

SECTION SIX PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE



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SHEPHERDSTOWN
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PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

As a full service community, residents within the corporate limits of Shepherdstown enjoy a wide range of services that contribute positively to the quality of life and livability of the community. Ensuring that the types of services that are being provided meet the needs and expectations of the community, and that they are being provided as efficiently and effectively as possible is critical to maintaining faith in local government and making Shepherdstown an attractive place to live and do business.

The town's situation is somewhat unique in that it is quite small, in both physical size and population, when compared to the surrounding urbanized area. Many times the number of residents of the larger community benefit to some degree, whether directly or indirectly, from the services that the town provides. The small size of the tax and fee paying base, however, makes it difficult to achieve the economies of scale that are necessary to provide some services in a cost effective manner. This, in turn, limits the town's ability to provide certain services and can restrict the scale at which other services are provided.

Moving forward, it will be critical for the community to seek efficiencies at every opportunity to ensure that it can continue to provide the services that make Shepherdstown such an attractive place to live. To do so, the town will need to expand the size of the base to which these services are provided (and supports them financially) to help guarantee the long term sustainability of the current levels of service.





The Town will provide high quality, efficient and cost effective services to its residents and utility customers.

1.1

Identify Growth and Annexation Impacts on Services

STRATEGY: Evaluate all annexations and development proposals to ensure that current town service levels will not be negatively impacted by growth or annexation. Where potentially negative impacts are identified, require mitigation or develop expansion plans and identify funding to maintain current service levels.

JUSTIFICATION: Given the small size and limited resources of the town, new development of any size can have a significant impact on its ability to maintain current levels of service. Through the Adequate Public Facilities regulations, the town can analyze the effects of new development or annexation on its service levels and determine whether revenues from the proposed development, or any proffers made, will be sufficient to ensure a continuation of existing service levels.

1.2

Provide Internet Based Customer Service Tools

STRATEGY: Consider the implementation of additional internet-based customer service tools and resources to expand the availability of customer service options for residents and businesses that do not require paper based forms or a visit to town hall.

JUSTIFICATION: Expanding the types of internet based customer service tools that are offered by the town would allow residents to access these services during evening hours, on weekends, or during other times when town hall is not open for business. Making such tools available also reduces the need for customers to make trips to town hall to conduct routine business.

1.3 Develop Performance Dashboards

STRATEGY: Consider developing “dashboards” or similar information tools that can be made available on the Town’s website to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of Town services.

JUSTIFICATION: Performance dashboards are an effective tool to communicate the activity levels associated with town services and demonstrate the efficiency with which those services are being provided. By developing and promoting such tools, the town will be able to demonstrate, on an ongoing basis, the overall effectiveness of the services that it provides in relation to the taxes and fees that it collects to fund them.

1.4 Partner with Jefferson County to Expand Access to Services

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to partner with Jefferson County to expand the availability of county services in the local area.

JUSTIFICATION: The distance between Shepherdstown and county offices in Charles Town can make it inconvenient for residents of Shepherdstown, and the northern section of the county as a whole, to access some government services. Making services available locally, if only on a part time basis, will help to improve the quality of life for residents in the area, allowing them to do county business or access services closer to home.

1.5 Town – University Public Service Partnerships

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to partner with Shepherd University to achieve economies of scale through the joint provision of services in the community.

JUSTIFICATION: Whenever the town and the university are providing identical services there is an opportunity for the two entities to partner to provide the service together in a more cost effective and efficient manner. By jointly providing services, redundant overhead, capital and operating costs can be eliminated. Cost savings and improvements in efficiency can also be realized as the scale of the operation and customer base increases, thereby creating economies of scale, which tend to reduce costs.



1.6

Build Economies of Scale for Town Services

STRATEGY: Pursue growth and annexation opportunities that will help to build economies of scale for town services.

JUSTIFICATION: Embracing opportunities for growth, whether through new development or annexation, will be the most effective way to increase the financial efficiency of providing services to residents. The limited population base receiving services from the town increases the proportional share of costs borne by each resident who pays taxes or fees for that service. This is particularly true with respect to the fixed costs associated with providing a particular service, but even use dependent costs can be proportionally more expensive per resident when spread among a small population. By expanding the number of customers who receive town services, the town should ultimately be able to realize the financial efficiencies associated with the economies of scale that are created by serving a larger customer base.



Municipal buildings, infrastructure and capital equipment will be maintained in the best possible condition in order to support the provision of services to the community and to stand ready to adapt to new growth or other demands.

2.1 Town Facilities Management Planning

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a facilities management plan that establishes long term capital maintenance needs for town buildings and other facilities and fund those improvements and maintenance activities in accordance with the plan.

