

# 1 POLICY PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

*A Vision for Botetourt County:  
“Envision a community where  
County residents are attaining  
higher educational and economic  
goals; are enjoying a quality of life  
marked by safety and security,  
environmental protection, quality  
business and residential  
development, and a variety of  
recreational and cultural  
opportunities; and are pleased with  
the value and cost of government  
services.”*

Board of Supervisors

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for the County of Botetourt Virginia. It was prepared as an update to Botetourt County’s current comprehensive plan adopted in 2004. The plan update was adopted on March 22, 2011.

A comprehensive plan is one of the most important long range-planning tools that Virginia communities use to guide development, manage change and implement a community vision. Communities naturally go through changes over time. A well thought out comprehensive plan which evaluates local trends and conditions and presents a shared vision for the future implemented through targeted goals, objectives and action strategies can help guide public and private decision making and investment to the benefit of the whole community. To be effective and useful, the plan must reflect the knowledge, values and

aspirations of a community’s citizens and be embraced and implemented by elected and appointed representatives.

Community involvement is one of the guiding principles that governed the preparation of this plan. Many citizens contributed to its development, as either participants in the community workshops, or as members of the Steering Committee. Stakeholder interviews, a citizen survey, community meetings, Planning Commission work sessions, and public hearings were just some of the techniques used to effectively engage Botetourt citizens in the development of this important document.

## **AUTHORITY TO PLAN**

Authority for local government planning in Virginia is contained in Section 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia. This plan was prepared in accordance with these provisions. By law, the Botetourt County Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility of preparing and recommending a comprehensive plan to the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors for adoption. This update was undertaken in part to fulfill code provisions that require local planning commissions to review the adopted comprehensive plan at least once every five years.

The Code of Virginia requires that the Commission base the preparation of a comprehensive plan on "careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth," and of the probable future requirements of Botetourt County's citizens. It also specifies that the plan should include all unincorporated areas of the County and that it shall be general in nature. The Code further requires that a comprehensive plan "shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use...."

The Comprehensive Plan, with accompanying maps, charts, and descriptive matter, may include, but need not be limited to:

- The designation of various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted housing, business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; floodplain and drainage; and other areas;
- The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
- The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
- The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;
- An official map, a capital improvement program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable;
- The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;
- The location of military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas;
- The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 138 kilovolts or higher.

**Comprehensive Plan Purpose:**  
***"It is the purpose of the Botetourt Comprehensive Plan to promote balanced growth and development while protecting the County's natural environment and cultural resources. This shall be accomplished through the application of sound planning principals and the implementation of complementary development controls"***

Planning Commission,  
August 2003

The Comprehensive Plan shall include:

- The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.
- A map that shall show road improvements and transportation improvements, including the cost estimates of such road and transportation improvements as available from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

## **PURPOSE AND PLAN ELEMENTS**

Botetourt County has a thirty-five year history of formal comprehensive planning initiatives. The County Board of Supervisors adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in February 1975. That plan, entitled the *Botetourt County Land Use Plan*, was intended to manage land development and population growth.

Five additional plans have been adopted since 1975, with updates occurring generally every five years. These planning efforts incorporated information from each decennial census and responded to land development trends and the need for improvements to County infrastructure. The plans developed from 1975 through 1998 were prepared with the assistance of the staff of the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC). Subsequent plans have been prepared by staff with the assistance of outside planning consultants through a process that included public involvement, followed by Planning Commission review and recommendation with ultimate review and adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Relationship to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan**

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan was prepared using a facilitated visioning process. The 2004 plan included discussion, analysis and recommendations that emerged from the community planning process. This Comprehensive Plan Update, which was also based on extensive community and stakeholder input, builds upon that information, further examining growth trends, planning initiatives, and affirming the county's goals and vision for Botetourt County's future growth. Some of the information included in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan has been incorporated into this plan update.

