



City of Elkins

Planning Commission Meeting

October 10, 2024

3:30 PM

RCDA - W. Va. Wood Technology Center
10 Eleventh Street

AGENDA

1. **Call to order and roll call**
2. **Public comment**
3. **Minutes**
 - a. Proposed minutes for the meeting of Sept. 12, 2024
4. **Presentation**
5. **Reports**
6. **Unfinished business**
7. **New business**
 - a. Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Discuss, review, and consider Focus Areas Housing, Infrastructure, and Economic Development
 - b. Industrial uses
8. **Announcements**
9. **Adjournment**



CITY OF ELKINS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Meeting Date:	October 10, 2024
Section:	Minutes
Category:	Action Item
Agenda Item Name:	Proposed minutes for the meeting of Sept. 12, 2024
Recommended By:	City Clerk
Summary:	Minutes proposed for the commission's meeting of September 12
Fiscal Impact:	n/a
Recommendation:	Consider for approval
Attachments:	1. Planning Commission - 2024_09_12 - minutes_proposed

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

***West Virginia Wood Technology Center
10 11th St., Elkins, WV 26241
September 12, 2024
3:30 p.m.***

Present were Commissioners Phillips Kolsun (president), Burley Woods, Kate Somers, Andrew Carroll.

Also present were City Clerk Sutton Stokes (secretary), City Attorney Gerry Roberts, and Christy DeMuth (WVU LUSD Law Clinic).

Commissioners Duke Talbott and Jerry Marco were absent.

MINUTES

Somers **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 8, 2024.** The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

As part of its work updating the Comprehensive Plan, DeMuth facilitated the commission's discussion of the proposed Focus Areas of Public Safety and Housing.

The commission reviewed information about the uses currently allowed in the city's Industrial district and the possible need to reduce these in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Name & Title

Signature



CITY OF ELKINS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Meeting Date:	October 10, 2024
Section:	New business
Category:	Action Item
Agenda Item Name:	Comprehensive Plan Update • Discuss, review, and consider Focus Areas Housing, Infrastructure, and Economic Development
Recommended By:	City Clerk
Summary:	Continued work on the Comprehensive Plan update, facilitated by the WVU Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic.
Fiscal Impact:	n/a
Recommendation:	Review and discuss
Attachments:	1. 2024.07.01.GoalObjectiveHandout 2. Notes - Proposed Critical Issues for Comp Plan - Burley - 2024_08_08 3. _strategic plan - 2024_06_25 - as adopted by council 4. Elkins Planning Commission - goals and objectives draft - 2024_08_12

Updated vision statement:

Quality of life is cultivated for all individuals with opportunities in technology, recreation, and economic development and supported by community investment in arts, education, and healthcare.

2015 Critical Issues

- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Land Use

Updated issues identified during planning process (Planning Commission SWOT, stakeholder interviews, public online survey)

- SWOT
 - Tygart River
 - Stormwater drainage
 - Abandoned and dilapidated buildings
 - Limited housing stock
 - Unsafe intersections
 - Aging infrastructure
 - Consolidation of schools
 - Recreation (Potential to expand parks, trails, community center, etc)
 - Make downtown Elkins more bicycle friendly
 - Connections with D&E (support of students, connecting D&E with downtown)
 - Public/private partnerships
- Online Survey
 - Walkability
 - Safe access to pedestrian street crossings
 - Condition of streets and sidewalks
 - Street lighting
 - Accessibility for those with challenges
 - Level of traffic
 - Parking for visitors
 - Safe access to outside roads
 - Access to public transit
 - Retaining young people
 - Lack of job opportunities
 - Availability of mental health and addiction services
 - Availability of high-speed internet
 - Abandoned and dilapidated buildings

Elkins Comprehensive Plan Update
Goals and Objectives-July 2024

- Activities for young children
- Keeping streets safe (homeless people, drugs, etc)
- Dog park needed
- Beautification of city
- Infrastructure concerns (age and cost)
- Need affordable housing
- Online survey respondents would like to see additional retail, single family housing, and recreation facilities
- Stakeholder Interviews:
 - The city could provide incentives for businesses to operate in downtown Elkins
 - Convert some of those yellow lines to handicap parking
 - Local government could create a means by which business owners could peacefully and regularly communicate with the city about issues and support needed
 - Local government could actively promote small local businesses on social media
 - Guidelines for making alcohol permissible for downtown community events while lessening prohibitive guidelines
 - Fund the creation of the part-time “beautification” or landscape specialist
 - Need a Glendale dog park
 - Upgrade of playground equipment in neighborhood parks
 - Renovation of the main pavilion of City Park
 - Security at parks
 - Tennis courts, additional pickleball courts
 - Continue to promote tourism, events, fairs/festivals for the county, as well as be a prominent hub for surrounding counties
 - Continue to beautify downtown
 - Sidewalk restoration and adding better footpaths
 - Promote new businesses
 - Develop areas of river front for recreation
 - Rising costs of rent (commercial and residential)
 - Community/business leaders reluctance to work together for the greater good
 - Age of school buildings
 - Drugs
 - Old Four Seasons Hotel reimaged
 - Additional parking
 - Lack of historic preservation regulations
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Lack of senior housing
 - Lack of ability to annex additional area

