

Washington County, Virginia Comprehensive Plan



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COUNTY OF WASHINGTON, VIRGINIA



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RESOLUTION 2015-08

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

JASON N. BERRY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
LUCY E. PHILLIPS
COUNTY ATTORNEY

TO APPROVE AND RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015), PURSUANT TO SECTION 15.2-2223 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, AS THE ADOPTED AND APPROVED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE COUNTY OF WASHINGTON, VIRGINIA.

**GOVERNMENT CENTER
BUILDING**
1 GOVERNMENT CENTER PLACE
SUITE A
ABINGDON, VIRGINIA 24210
276-525-1300 TELEPHONE
276-525-1309 TELEFACSIMILE

WHEREAS, PREVIOUSLY, ON DECEMBER 27, 1978, THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA WAS APPROVED, AND AMENDED ON APRIL 30, 1986; AND LATER REPLACED ON FEBRUARY 4, 2003, WITH THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2003, AS AMENDED); AND

WHEREAS, SECTION 15.2-2223 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA REQUIRES THE COUNTY TO HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. THE PLAN IS TO BE GENERAL IN NATURE AND TO REPRESENT A BROAD STATEMENT OF GOALS AND STRATEGIES TO GUIDE GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS RELATED TO FUTURE LAND USE AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LAND WITHIN THE COUNTY.

WHEREAS, ARTICLE 15.2-2230 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA REQUIRES THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND IF NECESSARY REVISE OR AMEND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AT LEAST ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS; AND

WHEREAS, THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FORMED THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AUGUST 13, 2013, TO ENSURE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. THE COMMITTEE COMPLETED THEIR WORK ON JUNE 4, 2014, HAVING CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED THE PROPOSED WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015); AND

WHEREAS, THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COUNTY STAFF PREPARED, CONSISTENT WITH THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE COUNTY OF WASHINGTON, VIRGINIA, ENTITLED "WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015)," AND

WHEREAS, IN CONNECTION WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COUNTY STAFF SURVEYED AND STUDIED PRESENT CONDITIONS AND PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE GROWTH OF WASHINGTON COUNTY; AND

WHEREAS, THE WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015) HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE PURPOSE OF GUIDING AND ACCOMPLISHING COORDINATED, ADJUSTED AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY OF WASHINGTON AND ITS ENVIRONS; AND

WHEREAS, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 15.2-2204(C) OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, WRITTEN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS WAS GIVEN TO THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF EACH ADJOINING LOCALITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH TEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE HEARING DATE; AND

COUNTY OF WASHINGTON, VIRGINIA

PAGE 2 OF 2

WHEREAS, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 15.2-2223 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, A COPY OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2015) WAS SUBMITTED TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT.

WHEREAS, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 15.2-2225 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, THE PLANNING COMMISSION POSTED THE PLAN ON COUNTY WEBSITE, GAVE NOTICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15.2-2204, AND HELD A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PLAN; AND

WHEREAS, ON MARCH 23, 2015, THE COUNTY OF WASHINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION HELD A PUBLIC HEARING IN THE BOARD AUDITORIUM AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1 GOVERNMENT CENTER PLACE, ABINGDON, VIRGINIA, AND RECOMMENDED ADOPTION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY UNDER ITS JURISDICTION TO THE GOVERNING BODY; AND

WHEREAS, ON APRIL 14, 2015, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, HELD A PUBLIC HEARING IN THE BOARD AUDITORIUM AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1 GOVERNMENT CENTER PLACE, ABINGDON, VIRGINIA, AND ADOPTED THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 15.2-2225 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA ; AND

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AS FOLLOWS,

THAT THE 2015 WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS HEREBY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED FOR THE ADOPTION BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 15.2-2225 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA.

DONE THIS THE 14TH DAY OF APRIL, 2015.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS DULY ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

MR. MCCALL: AYE
MR. PENNINGTON: AYE
MR. GIBSON: AYE
MR. STEVENS: AYE
DR. BAKER: AYE
MR. OWENS: AYE
MR. SMITH: AYE



JASON N. BERRY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



Acknowledgements

Washington County Board of Supervisors

Phillip B. McCall
A-11 Harrison District
Randy L. Pennington
B-11 Jefferson District
William B. Gibson
C-11 Madison District
C. Wayne Stevens, Jr.
D-11 Monroe District
Dr. James E. Baker
E-11 Taylor District
Odell Owens
F-11 Tyler District
Vernon L.. Smith
G-11 Wilson District

Washington County Planning Commission

Joe H. Hutton
A-11 Harrison District
Paul Widener
B-11 Jefferson District
Charlie S. Hargis, Jr.
C-11 Madison District
Bruce W. Dando
D-11 Monroe District
John Lentz, D DDS
E-11 Taylor District
Michael Felty
F-11 Tyler District
Bill S. Canter, Jr.
G-11 Wilson District

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Phillip B. McCall
Washington County Board of Supervisors
William B. Gibson
Washington County Board of Supervisors
Charlie S. Hargis, Jr.
Washington County Planning Commission
Bruce W. Dando
Washington County Planning Commission
Mickey Tyler
Nationwide Insurance
Carol Jones
Jones and Associates Realty
Phil Blevins
Washington County Cooperative Extension
Lawrence Cox
Holston High School
Travis Staton
United Way of Southwest Virginia
Robbie Cornett
Washington County Service Authority
Duffy Carmack
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Talmage Stanley
Emory and Henry College
Noah Carter
John S. Battle High School
Ben Mossholder
Holston High School
Emily Blevins
Holston High School
Bethany Campbell
Cornerstone Christian Academy
William Denton
Abingdon High School
Jacob Caudill
Patrick Henry High School

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1. Introduction

Geographically located in the Southwest corner of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Washington County is bordered by Smyth County to the northeast, Grayson County to the east-southeast, Scott County to the west, Russell County to the northwest, Johnson County, Tennessee to the south-southeast, Sullivan County, Tennessee to the southwest, and the independent city of Bristol, Virginia to the southwest. Washington County's boundaries include 561 square miles of land and 5 square miles of water. The county is included in the Greater TriCities Metropolitan Area which includes the cities of Bristol VA-TN, Kingsport, TN and Johnson City, TN.