### **Vision for Botetourt County**

This Comprehensive Plan sets out goals and policies that will be used by public officials to make decisions that will greatly influence the County's future. Most successful, thriving communities have a vision for the future that guides day-to-day decision-making. Stated or unstated, an ultimate vision sets a framework for incremental decisions that lead toward creating the future. The long term vision for Botetourt, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2002 and reviewed and affirmed as part of this update, is the foundation for more specific goals and policies that are included in later chapters of this plan. If the goals and policies of the plan are upheld and implemented, the following vision for Botetourt should be realized:

***“Envision a community where County residents are attaining higher educational and economic goals; are enjoying a quality of life marked by safety and security, environmental protection, quality business and residential development, and a variety of recreational and cultural opportunities; and are pleased with the value and cost of government services.”***

## Plan Elements

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan is organized into six elements, or major topics, of countywide significance. Immediately following this introductory chapter is a discussion about key countywide issues and influences driving the need to update the plan. This Trends chapter provides an overview of growth forecasts, defines the vision and themes that serve as the overarching goals for this Plan, and describes the role of the Future Land Use Map.



The subsequent chapters of the plan contain a summary overview providing the context and defining issues for each element, followed by policies and actions to address these issues. Tables, images, text boxes, and maps supplement the narrative content. One chapter of the plan is dedicated to each countywide element listed below:

**Trends:** The Trends Element provides base information for understanding the short and long-term growth trends related to people, jobs, race, income, housing, mobility, and agricultural activity.

**Land Use:** The Land Use Element provides a framework for all land use and development-related decisions. It is the critical foundation upon which all other elements are based, and includes the Future Land Use Map and related policies to guide growth in a more compact and efficient pattern over the next 20 years.

**Transportation:** The Transportation Element guides development of the County's transportation network. It includes highways, public transit systems, and bike and pedestrian networks to support the County's desired land uses and form. The proposed transportation system seeks to reduce the growth of vehicle miles traveled and provide transportation options that provide alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. The aim is to achieve a balanced and efficient transportation system for Botetourt County's expanding populations and their corresponding needs.

**Cultural and Environmental:** The Cultural and Environmental Element contains the policies and actions required for Botetourt County to preserve its natural resources and address the challenges inherent with retaining these resources as growth occurs. This element addresses park and recreation planning, greenway and trail planning and connectivity, open space conservation, and the preservation of special landscapes and historic resources, among other issues. The element also identifies all natural features of the County, including soils, topography, and floodplains.

**Community Services and Facilities:** The Community Services and Facilities Element provides direction for the location of government buildings, solid waste services, emergency services, schools, and libraries. This element also includes recommendations to ensure the adequacy and safety of the drinking water supply, distribution system, and the wastewater system.

**Economic Development:** The Economic Development Element provides recommendations to enhance Botetourt County's competitive advantages and economic viability. In May 2010, the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors adopted the Botetourt County Economic Development Study, which serves to update this section of the plan. That study addresses two main objectives; 1) Identify opportunities that can potentially expand quality jobs, build tax base, and enhance tourism activity within the County; and 2) define the strategy and plan for implementing those efforts required to achieve specific actions derived from the first objective.

This plan is intended to be accessible and easily understood by all users. Key issues are described with data to make the purpose of policies more apparent. Graphics, maps, photos, and charts have been used to illustrate major points and improve the legibility of the text. The Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map is incorporated as part of the document and provides the foundation for future decisions regarding land use and zoning.

## **PLANNING HORIZON**

Typical planning horizons for comprehensive plans range from approximately 20 - 50 years with 20 years being the most common. The year 2030 is the planning horizon for this comprehensive planning initiative. This comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the Botetourt County Planning Commission at least once every five years, as required by State Code. Each review will serve as the basis to evaluate the continued appropriateness of the plans' goals, objectives and policies, and progress made toward achieving the Board's vision for the community.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS**

There are several key documents that are available to Virginia localities to implement the goals, policies and vision of the comprehensive plan. These documents include the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and the capital improvements plan. County officials and staff use these tools on a day to day basis to guide development of individual properties and to plan for public improvements. Further, there are numerous other planning documents that guide the decision making processes. The County's recreation strategic plan provides information on the needs and future implementation of recreation services, the emergency service strategic plan provides direction of how to best provide safety and security, the economic development study report provides a new direction of how the County can best attract and promote economic growth, and the county-wide water and wastewater plan is critical to providing direction of where existing and planned infrastructure can accommodate new growth. All of these plans have been consulted and referenced in this plan. Consistency between all of these documents and the comprehensive plan ensures that the long term vision for the County is considered as part of the many incremental decisions that shape a community.

