

**Town of Pulaski
Strategic Plan & Vision**

August 4, 2009-January 6, 2012

Update: March 7, 2015

Tangible Outcomes

A. Unique Economic Opportunities

1. Strategy to foster high-tech businesses

Accomplishment: Funding of “Middle-Mile” Broadband to include drops at governmental buildings and public schools. As the build-out continues, broadband access will be an important part of Economic Development’s marketing strategy.

Update: The Middle Mile Broadband has been completed and Pulaski County has pulled additional fiber. The Town has received prices on fiber to the WMD buildings, with expansion to other Main Street buildings and The Dalton. Shah Development will have a fiber connection at the JPI & CC.

2. One-stop web presence and information packet for clients

Progress: A new web site created, links to the New River Valley’s Economic Development Alliance for enhanced, up-to-date information for clients.

Update: For Industrial clients, the web site links the NRVEDA sites and buildings. A new web site (planned) will add www.yesvirginia.org – the list of sites throughout Virginia.

3. Implement NEEMO and assist development of Commerce Park

Progress: The challenge has been funding and determining who best to partner with inside Virginia Tech. The Foundation has been supportive. We have worked closely with the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science, Drs. Tom Campbell, Roop Mahajan, and Jaime Camelio. The concept of advanced manufacturing in the material sciences is taking shape. John White and Aric Bopp plan another series of meetings in January.

Update: Due to the bankruptcy of NanoChemonics, Project NEEMO, as such, has been abandoned. Nanotechnology continues to be a target industry of the NRVEDA.

4. Small business recruiting strategy

Progress: 1) Micro-Solutions has been funded in partnership with the Town, County, and Beans & Rice, Inc. and is offering classes in small business management as a pre-requisite for funding. This funding is provided by UDAG, the County IDA, and a grant from DHCD. 2) The Rural Development’s Rural Business Enterprise Grant program has been used to help retain one business (Coffee Buy the Book) and allow another to expand (VA Stone and Brick Design, Inc).

Update: Funds from RBEG have been used to assist with the “soft-costs” for the WMD project. Micro-Solutions continues to offer small-business assistance to clients. Buz Booker and Yolanda Hunter have joined its staff.

5. Redevelopment Plan for the Pulaski Industrial Campus

Progress: Mr. Schwartz has been very aggressive in filling space in PIC where Cavalier Supply, KTI Trucking, three recycling firms, the Man Cave auto business, and Rusty’s Custom Lumber business are located (among others). Four floors of “Big Blue” are now being leased to KTI for the purpose of storing product made by Phoenix Packaging. Blue Bird Recycling/Resins is making plans for expansion should funding be available through state and local resources. Conversations have not been as successful in getting the finishing building readied for a potential tenant—though that is Mr. Schwartz’s intent -- nor in sufficient improvement in the exterior appeal of the Complex.

Update: Cavalier Supply has now moved to the Pulaski Plaza, and KTI has expanded into their space. Mr. Schwartz has invested over \$100,000 in the finishing building, and Project Racing (connected with WMD, LLC) now has an option on that building. Blue Bird Recycling/Resins was not successful in its expansion to the Hill Plant and has effectively gone out of business. A new re-cycler, “Second Chance,” has cleaned up the area where EcoSmart was and has begun to make pallets for Phoenix Packaging.

6. Rebuild UDAG funds.

Progress: Fewer expenditures in 2011-12. Rural Development and Micro-Solutions’ funds have been used for small business development instead of UDAG.

Update: Town Council reached an agreement with Kevin Dresser about the repayment of his UDAG loan, a portion of which was loaned to WMD, LLC for soft costs.

7. Bridges to colleges and universities.

Accomplishments: In addition to the work with NEEMO (above), we maintain close ties at Virginia Tech to the Office of Economic Development, the Corporate Research Center, the Business and Technology Center, among others. Economic Development has been a resource in Tech classes in areas such as “tourism.” At Radford, the ED Department has worked with Appalachian Studies on a report they submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission and with the Advancement Office discussing their support of the NRV Alliance. Contacts are now being made with both Radford and Virginia Tech about their “hotel and hospitality programs” with regards to how the Town might partner with the Dalton project.

Update: The Town has been working closely with Virginia Tech architecture Professor Elizabeth Grant and her students on drawings for Main Street renewal (last year) and The Dalton (March 4, 2015).