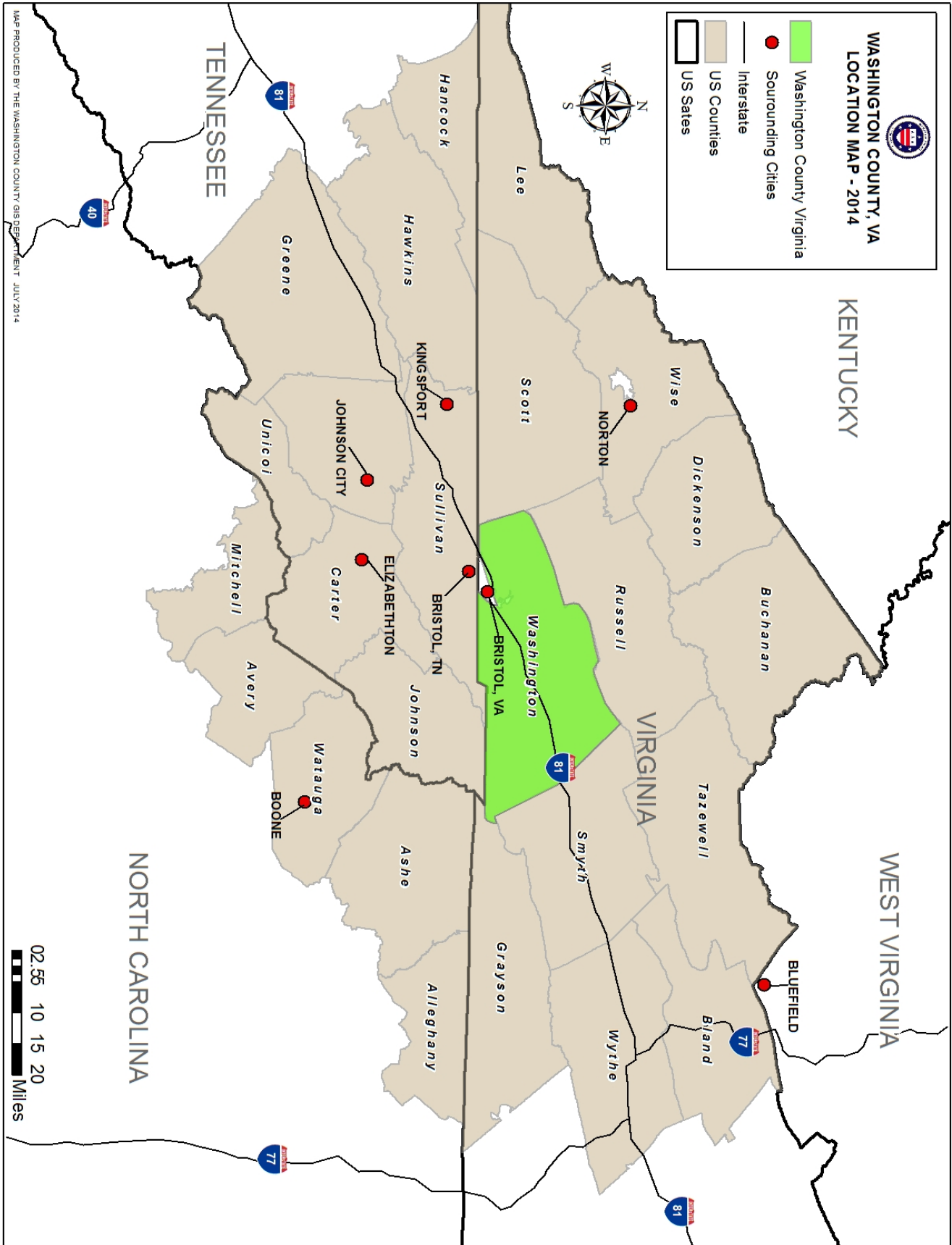
The majority of Washington County is located in the Great Valley Region of Virginia and is comprised of rivers, mountains, lush meadowlands and fertile soil. The Native Americans and early settlers of the area revered the natural resources that led the county to become a major agricultural center. Washington County remains an eminent agricultural community, leading the state in egg production and among the top counties in burley tobacco production and livestock.

Manufacturing is a major component in the economy of the county. Washington County is home to more than 45 industries. Some of the largest private employers include; Food City, Bristol Compressors, Washington County Schools, Mountain States Health Alliance , Bristol, and Universal Fibers.

Residents of and visitors to Washington County enjoy its wealth of natural resources; beautiful lakes, rivers and streams provide fishing, boating and swimming opportunities. Hiking trails abound including the 33.4 mile Creeper Trail which runs from Abingdon, VA, Whitetop, VA, intersecting the Appalachian Trail in Damascus, VA. Arts and culture are prominent throughout the area and venues feature many regional festivals, live music entertainment, local artisans and other cultural attractions such as the world famous Barter Theater.

Medical care is offered to residents of Washington County through access to several facilities all within a 50 mile radius; Johnston Memorial Hospital located in Washington County, Virginia, Bristol Regional Medical Center located in Bristol, Tennessee, Holston Valley Medical Center located in Kingsport, Tennessee and Johnson City Medical Center located in Johnson City, Tennessee.

During the 2014-2015 school year, approximately 7,300 students were enrolled in the county's public school system which includes seven elementary schools, four middle schools and four high schools. One private school, Cornerstone Christian Academy, is located in Abingdon, VA, and provides kindergarten through 12th grade education. The county also benefits from the educational resources of two vocational schools, Virginia Highlands Community College and Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, all designed to prepare students to enter the workforce. Emory and Henry College located in Emory, Virginia is a nationally recognized, award winning liberal arts college. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center located in Abingdon, Virginia partners with ten state universities to offer 90 degree programs.



For Whom Do We Plan?

The current and future residents of Washington County are the people for whom we plan. The county's 2013 population was 54,907¹. Three towns are located in Washington County with individual populations of; 8,206 in Abingdon, 1,462 in Glade Spring and 815 in Damascus². The population growth rate in the County from 1990 to 2000 was approximately 11%. The decade of 2000 to 2010 the County's population grew by 7.4%. Population forecasts provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service suggest a population of 57,040 people in the county by 2020, an increase of 7.2% people from the official 2010 U.S. Census total.

Population History of Washington County

Census	Population	% Increase since previous Decennial Census
1900 Census	28,995	-
1910 Census	32,830	13.2%
1920 Census	32,376	-1.4%
1930 Census	33,850	4.55%
1940 Census	38,197	12.84%
1950 Census	37,536	-1.73%
1960 Census	38,076	1.4%
1970 Census	40,835	7.2%
1980 Census	46,487	13.8%
1990 Census	45,887	-2.04%*
2000 Census	51,103	11.4%
2010 Census	54,876	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census

*This anomaly may be accounted for by the generally recognized undercount in the 1990 U.S. Census. Washington County presented a challenge to the U. S. Census Bureau regarding the 1990 Census count. The challenge was subsequently denied.

Through analysis of U.S. Census data, it is evident that the county's population growth during the past decade is the result of in-migration. Most of the people moving in between 2000 and 2010 were 55 to 74 years old. With a large older population, the number of births in Washington County has not increased while the number of deaths has. With the 65+ segment of population growing larger every year, the number of births in Washington County is not likely to increase while the number of deaths will. Population growth will likely be driven by people moving into the county. The table below shows the components of population change in the county over the past thirty years.

Components of Population Change

Component of Change	2000-2010	1990-2000	1980-1990
Births	5222	4915	5101
Deaths	5579	4741	4269
Natural Increase	-357	174	832
Migration	4130	5442	942
Population Change	3773	5616	1774

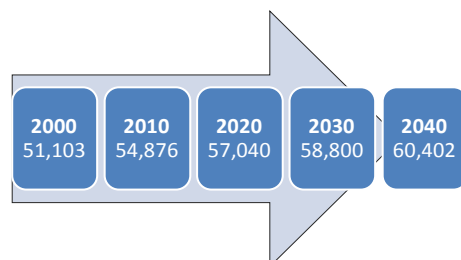
Source: U.S. Census

¹ U.S. Census 2013 Population Estimate (as of July 1, 2013)

² Ibid.

It is anticipated that Washington County will continue to experience growth in the future. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Demographics Research Group (under contract with the Virginia Employment Commission) produced detailed population projects for 2020, 2030 and 2040 for Washington County. These projections suggest that the county will continue to grow at a slow but steady rate.