### **Zoning Ordinance**

The Botetourt County Zoning Ordinance is perhaps the most significant of the three primary implementation tools that guide development and land use in the county. It includes regulations intended to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of current and future county residents by providing specific standards for uses, lots, building size, location and other related issues that encourage and ensure appropriate development in the County. The provisions for various zoning districts and zoning regulations included in the ordinance should be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the adopted comprehensive plan to ensure that the vision for Botetourt is fully realized.

### **Subdivision Ordinance**

The second regulatory document that helps implement the comprehensive plan is the Botetourt County Subdivision Ordinance. It provides for the orderly, efficient division of land into parcels or lots for development and for the coordinated construction of streets, highways and public facilities within proposed subdivisions. Like the zoning ordinance, the subdivision ordinance directly influences development in the County and the character of the community. Subdivision regulations should be in sync with the goals, objectives and policies of the comprehensive plan if the County is to be developed consistently with the adopted vision. Botetourt County's subdivision Ordinance adheres to the Virginia State Code.

### **Capital Improvements Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan provides direction for managing growth and development and guiding continued investment in the County's physical infrastructure and facilities. The plan can enhance the capital improvement planning and budgeting process by implementing more explicit ties between the Comprehensive Plan and the development of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and by helping establish priorities among competing potential capital investments. The Botetourt County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is reviewed and adopted annually by the Board of Supervisors to provide fiscal guidance for capital investments over a five year period. As the third primary implementation tool of the comprehensive plan, the CIP should reflect the recommendations and priorities of the plan to support the pattern of development envisioned for the future.

## **USE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This document is intended for use by elected and appointed officials, County government administration and staff, residents, businesses and developers, and others with an interest in the future of Botetourt. This Comprehensive Plan will:

- Establish the vision for what Botetourt County can achieve and aspires to be by 2030;
- Consolidate and coordinate policies that relate to the County's physical and economic growth and development into one document for use by all County departments;
- Guide decision-making and evaluation of zoning map and text amendments and discretionary development approvals;
- Guide public investment by coordinating the Capital Improvement Program with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and
- Identify short to long-term strategic actions for the County to undertake.

As the County's primary policy and planning document addressing the physical development of the County, the Comprehensive Plan will be used by elected and appointed officials who make land use and fiscal decisions related to the CIP. It will also be used by County staff that will be charged with implementing policies contained in the plan through departmental programs, strategic initiatives and by coordinating updates to related documents.

The Comprehensive Plan is also an important source of information and guidance for businesses, potential investors or employers, and members of the development community. The plan's Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map provides clear guidance on preferred land uses for each area of the County that will assist in guiding property owners in decisions about their property. Several policies describe the desired character of future development and will ideally be used as a factor in evaluating discretionary development applications, such as Special Exception Permits, rezoning applications and, to some extent, site plans and subdivisions.

The plan lays out a strategy for public improvements that reflect public investment priorities and that may promote concurrent and compatible private sector development. It also has the potential to improve the predictability of the development review and approval process for developers, property owners, and concerned citizens alike when the Future Land Use Map is used as a foundation for land use and zoning decisions. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan is also a resource for those who seek general information about how the County may evolve over the next 20 years, as well as those who seek to understand how the County will respond to key issues in the future.

### **Interpretation of Policies**

Policies provide direction for decision-makers regarding particular courses of action to pursue. They are also intended to guide decisions regarding the review and approval of development proposals, and provide a consistent basis for decisions relating to land use, such as amendments to the County's official zoning map. Policy language may be written to apply exclusively to County actions, or it may set forth an expectation regarding private sector activities.

The policies are typically worded as an ongoing aspiration or intent, using active words such as "encourage", "promote", and "provide". The latter such policies are typically worded as a statement expressing a desired state or outcome, using the word "should" to distinguish the policy statements in the plan from the legal requirements found in the County's codes, where the word "shall" is the norm.

## **DEVELOPING THE PLAN**

Public participation is possibly the most important part of any planning process and this may be especially true for a countywide comprehensive plan. Botetourt County undertook this plan update with a solid commitment to public participation. The public participation process began with the formation of a Steering Committee, comprised of a range of stakeholders in the county, to provide input throughout the planning process.

The public at large was also involved at critical points in the plan update process to ensure that the most accurate information was available, that goals and implementation steps were feasible, and most importantly, reflected the vision of the general public, Steering Committee members and municipal officials. Surveys, newsletters, a website and open house forums were used to involve the public in identifying and prioritizing key issues and initiatives deemed important by the community. These efforts are discussed in greater detail later in this plan. The information gathered through these efforts was a key component in developing goals and policies included in the plan.

