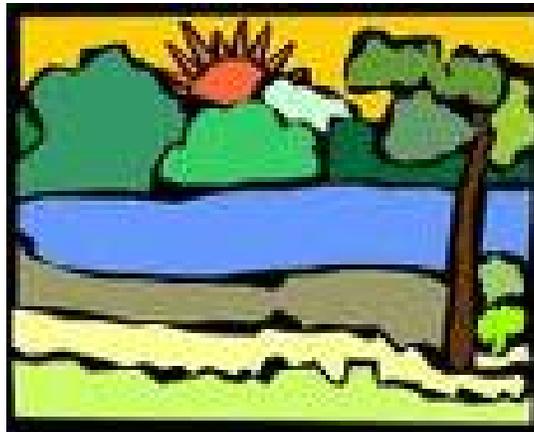


Mathews County Board of Supervisors Planning Retreat Report



May 6-7, 2015
Mathews Memorial Library

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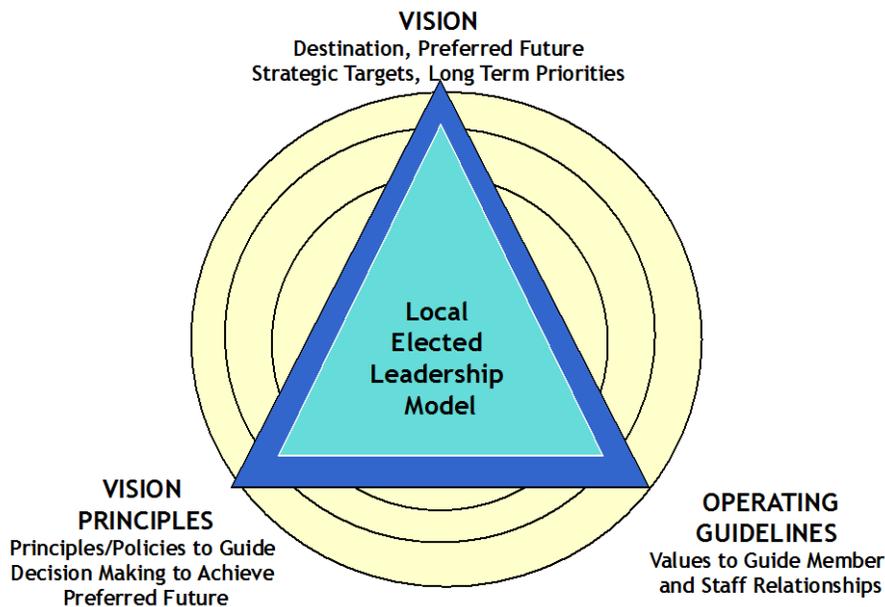
RETREAT PURPOSE

To enable the Mathews County Board of Supervisors to identify a long-term strategic direction for the County that builds on the previous vision with long range outcomes and near term priorities, along with roles and strategies that will support implementation

RETREAT GOALS

1. Gain an understanding of each individual Board Member’s perspectives on strengths, assets, needs, and desired change initiatives for the County
2. Building on the previous vision statement and a review of the environment, identify strategic focus areas and specific outcomes on which the County should concentrate
3. Identify and agree on shorter term Board Priorities to address to address the focus areas
4. Identify roles and guidelines that will best assure the achievement of the Board’s long and short term outcomes, to include the development of a more detailed staff work plan to provide alignment
5. Identify specific actions to communicate the Board’s vision and strategic priorities to stakeholders

LOCAL ELECTED LEADERSHIP MODEL



FIFTY-YEAR VISION FOR MATHEWS COUNTY

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2009
Reaffirmed May 6, 2015 by the Board

Widely acknowledged as the Pearl of the Chesapeake, Mathews is a beautiful, vibrant County with a rich cultural, political and economic heritage.

