

Chapter 2. Community Vision

Introduction

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to present a vision for the future of all activities that affect the growth and development of the community. Community engagement is critical to the development of that vision and to the comprehensive planning process. Citizens of Mechanicsville played a key role in the creation of the Mechanicsville Comprehensive Plan. This chapter outlines Mechanicsville’s vision for the future and summarizes the community engagement process used to develop it.

Community Engagement

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Mechanicsville Planning and Zoning Commission, consisting of community members appointed by the City Council, was the primary contributor to the planning process. The Commission met throughout the process and all meetings were open to the public. At its meetings, the Commission reviewed plan progress, worked on vision statements, identified issues, and provided feedback on draft documents.

The Commission members served as representatives of the broader community. Early in the process, the Commission participated in feedback sessions to identify ideas for the future of the community. As the planning process moved forward the Commission’s role shifted to reviewing and providing feedback on draft chapters.

Community Survey

A community survey was used as a method for collecting community input for the Comprehensive Plan. The survey was conducted between October - November 2021. The online survey form was published on the ECIA website and distributed locally via the monthly water bill. A total of 143 people responded to the twenty-nine-question survey. Following the completion of the survey, the Commission used the results as a guide for developing the Comprehensive Plan. Please visit the Mechanicsville comprehensive plan website at https://ecia.org/Mechanicsville_Plan/

Vision and Development Principles

After considering all the input collected from the community through the planning process, the City of Mechanicsville and the Planning and Zoning Commission developed a vision for the future of the community.

Community Vision

“The City of Mechanicsville will work to improve the quality of life by maintaining existing housing, public space, and community resources. The community will embrace new opportunities that help enhance the town’s unique character and economic prospects.”

To help Mechanicsville achieve its vision for the future, the plan includes six development principles. The principles represent the most important topics that emerged through public input sessions and work with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Improve Parks and Recreation

The existing park system in Mechanicsville is well maintained and popular among residents. Expansion and maintenance of the existing park system to help accommodate more recreational activities is a goal for the community. Park and recreation programs help improve the quality of life for residents and can be a source of affordable entertainment and engagement.

Increase Housing Options and Quality

Mechanicsville's housing stock is largely made up of single-family residential homes. The community has suggested that a more options such as apartments, condos, and multi family would help give residents more affordable options in the local housing market. Maintenance of existing housing units is also a high priority for the community.

Maintain Mechanicsville's Small-Town Character

Many residents have noted that Mechanicsville has always had a charming, small-town character that has helped create tight knit connection among residents. The community aims to maintain the social character of Mechanicsville as well as help new residents become quickly integrated into the existing social fabric.

Revitalize Downtown Mechanicsville and its Historic Assets

One of Mechanicsville's greatest assets is its historic downtown; it is the community's goal to create a downtown that is attractive and lively. To this end, maintenance of facades and commercial units is a high priority as well as attracting businesses that appeal to a broader demographic of residents.

Increase Development of Current and Future Businesses

Currently, there are very few businesses in the City of Mechanicsville and many residents seek out goods and services in surrounding towns. The community has made it a high priority to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses in Mechanicsville. This will help keep disposable income within the city and help improve the quality of life for residents. When considering businesses Mechanicsville's highest priority is attracting local businesses that contribute the most to the economy.

Attract New Residents and Retain Existing Population

Keeping and adding residents is very high priority for Mechanicsville, which has seen a steadily decreasing population over the last few decades. Adding more residents increases the possibility that private development will take interest in Mechanicsville and more amenities can be added to improve the quality of life for all residents.