8. Town-wide plan for adaptive reuse.

Accomplishments: the implementation of the EPA Assessment Grant completing Phase One and Two testing on Jefferson School, the Hill Plant, and the Town Shops. A recently announced grant from the Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund will allow complete testing and some remediation at the Dalton Building. The renovation of the Dalton Building remains an important part of the repurposing of Downtown. On February 7, 2012 the Town will host a developer and contractor from Durham and Greensboro, respectively who will tour the building and meet with officials and local leaders. The completion of the historic Depot was a

major step toward adaptive reuse. Remaining: the scope of work must be broadened to include planning for West Main Street, and the industrial areas of the Southside and the former Pulaski Furniture Complex, now referred to as the Pulaski Industrial Campus.

Update: Historical Architect, David Gall, worked with Town and County, in preparation for an Industrial Revitalization Grant for the Dalton Building (unsuccessful) and in the preparation of “Redevelopment and Renewal Plan for the Community of Pulaski, Virginia,” (April 16, 2013), the latter serving as the basis of an emphasis on “the First Street corridor” as a locale for revitalization. In fall 2014, the Town received a second EPA Assessment Grant focusing on “the First Street Corridor.” To date testing has occurred on the Virginia Wood Products Building and the Dunnivant Building (JPI &CC) and will commence on the Rice Building after its demolition. The Inn & Conference Center is a major step toward revitalization. There is also an option on The Dalton.

West Main Development, LLC has purchased four buildings on W. Main Street and plans to begin with Phase One of their project, 94 and 85, 87, 89 W. Main in April, 2015. This project will be “mixed use.”

9. Initiate and support a business retention program.

Accomplished: the Micro-Solutions program has provided training to existing business owners on topics such as business planning, accounting, taxation, and managing debt. Revolving, low-interest loans have been made from \$3,000 to \$40,000 for improvements or funds for major-start-up. See above the RD RBEG program.

Update: The Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce has contracted with the Town for FY '15 surveying local small businesses on their needs. Phase Two of their work includes an informational packet. Micro-Solutions continues its work. The Town has worked with James Hardie on a major expansion project and is teaming with VEDP and the County on what's termed

10. Opportunities for “green business.”

Progress: Thus far three new recycling companies have begun business at Pulaski Industrial Campus. One, Blue Bird Recycling and Resins, located in the Pulaski Industrial Campus (Schwartz) had inquired about funds for machinery to expand. In addition, new home construction and significant rehabilitation in the tornado affected area are employing green techniques. The same is true in the Dora Neighborhood Project where green building techniques are common.

Update: The pallet maker in the Pulaski Industrial Complex is green-oriented business.

B. Planning for a Progressive Community

1. Maintain inventory of buildings and link to Town Website to that of the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance.

Progress: Commercial buildings' availability is not yet listed on line. Industrial offerings are on the Alliance website.

2. Create a user friendly packet of information regarding applicable building codes and zoning codes with contact information.

Update: The Chamber has been contracted to assist with this project.

3. Review the building codes and amend zoning codes as needed to encourage adaptive re-use and development.
4. Implement and complete boundary line adjustment.
 - Developed maps of proposed areas;
 - Developed tables of property values and current use,
 - Prepared cost estimates for infrastructure; and
 - Estimated potential revenue of new homes and businesses.

Update: Project currently on hold.

5. Implement S.E. Neighborhood Renewal Grant if funded.
Accomplishment: The grant has been funded, and we are entering into Phase Two. To date 15 homes have either been rehabilitated or are in process, 6 in-fill homes have been built, and significant streetscape work has begun now that we are in Phase Two.

Update: The Dora Project is completed. In addition the “urgent need” CDBG Project in the aftermath of the tornadoes is completed. A planning grant has been received for a Kersey Bottom/Case Knife Road project.

6. Partner with regional realtors to showcase the Town’s assets and available housing.
In progress: A program was tentatively scheduled for spring 2011 but was deemed inappropriate (and without manpower) after the tornados. Such a program will be developed for spring 2012 when assets and progress on the SW and SE sides of Town can be properly exhibited.

Update: The showcase is on hold.

