

Executive Summary



The Nelson 2042 Comprehensive Plan took shape over more than 20 months and is the result of considerable input from the community and thorough assessment of data and market trends. The year and a half of collaboration and community engagement resulted in six goals with targeted strategies which will guide policy in Nelson County for the next decade. The Plan is grounded in fiscal and physical reality and is meant to be an actionable guide that the community can use to measure progress towards its goals. At its core, the Comprehensive Plan is a vision for what Nelson can be in the future in all aspects ranging from transportation to housing choices and from recreational amenities to employment options. The Plan does not directly regulate these issues, rather it provides the framework for updating regulatory tools, policies, programs, and partnerships ensuring that all tools and programs of the County are efficiently working together to achieve the community's vision for the Nelson of 2042.

The Community's Vision for the Future

Nelson is a welcoming community that values its natural resources, encourages economic growth, and provides excellent quality of life for all community members.

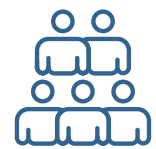
Nelson County today is a great place to work, live, and visit. Residents place high value on the rural character of the County and the strong sense of community, but they are concerned about unbalanced growth and protection of the natural environment; lack of job opportunities and economic diversity; limited housing choices for different types of individuals and families; and the condition of community services and infrastructure, including transportation networks.

The Nelson 2042 plan sets a vision for the future of the County that addresses concerns and builds on assets through a framework of goals, objectives, and strategies. The Plan is based on the results of a robust community

engagement process that included:

- Community Survey - available both online and in print
- 4 Public Workshops
- 4 Stakeholder Interviews
- Project Website & Online Engagement
- Draft Review & Online Comment Form
- 1 Public Open House

The community is integral to shaping the Plan and are key players in tracking progress to achieving the Plan vision. In partnership with County staff, public officials, and regional groups, the community must work together to reach the Nelson of 2042.



Plan & Provide Equitably for Everyone



Improve & Expand Vital Services



Diversify & Bolster the Economy



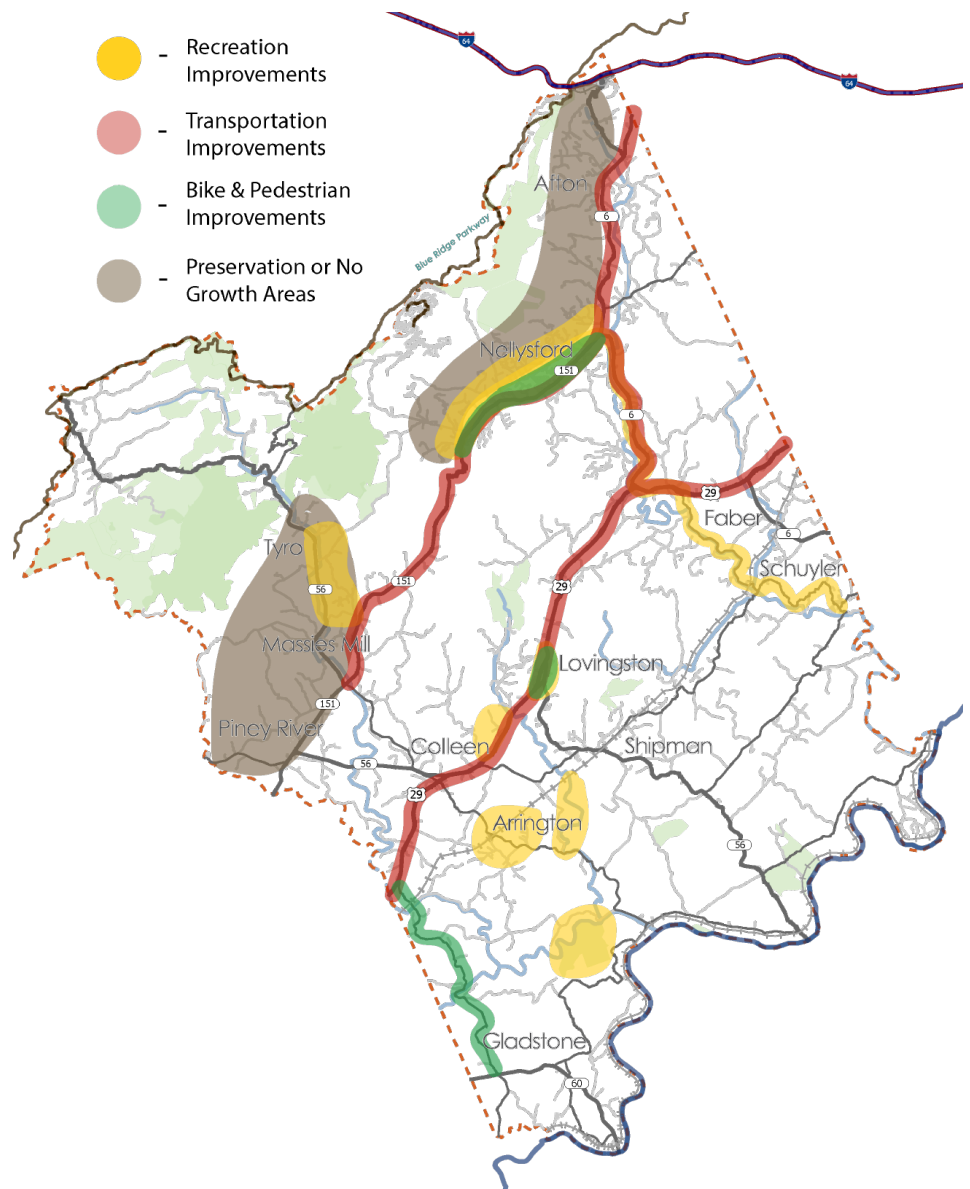
Protect & Connect to our Rural Environment