Elkins Comprehensive Plan Update
Goals and Objectives-July 2024

- Bad sidewalks and bad law that makes the property owner responsible for replacement along with poor or missing handicapped sidewalks at crossings
- Lack of signage for businesses and tourist attractions
- Retention of a young and educated workforce
- The current housing stock is limited and aging
- Benches for Town Square/Streetscape improvements
- Elkins specific marketing
- Lacking number and spacing on fire hydrants outside of city on PSD systems
- Difficulty with visibility at some intersections
- Lack of appropriate traffic control signs and systems
- Second fire station
- Recruitment and retention of fire volunteers-lack of volunteers will require additional paid positions
- VFD training facility
- City has parks and the normal community sports leagues, but what do we have for kids outside of that? There seems to be very little community or civic involvement from the youth.
- Educating the community on how each city department functions, why they function that way, and how it benefits the community.

2015 Goals

Goal 1: Further strengthen public safety services to meet the needs of existing and future residents and businesses

- Objective 1: Ensure residents are served with a high quality police and fire department
- Objective 2: Establish policies to help protect the public from disasters and make the community more resilient
- Objective 3: Provide residents and students with information regarding the effects of drug use

Notes from Dec. 2023 meeting- Police has hired more staff, purchased body armor and cameras, two canines. There is paid fireman and fire fee. Petty crime can be an issue with completion of Corridor H.

Goal 2: Improve traffic and pedestrian circulation to provide a safer and more accessible transportation network for residents

- Objective 1: Improve the walkability of the City
- Objective 2: Investigate parking options in the downtown business district
- Objective 3: Alleviate congestion in the City of Elkins

Elkins Comprehensive Plan Update
Goals and Objectives-July 2024

Notes from Dec 2023 meeting- traffic on Randolph Ave. is still an issue, wayfinding is still important, sidewalks/pedestrian infrastructure is still needed, traffic calming. Refer to streetscape master plan.

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for increased economic development

- Objective 1: Identify areas for re-development and new development to increase the tax base
- Objective 2: Capitalize on visitors to the American Mountain Theater and Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad
- Objective 1: Improve functions of city government

Notes from Dec. 2023 meeting- TIFF district can help with streetscape/signs. Big Timber and Tygart Hotel open will spur development around those places. Would still like to annex. City charter has been updated.

Goal 4: Enhance and protect the character of the City through land use planning

- Objective 1: Protect the natural and historic character of the City through zoning
- Objective 1: Encourage the beautification of the City to entice visitors
- Objective 2: Establish policies to protect neighborhoods throughout Elkins

Notes from Dec. 2023 meeting- Don't want 250 N to look like out towards Walmart. Not in city limits but concerned with corridor H and new development. Regulations have been modernized. Fine-tuning new zoning and stepped-up enforcement. Historic preservation has improved.

Proposed Critical Issues for Comp Plan

Round robin style proposal

- Housing
 - Limited supply
 - Condition
 - Cost
 - Population Density v/s Zoning
- Infrastructure
 - Technology
 - Transportation
 - Aging Systems
 - Water
 - Sewage
 - Storm Water
 - Parking
 - Sidewalks - Walkability
- Land Use
 - Annexation
 - Control on Development
 - Zoning v/s Density
 - Amenities / Recreation
 - Historical Preservation
 - Streetscape improvement
 - Riverfront plan
- Economic Development
 - Convention Center
 - Ascend
- Technology
 - Smart City

- Competitive Edge
- Operational Efficiency
- Data-driven Decisions
- Citizen Experience Optimization
- Future Preparedness
- Transportation
 - Pedestrian first
 - Bike Share
- Public Safety
 - Corridor H Project

Critical Issues Identified and Goal

Public Safety

- Goal: Further strengthen public safety service to meet the needs of existing and future residents and businesses

Housing

- Goal: Meet the needs of current residents, of all economic levels, while exploring options for future expansion.

Infrastructure

- Goal: upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency. (and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes)

Economic Development

- Provide opportunities for increased economic development

Land Use

- Enhance and protect the characteristics of the City (through proactive) land use planning

or

- Encourage and Promote the growth of the City through private planning

Technology

- Enhance technology to provide a competitive edge for future development and preparedness

or

- Use technology to increase organizational efficiency and the delivery of services

City of Elkins, W. Va.

2024-2029 Strategic Plan

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Introduction

This document describes strategic goals established by the Common Council of the City of Elkins, West Virginia, for the years 2024-2029. This document also lays out council's vision, mission, and values, which will inform the city organization's work toward these goals.

Council's 2024-2029 has established goals in the following six Focus Areas:

Focus Area 1: Proactive Public Safety & Disaster Preparedness

Elkins is committed to protecting the safety and enhancing the well-being of all community members and visitors.