- With its 250 miles of waterfront, shoreline management and access to the water are priorities.
- Researchers studying effects of rising seas on fragile eco-systems and sustainable energy alternatives in a coastal community are attracted to Mathews.
- Informed citizens work closely with government to protect the County and their way of life.
- Through their efforts, the sky is clear and the air sweet.
- Development is limited and carefully planned to control pollutants and protect the natural environment.
- Biking and hiking trails weave through forests and meadows while low emission public vehicles minimize the need for cars.
- Life-long learning is an integral part of community life.
- Schools are outstanding, academically and athletically, with nationally competitive crew and sailing teams.
- County farms delight consumers and restaurant owners with local products while merchants welcome patrons with quality offerings.
- The arts community has grown.
- Central water, safe streets and sidewalks, sewage and wastewater management systems support historic Mathews Courthouse.
- The County carefully focuses economic development, tailors the Comprehensive Plan to Mathews' unique requirements and manages Zoning and Ordinances rigorously.
- Eco-friendly enterprises - aquaculture, maritime museums, marinas, sailing schools, sea farms, kayak farms, boat tours - concentrate economic activities on the water.
- Home-based businesses, dependent on Internet service, distribute Mathews' products worldwide.
- Other commercial enterprises are approved in select locations when living-wage employment, limited environmental impact, and contribution to revenue can be demonstrated.
- By opening communication, encouraging citizen involvement and seeking funding alternatives, the County has achieved affordable housing, recreational options, health/wellness services, and a sustainable environment for its small, diverse population.
- Citizens appreciate each other.
- They value their history, close-knit family traditions, even-handed government, community services, and independence.
- Together, citizens look to the future with pride.

2035 - DEFINING STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

Thinking about this vision and the trends and issues that are affecting the future of the County, in order to be successful in dealing with this by 2035:

1. *What do you want to KEEP/PROTECT in Mathews County?*
2. *What do you want to CHANGE in Mathews County?*

Gold Group

Edwina Casey, O.J. Cole, Mindy Conner, Julie Kaylor (recorder)

Keep:

- Really must keep historical buildings
- Courthouse green
- Our valued waterfront
 - Public access
 - Water-based businesses
- Community pride
 - "Mathews Moments"
 - Citizen engagement
- Sustainable tax base - a sustainable economy and affordable tax rates
- Perception that Mathews is a great place
- Quality of education
- Picturesque charm
- Foody town
- Community participation; volunteers
- Maritime history
- Arts culture - Library, Bay School, music
- Youth development programs
- Conscientious, responsible, responsive local government
- Kids in the County
- Youth sports that are competitive
- Caring community - "love thy neighbor"
- Protect water and shoreline
- Rural, small town feel
- Lighthouse
- Working waterman heritae
- Fisheries (shell and fin)
- Population stable
- No stop lights
- Interesting people and characters
- Historical appreciation
- Functional working relationships with the School Board, Social Services, committees, volunteers, regional partners, public safety agencies, state partners, businesses
- Special events such as Market Days, Fireworks, Open Studio, Garden Tour, Tour de Chesapeake, Gwynn's Island Festival
- Civic clubs
- Recreational opportunities

- Nature trails and parks
- Strong faith-based community
- Our barber
- Independence and free speech
- Good working relationships with staff
- Relationships with other governing boards
- Honesty and integrity
- Farming

Change:

- Knee jerk reactions based on political ideology that are applied to local issues
- Perception of staff as bad guys or as developing policy
- Opportunities for economic growth
- Anti-change mindset
- Ability to communicate better and more effectively
- Configuration of the drainage system
- Parts of the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to overlay districts (too restrictive)
- Overhead power lines on Main Street
- Lack of infrastructure
 - Water
 - Sewer
 - Broadband
 - Human resources (do a lot with a small amount of people)
- Over-regulation and mandates from the state and federal government
- Conflict between private ownership and public access
- Attract private investment - Islander, marinas, gas, amenities
- Intra-governmental communication
- Silo mindset
- Ditch drainage
- Provide more public access boat ramps
- State and federal non-tidal wetlands
- Improve relationship/partnership with VDOT
- More retail and restaurants
- Simplify the permitting process
- Safer County-owned/public sidewalks

Purple Group

Janine Burns, Jack White, Charles Ingram, Tyler St.Clair (recorder)

Keep:

- Core is a vibrant, pedestrian friendly Historic Courthouse area and downtown
- Sense of community
 - In any given week, 90% of well adults volunteer in some way
 - Everyone pitches in
 - Identity versus anonymity; there is an attitude of acknowledging people, allowing people to cross the street, waving as people pass, and making eye contact

