

An Open Letter to the Warren County Board of Supervisors and the Warren County Planning Commission
From Scenic 340 Project, Inc.

Scenic 340 Project, Inc calls on the Warren County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to “*stand by your plan*” and reject the Centex development as proposed. The newly adopted Warren County Comprehensive Plan is a well thought out document that enumerates ways to protect the citizens and resources of our community and to ensure that our growth does not destroy the integrity of our community.

We support the Plan’s stated goals of preserving agriculture, forest land, open space and other natural features as our county grows. The Plan recommends that County channel most of its future residential, commercial and industrial development adjacent to Front Royal and in and around existing Village Centers “...to preserve agricultural lands from development pressures.” The Plan also recommends that the County direct future development into an efficient and serviceable form that will preserve the County’s predominately rural character.”

Your endorsement of this Plan is evidence of your commitment to protect the public’s health, safety and general welfare.

The Happy Creek study area that is under immense development pressure is of great concern. While we applaud the collaborative planning effort of the charrette exercise, we are concerned that it was just that: an exercise not a true planning process. One of the main concerns expressed at the charrette meetings was concern that the growth in the study area would overwhelm the community, eventually leading to northern Virginia style development and major fiscal impacts to the Town and County for public services.

Now Centex Homes has proposed building 2,400 houses and rezoning 25 acres for commercial use in the Happy Creek area. Such a subdivision would render meaningless the Comprehensive Plan guidelines. The 604 acre tract Centex wants to develop is presently zoned agricultural with 74 to 82 houses allowed by right.

While we support denser development in close proximity to Front Royal, the scale and speed of any development should still fall within the Comprehensive Plan guidelines. The Plan recommends that residential growth be limited to no more than three percent growth per year. The purpose of that limit is to allow time for growth to be accommodated in an orderly fashion. A deliberate rate of growth permits plans for roads, schools, and other infrastructure to keep pace with growth.

Amending our new Comprehensive Plan and rezoning the property for Centex will send a message to developers and citizens that Warren County isn’t serious about its Comprehensive Plan or its vision for the future. While most of our members don’t live or work in the Happy Creek area, we believe what happens there will influence future development throughout Warren County.

We are encouraged by Fauquier County's experience with Centex Homes. There Centex proposed building 650 houses on 338 acres at Bealton. The Fauquier Planning Commission and local residents objected to the project's scale. Centex was told to come back with a proposal that was compatible with the Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan. On August 18, Centex submitted a new proposal for 373 houses.

Well planned growth achieved on a controlled timetable will result in a diverse, vibrant community and will improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. Well planned growth can occur while we protect our history, land and environment for our children and for future generations to enjoy.

The membership of Scenic 340 Project encourages each of you to stand by the Comprehensive Plan.

Frederick Andrae, President

Jennifer Keck, Executive Director