Three-phase public input process was used to identify priorities, develop goals and objectives, and craft plan recommendations. The initial phase was aimed at identifying regional concerns and issues including potential areas for development, preservation and addressing specific issues such as infrastructure. The second phase of public involvement was designed to assist in identifying expectations and opinions about growth and development, and the overall future of the County. And the third phase served to present the final vision to the public. Community members were given an opportunity to review the plan's goals and objectives for a wide range of planning topics, including housing, transportation, community facilities, historic preservation, natural resources, agriculture, and land use. Final comments were received regarding the plan's recommendations and future land use plan. These comments were considered in the final revisions of the plan.

### **Role of Steering Committee**

Botetourt County initiated the public input component of the Comprehensive Plan update process by appointing a Steering Committee. A list of Steering Committee Members can be found at the beginning of this document within the Acknowledgement page. The Steering Committee embodied a cross-section of citizens representing businesses and industry, civic and social organizations, human service agencies, governmental bodies, and residents. Their mission was to engage the residents of Botetourt County to identify and articulate a vision and set of goals for the County. Steering Committee members also served as a liaison to their respective organizations to share and receive information about the plan update process. Additionally, members provided valuable information in their particular fields of expertise when appropriate during development of the plan.

The work of the Steering Committee assisted in identifying both local and regional concerns to develop a consensus for plan recommendations. This group of over 25 individuals was surveyed early in the plan process to help identify issues of importance and values that shape community opinion and aspirations. In those areas where the questions related to development patterns, there was a clear consensus: plan growth and infrastructure to provide for jobs, but do it in such a way as to ensure the preservation of the rural character of the county.

## Website Development

In October 2009, the County launched a project specific website to provide steering committee members, officials and the general public with easy access to the most current information related to the plan. Initially, the website provided an overview of the comprehensive planning process, the planning team, and Botetourt County data and resources. As the plan evolved, the website was used to conduct an electronic survey, provide press releases and news articles, post draft development objectives and goals, and summaries of public involvement meetings. Contact information was provided on the website so that any member of the public could address the planning team with questions related to the plan update.

## Public Workshops

The Botetourt County Comprehensive Plan Update began with advertised public workshops designed to solicit community input on issues of concern to citizens and to get a sense of their visions for the future of the County. The first public meetings were held on October 24, 2009; one at Lord Botetourt High School, and the other at James River High School, to target different geographic areas of the County. Between twelve and forty participants attended each workshop. At each of these meetings, participants were asked to affirm the current vision as adopted in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and to identify what residents valued the most in relation to the county's future growth. Participants provided feedback needed to develop recommendations for the 2010 Comprehensive Plan update.

These meetings were designed as open house forums and displayed information on growth trends for the public review and comment. Stations provided information about population and housing growth, transportation issues, employment and economics, agricultural and environmental features, land use, and public facilities. A questionnaire was provided to solicit responses from attendees about topics such as: What is best about the county? What are the top challenges? What are its opportunities? What is the vision for the next 20 years? Where should growth go, or not go? County and consultant team members were at the meetings to address questions and to listen to the public comments.

A second round of meetings was held on December 5, 2009 and on January 5, 2010. These meetings were held at Lord Botetourt High School and Central Academy Middle School, respectively. The purpose of these meetings was for participants to review and affirm the community values and priorities that evolved from the information and input gathered at the previous public forums. A total of 23 participants attended the second set of forums. Twelve people attend the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and 11 attended the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.



## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT**

### **Major Themes**

Citizen Survey participants identified "managing growth and development," "economic development" and "protection of farm and rural land" as the top three issues that the County will face in the next 20 years. Strong concerns about these three issues also emerged from the community-input meetings, along with more specific concerns about the pace and pattern of development, community design, preservation of natural and cultural resources, retaining traditional industries such as agriculture as a cornerstone for economic development, in addition to controlling commercial development along U.S. Route 220 and around Exit 150.

### **Population Growth and Pace of Development**

Botetourt County's population has grown substantially in the past decade, and surveyed residents perceive population growth as "somewhat too fast" or "much too fast." Growth management received the highest average score (8.35 out of 10) relative to areas of importance to residents.

At the public forums, participants expressed their perception that change is on its way and that the County's future is somewhat threatened by factors beyond the control of local residents and local government. The high quality of life in Botetourt County has attracted retirees and new families, stimulating recent growth.