- There is not much of a social pecking order in the County; people that want to have a pecking order don't stay here; people pitch in for the community without regard to social status
- An involved and excellent school system that innovates
 - 2-year college credit program with Rappahannock Community College
 - 97% graduation rate
 - Parents pay tuition for their children to come to Mathews County Schools
 - Polite kids
- Family focused community
 - Parents are involved in the schools and other activities
 - Church focused
- Strong sports/sporting culture - hunting, fishing, ball fields, YMCA, crew team, improvements to playgrounds and tennis courts
- Clean air; clear night skies (no light pollution)
- Waterways and our efforts to keep areas open to the public
 - Keep the ramps that people can access
 - Maintain the ability for people to view the water and appreciate our water identity
- Water quality
- Historical structures and locations (i.e. Billups House, Hesse, Fort Nonsense East River Boatyard, Callis Wharf, New Point Comfort Lighthouse, Williams Wharf, Donks Theater)
- Beaches
- Balanced mix of rural and more developed areas
- Islander Hotel and Restaurant as an asset to the County (with improvements)
- Music as a part of our culture - many artists/types of music in the community; legacy of music; also have a fabulous high school auditorium
- Museums; Museum Tour program
- Kayak Trails; mapping of Kayak Trails facilitates use for community and visitors
- Historic Society and its programs
 - Have great artifacts and programs
 - Are becoming an archeological "hub" with the Archeological Society, Historical Society, and Williamsburg's Rockefeller Foundation working together
 - Mapping and research of our archeological history supported by seed funding from the Board has been leveraged to acquire other funding
- Traditional historic waterman operations and community docks
 - Going to the water for religious activities is part of our culture (i.e. Auburn Landing)
 - Greater efforts to enhance access and usefulness (i.e. enforcement)
- Farmers Market
- Farmers that we have now (i.e. Billy's Bees)
- Aquaculture operations; oyster gardeners
- Campgrounds on the water - Sun Systems
- Seafood industry
- Our marinas and water-dependent businesses
- Bay School of the Arts, art shows, and our artist community
- Visitor Center
- Library
- Restaurants and restaurants that are landmarks give us a sense of community and an opportunity to socialize
- Internet service

- Board Member accessibility
- Small businesses and small business development
 - Seeding advertising and promotion of the County
 - Partnerships between businesses to promote Mathews County
 - Mathews Business Development Group
 - Market Days Committee
- Community based organizations that improve our quality of life; we have a strong infrastructure of this; new people come and buy in to this
 - People really pitch in and show that they care (i.e. Fireworks Committee, donations)
 - Legacy of long term community giving values are reflected in this lifestyle

Change:

- Upgrade and improve waterfront sites that would support or enhance economic development such as: (note that list contains both public and private sites)
 - Auburn Landing
 - Water access to Mathews Courthouse
 - North River Boatyard
 - Callis Wharf
 - The Islander
 - Williams Wharf
 - Island Seafood
 - New Point Overlook
 - Davis Ceek Marina and others
 - Seabreeze

Consider how to:

- Enhance viability of these sites so that we enhance our tax base
- Retain the identity of Mathews - represent the aesthetic beauty, history, and heritage of the County with these sites
- Find new ways to use treasured resources
- Rethink and encourage entrepreneurs and investment versus spurning it
- Use these sites to make Mathews a destination spot with access to waterways
- Re-define "water dependency" so that we have "creative implementation" of our regulations to achieve full use of opportunities - use discretion for moral purposes
- Re-examine and reiterate policy directives from the Board to County staff
- Consider how to lobby to improve our position with regard to regulations that inhibit development that we need
- Focus on "getting to yes" - find ways to solve problems to enhance our tax base

Examples of redevelopment opportunities:

- Auburn Landing - build a dock; add parking
 - East River Landing - Stabilize site with rip rap; add boat ramp, fishing pier, parking
 - Callis Wharf - use public/private partnership to develop a restaurant, etc.
 - Williams Wharf - bring things to conclusion through "creative implementation"
- County Administration Building needs upgrading (i.e. maintenance issues, access)
 - Improve and enhance emergency preparedness, including evacuation routes
 - Need a community well in Mathews Courthouse
 - Protect the buildings