Plan Priorities

“Move forward mindfully with consideration of the environment and future generations”
 - Nelson2042.com Idea Wall Comment

The Nelson 2042 Plan addresses the physical and social elements that go into making our community - Land Use, Transportation Networks, Housing, Economy and Businesses, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Community Facilities and Infrastructure. Within the Plan, each of these elements contains a unique goal, objectives, and strategies, but they are connected by four “Big Ideas” or plan priorities. The Big Ideas were derived directly from community engagement and include the following key ideas: The community prioritizes economic diversification and advancement of the County in ways that protect the environment. There are key infrastructure concerns including water availability and vehicular network safety that the County must address before all else. Protecting the rural character of the County and connection to the natural world through enhanced recreational amenities is a strong desire of residents. There are communities in Nelson whose voices are often not heard or needs unmet. All planning for the future of Nelson must

aim for transparency and accessibility to engage and authentically plan for all segments of the community. The Big Ideas pervade the Comprehensive Plan elements and directly informed strategies, priority transportation projects, and the conceptual land use framework.



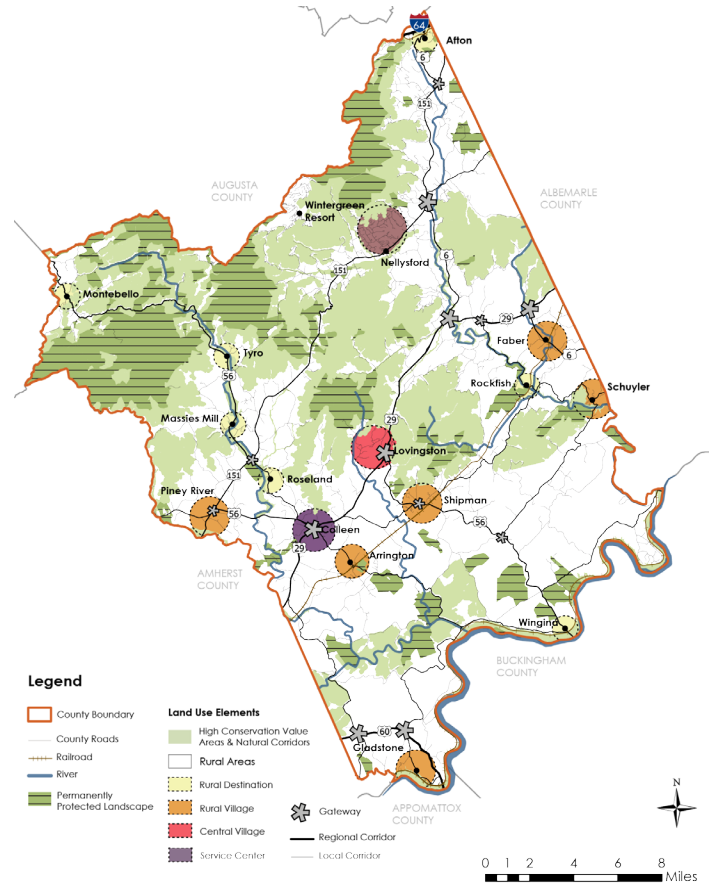
Composite diagrammatic results of public workshop map exercises.

Land Use

Nelson County preserves and enhances its rural character and natural resources by creating opportunities for strategic growth to create a stronger, more vibrant, and prosperous community.

