



A Season of Listening and Learning

I began my tenure as County Administrator by learning from the people who know Goochland best. Through more than 190 conversations, their voices have shaped a path forward.

The start of my role as County Administrator began with a simple priority: listen before leading. My Entry Plan, therefore, focused not only on learning our operations, but also understanding the experiences, expectations, and hopes of our residents, employees, and partners through more than 190 listening sessions.

These conversations took many forms—community meetings, departmental briefings, one-on-one discussions, public comment sessions, site visits, and tours of county facilities. I also met with each department ahead of the budget cycle to understand their work and their needs.

In every department and every corner of the county I visited, I sensed the deep, unmistakable pride people feel for Goochland.

Residents spoke about the strength and focus of our public safety, the quality of our schools, and the importance of preserving our county's identity. Employees celebrated each other for their teamwork, accountability, and commitment to serving our residents well.

Goochland's future depends on these traits, and across departments I witnessed teammates solving problems together, improving processes, and moving major projects forward. Across our community, a wealth of citizens, businesses, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, faith leaders, and regional organizations are committed to Goochland's success.

Many people I spoke with described Goochland as "small but mighty," and this report reflects that might—our strengths, opportunities, and the work ahead. It is both a reflection and a roadmap grounded in a simple belief: lasting progress begins with listening. Listening will remain central to how we move forward.

Jeremy Raley, Ed.D., County Administrator
Goochland County



Team Goochland in Action: Celebrating Our People

Over the past several months, Goochland has made meaningful progress and has met many milestones thanks to the teammates, citizens, and partners who serve this community every day. Staff consistently described a culture rooted in teamwork, respect, and shared purpose. These characteristics were evident not only in the honest thoughtful feedback they shared this fall, but also through their actions.

Their spirit of service keyed measurable wins over the past six months:

- Fire/Rescue continued advancing key safety and readiness priorities, including work to develop the county's Whole Blood Program.
- Community Development improved customer service and strengthened its plan to review processes, reducing delays and restoring predictable timelines for residents and businesses.
- General Services moved major capital projects forward, including Station 8 site preparations and Phase 1 of the Courthouse Needs Assessment.
- Economic Development strengthened business relationships and supported major investments that will shape Goochland's future.

These accomplishments reflect the values that guide Goochland—Customer focus, Transparency, Stewardship, Integrity, Respect, and Courage—and demonstrate that progress is never the work of one person. It is the collective effort of a team committed to serving residents with excellence. Recognizing the people who make this possible is central to our team's leadership philosophy and to sustaining the strong culture that defines Team Goochland.

From first responders and planners to utility crews, dispatchers, and educators, Goochland's progress is made possible by the people who serve our community every day.

Recent Improvements

- Reduced building and site plan review backlog from 109 to 26, giving residents and businesses faster, more predictable service.
- Built and maintained relationships with existing businesses by over 170 business touchpoints.
- Strengthening employer relationships across the county.
- Station 8 site prepared: demolition completed, wells drilled, design advanced.
- Courthouse Needs Assessment: Phase 1 completed.
- Supporting responsible long-term planning.
- Whole Blood Program expanded.
- Advancing emergency response readiness.



What We've Done: Building Trust Through Understanding

Goochland's early momentum reflects a simple approach: be present, listen closely, and follow through. During these first months, we built and strengthened relationships across the county and advanced a mindset of problem-solving, clearer communication, and more coordinated service delivery.

In Community Development, for example, staff reduced bottlenecks through clearer alignment and consistency, working together to improve the customer experience and restore predictability for residents and businesses.

Regular communication with the Board of Supervisors, Goochland County Public Schools, and regional partners helped to ground decisions in shared information and a common understanding of community needs. At the same time, we renewed an emphasis with employees on transparency and accountability to the public, which informed internal updates and the adoption of supervisory tools such as SMART Goals.

In each of these instances, listening provided the direction. Collaboration and clear communication helped translate what was heard into improvements residents and employees can experience. The following highlights the practices that shaped this early momentum.

Principles That Guided Our Work

- Listen first
- Communicate clearly
- Collaborate across departments
- Build shared understanding
- Follow through with action

Listening in Action

Intentional conversations with civic groups, neighborhood associations, businesses, regional organizations, and county staff revealed both strengths and opportunities. This structured, inclusive approach created a shared understanding of community needs that is already informing operational and organizational improvements.

Building Relationships

Regular communication with the Board of Supervisors, joint engagement with the school division and regional partners, and outreach with civic, faith, and nonprofit leaders helped align priorities and supported coordinated progress on major initiatives. These relationships now serve as a durable foundation for future, long-term strategic work.

Service Through Communication

Staff emphasized the importance of honoring the commitment and dedication of staff to our community through transparency, communication, and clarity. Improvements within Community Development have led to more reliable service for residents and businesses.

What Our Partners Are Saying

"We are deeply grateful for Goochland County's unwavering support and timely guidance throughout the Virginia Urology IR Center expansion. Their commitment to efficiency and collaboration has played a critical role in bringing this important project to life."

- Leigh Sewell, CEO, Virginia Urology

What We've Learned: Insights and Shared Priorities

Outreach throughout the fall offered a deeper look at where Goochland stands today. Through their candid feedback, stakeholders strengthened an understanding of what is working well, where strong alignment currently exists, and where targeted improvements will have the greatest impact.

These “Community Strengths,” “Opportunities for Growth,” and “Shared Priorities” surfaced by our stakeholders will remain central to our team’s continued growth and our work moving forward.