7. Develop and Implement a strategy to enhance communication between the Town and citizens.
Progress: The website has been renovated and is kept current. The Town’s Facebook Page now has 3,654 “friends” and has accomplished at least two important things: it’s kept former residents and friends of the Town with current happening and recent images; and 2) has attempted to keep local residents current on various events in the community. The Police Department has redesigned its website and has used utility bills to conduct a survey. **Pulaski Pulse** has been developed by crime prevention to provide a quarterly newsletter to businesses discussing information and specific crime strategies for commercial enterprises. In addition, Officer Jennings has also developed a Facebook page for the Police Department.

The website is offering the tool “Ask Pulaski” to handle citizens’ questions and concerns.

Update: the Town’s Facebook Page now has 5,413 likes. The Police Department’s has 2,501.

C. Showplace of Southwest Virginia

1. Rebuild Depot to include enhancements to the Trail

Accomplished: In the spring, Pulaski Bikes, LLC signed a lease to operate a bike sales and rental shop in the west end of the Depot. **Completed:** In June, the Depot had its formal opening. Since then, the main, east room has been used frequently for public gathers and for private events – including a memorable one-act play, written and performed by The PCHS Players in cooperation with the Pulaski County Chamber. In late fall, an outside restroom was completed enhancing the Trail and the community as “bike friendly.”

Update: Cyclists associated with Pulaski Bikes, LLC have created mountain biking trails on Draper Mountain, and the business frequently hauls riders to the top for the downhill ride. Fun rides have been initiated and are coordinated with the Tuesday evening MarketPlace.

2. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for parks and recreation facilities.

Update: The FY '15 Budget includes capital improvements for parks and facilities. With the purchase of Calfee Park and a new home team, significant financial burden has passed from the Town to private interests.

3. Support the completion of the Fine Arts Center and the Pulaski Theatre.

Progress: While on the Board of the Randolph House Foundation, the Economic Development Director secured a \$50,000 grant for the purchase of projection and sound equipment for the Theatre. The Town has made a \$25,000 commitment to the Fine Arts Center to assist them in their capital campaign. The Town “showed off” the Theatre by hosting a meeting of the Heartwood Board literally on the stage. Provided a \$5,000 match for an equal State grant for operations.

Update: The Pulaski Theatre continues to build strength in the community and is bringing in tourists. The Fine Arts Center is positioned well to receive an Industrial Redevelopment Grant from the State.

4. Build new museum for historical artifacts.

50 photographic images have been taken to Oppenheimer Arts in Chicago for restoration. A time line is almost complete and story boards for the museum are at the design stage. Plans for the building have been refined, and the general contractor is on site, steel has been delivered and is being erected, and the structure should be completed in a couple of months. Plans are developing for moving the Brockmeyer display.

Update: The Ratcliffe opened on June 11, 2013. The Friends of The Ratcliffe a 501 © 3 organization and Town Council subsequently developed a Memorandum of Understanding about its operation.

5. Developing a recruitment plan for trail-related businesses.

Completed: Pulaski Bikes, LLC began business in April, 2011. **In progress:** The attempt to create a hostel and restaurant at the historic Dalton Building continues. One private investor is planning a hostel in an older home on First Street SW.

Update: The 132 Guesthouse is opened. The Jackson Park Inn & Conference Center will be completed by summer 2015. The Dalton is under option.

6. Enhanced maintenance of Town building and parks.

Completed: Improvements have been made in Town appearance through an increased focus on flower beds and mowing. Gatewood received a major improvement with re-grading the boat ramp and expanding parking at the picnic area. While no major improvements have been made to the parks, maintenance continues at a level that offers increased quality of life for citizens. Time has been spent insuring the most traveled sections of the Dora Trail (from the Depot to Cool Springs) and Kiwanis Park are well-cleaned, mowed, and presentable. Public Works has done a good job getting equipment and manpower on those sections of the Trail to wash out regularly after storms. The shelter's use at Heritage Park has increased – creating some burdensome weekend maintenance issues. The restrooms being completed is a major priority at Heritage.

Calfee Park is beginning to show its age after the improvements in 1999. More must be done to keep the facility up to par. Every year, it seems, turf and field improvements are requested by the team.

With the addition of the new Museum and the Depot, meeting regular maintenance needs is a sufficient goal to be met.

Update: There are still no restrooms at Heritage. The sale of Calfee Park does not mean that there are no longer obligations for Town staff members to provide care for the field though it appears that some salary assistance will pass to the new owners.