The Nelson 2042 conceptual land use framework prioritizes enhancement of rural character and protection of natural resources. The framework includes 7 land use designations and 2 corridor overlay designations. None of these designations directly regulate or promote development, rather they provide a decision-making framework based on data analysis and community consensus. Each land use type contains a description with key planning guidelines and primary land use types. The land use types are meant to be a guide and do not replace allowable uses as defined in the zoning ordinance. Use types take into account existing uses, the potential to repurpose existing buildings, as well the capacity for new development. The following summarizes the key purpose behind each land use designation.

- Conservation Areas** comprise the majority of land within Nelson County. These are highly sensitive environmental lands that should be protected from all development.
- Rural Areas** comprise the majority of agricultural lands in the County and should be maintained.
- Rural Destinations** are those areas in the County that have a distinct identity - such as Massie's Mill or Afton - where additional development cannot be supported but redevelopment of existing structures and targeted investment in community amenities or services can improve resident quality of life.
- Rural Villages**, like Destinations, have a unique identity but these places have a higher concentration of buildings and an existing mix of uses. The intent is to maintain the traditional character of these places while allowing for investment in amenities, services, small scale development, and redevelopment to serve the needs of residents. This could include the rehabilitation of a community center as a store or mixed use space; the conversion of a single family or commercial building to two single family units; or the construction of a new two family unit.
- Lovingston, Colleen, and Nellysford are the County's **Community Hubs**. Each has an existing concentration of development and services for residents and visitors alike. While Lovingston and Colleen have the capacity to absorb new growth, provide regional services, and provide for housing needs within the County, Nellysford is at capacity and planning should focus on targeted investment in services, amenities, rehabilitation, and redevelopment. Each of these areas should prioritize quality design and development standards; signage, landscaping, and lighting; and pedestrian connectivity to enhance their village character.



“... create a real streetscape in Nellysford and Lovingston – the 2 main business areas. Nellysford would greatly benefit from sidewalks, landscaping and attractive lighting ... Make it a walkable area to attract and keep better small businesses ... Same for Lovingston. What a gem of a small town! It could be SO much more, with some planning and investment.”

- Nelson2042.com Idea Wall Comment

Key Strategies

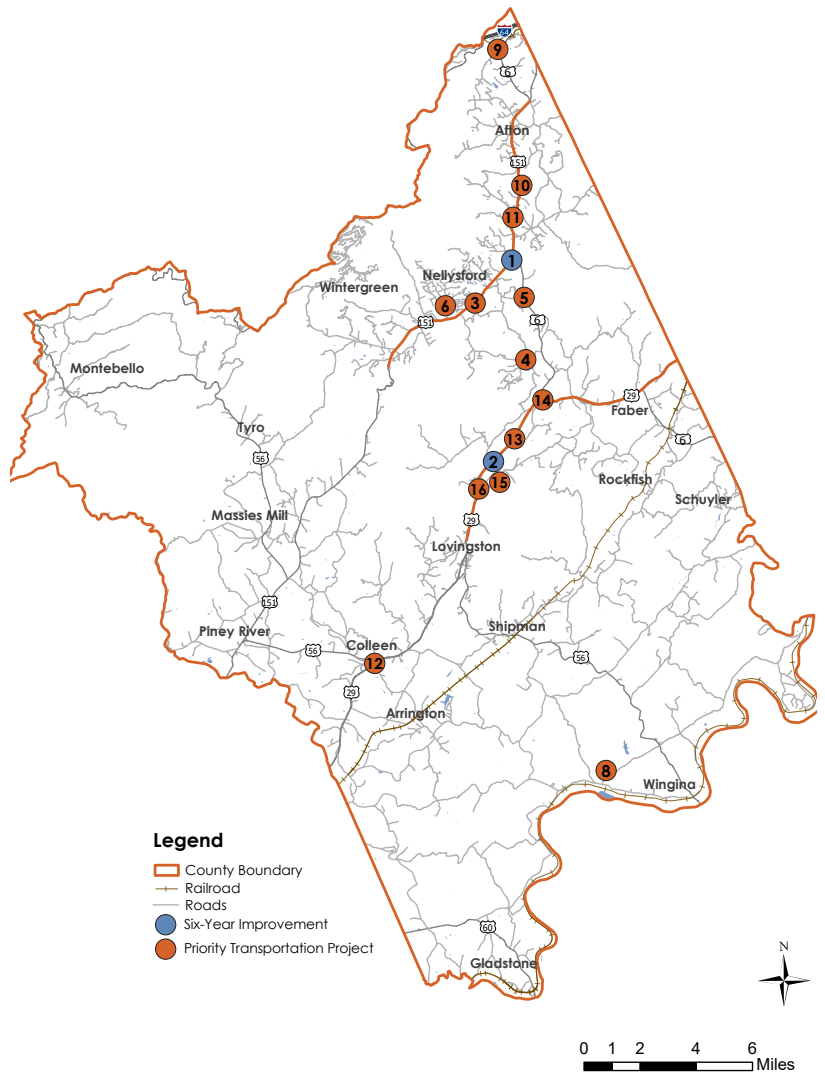
- Connect neighborhoods and development through sidewalks, shared use paths, and trails and require such connections in new development or redevelopment proposals.
- Encourage any new development to locate in designated growth areas so that existing infrastructure can be more efficiently used, and rural lands protected.
- Review the zoning ordinance, and amend it as necessary, to allow for a wider mix of use types, including accessory dwellings and mixed-use buildings.
- Continue to administer cluster subdivision regulations and incentivize their use to preserve open space and reduce the impact of development.