Citizens expressed concern that the attractive character of Botetourt County creates growth pressures that will overwhelm it and compromise the rural quality of life for those who currently live here. Comments received at the public forums also emphasized preserving rural land and allocating growth to areas that are already designated to support future growth. Residents would like to see commercial growth occur where capacity exists and ensure future commercial growth is designed well to minimize the impact on the rural character. Overall, most comments focused on how to maintain the rural character and related land uses. Workshop participants felt that one of the best ways to address these issues in the future is to direct new development to appropriate locations and ensure that the County's Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are reflected and supported in its Zoning Ordinance.

### **Local Economy and Economic Development**

Residents expressed concern that young people are leaving the area for jobs elsewhere, wages are too low, and local workforce skills are not adequate. Botetourt County's residents also voiced concerns about the future vitality of the County's traditional economic engines – agriculture and manufacturing.

The general sense among workshop participants was that Botetourt County is fortunate to have some of the most fertile and productive agricultural soils in Virginia. However, outside influences, such as nationwide changes in farming practices, loss of local farm laborers, increased agricultural regulations, and changes in food merchandising, have meant that family farming is gradually giving way to larger, corporate-owned farm entities, or have increased pressure to sell family farms for conversion to residential development.

In addition, citizens in the workshops commented on Botetourt County's strong tourism potential and highlighted assets that would be attractive to the tourism industry, including pristine natural areas, historic buildings and settlements, and recreational activities. Agriculture-based, nature-based, and cultural and heritage-based tourism were identified as key industries that the County should pursue and plan for in the coming years.

Citizens voiced a strong interest in finding ways to strengthen agriculture and tourism for economic development purposes, but also as a crucial part of maintaining the County's rural character and traditional development pattern of towns and villages.

## **Community Character and Development Pattern**

Participants in the community meetings expressed fears that without appropriate land-use policies and regulations, regional growth pressures will lead to the conversion of farmland to residential and commercial use, loss of affordable housing and loss of rural character. There was also a concern that towns will lose their identities and significance or be indistinguishable from surrounding suburban development. Most community workshop participants favored directing new development to existing incorporated towns where public services are already available as a way of revitalizing existing incorporated towns and promoting compact development.

Workshop participants also suggested that historic districts, design guidelines and maintaining a clear separation between incorporated towns and encroaching development would reinforce the fabric and sense of community in the existing incorporated towns and improve the compatibility of new development.

## **Natural Resources**

It was evident from comments made at the public-input meetings that Botetourt County residents take pride in the unique natural resources that make the County a desirable and beautiful place to live, including the ecologically and environmentally significant feature of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Citizens supported promoting Botetourt County's unique natural features as a means to attract tourists, encourage eco-tourism, market Blue Ridge products and goods, and to attract innovative and ecologically compatible business and industry.

## **Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

While local residents expressed pride in local community facilities such as schools and libraries, the lack of water and waste water facilities needed to serve existing and future residents was a topic of concern during the public forums. The potential for development at higher densities and adjacent to the incorporated towns is limited due to a lack of utility capacity. Citizens also noted that new development brings demands for services that may stretch the County's financial capabilities. Citizens identified Town and County cooperation and coordination, improvements to existing systems, and development proffers garnered through conditional zoning as ways to address future infrastructure needs.

## **The U.S. Route 220 Corridor**

U.S. Route 220 is not only the major local roadway connecting Botetourt County's incorporated towns to regional destinations; it is the only north-south connector road in the County. It is a vital transportation artery for both local residents and the many travelers who pass through the area each year. For this reason, residents expressed concerns about the level of commercial development occurring on U.S. Route 220 and at key intersections. U.S. Route 220 has been a typical location for commercial uses that serve through travelers. Residents are concerned that too much commercial development along U.S. Route 220 would create congestion, compete with commercial activities in the incorporated towns and fundamentally alter the character of the rural "view from the road" valued by residents and a factor in attracting potential tourists to the area. Stakeholders interviewed during the plan update process focused on the need to control commercial development along U.S. Route 220 and focus growth around existing incorporated towns to promote nodes of development.

**SUMMARY OF 2008 CITIZEN SURVEY**

Another source of input for the Comprehensive Plan Update was the third county-wide "Botetourt County Citizen Satisfaction Survey" conducted in 2008. The telephone survey was a comprehensive citizen survey conducted by *The Center for Community Research at Roanoke College*. A summary of the survey as it relates to the Comprehensive Plan is provided below.