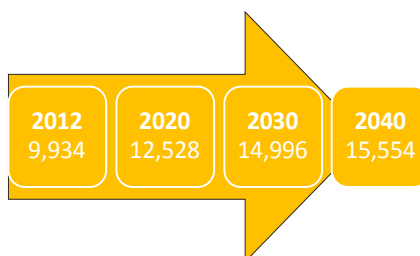
Total Population Forecast¹



Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy

Within the total population, it is evident that the population of the county is aging. This trend is not unique to the county but is occurring nationwide as the average lifespan increases and as the baby boomer generation ages. According to that United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging, the older population, defined by those persons 65 years and older, numbered 39.6 million in 2009 and represented 12.9% of the U.S. population. By 2030, the percentage of older persons is expected to grow to be 19% of the population. The number of citizens, age 65+, in Washington County is anticipated to grow to approximately 25.5% of the County's population.

65+ Population Forecast²



Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy

The Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia reports that many counties, east of the Blue Ridge, grew in-inmigration of retirees or those 55-74. Washington County has many attractive qualities for those wishing to retire to a rural county; proximity to airports, quality healthcare, natural and cultural amenities, low cost of living and temperate climate. As a region, Southwest Virginia experienced a 6.2% increase in migration of those ages 55 to 74 between the years 2000 to 2010. Washington County saw an increase in this overall segment of 32.14%, from 10,434 persons in 2000, to 13,787 persons in 2010.³

Washington County Age Specific Migration Data: 2000-2010

Age Group	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Number of People	213	-346	1070	805	921	559	-35	-37
Percentage Change Among Age Group	3.5%	-5.4%	16.9%	9.9%	11.9%	9.4%	-0.8%	-1.4%

Source: U.S. Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy

¹ Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Demographics Research Group

² Ibid.

³ Retirement patterns: Anywhere but cities, published November 25, 2013. <http://statcatchva.org/2013/11/25/retirement-patterns-anywhere-but-cities/> (accessed July 16, 2014)

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Census documents the population per square mile for Washington County at 97.8 persons per square mile. The population in 2000 was 90.0 persons per square mile. The map on the following page shows the population density throughout the county. The highest population concentration is located with town limits and along the I-81 corridor. When compared with the population density map included in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, it is evident that density has maintained in the same areas with expanded growth in some areas in the western end of the county and around South Holston Lake. The housing units per square mile reported in the 2000 Census was 40.8 houses. This number increased to 45.6 units per square mile in the 2010 Census.

Washington County At A Glance

Facts and Figures

Geography

Land Area in Square Miles: 561
Population Per Square Mile: 97.8
Metropolitan Statistical Area: Kingsport-Bristol TN,
VA Metro Area

Population

2010 Population Estimate: 54,876 persons
2013 Population Estimate: 54,907
Population Projections:
2020: 57,040
2030: 58,800
2040: 60,401
(Source: Weldon Cooper Center)

Income

Median Household Income: \$42,844
Individuals Below Poverty Level: 12.4%

Business Quick Facts

Number of Companies: 4,931
Private nonfarm establishments (2012): 1,156
Private nonfarm employment (2012): 17,046
Private nonfarm employment change, % change between
2011-2012: 1.4%
Nonemployer establishments (2012): 3,416
Total Number of Firms: 4,931
Women-owned firms (2007): 28.5%

Farms

Number of Farms (2012): 1,602
Land in Farms: 192,123 acres
Median Size of Farm: 120 acres
(Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture)

Age and Sex

Female: 50.7% Male: 49.3%
Median Age in Washington County: 43.2 years
Median Age in Virginia: 37.4 years
Persons Under 5 Years: 5.0%
Persons Under 18 Years: 19.4%
Persons 65 Years and Over: 19.5%

Race and Ethnicity

White: 97.0%
Black or African American: 1.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native: 0.1%
Asian: 0.4%
One Race: 99.1%
Two or More Races: 0.9%
Hispanic or Latino: 1.4%
Foreign Born Population: 576 persons

Housing

25,574 total housing units

Education

High School Graduate or Higher: 82.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 21.7%

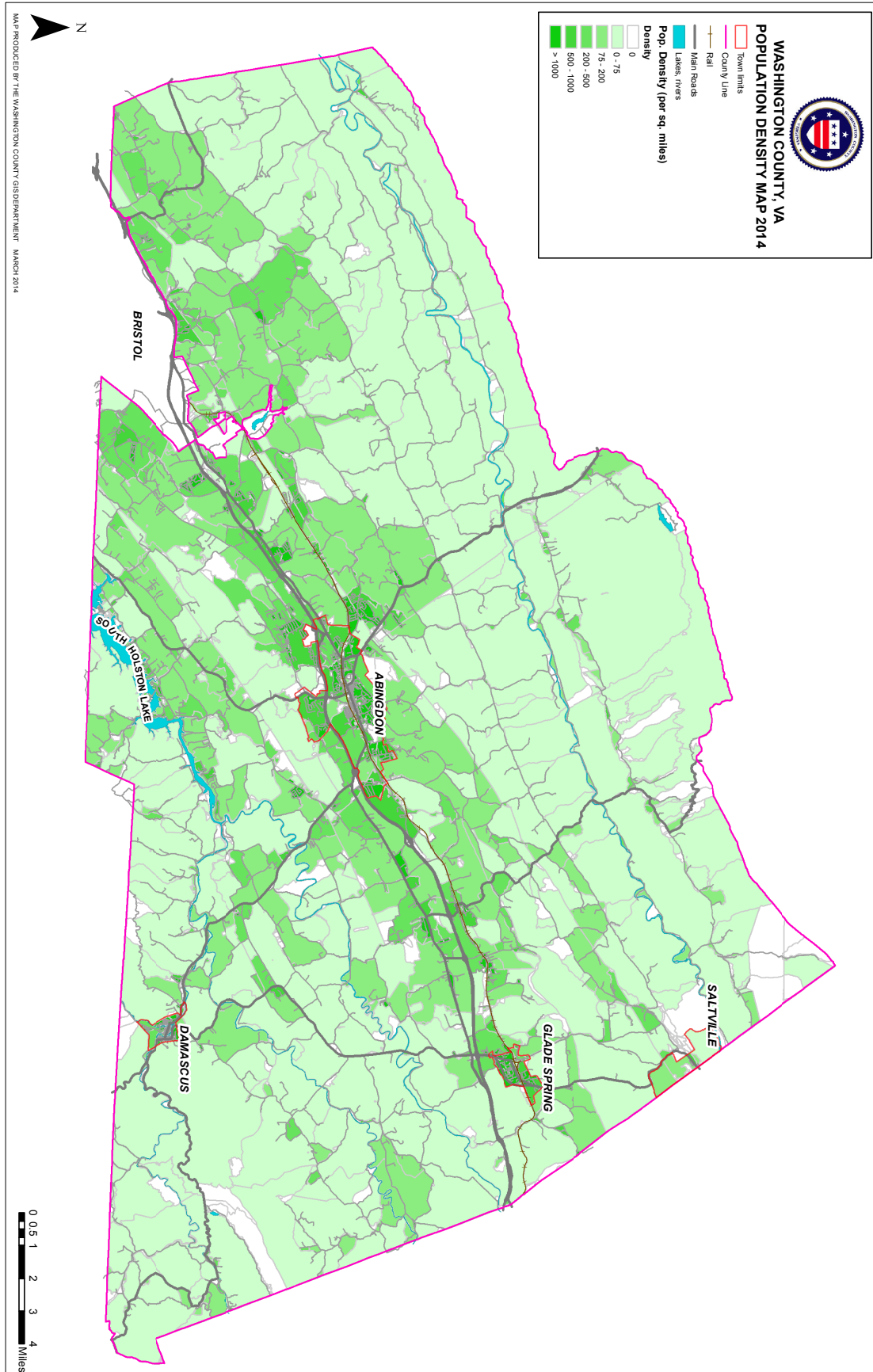
Veterans

4,701 Veterans

County Health Ranking

86 out of 131 Virginia Counties
(Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service)

Source: U.S. Census American
Community Surveys unless otherwise noted.