Focus Area 2: Trustworthy, Effective Governance & Administration

Elkins provides governance and administration that is transparent, fiscally responsible, and dependable.

Focus Area 3: A Thriving Community with Attractive Amenities

Elkins is a welcoming community with strong, distinctive neighborhoods and a lively downtown, where entrepreneurship and investment are encouraged and supported.

Focus Area 4: High-Value City Services

Elkins is committed to reliably providing a wide range of helpful, convenient services that add value to and enhance daily life for community members and visitors.

Focus Area 5: High Quality Workforce

Elkins uses a range of modern recruitment and personnel administration practices to ensure that it is fielding a dedicated, high-achieving workforce.

Focus Area 6: Powerful Partnerships & Collaborations

Elkins sees value in productive, positive partnerships and collaborations with a variety of organizations, agencies, and community stakeholders.

In its appendices, this document also includes information about how this plan was developed, the crucial partner and community organizations that the city relies on to assist in accomplishing its work, and the status of goals established in council's previous strategic plan.

Vision, Mission, and Values

This plan lays out strategic goals for the City of Elkins. Our work toward these goals is guided by our vision, mission, and values.

Vision Statement: 2024-2029

By 2029, Elkins will be known as a modern, inclusive city that respects and values its Appalachian heritage.

Still home to a thriving arts and cultural scene, Elkins will also be well-established as the “base camp” for the Mon Forest, the central stepping-off point for a huge range of outdoor activities and adventures suitable for all ages and skill levels.

The city government will be regarded as a model employer that is transparent, accountable, and innovative. Coordinated efforts to modernize infrastructure will be making strong progress.

With a revitalized downtown, a beautiful and accessible riverfront area, a busy conference and events center in the Railyard, and thoughtful planning, Elkins will be ready for the challenges and opportunities of a fully completed Corridor H.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide responsive, effective, cost-efficient government services while actively looking for opportunities to exceed expectations and apply creative approaches as we enhance safety, wellbeing, prosperity, and quality of life in Elkins.

Values

To ensure our work is informed by our core values, City of Elkins officials and staff will:

- Hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards.
- Act as ambassadors of our city.
- Embrace accountability and openness.
- Lead by example.
- Protect community and natural resources for future generations.
- Guard our community’s safety, health, and wellbeing.
- Expend public funds wisely and responsibly.
- Value and respect our coworkers.

Focus Area 1: Proactive Public Safety & Disaster Preparedness

Elkins is committed to protecting the safety and enhancing the well-being of all community members and visitors.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

1. Improve and expand public safety infrastructure and resources.
2. Prepare for public safety challenges arising from completion of Corridor H.
3. Enable efficient emergency response and effective disaster response.
4. Facilitate the safe, efficient movement of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Objective 1.1: Improve and expand public safety infrastructure and resources.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Deploy public safety cameras	2024	New tools and capabilities
Build substation on Beverly Pike	2024	New facilities
Achieve PD accreditation through CALEA	2024	Process improvements

Objective 1.2: Prepare for public safety challenges arising from completion of Corridor H.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Plan for evolving law enforcement issues arising from completion of Corridor H	2025	Plan development
Plan for evolving fire/EMS issues arising from completion of Corridor H	2025	Plan development
Plan for evolving traffic management issues arising from completion of Corridor H	2025	Plan development

Objective 1.3: Enable efficient emergency response and effective disaster response.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Review and update SOPs for disaster scenarios	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Improve consistency of city addresses	2024	Process improvements
Improve display of city addresses	2025	Education and outreach
Further strengthen emergency communications capabilities	2024	Process improvements
Plan for continuity of government after catastrophic event	2025	Plan development

Objective 1.4: Facilitate the safe, efficient movement of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Evaluation of pedestrian safety issues	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Evaluation of traffic control and signaling issues	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Evaluation of bicycle safety issues	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Plan for sidewalk improvements in high-traffic areas	2024	Plan development

Focus Area 2: Trustworthy, Effective Governance & Administration

Elkins provides governance and administration that is transparent, fiscally responsible, and dependable.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

1. Safeguard and enhance the city government's digital data and IT resources.
2. Enhance financial stability
3. Enable greater stakeholder participation in budgeting process
4. Enhance stewardship of city assets and real property

Objective 2.1: Safeguard and enhance the city government's digital data and IT resources.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Investigate feasibility of hiring an IT manager	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Identify needed improvements in network and IT services	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Perform network assessment to identify opportunities to strengthen compliance with best IT and cybersecurity practices	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Create roadmap for digital transformation (cloud, collaboration, data, transparency) and technology development	2025	Plan development

Objective 2.2: Enhance financial stability.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Actively seek voluntary annexations by keystone businesses on Beverly Pike	2024	Outreach and education
Evaluate opportunities to increase B&O tax collections	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study

Evaluate options for decreased reliance on B&O taxes	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Investigate feasibility of a grant writer/ manager position	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Establish and maintain the Financial Stabilization Account at \$250,000	2025	Plan development

