

# Chesterfield Master Plan Deadline Extended

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Chesterfield, Va. -- Crafting a plan for Chesterfield County's future will take a few months longer than anticipated.

Because of a tougher-than-anticipated process, the presentation of a draft plan to county leaders has been pushed back from September to December, meaning adoption probably will be well into 2011. Planning Director Kirk Turner said the extension is not a sign of trouble with the process, which will consolidate the county's 22 area plans into one comprehensive document.

"We set an ambitious goal, which is what I believe you should always do. You work really hard to achieve it, and when it's patently obvious to everyone involved that you're not going to meet it, you ask for an extension," he said.

The county's Board of Supervisors agreed that the 34-member residents steering committee, consultants and planners could use the extra time to add detail to the first countywide look at Chesterfield's 446 square miles.

"I would rather they do it right than do it fast," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Daniel A. Gecker, anticipating an adoption date in March or April of next year.

The county and consultants are in the process of reviewing the various elements of the plan and editing them to return to the steering committee for final approval.

The spirit of the work so far looks to cluster future growth in already developed areas, while leaving untouched areas green.

Turner said it was based on the "five C's": centers, corridors, community, countrysides and connections.

"It recognizes the current pattern of suburban development that we have and begins to suggest how we might promote in-fill and redevelopment along our corridors that is more mixed-use and is more efficient through a higher density," he said.

Turner added that the final product should "respect and retain the rural aspects of the southern and western portions of the county."

In that largely undeveloped part of the county, there are already 14,300 homes approved but not yet built. That represents almost 12 percent of the county's 122,000 current single-family homes. In public input sessions last year, residents suggested that growth should be focused near major transportation corridors off state Route 288, Interstate 95 and Midlothian Turnpike. Affordable housing, revitalization and economic development were other key areas of interest.