Comprehensive Plan Overview

An important long range planning tool used to help manage growth, guide development and implement community vision is the Comprehensive Plan. As a place of regional and historical significance, Washington County needs to preserve its sense of place while encouraging new development on a congruent scale, character, and location. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as Washington County's blueprint for the future. It may be utilized as a guide for elected and public officials and provide the framework for evaluating future land use and public investment proposals. Washington County, Virginia, has a wealth of attributes that have defined its unique character; historic significance, incomparable scenic beauty, a rich arts culture, educational prominence, extensive natural resources, and a business friendly work environment. The quality of life and hospitable values of the county make it a desirable place to live and work as well as a popular tourist and retirement destination. The leaders of Washington County have fostered a strong tradition of protecting and enhancing the county's attributes and unique character while planning for future population and business growth.

Although required by the Code of Virginia, the comprehensive plan can be so much more to the county. Preparation of the Plan offers the opportunity for the public to work with county leaders and staff persons to develop a vision for development that can be implemented in a responsible, conscious, considerate way. The Plan provides a means to anticipate and deal constructively with inevitable changes. Elected and appointed officials of the county will use the plan as a charter for issues related to development, growth, resource use, and public investment decisions.

Role and Purpose of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide assistance to elected and appointed officials making decisions related to county development, growth and the provision of public services. The purpose of the Plan is to promote balanced growth and development while protecting the county's natural and cultural resources. The Plan is general in nature and represents a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of the county. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates change and provides specific guidance for future growth and administrative actions, generally over 20 years. It is a living document and should be amended and updated as needed.

While non-regulatory in nature, the comprehensive plan provides a foundation for the critical policies of the county. The plan cannot stand alone and is only effective if supported by various implementation measures such as the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. The plan acts to provide a consistent guide to modify regulations and amendments to ordinances. It is by design developed for the wellbeing of the citizens of Washington County and the protection the county's valuable natural resources.

The success of a comprehensive plan resides in implementation. Comprehensive planning does not end with this document. Recommendations contained herein are provided for guidance and will be developed further through regulatory channels such as the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances, and other programs including economic development efforts, and management of public facilities. It is important to periodically revisit and update the Plan to ensure it addresses current issues within the community.

History of Comprehensive Planning in Washington County

As early as the mid 1970s, Washington County officials expressed an interest in planning and the need for a Comprehensive Plan. The county's first Comprehensive Development Plan was adopted in 1978 and revised in 1986. The county's second Plan was adopted in 2002 and revised in 2007. This document represents the third Comprehensive Plan, an enhancement and expansion of the work done on earlier plans. As with the 1978 and 2002 Comprehensive Plans, good long range planning does not end with the adoption of this document. Work will continue as the county undertakes revisions to the Zoning and Subdivision regulations with the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. This document was prepared as an update to Washington County's previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2002.

Legal Basis for the Comprehensive Plan

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that Washington County prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of land within its jurisdiction under Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia. This plan was prepared in accordance with these provisions. The purpose of the Plan shall be to guide a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promotes the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. Section 15.2-2232 of the Code explains the legal status of the Comprehensive Plan. Though the Plan is a guide and does not have the status of the Zoning Ordinance, nor can it supersede an existing zoning designation. Conformance to the Plan facilitates reasonable, long-range decisions.

The Code charges the Washington County Planning Commission with the responsibility of preparing and recommending a comprehensive plan to the Washington County Board of Supervisors for adoption. Once adopted, the Plan must be reviewed by the Planning Commission once every five years. The Planning Commission is tasked with making careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The Code requires that the Plan shall be general in nature but must include:

1. A transportation plan that designates a system of transportation needs and recommendations accompanied by a map showing transportation improvements and cost estimates. In developing the plan, the locality shall take into consideration how to align transportation infrastructure and facilities with affordable, accessible housing and community services that are located within the territory in order to facilitate community integration of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
2. Long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. These recommendations may include, but need not be limited to:
 - a. The designation of areas for types of public/private use such as housing, business, industrial, agricultural and mineral resources, conservation, active and passive recreation, floodplain and drainage areas.
 - b. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, assisted living facilities, community centers, nursing homes, waterworks, sewage disposal and waste disposal areas.
 - c. The designation of historical areas and areas for community revitalization.
 - d. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures.
 - e. A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance, and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and forestal district maps.
 - f. The location of existing and proposed recycling centers.
 - g. The location of military bases, installations, airports and adjacent safety areas.
 - h. The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more.
 - i. The identification of urban development areas.
3. The designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing.

The Code of Virginia requires Washington County to submit the transportation element of the plan to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for review and comment at least 90 days prior to adoption of the plan or an amendment to the plan and, once adopted, provide a copy of the final plan. The transportation element of the county's Comprehensive Plan must be consistent with the Commonwealth Transportation Boards' Statewide Transportation Plan, Six Year Improvement Program, and route locations selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Washington County's Comprehensive Plan was submitted to the Department of Transportation for review in January 2015. All revisions requested by the Department of Transportation have been addressed in this document.

Comprehensive Plan Development Process

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

On August 13, 2013, the Board of Supervisors created the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee through the passage of Resolution 2013-6. The composition of the committee included citizens, business owners, stakeholders, and members of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. Individuals appointed to the committee were chosen for their diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives on issues. The committee was tasked to meet with staff on a periodic basis to review information, draft materials and to make recommendations regarding various components of the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to those members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, an student member from each high school in the county was asked to serve on the advisory committee. Because today's students will inherit the communities we plan, it was important to involve them in the conversation. Student involvement gives young people the opportunity to speak out about issues that concern them and what they value for their future community. An article about the students, published in the Bristol Herald Courier on November 8, 2013, is reproduced on the following page.

The committee held ten meetings throughout the year. Various speakers were invited to attend meetings and present on subjects critical to the development of the Plan. Speakers included individuals from the Virginia Department of Transportation, Washington County Service Authority, United Way, Washington County Department of Social Services and Washington County Extension Office. On June 4, 2013, the committee completed their work and voted to forward the Plan to the Planning Commission for review.

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Members

Phillip McCall	Robbie Cornett
William Gibson	Duffy Carmack
Bruce Dando	Talmage Stanley
Charlie Hargis	Noah Carter
Mickey Tyler	Ben Mossholder
Carol Jones	Emily Blevins
Phil Blevins	Bethany Campbell
Lawrence Cox	William Denton
Travis Staton	



Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Members

Washington County Students Helping Plan County's Future

BY ALLIE ROBINSON GIBSON | BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

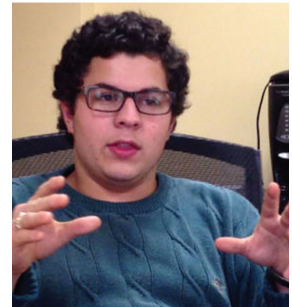
ABINGDON, Va. -- Some of those helping to map out Washington County's comprehensive plan -- the community's blueprint for the next two decades -- will be in their 30s when it's time to write a new one.