Community Strengths

Goochland’s greatest strengths are its people and its strong community identity. Residents across all districts expressed pride in the county’s rural character, shared values, and quality of life. Employees demonstrated exceptional professionalism and dedication to service. The county also benefits from strong partnerships with Goochland County Public Schools, Economic Development Authority, civic groups, nonprofits, and regional agencies—relationships that are essential to meeting community needs.

Opportunities for Growth

Stakeholders highlighted several opportunities to strengthen county services, including modernizing development processes, building in redundant business structures, improving predictability for customers, and enhancing communication across departments. Business leaders encouraged attention to more efficient processes, and staff emphasized the need for clearer priorities and systems that reduce single points of failure. Across conversations, residents and partners expressed interest in ongoing engagement and dialogue on the issues impacting our community, and on long-term, strategic planning that preserves Goochland’s identity while preparing for growth.

Shared Priorities

Across listening sessions, stakeholders consistently pointed to the same priorities. These shared priorities reflect what matters most to residents, employees, and community partners.

- Strengthen customer service and responsiveness.

Residents and businesses want clearer communication and more predictable timelines.

- Deepen community and business engagement.

Residents, civic groups, nonprofits, and employers seek consistent opportunities to partner and provide input and engage in opportunities to share their voice.

- Improve internal coordination and strategic focus.

Staff desire clearer priorities, stronger alignment, and systems that support proactive work.

- Prepare for responsible, intentional growth.

Residents emphasize preservation of Goochland’s identity while planning for infrastructure, facilities, schools, and county assets.

- Sustain a values-driven workforce culture.

Employees want continued communication, recognition, and strategic planning aligned with the county’s core values.

What We Learned

1. Pride and identity anchor Goochland’s sense of community.
2. Employees are dedicated and deeply committed to service.
3. Residents want opportunities to be engaged and share their voice.
4. Partners want structured opportunities to collaborate.
5. All stakeholders want intentional preparation for growth.

Where We're Headed: From Listening to Leading



Goochland's accomplishments and improvements over the past six months demonstrate what is possible when we work together. Our continued momentum hinges on strengthening systems, deepening engagement, listening, and planning responsibly for the future.

Community Development modernization will continue, with an emphasis on predictable service, clear timelines, and standardized processes that reduce future bottlenecks. Across departments, the continued adoption of a mindset of problem solving, goal development and progress tracking, ongoing professional development opportunities, and consistent communication will support strategic alignment and proactive processes.

To integrate residents, civic groups, businesses, and regional partners into county decision-making, Team Goochland will build on the outreach already underway by seeking ongoing opportunities to engage with residents and provide opportunities to collaborate on issues impacting our community. Future steps include establishing a process for listening sessions, creating a community engagement committee, instituting a strategic planning process, and improving communications channels.

The following roadmap will help Goochland honor its values and identity, while preparing intentionally for new economic opportunities, rising development pressures, and long-term capital needs. Meanwhile, continued coordination and transparent planning will help strengthen transportation services, utilities, public safety needs, school programming, and county assets.

The work ahead:

Near-Term Priorities (Next 12 Months)

- Develop a plan to engage with citizens in listening sessions in their neighborhoods and communities.
- Conduct an initial strategic work session with staff in early 2026.
- Launch a countywide Strategic Planning process with robust public engagement.
- Establish a Community Engagement Committee to serve as a consistent channel for community voice.
- Continue modernizing Community Development workflows, timelines, and technology.
- Strengthen business attraction with more structured, proactive outreach, especially for businesses in the Courthouse area.
- Support employee development through goal setting, metric monitoring, clear expectations, professional growth, and consistent communication.
- Develop a budget that aligns resources with county priorities, capital needs, talent acquisition, and talent retention.
- Introduce public-facing dashboards and internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to strengthen transparency and accountability.
- Build processes for redundancy and cross training to avoid identified single points of failure.

Intermediate Goals (1–2 Years)

- Align staffing and budgeting decisions with the forthcoming Strategic Plan.
- Develop total compensation goals and strategies for our workforce.
- Advance major capital projects, including Station 7 planning, courthouse needs, transportation, utilities, schools, emergency communication, and the Old GES property.
- Sustain and expand regional partnerships that support coordinated growth.
- Standard Operating Procedures for critical functions and processes within each department are established, communicated, and operational.

Long-Term Vision (3–5 Years)

- Become a model of transparent, community-driven governance grounded in ongoing engagement.
- Advance a strong organizational culture anchored in the county's core values.
- Preserve Goochland's identity while supporting infrastructure and economic opportunity through balanced, intentional growth.

We Want to Hear From You!

Visit www.goochlandva.us/feedback to tell us about your experience.

Reflections and the Road Ahead

Goochland's progress over these past several months reflects the strength of its people—teammates who serve with dedication, residents who speak candidly and care deeply, and partners who remain committed to our shared success. These first months reaffirmed what so many expressed in different ways: Goochland is defined by a deep sense of pride, a strong community spirit, and a shared willingness to work together toward a better future.

The work ahead will require collaboration, clear communication, and continued openness to new ideas. This future work begins from a place of real momentum. The insights shared by residents, employees, businesses, civic groups, and regional partners have sharpened our direction and strengthened our resolve to lead with transparency, empathy, accountability, and purpose.

As we move into strategic planning, long-term capital work, and continued organizational improvements, we will stay grounded in the values that emerged throughout this listening effort—service, stewardship, and a shared responsibility for Goochland's future. Every conversation, every partnership, and every contribution has shaped the path forward.

Goochland's progress is a collective achievement, and its future will be the same. I am grateful for the trust, candor, and partnership shown throughout this process, and look forward to continuing this work—together.



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