JUSTIFICATION: The development of a facilities management plan will help the town to budget, or reserve, an adequate level of funding to maintain and repair its major facilities. Such a plan will also allow the town to have a greater amount of predictability into its long term budget forecasts. In the absence of a facilities management plan, even routine repairs and maintenance can be overlooked as budgets are prepared, leading to a greater potential to incur unbudgeted expenses to meet emergency needs. Properly planning for maintenance and repairs for

facilities should also extend their period of usability, potentially preventing the need to replace substandard facilities prior to their anticipated obsolescence.

2.2 Capital Equipment Replacement Planning

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a cyclical capital equipment replacement schedule to ensure that all capital equipment is replaced according to equipment lifecycle guidelines and local needs.

JUSTIFICATION: Planning for and funding the regular replacement of capital equipment will help the town to ensure that it can continue to provide services without interruption or diminished capacity when equipment cannot perform as



required due to age or obsolescence. Developing such a plan will also allow the town to forecast and budget the financial resources necessary to keep equipment up-to-date, thereby lowering the chances that unanticipated capital expenses will arise in the future.

2.3 Street Maintenance Planning

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a street maintenance plan that includes a street condition inventory and prioritizes scheduled street maintenance and improvement activities based on the severity of needs that exist in the street network.

JUSTIFICATION: The development of a street maintenance plan based on an analysis of pavement conditions and forecasted funding availability will allow the town to develop an objective long term strategy that ensures that streets in greatest need of rehabilitation are repaired in a timely manner. Such a plan will also allow the town to budget its anticipated revenues and expenditures more effectively and forecast the financial resources needed to maintain local streets over the long term.

2.4 Develop a Space Needs Analysis

STRATEGY: Prepare a space needs analysis to identify potential future deficiencies and plan for the development or acquisition of additional offices, storage, maintenance facilities and other space to continue to provide services as the community grows and changes over time.

JUSTIFICATION: As the town grows, whether through new development or annexation, its staffing, storage and maintenance needs will grow as well. Identifying the population and service level thresholds that will trigger the need for new facilities will help the town better prepare for growth and determine the necessary mitigation funding levels that are imposed through its adequate public facilities regulations. With a plan in place, the town can identify potential locations for future town facilities and plan for the acquisition of land and/or construction of new facilities in a timely manner. Ensuring that the town has adequate space available to meet the needs of its staff will also help to ensure that services can continue to be provided in an efficient manner as growth occurs.

PSI GOAL 3

Water and sewer infrastructure will be maintained to the highest standards, and operated in a manner that provides the highest quality service to utility customers and the lowest impact on the environment.

3.1 Utility Capital Improvement Planning

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a long range capital improvement plan to guide strategic investments in the maintenance and growth of the public water supply and wastewater collection systems.

JUSTIFICATION: The development of a long term capital improvement plan for the town's public water and wastewater systems will help to ensure that the system has its revenues aligned with its long term maintenance and expansion needs. A capital improvement plan that establishes target dates for system expansions and capacity upgrades will also help the town, property owners and developer adequately prepare for the growth that will follow such improvements. A utility capital improvement plan will also help to inform the community's land use and growth policies by giving policymakers better indicators

of the types of land uses, including the potential density or intensity of development, that can be supported by the utility system.

3.2 Utility System Public Outreach

STRATEGY: Provide utility customers with regular updates on the status of improvements to the utility system, including promoting the environmental benefits of the town's new wastewater treatment plant and the quality of the town's municipal water system.

JUSTIFICATION: As investments are made in the utility system, keeping its customers and the community at-large informed of the progress being made in developing the system. The recently completed upgrade to the town's wastewater treatment plant



is one example of a major investment in the quality of the system that has both a significant environmental benefit, but also comes with a cost to the customers who are served by it. Promoting the benefits of this, and similar improvements in the system, will help customers understand how their funds are being used to guarantee the quality of their utility system. This in turn can help to build support for continued upgrades to the system.

3.3 Implement “Smart” Metering Technology

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a “smart meter” program, utilizing wireless technology, to provide utility customers with real time access to water consumption information.

JUSTIFICATION: The deployment of water meters that can provide real time usage data can provide a wide range of benefits to individual customers as well as the community as a whole. A major benefit of this type of technology is the ability of customers to monitor their water usage in real time, giving them a better understanding of how various activities and appliances affect their water consumption. This, in turn, allows residents to identify those activities and appliances that consume excessive quantities of water so that they can modify their behavior, upgrade fixtures or

acquire water saving appliances to decrease their consumption. Real time monitoring also allows customers to detect leaks or other issues with their water systems, enabling more timely repairs and potentially preventing damage from occurring to structures. Overall, such technology would help the community conserve water as customers gain more awareness of their consumption.