The youngest members of the plan's advisory group are local high school students who have for the past few months been mulling over what to do to preserve the county's agricultural industry, keep young families in the community and aid the county's aging population in the years to come. "I think it's kind of amazing being able to work on the plan," said William Denton, 16, a sophomore at Abingdon High School. "I get to say, 'I changed that. I helped do that.'"



The advisory group for the comprehensive plan has been meeting since late August and community meetings have been held in the weeks since then to get community input on what's important to county residents. There are six students in the group from each high school in the county.

There will be an open house Saturday to provide one more meeting opportunity for folks to make suggestions for the comprehensive plan.



The advisory group will sort through the ideas and present a plan to be adopted by the county's Board of Supervisors.

Bethany Campbell, 17, a senior at Cornerstone Christian Academy, said participating is an important way for her and the other students to have a voice in the community, since most of them can't yet vote. "Our age puts everything into perspective," she said. "You have to look at each generation and examine their needs and try to meet them all to the best of your ability."



One of the students who can vote, Noah Carter, 18, a senior at John Battle High School, said the process has personalized local government for him, as he's met several local officials and supervisors. "It's revealed how important local government is, and how big of an impact you can have if you talk to local government," he said.

Cherith Marshall, the county's planner, said the teens have been helpful. "Youth are an important part of the county, and they're going to inherit the planning decisions we make today," she said. "It's important that they're involved. They've offered some good input in terms of some of the ways to use technology and jobs and the future they see for themselves."

The students said being able to find a job in the community means they can stay here.

"I don't have plans to move out of this community if I can find a job here," Noah said. "I guess eventually [on the advisory board] we'll talk about business and industry, but one of the biggest questions for me is, 'What jobs are here that you can get if you have a bachelor's degree?'"

Bethany said young people need incentives to stay in the area. "We need to appeal to families more," she said, adding that that might be accomplished by building a sports complex and offering other recreational opportunities.

William said he wants to stay in Abingdon and open a funeral home. "I want to stay here because I grew up here. I know the town and the population, and it's better to start my business in a small town rather than in a large city," he said.

All three students said they've learned something through their involvement and think others their age should take a bigger interest in their community. "I think we should be more involved at government even at a young age," Bethany said. "We need to show involvement and start to make a difference in our community."

Community Participation

Community involvement was critical to the development of the plan as it was essential to identify the issues and challenges unique to Washington County. The citizens of the county were encouraged to invest time in the public participation process because their involvement ensures the production of a planning document that best reflects the overall vision for the community. The public process of the Comprehensive Plan design began in August 2013. County citizens were offered a variety of opportunity to provide input. The residents of Washington County have been encouraged to evaluate the strengths, opportunities and challenges of the community.

Community input was obtained through public solicitation efforts such as; community meetings, direct mail surveys, online surveys, targeted agriculture surveys, and from the meeting-in-a-box evaluations. Washington County staff members were also involved in speaking engagements regarding the Comprehensive Plan process at various civic clubs including; Abingdon Kiwanis Club, Abingdon Rotary Club, Washington County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Abingdon/Bristol/SW Virginia Tea Party, Elderspirit Community, and Berry Home Center.

Seven community meetings were held throughout Washington County from August through November 2013, to seek community input for the comprehensive plan. One meeting was held in each of the seven electoral districts of the county. Each meeting began with a brief presentation designed to provide an overview explanation of the comprehensive plan process. Following the presentation, the audience was asked to provide input on eight specific priority boards and maps of the particular district. The priority boards represented the following topics: Quality of Life, Housing, Transportation, Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Utilities, Community Facilities, and Land Use. All meetings, except for the Open House, were held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A "Kid's Table" was provided entertain children so parents could participate in the meetings. The "Open House" was held on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Community Meeting at Damascus Middle School

Community Meeting Dates

August 29, 2013

Damascus Middle School – Taylor District

September 5, 2013

Glade Spring Library – Monroe District

September 19, 2013

Greendale Elementary School – Jefferson District

October 1, 2013

John Battle High School – Wilson District

October 15, 2013

Valley Institute Elementary School – Tyler District

October 17, 2013

Green Spring Fire Department – Madison District

November 7, 2013

Abingdon High School – Harrison District

November 10, 2013

Open House (Washington County Building)

From November through December 2013, 2,484 surveys were mailed to a random selection of Washington County residents. The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research was instrumental in selecting the random survey pool and assisted county staff with the survey design. Of the 2,484 surveys mailed, 112 surveys were returned by mail for various reasons including; insufficient address, vacant property, unable to forward or unable to deliver. 480 completed surveys were returned to Washington County. The survey booklet contained ten questions, a page for additional comments, and a page seeking demographic information about the respondent.

An online survey was provided for public comment through the website www.surveymonkey.com. The survey was available from September through December 2013. 150 responses were received. The survey was advertised on the Washington County website and during community meetings.

In an effort to get involve young people in the process, the county encouraged young people to submit their vision of Washington County twenty years from now. Forty-nine artists from Watauga Elementary School and Wallace Middle School submitted drawings depicting how they imagined the Washington County to be as adults.



Washington County in 20 Years by Michaela Horton

On November 6, 2013, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee held a meeting with a primary focus on the topic of "Agriculture". During discussion, the committee directed staff to send a targeted survey out to the agricultural community for additional input for the comprehensive plan. The survey was distributed through the Washington County Extension Office, the Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District, the Washington County Farm Service Agency and through high school agriculture and horticulture programs. Ronald Hale, County Executive Director of the Farm Service Center, recorded a 45 second radio spot announcement about the survey which aired on WABN 1230 Radio twice daily during the month of December. Twelve survey responses were returned to the county.

Washington County staff members were involved in speaking engagements regarding the Comprehensive Plan process at various civic clubs or business events including; Abingdon Kiwanis Club, Abingdon Rotary Club, Washington County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Abingdon/Bristol/SW Virginia Tea Party, Elderspirit Community, Washington County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Berry Home Center, and Leadership Washington County.

Three organizations hosted a "Meeting-in-a-Box" during the public participation process. The "Meeting-in-a-Box" is a participation tool which was designed to be self-guided and could be individually hosted by any business, church, service organization or neighborhood group. The group can choose the any time and location convenient for its membership and the host could facilitate the meeting through utilization of a host script and suggested agenda/discussion guide. Information collected during the meeting was submitted to the county.

The results from all public participation tools were published in a stand alone document, the Community Participation Report.

How to Use the Plan

The comprehensive plan is developed and adopted upon approval as a guide for public decision-making. Specifically, the appointed officials will use the plan to evaluate future proposals or policy changes to ensure consistent decisions are made within the planning horizon of 20 years.

The 2014 Plan is organized into six major topics; Housing, Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Transportation and Land Use. The final chapter of the document includes an implementation guide and approximate timeline for execution of objectives included in the each chapter of the Plan.

Throughout the plan the following terms are used to describe the various policy recommendations;

Vision - The comprehensive, overarching statement of the desired future of the county. The Comprehensive Plan supports and builds upon the vision statements adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 17, 2007.

Objectives - a statement of desired goals. This plan's objectives relate to the vision statement and focus on specific elements of the plan. Goals provide particular guidance for the county's future position and establish objectives for individual initiatives.

Strategy – specific actions or tasks recommended for pursuit of objectives in consideration of the vision. The strategy provides focused and achievable guidance for specific issues and tie implementation of the plan to the vision and objectives.