- Give us the ability to put in a small hotel and/or to add new restaurants
- Water access to Courthouse to enhance the use of Mathews County as a stopping point on the Intercoastal Waterway
 - Put In Creek - small water craft/dinghy access
 - Turn-around basin/overflow basin
 - Interface/build relationships with the federal and state agencies that would help with this (i.e. Corps of Engineers, EPA, etc.)
 - Delineation Manual
- Realize the public/private partnership potential of the Islander to acquire a hotel, restaurant, and visitors center
- Small business develop; consider small business incubator effort
- Need an economic development plan:
 - Develop County brand (i.e. we don't even have the same business cards now)
 - Create outreach effort
 - Identify, focus on, and recruit businesses that are right for us
 - Identify our assets, target businesses, and address barriers
 - Need enhanced workforce development strategy to enable schools to job transition
- Need focused grant and project management for large grants
 - Currently grants are divided up among staff; large grants may not always be monitored and managed closely to optimize their benefit
 - Build relationships with grant agencies and partners to keep grants moving
 - We have a lean staffing pattern; staff members may be doing as much as they can; consider that we may need to add staff to achieve this
- Drainage strategy that keeps us viable
 - Be focused on VDOT, including clarity/specificity on what we need managed
 - Seeks grants if possible, but may have to make some investments
 - After the report, go after low-lying fruit and identify a couple of areas to fix
 - Include a strong communications effort with citizens
- Complete last mile on internet service

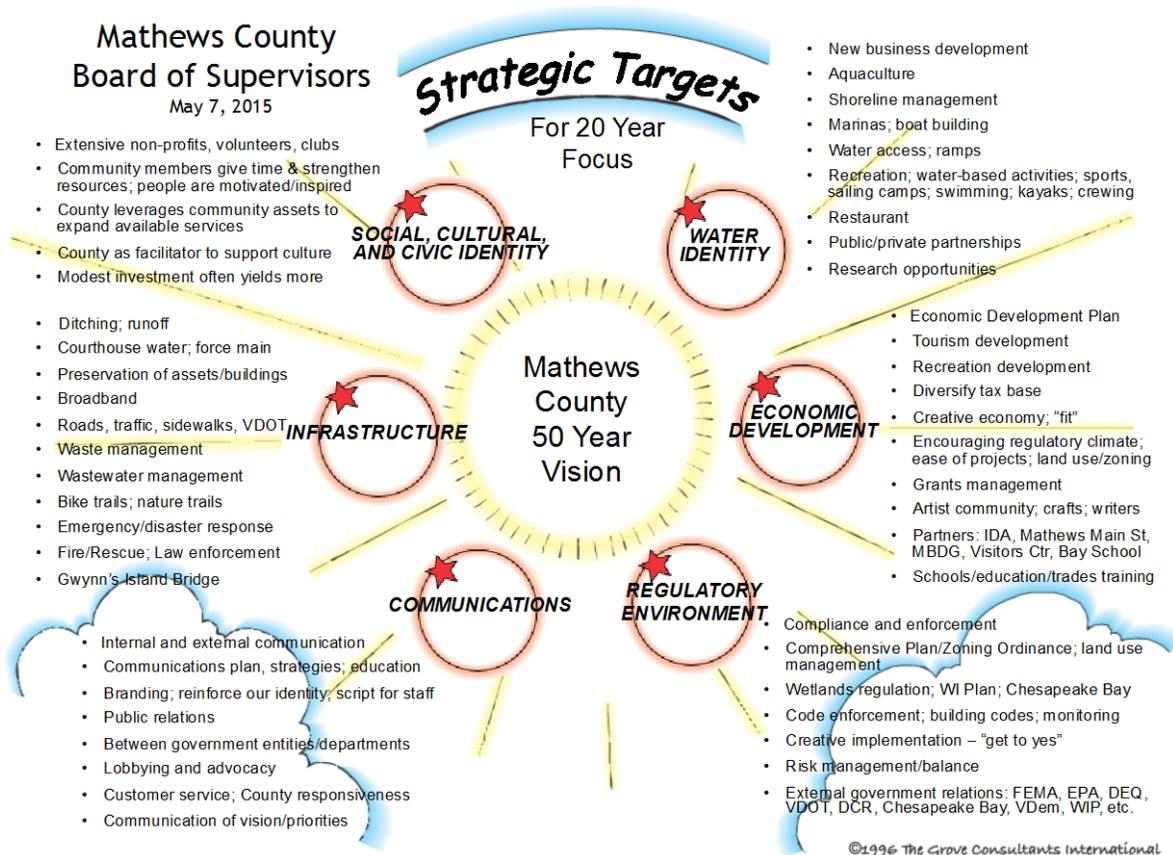
Day Two Discussion of the Keep/Change work from the Board added these points:

- Upcoming re-assessment may affect County revenue because of the impact of wetlands regulations on property values; we have to have a strategy to address this and manage citizen reaction
- Lack of economic base and our dependence on real estate tax is not sustainable in the long term - we need to bring in some other sources of income for the County
- Change is inevitable; it will happen to us because of the decisions of others
 - Have to manage change
 - Best to look down the road to the future and make the best decisions we can now
- Communication will be critical to success
 - Can't depend on the press [alone] to deliver our message; consider providing a point page to the press to get a more accurate accounting
 - We may need a staff person to handle public information

- Need to find different ways to communicate beside the newspaper and website; we have to consider what resonates with our particular population
 - We have a great website but some citizens do not use a computer
 - We need consistent talking points if the Board is going to share the vision and priorities with citizens
 - Communication needs to be managed; develop a comprehensive, honest narrative and tell the story proactively in a way that it makes sense to people
- For example, we should begin to communicate about water in the Courthouse
 - Being successful at the things that we want to do may depend on getting water in the Courthouse; we should begin discussion now as this may take some years
 - People outside the Courthouse who do not have water issues may not understand
 - May have to deal with everyone's water before this is over - water is critical to sustaining the business that we have
 - We have to help people see that water is not a mechanism for growth, but it will help us sustain what we have
 - Water/sewer in the Courthouse - may need to separate the lines
 - Needs some research to find out where there are wells on which we can depend

IDENTIFICATION OF THE BOARD'S STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

The Board identified strategic focus areas to be addressed over the next 20 years in order to achieve the 50 year Vision. They also identified content to be attached to these areas.



MATHEWS COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 20-YEAR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES May 7, 2015

The Board developed outcome statements for the 6 focus areas to guide action for the next 20 years. Note that bullets below each outcome are examples and opportunities identified by the Board and are NOT goals. Priorities follow in the next section of this Report.

Water Identity

Attain the business and eco-tourism potential of our waterfront while providing for full enjoyment of our recreational opportunities, protection of our natural resources, and appreciation of our maritime heritage

- Develop a vision plan that highlights the integral role that water plays in Mathews County
- Generate programs that encourage the growth of water based businesses and activities
- Foster policies that increase water access and promote water quality and the protection of our natural resources
- Develop education to highlight our strong maritime history and encourage eco-tourism
- Take a closer look at our resources and how to use them wisely

Economic Development

Attract new businesses to the County that can thrive in our unique environment and sustain existing enterprises through business-friendly policies and programs

- Develop policies and programs that attract and foster business development in the County
- Promote business friendly policies that encourage commerce and enhance investment in the community
- Strengthen incentives to water-based entrepreneurs to locate to Mathews
- Develop and maintain County assets that attract tourism and preserve maritime history
- Develop programs and policies that foster sustainable activities

Regulatory Environment

Develop and implement a strategy to navigate the complex regulatory environment and to ensure that Mathews can remain economically and environmentally sustainable

- Develop a strong program to monitor and assess external government regulations and mandates that impact Mathews
- Strengthen outreach and communications to enhance relations with governmental entities and convey community concerns
- Ensure that our policies, directives, and regulations promote a business-friendly environment
- Balance public and private considerations so that we can acquire what we need to sustain ourselves and to protect our treasured environment

Communications

Develop and implement an effective communications strategy that fosters genuine dialogue among citizens, elected officials, staff, and other stakeholders

- Effective communication between government departments, offices, and entities
- Customer service/county responsiveness
- Developing narrative and conveying it consistently
- Branding
- Lobbying and advocacy with a clear message
- Building community

Infrastructure

Invest resources responsibly to address community needs and promote economic vitality

- Explore infrastructure funding options to promote community safety and future viability
- Capitalize on funding opportunities and leverage where possible