Objective 2.3: Enable greater stakeholder participation in budgeting process.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Identify opportunities in budgeting process for public and stakeholder input	2025	Outreach and education
Publish a budgeting process calendar before the end of each calendar year	2024	Process improvements

Objective 2.4: Enhance stewardship of city assets and real property.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Create and implement master facilities plan	2024	Plan development
Create and implement capital asset management plan	2024	Plan development
Create and implement asset management plan	2024	Plan development
Construct new Sanitation Garage	2024	New facilities
Upgrade City Hall HVAC system	2024	Facility or infrastructure upgrades
Modernize City Hall access, security, fire prevention, and other systems	2024	Facility or infrastructure upgrades
Evaluate the viability of current city hall building and need for relocation	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study

Identify and deploy a Wiki platform for knowledge capture and inter-departmental information sharing	2025	New tools and capabilities
Evaluate feasibility of creating an urban landscape technician position	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study

Focus Area 3: A Thriving Community with Attractive Amenities

Elkins is a welcoming community with strong, distinctive neighborhoods and a lively downtown, where entrepreneurship and investment are encouraged and supported.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

1. Encourage and facilitate opening and operating successful businesses in Elkins
2. Maximize the value and impact of TIF revenues
3. Minimize disruption and revenue loss during Davis Avenue Bridge replacement
4. Increase available housing and reduce obstacles to home ownership
5. Protect and grow property values
6. Define and enhance neighborhood identity

Objective 3.1: Encourage and facilitate opening and operating successful businesses.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Survey business owners for needed changes to city laws	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Perform parking study for downtown	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Install wayfinding assets throughout downtown	2025	Facility or infrastructure upgrades
Seek opportunities for outreach to/recruitment of new businesses, residents, and tourists	2024	Outreach and education
Celebrate the opening of new businesses as well as significant anniversaries of existing businesses	2024	Outreach and education
Establish façade improvement grant program for city businesses	2025	New programs and services

Objective 3.2: Maximize the value and impact of TIF revenues.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Collaborate with community partners to leverage TIF funds for accessing additional funding and for help executing project plans	2024	Partnership and collaboration
Execute the Riverfront Development Plan as TIF and grant funds become available	2025	Facility or infrastructure upgrades
Execute the Streetscape Master Plan as TIF and grant funds become available	2025	Facility or infrastructure upgrades
Execute infrastructure and other projects authorized by the city's TIF ordinance as TIF and grant funds become available	2027	Facility or infrastructure upgrades

Objective 3.3: Minimize disruption and revenue loss during Davis Avenue Bridge replacement.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Devise proactive communication plan aimed at multiple audiences (e.g., business owners, residents, customers, traveling public)	2024	Plan development
Plan extensive signage for detour/alternate routes, including reminders that businesses are open	2024	Plan development
Plan for increased parking needs due to reduced walking routes between South Elkins and downtown	2024	Plan development
Establish and maintain close contact with DOH/contractor throughout project	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Tabletop exercise to analyze critical incident/disaster response scenarios involving out-of-service bridge	2025	Plan development
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Objective 3.4: Increase available housing and reduce obstacles to home ownership.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Maintain and expand partnerships with nonprofit developers to reduce the construction cost of high-quality workforce housing	2024	Partnership and collaboration
Investigate the feasibility of modifying the zoning code to encourage housing infill and density	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Partner with the Home Ownership Center to provide incentives to city employees purchasing homes inside city limits	2025	Partnership and collaboration
Investigate feasibility of providing similar incentives to any first-time home buyer inside city limits	2026	Inventory, assessment, or study

Objective 3.5: Protect and grow property values.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Utilize any available means and funding, including grants and public/private partnerships, to improve or demolish dangerous and dilapidated structures	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Further strengthen public compliance with building and property-maintenance codes, using both enforcement and education tools	2025	Outreach and education
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Objective 3.6: Define and enhance neighborhood identity.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Define neighborhoods geographically and seek stakeholder input on signage and similar assets	2026	Inventory, assessment, or study
Survey neighborhoods to identify desired improvements	2025	Survey

Focus Area 4: High-Value City Services

Elkins is committed to reliably providing a wide range of helpful, convenient services that add value to and enhance daily life for community members and visitors.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

1. Maximize transparency and public awareness of city news and information.
2. Modernize public-facing processes to improve efficiency and create a more user-friendly customer experience.
3. Manage stormwater effectively.
4. Modernize solid-waste management.