Table 1 – Citizen Survey Summary

1. Top three areas of importance scored 1 to 10, with 10 being extremely important (mean score of respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ensure carefully managed growth – 8.35</li> <li>B. Improve quality of schools – 8.07</li> <li>C. Improve job creation and business investment – 7.90</li> </ul>
2. What are the three things that have changed for the better in Botetourt County?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. More shopping/restaurants</li> <li>B. More people/population growth</li> <li>C. Better schools</li> </ul>
3. What are the three things that have changed for the worse in Botetourt County?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Too many people/population growth</li> <li>B. Traffic/roads</li> <li>C. Taxes too high</li> </ul>
4. Top three aspects rated best of Botetourt County (mean score provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. As a place to raise children – 8.77</li> <li>B. Public safety – 7.79</li> <li>C. Quality of housing – 7.49</li> </ul>
5. Top three aspects rated worst of Botetourt County (mean score provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Cultural amenities – 5.53</li> <li>B. Cost of housing – 5.88</li> <li>C. Availability of recreational activities – 6.21</li> </ul>

Source: *Botetourt County Citizen Satisfaction Survey, May 2008.*

**Conflicts and Contradictions of the Public Input Process**

It is an inherent part of any community planning process that conflicts and contradictions occur. When discussing with residents certain aspects of the community in isolation, they form opinions based on the context of the discussion. As a result, desires and needs will conflict, for a single individual as well as between residents of a diverse community like Botetourt County. For example, based on the input received during the public workshops and information from the 2008 Citizen Survey, there is consensus that more people moving to Botetourt County is a change for the better (Table 1, 2B). But, this directly conflicts with the consensus that the population growth is a change for the worse (Table 1, 3A). Further, residents have concerns that taxes are too high, but there is a desire for more recreation facilities and more commercial growth, both require expenditure of County funds.

There exists a fine balance of what resources and infrastructure are critically implemented, and what resources are critical for the sense of livability. Through the use of the comprehensive plan, and continued community input, the county can prioritize the investments of its resources to best meet the needs, and expectations of the residents. It is only through the use of this plan that the County can ensure appropriately planned growth while minimizing unnecessary investments in infrastructure.

## INVENTORY, ANALYSIS AND PEER COUNTY COMPARISON

### Research and Analysis

Based on the preliminary comments and opinions researched and received, an analysis of several topic areas have been conducted to provide a basis for understanding how Botetourt County has grown and how it is projected to grow. The following data and information has been reviewed and evaluated to provide a basis for informed decisions during the Comprehensive Plan Update process:

- *Demographics:* Provides information about local and regional growth, age groups, income, persons per dwelling units (measure of average household size), and population forecasts.
- *Employment:* Includes a trend analysis of the labor force, commuting patterns, types of jobs, types of businesses, and location/density of employment.
- *Land Use:* Includes information about current zoning and the use of land throughout the county; trends of building permitting, residential dwelling units; population distribution, and anticipates future land use demands based on population forecasts (these projections are based on current trends and not planned development or existing development approvals).
- *Public Facilities:* Includes an inventory of existing public facility capacity, projected capacity, future demands based on projected population growth, fire and rescue inventory, recreation plans, and water and sewer service.
- *Housing:* Includes an analysis of the current housing stock, the availability of housing, density of residential dwelling units, owner occupied versus rental units, home values, and the relation of home values to income levels.
- *Environmental and Historic Resources:* Shows an inventory of environmental and historic resources.
- *Transportation:* Presents a summary of the existing travel demand analysis, an assessment of future transportation demands, and current studies related to I-81 interchanges 150 and 162.

## Regional and Peer Comparison

Botetourt County is one of six localities in the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). To provide a sense of Botetourt County's role in the region, most of the analysis in this document is based on a comparison of Botetourt County relative to the other communities in the Roanoke MSA. Additionally, two counties were selected for peer evaluation since they share some characteristics with Botetourt County; Culpeper County and Rockbridge County. Comparisons to these counties provide a means of evaluating Botetourt County relative to other predominantly rural communities of different sizes in other regions of the State.

Figure 1 – Map identifying Roanoke MSA, Culpeper County, and Rockbridge County

