

12. Plan Monitoring

If the *Cultivating Community* Comprehensive Plan is to have maximum value and use over its 10-year timeframe, it is important to establish ways to monitor progress in achieving the many initiatives it calls for, measuring success in achieving its vision and goals, and keeping it current as new information becomes available and conditions change. For these reasons, the Comprehensive Plan should be thought of as an ongoing process and the foundation to build more detailed planning and implementation rather than as a static, “one-time” document. Components of the plan monitoring process should include the following:

- Annual reports prepared by the Union County Planning Commission indicating actions taken and progress made towards plan implementation during the previous year and establishing a new action plan for the upcoming year. These reports should be coordinated with the County’s budgeting and capital improvements processes to ensure that the latter reflect the priorities set by the Comprehensive Plan.
- Use of measures of success to help evaluate the effectiveness of implementation efforts and adherence to the Plan. As described below, these measures of success (or sustainability indicators) should be tied to the sustainability keys established for the plan elements.
- Complete plan updates, ten year intervals.

The sustainability keys provide a framework for developing a set of indicators to be used to measure implementation success. By definition, indicators are measurements of particular conditions or specific actions that reflect the status of a larger system’s operation. They are commonly used in sustainable community initiatives around the country to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development objectives. The Comprehensive Plan proposes that Union County Planning Commission partner with the Bucknell University Environmental Center to establish indicators tied to the sustainability keys, along with responsibilities for measuring and updating them on an ongoing basis (yearly), as part of the Comprehensive Plan monitoring process. (Bucknell has undertaken a similar initiative for its campus called the Bucknell University Environmental Assessment.) Table 12.1 provides a list of potential indicators as a starting point for this initiative. This list should be reviewed and refined based on available data sources, ease of monitoring, and importance to the relevant sustainability keys. The final set should consist of a basic set of indicators that can be readily monitored using existing resources. In addition to Bucknell University and Union County, outside partners should participate in monitoring indicators related to their areas of expertise (e.g., housing, economic development, etc.).

Bucknell University Environmental Assessment

In September 2007 The Bucknell University Environmental Center initiated a project to assess the University’s environmental impacts using sustainability indicators in ten areas: administration and policy, education, energy, water, solid waste, hazardous materials, purchasing, dining, built environment, and landscape. This project is part of Bucknell’s larger “Campus Greening” initiative. Assessment groups comprised of a mix of faculty, students, and staff were formed for each of the ten areas and met regularly over a one-year period. The results of the assessment will be used as a baseline for ongoing efforts to increase the sustainability of Bucknell’s campus and operations.

Table 12.1 Sample Sustainability Indicators

Sustainability Key (Plan Element)	Potential Indicators
System Integrity <i>(Natural and Agricultural Resources)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality • Animal and plant key indicator species • Agricultural / forest lands preserved (easements, TDR, etc.) • Agricultural production / output
Mixed Use <i>(Land Use)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development inside / outside growth areas • Vertical vs. horizontal mixed uses • Carbon footprint / greenhouse gas emissions
Housing Diversity <i>(Housing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of housing types vs. housing demand based on demographics • Affordability • Access to services (e.g., community facilities, parks / recreation as measured by level of service standards, retail)
Building Local Assets <i>(Economic Development)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally-owned businesses • Employment opportunities / living wages
Multi-Modal Choices <i>(Transportation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) • Length of sidewalks / bike lanes / multi-use trails • Connectivity index
Adaptive Reuse <i>(Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resources)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic resources recognized / preserved • Recycled buildings • Heritage tourism activity
Energy Conservation <i>(Community Facilities, Utilities, and Energy Conservation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compactness of infrastructure systems • Renewable energy installations • Green buildings • Reduction in VMT