Objective 4.1: Maximize transparency and public awareness of city news and information.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Create and publicize citizen education assets concerning city government	2024	Outreach and education
Design and implement citizens police/fire academies	2025	Outreach and education
Expand use of streaming and videoconferencing technology	2025	New tools and capabilities
Involve young people with city government	2024	Outreach and education
Improve consistency, appeal, and useability of city website	2024	New tools and capabilities

Objective 4.2: Modernize public-facing processes to improve efficiency and create a more user-friendly customer experience.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Identify and deploy a customer relations management platform for all city departments to track customer contacts	2025	New tools and capabilities
Identify and deploy solutions for digitizing all customer-facing processes and services to the extent allowed by law	2026	New tools and capabilities

Engage in formal and informal information exchange with other cities to learn of potential practice and process improvements	2024	Partnership and collaboration
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Objective 4.3: Manage stormwater effectively.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Perform a stormwater management needs assessment	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Staff a stormwater department	2024	New programs and services
Investigate funding sources for stormwater management	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Achieve Army Corps of Engineers “active status” for Flood Control Works	2024	Process improvements
Plan for effective monitoring and maintenance of underground waterways	2025	Plan development

Objective 4.4: Modernize solid-waste management.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Expand recycling options	2025	New programs and services
Investigate feasibility of city operating its own transfer station	2024	Inventory, assessment, or study
Investigate feasibility of incentivizing household waste reduction	2026	Inventory, assessment, or study

Focus Area 5: High Quality Workforce

Elkins uses a range of modern recruitment and personnel administration practices to ensure that it is fielding a dedicated, high-achieving workforce.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

Objectives:

1. Improve employee recruitment and retention.
2. Train and develop employees to a high standard.
3. Demonstrate commitment to employee safety.
4. Modernize processes for more efficient, user-friendly personnel administration.

Objective 5.1: Improve employee recruitment and retention.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Prioritize annual cost-of-living increase for all non-appointed staff	2025	Plan development
Evaluate feasibility of merit-based compensation increases	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Establish and publicize channels for employee ideas and concerns, including anonymously	2025	New tools and capabilities
Promote internal and external awareness of the importance of public service and the value of the city's compensation package	2024	Outreach and education
Conduct periodic compensation studies to ensure city compensation remains as fair and competitive as possible	2027	Inventory, assessment, or study

Objective 5.2: Train and develop employees to a high standard.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Train supervisors in management techniques	2025	Outreach and education

Identify and deploy an employee training platform	2025	New tools and capabilities
Establish policy for subsidizing employee memberships in professional or trade organizations	2025	Plan development
Evaluate feasibility of providing access to third-party/online training programs	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Maximize opportunities for all-hands training, presentations, and social/recreational events to further strengthen interdepartmental relationships and collaboration	2024	Outreach and education

Objective 5.3: Demonstrate commitment to employee safety.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Update response plans concerning emergencies in the workplace	2025	Inventory, assessment, or study
Provide hands-on training concerning emergencies in the workplace	2025	Outreach and education
Evaluate feasibility of employing a safety officer	2026	Inventory, assessment, or study

Objective 5.4: Modernize processes for more efficient personnel administration.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Identify and deploy a Human Resources Information System platform	2025	New tools and capabilities

Digitize personnel records and all steps in personnel onboarding, offboarding, and administration	2024	Process improvements
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Focus Area 6: Powerful Partnerships & Collaborations

Elkins sees value in productive, positive partnerships and collaborations with a variety of organizations, agencies, and community stakeholders.

In this Focus Area, council establishes the following objectives:

1. Seek opportunities to collaborate with local county and city governments.
2. Strengthen and extend existing partnerships with community stakeholders and organizations.
3. Amplify and publicize services available from external non-profits and agencies.
4. Develop relationships at the state and federal level to take full advantage of available programs and funding.

Objective 6.1: Seek opportunities to collaborate with local county & city governments.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Facilitate regular information sharing with area city governments	2024	Partnership and collaboration
Attend and offer updates on city projects and initiatives at Randolph County Commission meetings	2025	Outreach and education
Seek collaboration with the Randolph County Commission on countywide issues	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Objective 6.2: Build and extend partnerships with key community stakeholders and organizations.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Hold regular Coffee at City Hall events for informal contact between staff and community members	2025	Outreach and education
Establish “town/gown” communication channel(s) with Davis & Elkins College	2025	Partnership and collaboration
Collaborate with and support efforts to respond to the opioid crisis	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Objective 6.3: Utilize, amplify, and publicize services of area non-profits and agencies.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Grant requests for use of city communications channels (e.g., social media, etc.) to assist local nonprofits in publicizing services and projects	2024	Partnership and collaboration
Annually update a referral list of area social service agencies and provide to frontline staff	2025	Outreach and education
Establish collaboration between EPD and area agencies for assistance with mental health crisis response and similar incidents	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Objective 6.4: Develop relationships at the state and federal level to take full advantage of available programs and funding.

Actions	Estimated Start Year	Deliverable or Result
Meet annually with congressional staff to plan effective applications for Congressionally Directed Spending	2024	Partnership and collaboration
Attend conferences and information sessions to network with state and federal officials	2024	Partnership and collaboration

Appendix A: Partner Organizations

City of Elkins is proud to offer a variety of core government and utility services to its community. Because of funding realities, however, the city is limited in what it can provide directly and must rely on community partners and collaborators for additional services and capabilities that some larger cities are able to offer “in-house.”

