant downtown. 6. The Town will make clear its preferred form of development and use of land in all areas of the Town, and look to its Comprehensive Plan to guide development-related decisions. 7. The Town’s zoning and development standards will reflect the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
<p>Transportation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. It will be safe and easy for anyone to pedal, roll, stroll, or drive on Abingdon’s streets through tamed traffic and expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities. 9. Abingdon’s street network will provide more route options for people to travel within and through the Town, to alleviate traffic congestion on major streets by aligning street design, law enforcement, and education to reduce speeding and truck traffic in the Town’s historic district and on Main Street. 10. Public transportation will be a viable option for traveling to work and enable people to access daily needs and fully participate in society regardless of income or abilities.
<p>Economic Development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Abingdon will grow its economy by helping entrepreneurs and businesses prosper. 12. The Town will attract larger established businesses looking to grow in Southwest Virginia in appropriate locations as planned and designated in the Comprehensive Plan.. 13. Abingdon will continue improving its downtown and quality of life in order to make the Town a top destination for talented people and firms.
<p>Parks, Recreation, and Open Space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Abingdon’s residents will have exceptional parks and recreational facilities in walking distance of their homes.

COMMUNITY ELEMENT	GOALS
	<p>15. The Town’s scenic open spaces and regional recreational facilities are important economic and social amenities that will be protected.</p> <p>16. Abingdon will be known as a hub of outdoor recreation and regional trails, with a diverse array of opportunities available within and near the Town.</p>
Arts, Culture, and History	<p>17. Abingdon will maintain its reputation for talented artisans, diverse cultural opportunities, and architectural and archaeological history.</p> <p>18. Artists will be able to find affordable housing and studio space in Abingdon.</p> <p>19. Abingdon will welcome both new and traditional forms of artistic expression.</p> <p>20. The Town’s standards for preservation will maintain the look and feel of its historic districts while allowing for economically viable reuse of the structures.</p>
Tourism	<p>21. Abingdon will have a thriving tourism economy built upon three main pillars – the arts, history, and outdoor recreation.</p> <p>22. The Town will have a wide variety of options, such as lodging, restaurants, experiences, retail, tours and culinary events to meet the needs of visitors of all ages and interests.</p> <p>23. Abingdon will invest in activities, amenities and experiences to meet the changing needs for repeat and new travelers.</p>
Environment and Quality of Life	<p>24. Abingdon will be a clean and healthy community that protects natural features through high environmental standards for public and private activities and the built environment.</p> <p>25. New development will not detract from the authentic experience of enjoying Abingdon’s most treasured assets, such as the historic Main Street and the Creeper Trail.</p> <p>26. The protection of natural features and the use of “green” technologies, low-impact development methods and an active bicycle and pedestrian network will establish the town as a development and conservation model for other communities.</p>
Public Utilities, Facilities, and Services	<p>27. Abingdon will provide quality, effective, and efficient public facilities and services to residents.</p> <p>28. Public buildings will be exemplary in architecture and reflect best practices for site development while complementing the region’s natural features and cultural heritage.</p> <p>29. The Town government will provide outstanding customer service to citizens and businesses.</p> <p>30. Abingdon will continue to be a safe community with high quality public safety services.</p>