It is important to note that while the policies contained within the document serve as a guide and express desired outcome, they do not carry the legal requirements found in the county's codes and ordinances.

SUMMARY OF VISION STATEMENTS

LAND USE:	Rural, residential, retail, and industrial endeavors prosper throughout Washington County in a mutually respectful and non-invasive fashion.
RECREATION:	Washington County is a premier leisure and adventure destination.
ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORY:	Washington County is a champion of cultural heritage preservation and awareness.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:	Washington County is the industrial, commercial, medical, and government service center for all of Southwest Virginia.
INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES:	Washington County citizens enjoy superior public water and sewer service, roads, and government facilities that create an enviable quality of life.
EDUCATION:	A diverse spectrum of educational resources complements our cultural and historic setting and creates a strong foundation for lifelong learning in Washington County.
REGIONAL COOPERATION:	Cooperation is the key to success, finding power in numbers through regional cooperation and standing together with our sister towns, cities, and counties.
GOVERNMENT:	Information, professionalism, accessibility and involvement ensure that we have efficient, effective, and fair governance.

Plan Adoption and Future Updates

Because the Plan is long-range in nature, with a planning horizon of 20 years, it is intended to shape the community over time. The Comprehensive Plan is also based on extensive public participation. For these reasons, minimal amendments to the plan can maximize its effectiveness. However, change is inevitable and the plan may need to be amended at times to reflect both community desire and new circumstances that may arise.

Virginia law requires that the Planning Commission develop the plan and any amendments to it. The Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing, after providing public notice, before taking action to recommend adoption of or amendments to the Plan. The Board of Supervisors must hold a public hearing, after providing public notice, before taking action on any recommendations made by the Planning Commission either to adopt or the amend the Plan. The comprehensive plan must be reviewed by the Planning Commission every five years, as required by the Code of Virginia.



Housing is a critical component of what makes a community. Housing is a large consumer of land in Washington County and one of the most important factors in our life because it directly affects our quality of life – our health, safety, and welfare. The majority of housing units are constructed, owned and/or rented according to the principles of supply and demand. Though housing in the United States is largely a private commodity, it is also a concern in community planning. We depend on private developers and builders to construct and sell housing units, but local government must consider delivery of services to those homes which may include roads, sewer and water systems, schools, parks and emergency services.

The Comprehensive Plan policies related to housing are connected to the location, type, affordability and safety of the county's housing stock. This chapter describes the characteristics of Washington County's housing stock as well as expectations for a mix of housing types which may be desired in the future.

Population projections forecast slow, steady growth for Washington County. By the year 2030, the county population is forecasted to reach approximately 58,800 people, the addition of almost 4,000 residents. In addition to a population increase, the county must be mindful of the aging demographic and residential choice of younger generations. Future population demands for particular residential types could vary based on many variables: house type preference, personal mobility, income level, proximity to jobs, employment security, housing affordability and bank lending patterns.

Recommendations contained within the chapter are suggested to provide county residents with the opportunity for a variety of housing options that are safe, efficient and affordable.

Existing Housing Conditions

The housing supply of Washington County has increased at a steady rate over the past half century. From 2000 to 2010, approximately 2,616 units were added to county's housing stock. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 25,601 housing units in Washington County.

Total Number of Housing Units	
Year	Number of Units
1950	9,334 units
1960	11,141 units
1970	13,522 units
1980	17,884 units
1990	19,183 units
2000	22,985 units
2010	25,601 units
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, and Washington County Comprehensive Plan (2002)	

2010 – Number of Housing Units	
Washington County	25,601 units
Abingdon	4,271 units
Glade Spring	1,456 units
Damascus	814 units
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census	

The largest percent of housing units (42.1%) in Washington County are occupied by two person households, however, a one person household represents the largest percentage of renter-occupied units at 40.8%. The largest age group of people living in owner-occupied housing is the group 65 years and over at 32.7%. This number increased from 27.3% in 2000. The largest segment of the population inhabiting renter-occupied housing units are those aged 25-34 at 21.7%. The average household size in Washington County is 2.37 persons per household of owner-occupied unit and 2.19 persons per household of renter-occupied unit.¹

The majority of occupied housing units in Washington County are single unit detached homes representing 69.5% of the housing stock. Single unit, attached, homes represent 1.9%. 10.8% of units are apartments and 17.9% of housing units are mobile home or other types of housing.

The 2008-2012 American Community Survey documents the median value of owner-occupied housing at \$133,800. To compare, the state average for number of persons per household is 2.59 and the median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$249,700.

¹

Source: U.S. Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

HOUSING

Households by Type		
	Number	Percent
Total households	22,843	100.0
Family households (families) [7]	15,509	67.9
With own children under 18 years	5,402	23.6
Husband-wife family	12,472	54.6
With own children under 18 years	3,992	17.5
Male householder, no wife present	954	4.2
With own children under 18 years	440	1.9
Female householder, no husband present	2,083	9.1
With own children under 18 years	970	4.2
Nonfamily households [7]	7,334	32.1
Householder living alone	6,294	27.6
Male	2,715	11.9
65 years and over	764	3.3
Female	3,579	15.7
65 years and over	1,971	8.6
Households with individuals under 18 years	6,259	27.4
Households with individuals 65 years and over	7,043	30.8
Average household size	2.33	(X)
Average family size [7]	2.82	(X)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census		

General Housing Characteristics		
	Number	Percent
Occupancy Status		
Total housing units	25,601	100.0
Occupied housing units	22,843	89.2
Vacant housing units	2,758	10.8
Tenure		
Occupied housing units	22,843	100.0
Owner occupied	17,032	74.6
Owned with a mortgage or loan	9,223	40.4
Owned free and clear	7,809	34.2
Renter occupied	5,811	25.4
Vacancy Status		
Vacant housing units	2,758	100.0
For rent	577	20.9
Rented, not occupied	29	1.1
For sale only	275	10.0
Sold, not occupied	111	4.0
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	691	25.1
For migratory workers	7	0.3
Other vacant	1,068	38.7
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census		

Housing Costs

The median home Value in Washington County was \$133,800 according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

Of the housing units available in Washington County, 2,758 or 10% of units are vacant. The home ownership rate in Washington County is higher than the state average. The percentage units owned with a mortgage (50.2%) or owned, free and clear (17%), in the state-wide is a total of 67.2%. By comparison, in Washington County, the number of units owned with a mortgage or loan (40.4%) or owned, free and clear (34.2%), is 74.6% according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The 2008-2012 American Community Survey documents the home ownership rate for Washington County at 75.4%. The number of owner occupied homes in 2000 was 16,255 and increased to 17,266 in 2012.¹

The largest percent of homeowners with a mortgage, approximately 33%, pay between \$1,000 and \$1,499 per month in housing costs. The median housing cost is \$1,121 for all homeowners with a mortgage and the 43% of this group are paying less than 20.0% as a percentage of household income. The largest percent of homeowners without a mortgage, approximately 30%, pay between \$200 and \$299 in costs. The median cost for all homeowners without a mortgage is \$304. 45.2% of renters in Washington County are paying \$500 to \$749 in rental costs per month. 35% or more pay 28.4% gross rent as a percentage of household income. This statistic suggests that more affordable rental units are needed in the county.

"Housing cost burdened" reflects the percent of income paid for housing by each household living in the geographic area reported. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.² In their 2013-2014 Community Assessment, People, Inc., reports 23.6% of households in Washington County are "housing cost burdened".