These partners and collaborators fall into three categories:

1. Quasi-governmental organizations created by statute
2. Community organizations
3. County and state agencies

Category 1 includes the city’s various boards and commissions. Although council makes most appointments to these bodies and may provide funding to them, they are otherwise outside of council’s direct control. Three especially significant boards and commissions are the Elkins Parks and Recreation Commission (EPRC), the Elkins Sanitary Board (which oversees the city’s wastewater systems), and the Elkins Water Board (which oversees the city’s water system). Category 1 also includes the Elkins Planning Commission, the Elkins Tree Board, and the Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission.

Category 2 includes the many community nonprofits and similar organizations that serve the Elkins community. Some of these work side-by-side with city personnel to supplement crucial core services. Others play just as important a role by sponsoring events, fostering recreation opportunities, and otherwise contributing to and augmenting daily life in our community. A sample list is provided at the end of this section.

Category 3 includes various agencies of the county and state with jurisdiction over or areas of responsibility that include Elkins. Some of these agencies play a direct role in infrastructure inside city limits (such as the W. Va. Division of Highways, which is responsible for maintenance of nearly two dozen state routes that pass through Elkins) or work side by side with city public safety personnel (Randolph County Sheriff’s Office, Randolph County Humane Officer, West Virginia State Police, Randolph County Emergency Medical Services). See the sample list at the end of this section.

City of Elkins recognizes the importance of the many organizations and agencies in both of these categories. Indeed, in many cases, the services provided are important enough that—if these organizations and agencies did not exist—the city might need to find ways to provide these services itself. For this reason, city council is open to funding requests from outside/partner organizations. At the same time, as the list at the end of this section makes clear, it would simply not be possible to provide funding to every worthy organization in the community—at least not without so diluting the value of that funding as to render it almost meaningless. (In a typical budget year, the city dedicates around \$500,000 to these partner organizations.)

Therefore, city council considers requests for outside/partner contributions as part of its annual budget planning process. With the recognition that it is not possible to fund every worthy organization or agency, city council carefully analyzes how best to balance the many competing demands and ensure that city contributions are guided by consideration of need, value, and impact. It is generally not possible for the city to entertain significant outside contribution requests other than during annual budget planning.

See below for a partial list of the many boards, commissions, authorities, organizations, and outside agencies that all play crucial roles in the Elkins community.

Quasi-Governmental Boards and Commissions

- Elkins Depot Welcome Center (CVB)
- Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission
- Elkins Parks & Recreation Commission
- Elkins Planning Commission
- Elkins Sanitary Board
- Elkins Tree Board
- Elkins Water Board
- Elkins-Randolph County Airport Authority (joint body with Randolph County)
- Elkins-Randolph County Public Library Board (joint body with Randolph County)

Community Organizations

- Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area
- Ascend WV
- Child Advocacy Center
- Country Roads Transit
- D&E College
- Elkins Area Shared Trails (EAST)
- Elkins-Randolph County Chamber of Commerce
- Interact Children's Museum
- Kump Education Center
- Mayor's Addiction and Homelessness Task Force
- Mon Forest Towns
- Our Town, Inc.
- Randolph County Community Arts Center
- Randolph County Humane Society
- Recovery Resource Group and other recovery organizations
- Woodlands Development and Lending

County and State Agencies

- Elkins-Randolph County Health Department
- Local Emergency Planning Commission
- Neighboring city and county governments
- Randolph County Development Authority
- Randolph County Emergency Medical Squad
- Randolph County Humane Officer
- Randolph County Office of Homeland Security
- Randolph County Public Schools
- Randolph County Sheriff's Office
- Region VII Planning and Development Council
- West Virginia State Police

Appendix B: Strategic Plan Development

The purpose of a strategic plan is to provide city staff and policy makers with a set of long-term goals, so that departments can work in alignment with each other and ensure that the city is moving in a positive and productive direction.

After first experimenting with strategic planning in 2014, City of Elkins has been operating continuously under an adopted strategic plan since 2018, when a five-year plan was created and put into action (see that plan's priorities in the box at right; see Appendix A for the current status of all of the 2018-2023 goals). The 2018-2023 plan was found to be highly effective in guiding city decision-making and budgeting, and the city is now committed to continuing use of strategic planning.

2018-23 Focus Areas

1. Redevelopment/beautification of downtown Elkins
2. Execution of the Master Facilities Plan for Elkins
3. Improved Communication
4. Enhancement of governance and process protocols
5. Exploration of city boundary expansion opportunities

As the 2018-2023 strategic plan neared its end date, the city embarked on the process of creating a new five-year plan.

To support the creation of a new plan, the city contracted with Terri Reed Cutright & Associates to perform initial information gathering and facilitate internal stakeholder conversations.

Public and stakeholder input was also obtained through a series of collaborative conversations and workshops convened by Smart Growth America (SGA) in the fall of 2022.

Information gathered during that initial phase is available in a document produced by Cutright & Associates called the *Strategic Planning Review*.

During 2023 and 2024, city administrators and policy makers continued analyzing the information collected during that initial phase of work. The result is the plan you hold today.

Appendix C: Status of 2018-2023 Strategic Plan Goals

The City of Elkins *2018-2023 Strategic Plan* identified five focus areas, within which many goals and associated milestones were outlined. Most of these were either accomplished or amended based on changing circumstances and needs. The following list shows the status of the objectives included in the *2018-2023 Strategic Plan*.