Social, Cultural, and Civic Identity

Embrace and support our heritage and culture that form the social fabric of Mathews County

- Honor the value of neighbor helping neighbor
- Support community groups that address human needs and enhance quality of life for Mathews citizens
- Leverage community investments
- Support the creative economy, including the creative and fine arts community
- Support athletic and recreational activities that contribute to our identity and excellence

MATHEWS COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 3-YEAR DRAFT PRIORITIES

May 7, 2015

The Board used a process of consensus to identify the most critical 3-Year Priorities that should be addressed by staff to achieve the Vision and its related Strategic Outcomes. The 3-Year Priorities will be used by staff to develop a comprehensive Strategic Work Plan for the Board's consideration. This will enable the Board to learn the steps and resource needs for each of the 3-Year Priorities to enable informed planning and policy-making.

Water Identity

Attain the business and eco-tourism potential of our waterfront while providing for full enjoyment of our recreational opportunities, protection of our natural resources, and appreciation of our maritime heritage

- Develop a vision plan that highlights the integral role that water plays in Mathews County
- Generate programs that encourage the growth of water based businesses and activities.
- Foster policies that increase water access and promote water quality and the protection of our natural resources
- Develop education to highlight our strong maritime history and encourage eco-tourism
- Take a closer look at our resources and how to use them wisely

Water Identity	
Attain the business and eco-tourism potential of our waterfront while providing for full enjoyment of our recreational opportunities, protection of our natural resources, and appreciation of our maritime heritage	
1	Develop and implement a strategy to move forward with East River Boatyard
2	Develop a plan that identifies all Mathews County owned water access points and docks, and includes status and recommendations and the potential for adequate parking consistent with use <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess our resources• Determine how to develop and promote them• Consider development of a map or chart of these facilities
3	Survey existing public piers and docks in order to determine appropriate use (private versus business,) determine whether regulations and/or enforcement are needed, and take appropriate actions
4	Review existing regulations to determine if there are opportunities to amend zoning and code regulations to facilitate enhanced aquaculture investment in Mathews County
5	Develop a program to work with volunteers to keep our beaches clean

Economic Development

Attract new businesses to the County that can thrive in our unique environment and sustain existing enterprises through business-friendly policies and programs

- Develop policies and programs that attract and foster business development in the County
- Promote business friendly policies that encourage commerce and enhance investment in the community
- Strengthen incentives to water-based entrepreneurs to locate to Mathews
- Develop and maintain County assets that attract tourism and preserve maritime history
- Develop programs and policies that foster sustainable activities

Economic Development	
Attract new businesses to the County that can thrive in our unique environment and sustain existing enterprises through business-friendly policies and programs	
1	<p>Develop an economic development plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the process and players for developing the economic development plan • Identify our brand so that we can communicate it, including identifying our assets, realistic opportunities, business targets and competitive advantage • Survey our current business community to determine their current needs/solutions • Develop and implement a public information program to advertise and elaborate on the advantages of locating a business in the County • Review and assess policies and procedures to identify opportunities to streamline and ease business development, including regulations • Consider whether we need incentives to foster economic development • Develop a marketing strategy • Implementation plan • Develop and/or ensure access to support for existing businesses
2	Develop and implement a strategy and/or system(s) that will improve one stop permit shopping for those who want to do business in the County

Regulatory Environment

Develop and implement a strategy to navigate the complex regulatory environment and to ensure that Mathews can remain economically and environmentally sustainable

- Develop a strong program to monitor and assess external government regulations and mandates that impact Mathews
- Strengthen outreach and communications to enhance relations with governmental entities and convey community concerns
- Ensure that our policies, directives, and regulations promote a business-friendly environment
- Balance public and private considerations so that we can acquire what we need to sustain ourselves and to protect our treasured environment

Regulatory Environment	
Develop and implement a strategy to navigate the complex regulatory environment and to ensure that Mathews can remain economically and environmentally sustainable	
1	<p>A. Identify and prepare a list of federal and state mandates and directives, whether funded or unfunded, and determine financial/staffing impact for the Board’s consideration and to determine appropriate response/action</p> <p>B. Promulgate an ongoing tracking program to monitor outside regulations and directives that impact Mathews County to enhance our awareness and ability to promulgate policy and strategy to mitigate impact</p>
2	<p>Develop and implement a strategy to cultivate and reinforce relationships with key agencies to find creative solutions that are favorable to Mathews County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop organized lobbying effort with the assistance of the Board • Identify and maintain a contact list (position/points) with other agencies
3	Revise/update the Comprehensive Plan