3.4 Wastewater System Inflow and Infiltration Improvements

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a program to monitor and repair stormwater inflow and infiltration issues in the town’s sanitary sewer collection network.

JUSTIFICATION: Proper monitoring of the inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the wastewater collection system will aid in the early identification of problems with the sewer network. By correcting issues with the system as they are identified (with monitoring) the capacity impacts and financial costs associated with treating stormwater in addition to sanitary sewer flows can be minimized.

3.5 Utility Service Area Planning

STRATEGY: Develop and regularly update a utility system service area plan that defines existing service areas and establishes future service areas that are consistent with the extent of the town’s Municipal Growth Area.

JUSTIFICATION: Establishing the planned geographic scope of the future extent of the utility system, and aligning that closely to the town’s established municipal growth area , will help to better coordinate future development with planned expansions of the utility system and direct growth in a manner that more closely tracks the town’s preferred growth strategy.



The safety of the public will be assured through the provision of a level of police and fire protection that is sufficient to meet the needs of the community.

4.1 Town – University Law Enforcement Cooperation

STRATEGY: Continue to work closely with Shepherd University to provide police protection to the community and explore opportunities for the town to assume a greater role in providing police protection services through a potential partnership with Shepherd University.

JUSTIFICATION: The close cooperation between the town and university on providing law enforcement services in the community is a major contributor to the town’s high quality of life. Given the limited resources that are available to the town and university to provide police protection, the partnerships that have been developed between the two entities enables them to ensure that adequate resources are available to provide coverage throughout the community with a relatively small force



of officers. Continuing this partnership will allow the community to maintain the level of service that it expects while making the best use of the resources that are available to provide it.

4.2

Provide Full Time Police Coverage

STRATEGY: As growth occurs, ensure that sufficient resources are available for the town to provide law enforcement on a full-time basis without any gaps in coverage.

JUSTIFICATION: The growth that is anticipated by this plan will add stress on the resources that are currently used to provide police protection in the town. Growth will bring both an expanded service area as well as a larger population, who will all expect to receive adequate law enforcement coverage. Growth, however, also provides opportunities for the town to increase the revenues that are available to dedicate toward providing this service. As revenues increase, dedicating sufficient funds to provide a basic level of law enforcement coverage within the corporate limits 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, will help the community maintain confidence in the safety of the town and realize the benefits of the taxes that they pay to support this critical service.

4.3

Maintain Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreements

STRATEGY: Maintain strong mutual aid agreements with law enforcement agencies located in surrounding communities.

JUSTIFICATION: Given the small size of the town's police force, it is important for it to maintain mutual aid agreements with other law enforcement agencies. Such agreements allow for the dispatch and response of officers from other jurisdictions to incidents within the town when local resources are not sufficient to deal with a situation without outside assistance, or the call volume exceeds the capacity of local resources to respond to multiple emergency calls for service simultaneously. Similarly, such an arrangement allows Shepherdstown's resources to be made available to surrounding communities in similar situations as resources permit.

4.4

Establish Stable and Recurring Fire Department Funding

STRATEGY: Work cooperatively with the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department to establish regular and recurring funding for the provision of fire and EMS services in order to guarantee the



long term sustainability of the department, promote economic development, ensure public safety and allow the department to develop long range plans for equipping, maintaining and staffing fire protection and EMS services.

JUSTIFICATION: Maintaining a strong fire department is a critical tool to both guarantee a high quality of life in a community and promote economic development. A well organized, equipped and funded fire department with access to a sufficient water supply can help home owners maintain lower property insurance costs and allow business owners to receive more favorable insurance rates as well. A stable, recurring and reliable source of revenue is critical to maintaining a department's ability to retain a strong organizational structure and equip itself with the equipment and apparatus necessary to fulfill its mission. By working with the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department to identify methods by which it can secure a more reliable source of funding than the current structure that relies primarily on fundraising, donations and grants, the town can help to ensure that it maintains the best possible fire service to meet the current and future needs of the town and the community at large.

4.5 Include the Fire Department in Development Review

STRATEGY: Include the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department in the development review process to ensure that necessary considerations for the provision of fire protection are incorporated into development plans.

JUSTIFICATION: The involvement of those agencies responsible for providing emergency services in the review of development proposals will help to create better outcomes with regard to the provision of emergency services following development. Giving fire officials a role in working with developers on their proposals will help to ensure that proper access is given to neighborhoods and businesses that will allow for the most efficient response possible. This will also help to ensure that fire officials are able to give input on the location and installation of firefighting equipment, such as hydrants, to help ensure that they meet minimum standards and best practices for the installation of such equipment.