Housing Value	
Owner-occupied units	17,266
Less than \$50,000	2,488
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3,776
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,148
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,920
\$200,000 to \$299,999	2,682
\$300,000 to \$499,999	1,535
\$500,000 to \$999,999	480
\$1,000,000 or more	237
Median (dollars)	\$133,800
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey	

¹ U.S. Census 2000 Population and Housing, American Community Survey, 2008-2012.

² Housing Virginia website, www.housingvirginia.org/Cost-Burden-House-Paying-30-Housing, accessed May 3, 2014.

HOUSING

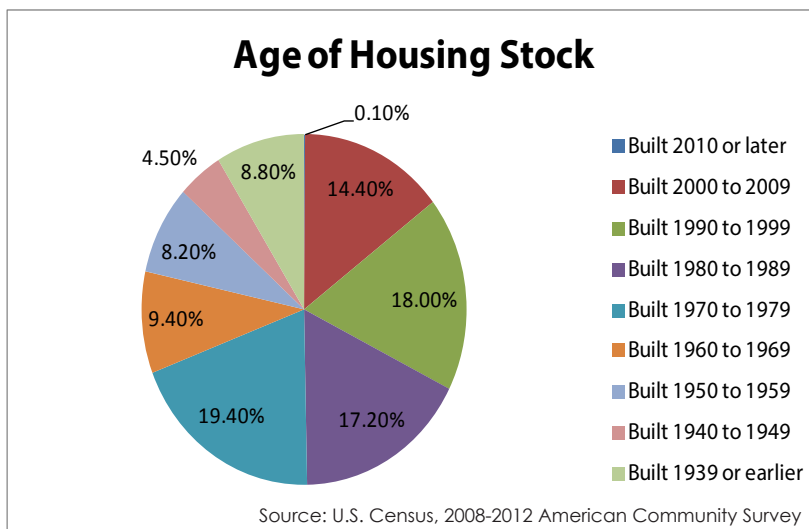
Mortgage Statistics		
	Number	Percent
Owner-occupied units	17,266	17,266
Housing units with a mortgage	9,101	52.7%
Housing units without a mortgage	8,165	47.3%
Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC)		
Housing units with a mortgage	9,101	9,101
Less than \$300	34	0.4%
\$300 to \$499	352	3.9%
\$500 to \$699	929	10.2%
\$700 to \$999	2,490	27.4%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	2,961	32.5%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	1,111	12.2%
\$2,000 or more	1,224	13.4%
Median (dollars)	1,121	(X)
Housing units without a mortgage	8,165	8,165
Less than \$100	202	2.5%
\$100 to \$199	1,370	16.8%
\$200 to \$299	2,427	29.7%
\$300 to \$399	2,000	24.5%
\$400 or more	2,166	26.5%
Median (dollars)	304	(X)
Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAPI)		
Housing units with a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	9,070	9,070
Less than 20.0 percent	3,898	43.0%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1,654	18.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	896	9.9%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	715	7.9%
35.0 percent or more	1,907	21.0%
Not computed	31	(X)
Housing unit without a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	8,106	8,106
Less than 10.0 percent	3,904	48.2%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	1,380	17.0%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	880	10.9%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	515	6.4%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	512	6.3%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	174	2.1%
35.0 percent or more	741	9.1%
Not computed	59	(X)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey		

Gross Rent Statistics		
	Number	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	4,848	4,848
Less than \$200	190	3.9%
\$200 to \$299	219	4.5%
\$300 to \$499	935	19.3%
\$500 to \$749	2,193	45.2%
\$750 to \$999	883	18.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	247	5.1%
\$1,500 or more	181	3.7%
Median (dollars)	615	(X)
No rent paid	799	(X)
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (GRAPI)		
Occupied units paying rent (excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed)	4,822	4,822
Less than 15.0 percent	843	17.5%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	730	15.1%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	780	16.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	604	12.5%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	495	10.3%
35.0 percent or more	1,370	28.4%
Not computed	825	(X)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey		

Characteristics of Housing Stock

The majority (36.5%) of units in Washington County were built between 1980 and 1990. Most (75.2%) housing units have 2 or 3 bedrooms. The median year in which most houses were built is 1981 and the median house age (in 2012) is 31 years.¹

Nearly 100% of all occupied housing units are complete with plumbing and kitchen facilities. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, of the estimated 22,913 units in the County, 99.5% of all units have plumbing facilities. U.S. Census data shows 245 housing units in the report area were without plumbing in 2000 and American Community Survey five year estimates show 115 housing units in the report area were without plumbing in 2012.² Most homes, 73.3%, are heated with electricity, followed by 9.1% heated by gas and 6.7% heated by oil or kerosene.



Subject	Occupied Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Renter-Occupied Housing Units
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Occupied Housing Units	22,913	17,266	5,647
Complete Facilities			
With complete plumbing facilities	99.5%	99.5%	99.6%
With complete kitchen facilities	99.7%	99.8%	99.6%
House Heating Fuel			
Utility gas	9.1%	9.6%	7.7%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	3.7%	4.1%	2.4%
Electricity	73.3%	71.0%	80.5%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	6.7%	7.3%	5.0%
Coal or coke	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
All other fuels	6.5%	7.3%	4.2%
No fuel used	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%
Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey			

Housing Trends

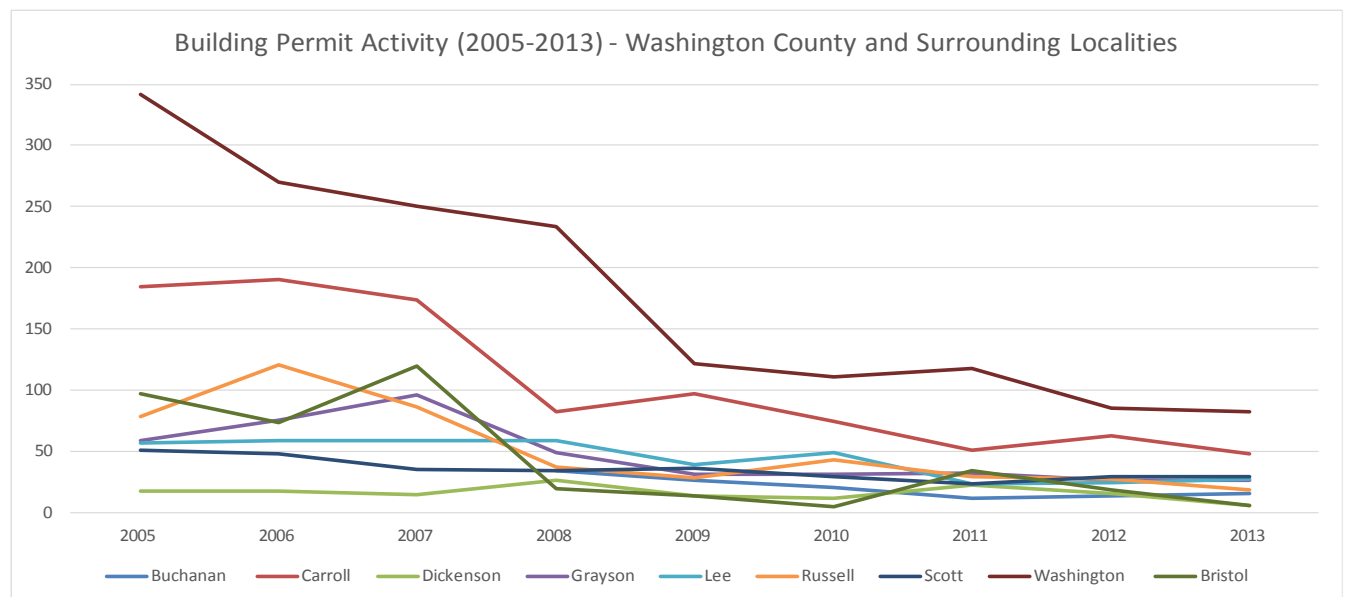
Building permit data suggests that more single family, detached homes were constructed in recent years than any other building type. Of the 4,213 new units constructed between 2000 and 2013, almost 54% were single family detached units. 1811 mobile homes (43%) were added in the same time frame and only 140 multifamily units, just over 3% of all units, were multi-family. The following page contains building permit history for Washington County and a comparison of building activity in surrounding counties.