Communications

Develop and implement an effective communications strategy that fosters genuine dialogue among citizens, elected officials, staff, and other stakeholders

- Effective communication between government departments, offices, and entities
- Customer service/county responsiveness
- Developing narrative and conveying it consistently
- Branding
- Lobbying and advocacy with a clear message
- Building community

Communications	
Develop and implement an effective communications strategy that fosters genuine dialogue among citizens, elected officials, staff, and other stakeholders	
1	<p>Develop an enhanced reporting mechanism to enhance communication between Board and staff and to ensure Board Members are fully informed on important issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify procedure, including roles, frequency, how information will be shared • Events - make sure that we are on the same page and don't get blindsided • Board and staff both have a role in this • May need discussion points to facilitate understanding/dialogue between Board and staff • Tracking is harder because of change to electronic communications; consider needs that are related to improved tracking
2	<p>Develop a communications plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize use of the web page as a communications tool • Develop a narrative and convey it consistently • Explore the use the existing resources (i.e. regular Gloucester/Mathews Journal feature on government) • Provide awareness of activities in the County • Communication with boards and commissions • Customer service
3	<p>Develop a branding strategy</p>

Infrastructure

Invest resources responsibly to address community needs and promote economic vitality

- Explore infrastructure funding options to promote community safety and future viability
- Capitalize on funding opportunities and leverage where possible

Infrastructure	
Invest resources responsibly to address community needs and promote economic vitality	
1	Develop a modest ditching plan in cooperation with VDOT to demonstrate cooperative effort and show progress in it
2	Renovate the County Administration building
3	Continue efforts to complete the Main Street project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to address regulatory issues by working closely with VDOT • Consider whether additional resources are needed (i.e. focused staffing, project management, integration with all agencies) • Complete plans and build-out on the Put In Creek project • Coordinate with HRSD on utilities issues; ensure that we are planning ahead
4	Complete New Point Comfort Lighthouse Preservation project
5	Explore opportunities for last mile of broadband
6	Research options for potable water in the Courthouse and provide information for the Board's consideration

Social, Cultural, and Civic Identity

Embrace and support our heritage and culture that form the social fabric of Mathews County

- Honor the value of neighbor helping neighbor
- Support community groups that address human needs and enhance quality of life for Mathews citizens
- Leverage community investments
- Support the creative economy, including the creative and fine arts community
- Support athletic and recreational activities that contribute to our identity and excellence

Social, Cultural, and Civic Identity	
Embrace and support our heritage and culture that form the social fabric of Mathews County	
1	Continue to invest in civic organizations and not for profits that provide community services
2	Develop enhanced community outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a data base that tracks the talents of our citizens • Solicit the support of the Community Foundation or IDA to fund development of a data base of community skills • Identify new ways to recognize and encourage youth involvement with community services • Consider a volunteer coordinator • Find a way in the creative community to showcase what occurs • Determine what services are currently offered in the community for seniors • Support a “Meet Your Neighbor” initiative • Promote participation of diverse members of the community



NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Facilitator will send Session Report to the County Administrator
2. County Administrator will distribute Session Report to the Board
3. Staff Members will participate in a facilitated Strategic Planning session to develop a comprehensive work plan for each of the Board's priorities.
4. When completed, the draft Strategic Work Plan would be returned to the Board for its consideration.
5. Board may wish to consider adoption of the Board's Strategic Outcomes and endorsement of the Strategic Priorities and the Strategic Work Plan as a document to support the existing 50 Year Vision.
6. The County Administrator may wish to assist the Board in developing a comprehensive communications strategy by which to share the Vision, Strategic Outcomes, and the Priorities with citizens.
7. Establish a regular means of reporting to the Board on Strategic Work Plan progress.
8. The Facilitator suggests that a Board retreat to review/revise the Strategic Plan that is consistent with the election cycle may also be helpful.