1. Public safety and engagement
 - a. Neighborhood watch – ELIMINATED due to manpower demands on police department
 - b. Council meetings held in the wards – ELIMINATED due to implementation of online streaming
 - c. Police department staffing - COMPLETED
2. Public Landscaping
 - a. Improving the tree board ordinance - COMPLETED
 - b. Educating the public on landscaping mandates and property owner responsibilities – ELIMINATED due to lack of broad mandates/opportunity to educate specific property owners at time of permit issuance
3. Beautification
 - a. Adoption of zoning ordinances - COMPLETED
 - b. Creating a matching grant fund – ELIMINATED due to lack of funds/uncertain need
4. Vehicle and Pedestrian Access
 - a. Installing new crosswalks – SUSPENDED due to pending streetscape improvements
 - b. Wayfinding and welcome signs - ADDED to **Focus Area 3: A Thriving Community with Attractive Amenities**
 - c. Connecting City parks with walking and bike paths
 - d. More citywide parking – COMPLETED with construction of city hall parking lot
 - e. Parking and wayfinding around the Tygart Hotel – Added to **Focus Area 3: A Thriving Community with Attractive Amenities**
5. Operations, facilities, and Equipment – ADDED to **Focus Area 2: Trustworthy, Effective Governance & Administration**
 - a. Complete bid for sanitation garage project – IN PROCESS
 - b. Equipment management plan
 - c. Vehicle management plan
 - d. Conduct annual needs assessment; evaluate strategic plan accomplishments
6. Develop a communications plan
 - a. A regular schedule of press releases - COMPLETED
 - b. Presentations by departments/staff to City Council - COMPLETED
7. Marketing
 - a. A plan to draw Corridor H travelers to Elkins – COMPLETED (roll into other wayfinding)

8. Adoption of recurring agenda items
 - a. Citizen recognition – ELIMINATE due to other forms of recognition (Extra Mile, etc.)
9. Departmental policies
 - a. Review, amend and train on standard operating procedures – ADD as a goal to **Focus Area 5: High Quality Workforce**
10. Training
 - a. Council retreats – ELIMINATE due to restrictions under open meetings law
11. Development and execution of an Action Plan for City limits expansion
 - a. Seek and request letters of support – ELIMINATE due to statutory changes reducing viability of non-voluntary annexation
12. Identify and promote business needs – ADDED to **Focus Area 2: Trustworthy, Effective Governance & Administration**

Elkins Planning Commission

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update: Goals and Objectives

Critical Issues

The commission has identified the following Critical Issues for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update:

1. Public Safety
2. Housing
3. Infrastructure
4. Economic Development
5. Land Use
6. Technology

Critical Issue 1: Public Safety

Goal: Further strengthen public safety services to meet the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.

Objectives:

1. Prepare for public safety challenges arising from completion of Corridor H.
2. Improve and expand public safety infrastructure and resources.
3. Facilitate the safe, efficient movement of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Commented [SS1]: Retained 2015 wording.

Commented [SS2]: Commission notes mentioned Corridor H. This objective matches wording from council's Strategic Plan.

Commented [SS3]: Wording from council's Strategic Plan. Encompasses plans for a substation on Beverly Pike and other potentially valuable work.

Commented [SS4]: Wording is from council's Strategic Plan.

Critical Issue 2: Housing

Goal: Meet the needs of current residents of all economic levels, while exploring options for future expansion.

Objectives:

1. Increase available housing and reduce obstacles to home ownership.
2. Evaluate options for encouraging housing infill and higher population density.

Commented [SS5]: Wording from council's Strategic Plan.

Commented [SS6]: Similar to a Strategic Plan objective.

Critical Issue 3: Infrastructure

Goal: Upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increase resource-use efficiency

Objectives:

1. Modernize water, wastewater, and stormwater management.
2. Evaluate parking availability and policies to ensure best fit for current needs and future growth.
3. Strengthen walkability by encouraging and supporting sidewalk improvements.

Commented [SS7]: This doesn't seem to be something a city can have much influence on. What about a wording change: "Upgrade infrastructure to meet current needs while preparing for future growth."

Commented [SS8]: Wording from council's Strategic Plan. Stormwater piece is important due to ongoing separation of stormwater from sewer system (meaning sewer rates are allowed to pay for less and less of the cost of managing stormwater). Also increasing heavy rain events, etc.

Commented [SS9]: Council's Strategic Plan calls for a parking study.

Critical Issue 4: Economic Development

Goal: *Provide opportunities for increased economic development*

Objectives:

1. Take advantage of opportunities to increase tourism and attract new residents.
2. Implement streetscape improvements downtown.
3. Restore and improve the city's riverfront.

Commented [SS10]: Notes referenced the new convention center and Ascend. This encompasses these and similar opportunities.

Commented [SS11]: Two projects intended to be funded by the TIF.