7. Enhance Town Tourism Plan

Underway: John White, appointed coordinator of tourism activities, represents the Town on various regional committees. Tourism is a genuinely regional project – while at the same time we work local to enhance our assets. The Theatre, Fine Arts Center, Calfee Park, Gatewood, the historic Depot, and the new Raymond F. Ratcliffe Memorial Transportation Museum, the historic Courthouse and its museum, give Pulaski tremendous assets. We need to build the Town's perception as a center for music (e.g., WPUV) and for native arts. The Town participates with the opportunities provided by the Southwest Virginia Cultural Commission. Town staff members participate in the "tourism working group" of the Chamber of Commerce and adopted the slogan for its new brochure, "Pulaski VA: Orchestrated by Nature."

Update: The Town will be featured in an upcoming article in **The Roanoke Business Journal** and in the March 29, 2015 **Washington Post Magazine**. With the purchase of Calfee Park, we expect more marketing funds to be allocated by the owner making it a wider attraction and offering other events than MLB.

D. State of the Art Service and Support

1. Implement existing water study and identify sewer line repairs.

Accomplished: Obtained DEQ funding to slipline main sewer interceptor.

Update: The Town has received a grant from the Virginia Department of Health for \$22,920 to update the antiquated water model. In the current FY '16 budget proposal, Engineering has requested evaluation services of the force main/gravity line to PFRWTA.

2. Designate, locate, and build Public Safety Complex.
Progress: Evaluated Strenz Building for fire and rescue.

Update: No further progress to date.

3. Staff dispatch center to handle fire department communications

Update: Shifted to Joint Dispatch Center.

4. Evaluation feasibility to implement a complete board/fiber optic system.
Progress: The New River Valley Broadband Project has been funded with Citizens' Telephone installing Middle Mile fiber throughout the Valley. There has been some delay in the installation due to product delays from Japan and complicated zoning issues in other communities (e.g., Blacksburg).

5. Find site and relocate drop site.
Progress: The site has been found, negotiations have been completed with Honeywell. We await Council's approval of rezoning and subdivision at the January 24, 2012 meeting as a prelude to the final conveyance. Then negotiations begin with the PSA.

Update: Site secured. Project on hold.

6. Determine current and future need of wastewater site (old Sewerage Treatment Plant)
7. Assess the need to sewer pretreatment requirements
8. Enhance Town's ability to attract qualified employment candidates and retain qualified, well-trained, experienced professional staff.

E. Inviting and Accessible

1. Develop and implement a wayfinding signage system
Progress: Engineering has designed some preliminary signage and is "test driving" signs.

Update: Signs are about to be ordered.

2. Evaluate 2-way traffic
Progress: Evaluation was made soon after Council approved the Strategic Plan. Council rejected due to public opposition and perceived costs. New life could occur should the Town apply for a new Downtown CDBG project.

Update: Nothing to report.

3. Enhance appearance of Town entrances of Route 11 and S. Washington Ave.
4. Continue support of the establishment of TDX.

Update: Town officials have been active in (and have hosted) meetings of New River Valley leaders from the Universities, Towns, the City, and Counties on a passenger rail extension from Roanoke (2016) into the NRV (2020).

5. Update and expand Bike Path Plan.

Progress: The Town has assisted local cyclists on completing mountain-bike trails on Draper Mountain and have worked with the Planning District to include the Town in the NRV Bike Plan.

Update: The Friends of Peak Creek have expressed interest in extending the current Trail paralleling Route 99 to the Honeywell-owned coffer dam behind Wendy's.

6. Widen the Route 99 corridor

Progress: VDOT consultant is rescoping the project.

Update: VDOT plans are being finalized and will go out for bid late summer/early fall.

F. Pulaski is What a Community Should be

1. Continue blight elimination program

Accomplished: Established the F-1 Blight Team and began regular meetings – suspended after the tornadoes, however. Developed the legal process to take Virginia Maintenance Code violations to court.

2. Expand community events

Accomplished: organized and hosted the Grand Slam Bluegrass event and worked with a local group in summer cruise-ins.

Update: Cruise-Ins are planned for the summer in association with Motor Mile Speedway. The Town will join in the Homecoming Celebration, Mountains of Music, on June 20th with a Street fair, music, and artisans.

3. Development and implement a campaign for the Town Vision and Plan.

Completed: Designed a campaign and made presentations to community groups.