Transportation

Nelson County maintains a transportation system that provides a safe and efficient multimodal network to connect residents and visitors to places they live, work, recreate, and access services throughout the County and region.

The Nelson 2042 priority transportation projects prioritize safety, efficiency, reduction of traffic volumes, and enhanced connectivity. Throughout public engagement, the safety of the 151 and route 6 corridors was a prime concern. Many safety enhancements or additional plans are already accounted for through VDOT's Six-Year Improvement and VTrans project lists. By including them on the Comprehensive Plan's priority projects list, the County is reiterating the community's desire to see these projects completed.

Another key priority of community residents was the enhancement of alternative transportation networks (bikes, sidewalks, trails) both within villages as well as connecting between villages and community recreation assets. These projects do not take priority over safety improvements and in no case would they be constructed to create additional safety issues. In some cases the investment in alternative connections can alleviate vehicular demand and increase safety on Nelson's roads. Additionally, including projects on the priority transportation projects list is a requirement to qualify for additional VDOT funding or assistance.



Map ID #	Project Name
1	Route 6 Roundabout
2	Route 29 Safety Improvements
3	Route 151 Safety Study
4	Adial Road Safety Study
5	Route 6 Truck Reduction
6	Route 151 Parallel Trail
7	Greenway Connectivity
8	James River Multi-Use Trail
9	Blue Ridge Trail Connectivity

Map ID #	Project Name
10	Route 151 Speed Study
11	Route 151 Road Widening
12	Colleen Park and Ride
13	Route 29 Safety Study
14	Route 29 Roundabout
15	Lovingsston Streetscapes
16	Route 29 Pedestrian Study

“If there was a safe and visible path for bikes and pedestrians to use along the 151 corridor, it would alleviate conflicts with vehicles, and perhaps even reduce the number of sight-seeing vehicles on the road.”

- Nelson2042.com Idea Wall Comment

Key Strategies

- ✓ Work with VDOT to address priority traffic safety issues such as reduction of speed limits, safety improvements at high crash intersections, adequate turn lanes and reduced tractor-trailer “cut through” traffic.
- ✓ Identify areas to construct or expand natural trails and sidewalks for pedestrian traffic.



Local Economy

Nelson County creates and maintains a strong, resilient economy that promotes workforce development and diversifies business and tourism opportunities while supporting agriculture.

Key Strategies

- ✓ Prepare for the needs of the next generation of workers by supporting both traditional higher education and vocational education opportunities.
- ✓ Support multiple revenue streams for farmers by reviewing and amending ordinances to better allow farmers to host complementary agritourism uses on agricultural properties.



Natural & Cultural Resources

Nelson County preserves its rural character and agricultural heritage by sustainably protecting and stewarding its natural and historic resources for future generations.

Key Strategies

- ✓ Continue improving flood resiliency by updating the Floodplain District Ordinance as needed to reflect new flood maps and best practices, and participating in FEMA's Community Rating System.
- ✓ Limit development on steep slopes to maintain balance between slope, soils, geology, and vegetation. Where disturbance is unavoidable, enforce erosion and sediment control measures to prevent unnecessary degradation.



Housing

Nelson County strives to ensure the availability of quality housing for residents of all income levels and lifestyles by allowing for a variety of housing options, including affordable and workforce housing, and encouraging rehabilitation of existing vacant units.

Key Strategies

- ✓ Consider allowing accessory dwelling units by right through zoning changes that can allow affordable rental options that benefit renters and homeowners.
- ✓ Expand the types of allowable housing in appropriate areas to accommodate multi-family housing units, such as townhouses, condominiums, and duplexes.



Infrastructure, Facilities & Services

Nelson County offers superior community services and facilities that serve all segments of the community, support economic development, and ensure community health and safety.

Key Strategies

- ✓ Continue to work with the regional authority to create a water and sewer master plan to identify current system needs and target long-term strategies to maintain and expand service areas.
- ✓ Create a County-wide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) strategic plan that can be regularly updated and maintained to address response time, facility, and staffing needs.