Critical Issue 5: Land Use

Goal: *Enhance and protect the characteristics of the city through proactive land use planning*

Objectives:

1. Refine new zoning code to ensure best fit with current needs and future growth.
2. Define and enhance neighborhood identity.

Commented [SS12]: Wording is from council's Strategic Plan; builds on an objective from the 2015 Comp Plan.

Critical Issue 6: Technology

Goal: *Use technology to increase organizational efficiency and strengthen service delivery*

Objectives:

1. Modernize public-facing processes to improve efficiency and create a more user-friendly customer experience.
2. Seek opportunities to deploy "smart city" technology with flexibility for future needs and growth.
3. Modernize data storage and access as basis for planning and decision making.

Commented [SS13]: Wording from council's Strategic Plan.



CITY OF ELKINS AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Meeting Date:	October 10, 2024
Section:	New business
Category:	Action Item
Agenda Item Name:	Industrial uses
Recommended By:	City Clerk
Summary:	The attached memo is presented to open a discussion of the possibility of reducing non-industrial uses allowed in the Industrial District. (Repeated from previous agenda with no changes.) For discussion: Could we make a distinction between a Light Industrial zone and a Heavy Industrial zone, mostly reserving the latter for the new Industrial Park?
Fiscal Impact:	n/a
Recommendation:	Consider for next steps or recommendations to council
Attachments:	1. Industrial vs commercial uses

Comparison of Uses in Industrial and Commercial Zone

“Industrial Zones” that include too many non-industrial uses can be an obstacle to industrial uses locating there. This is because of conflicts and risk related to, for example, a mix of heavy truck traffic and passenger cars and foot traffic visiting adjacent businesses.

The “Industrial” category in Elkins includes multiple uses not typically associated with an industrial area.

The table below offers a comparison of uses included in:

- BOTH Commercial and Industrial
- In Industrial but not Commercial
- In Commercial but not Industrial

Yellow highlighting indicates uses that are assigned to (1) existing businesses that are (2) currently located in an area zoned Industrial. (Some of them might be outside the Industrial Park.) Based on this analysis, there seem to be only two use definitions currently applicable to active businesses that would raise the concern described at the top: Clinic (Seven Performance and the Audiology business) and Butcher Shop (Charm Farm Market).

In addition to Clinic and Butcher Shop (both currently “in use”), green highlighting indicates (1) uses allowed in Industrial that (2) are NOT currently “in use” and that (3) would probably need to be eliminated from Industrial to avoid raising the concern described at the top.

If the commission decided to recommend this, only three currently active businesses would see their uses eliminated from Industrial. Keep in mind, however, that they would be grandfathered in and would could continue to operate with no effect; the right to continue these nonconforming uses would persist even if the property were sold, as long as the nonconforming use were never discontinued for longer than 12 months.

Industrial Only	Industrial & Commercial	Commercial Only
Adult business	Animal hospital/veterinary office	Bed & Bkfst I-III
Extractive industry	Car wash	Catering business
Freight terminal	Clinic	Child day care (all sizes)
Incinerator	Auto repair	Community facility
Industrial park	Bakery	Continuing care facility
Lumber yard	Bank	Cultural service
Manufacturing (heavy)	Boat and marine sales and service	Dwellings
Medical cannabis growing facility	Brew pub	Educational institution
Medical cannabis processing facility	Broadcasting studio	Emergency shelter
Research & development	Building material facility	Funeral home
Salvage yard	Bus/transit facilities	Health club

Self-storage facility	Bus/transit shelter	Home based business (low impact)
Solar energy facility, large	Butcher shop	Hospital
Solid waste disposal area/Facility (public & private)	Convenience store	Hotel/motel
Truck terminal	Conversion of school/church	Kennel
Warehouse	Distillery	Laundromat
Wholesale establishment	Distribution facility	Liquor store
Wireless telecom facility	Dock	Medical adult day care center
	Dog day care	Medical cannabis organization, health care
	Dry cleaner	Night club
	Equipment repair/rental	Office supply establishment
	Essential utilities and equipment	Park
	Event, mass gathering	Personal service
	Event, special	Pet shop
	Farm/construction equipment and supply sales	Pharmacy
	Farmer's market	Private club
	Garden center	Professional services
	Gas station	Roadside vendor stand
	Gas station, large	School, prek-12
	Governmental operations	Senior independent housing
	Greenhouse, commercial	Shopping center
	Greenhouse, noncommercial	Sports arena
	Group residential facility	Studio, dancing, music, or art
	Group residential home	Tattoo parlor
	Home-base business (no impact)	Theater
	Manufacturing (light)	Theater, drive-in
	Medical cannabis dispensary	Vehicle sales/rental and service
	Parcel delivery facility	Video gaming or lottery establishment
	Parking lot	Water treatment plant
	Parking structure	
	Photographic studio	
	Places of worship	

	Reception facility	
	Recreation, commercial indoor	
	Recreation, commercial outdoor	
	Recreation, municipal	
	Recycling facility	
	Restaurant	
	Retail store (all sizes)	
	Solar energy facility (small)	