¹ American Community Survey 2008-2012

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3, 2000

HOUSING

Washington County Building Permit Activity (2000-2013)				
Calendar Year	Residential - New Single Family Permit	Residential – New Multifamily Permit	Residential—Other*	Mobile Homes
2000	247	9	101	259
2001	200	16	144	210
2002	212	16	122	194
2003	186	9	119	187
2004	246	17	103	152
2005	238	5	98	136
2006	202	18	33	128
2007	179	8	101	100
2008	133	23	96	94
2009	92	4	86	97
2010	91	7	79	73
2011	95	4	124	47
2012	72	3	86	75
2013	69	1	81	59
2014	54	2	93	51
Total	2316	142	1466	1870
<p>*Permits issued to existing units for repairs, rehabilitation, additions Source: Washington County Department of Building and Development Services.</p>				



Notes: The Census Bureau combines town and county data. The spreadsheet includes permits for residential (stick-built) construction only. The Census Bureau does not collect information for commercial construction, renovations, or mobile homes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As discussed in the Land Use chapter, the population forecast for Washington County suggests growth through 2040. To accommodate population growth, it is important to consider the approximate number of dwelling units that may be needed to house additional population. It is possible to project a simple approximation of units that may be needed in the future. This assessment is based on assumptions: population estimates and the premise that current household size will be maintained in the future. It is also important to note that this estimate does not account for unknown variables, positive or negative, which may drive housing needs. These factors may include economic circumstances, natural disasters, and external private factors, such as the location or vacation of a large business or industry. The formula to determine an estimate for the additional number of housing units needed is summarized as follows:

$$\text{Population Estimate (By Year)} - 2010 \text{ Population} = \text{Population Increase}$$

$$\text{Population Increase} / \text{Household Size} = \text{Additional Number of Housing Units Needed}$$

Year	Population Estimate (Weldon Cooper)	2010 Population (U.S. Census)	Population Increase	2010 Household Size	Additional Number of Units Needed
2020	57,040	54,876	2,164	2.32	932
2030	58,800	54,876	3,924	2.32	1691
2040	60,402	54,876	5,526	2.32	2382

Source: U.S. Census and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service



How Does Washington County Compare? Relevant Housing Statistics For SWVA						
Category	Buchanan	Dickenson	Russell	Washington	Bristol	Virginia
Total Housing Units	11,605	7,590	13,493	25,574	8,821	3,365,855
Occupied Units	81%	84%	83%	90%	88%	89%
Percentage Vacant	19%	16%	17%	10%	12%	11%
Percentage Built Before 1990	79%	79%	74%	66%	88%	69%
Lacking Complete Plumbing and/or Kitchen	266	143	199	169	44	33,166
Median House Value	\$63,900	\$74,500	\$89,800	\$133,800	\$102,800	\$249,700
Median Household Income	\$38,887	\$40,000	\$42,880	\$53,529*	\$39,562	\$76,566
Per Capita Income	\$17,165	\$18,090	\$18,620	\$24,768	\$18,999	\$33,326
Housing Cost Burden	21.9%	19.4%	21.1%	23.6%	31.1%	33.8%
Source: People Inc., 2013-2014 Community Assessment, U.S. Census 2008-2012 American Community Survey * Washington County staff documented this to be \$42,844						

Housing Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Vision Statement

LAND USE: Rural, residential, retail, and industrial endeavors prosper throughout Washington County in a mutually respectful and non-invasive fashion.

Washington County is a preserve of heritage and historical beauty. A drive through the county provides opportunity for relaxation and enjoyment of natural environments including flowing rivers, mountains, lakes, creeks, hills, and pastures. Historic landmarks are lovingly preserved and farmland and rural ambience are protected and productive. Residential neighborhoods are attractive, orderly, and serene with children playing safely in their yards. Commercial and industrial developments prosper without interrupting the peace and quiet in residential and rural areas. Visitors are delighted by the cleanliness of the county. Nestled within the hills and valleys of the county, distinct rural communities add unique character to the county's personality and create opportunity for socializing, entertainment, and grassroots involvement and education among local residents.

Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: To support the opportunity for decent, safe, sanitary, and efficient housing for all residents.

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage the preservation and improvement of aging housing stock.
2. Ensure that the existing housing stock is maintained and new units are constructed to appropriate building codes, standards and guidelines.
3. Support non-profit agencies that provide housing rehabilitation programs.
4. Promote residential development in environmentally safe areas where physical conditions are favorable for development including soils, drainage and topography.
5. Encourage energy efficiency in new construction and housing rehabilitation projects.
6. Produce a brochure to provide information on cost saving benefits of energy efficiency.

OBJECTIVE: To promote a variety of housing types and densities for a wide range of incomes, family size, age groups, and life-style.

STRATEGIES

1. Support the opportunity for housing that meets the needs of various ages and levels of mobility.
2. Support local agencies which provide residential living facilities for persons with disabilities and senior citizens.
3. Work with non-profit partners to promote the rehabilitation of existing residences and community improvement programs.
4. Work with non-profit agencies to promote affordable housing.
5. Work with non-profit partners to study housing needs in the county.
6. Encourage affordable rental housing to satisfy community need.
7. Work with partner agencies to study senior housing issues.

HOUSING

8. Work with development and real estate communities to monitor changes in the industry for the purpose of amending regulations as appropriate to reflect market changes.

OBJECTIVE: **Consistent with the Land Use Chapter and Community Facilities Chapter, locate housing developments where supporting infrastructure is available, including; transportation facilities, water and waste-water facilities and emergency services.**

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage residential development in those areas where infrastructure is available and adequate to support such development.
2. Encourage concentration of higher density development along major corridors where infrastructure is available with access to business, schools, parks and transportation.

OBJECTIVE: **To revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as needed to incorporate housing strategies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.**

STRATEGIES

1. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to include regulations mixed use developments in appropriate districts to allow multiple housing types, including multi-family units. This offers flexibility to developers and provides opportunity for affordable housing and rental units.
2. Revise the County's policy related to "Planned Unit Development" to encourage alternative housing development.
3. Audit and revise Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and other policies as needed to implement housing recommendation included in this chapter.
4. Audit and revise Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance and other regulations as needed to remove any barriers that could impede opportunities for energy efficiency in residences.

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Economic development does not necessarily mean growth, although growth of both population and revenue may be a result. Economic development means strengthening of the economic base of the community or the part of the local economy that brings in money from outside the county. In the long run, the county economy will only be strong if it is diverse and sustainable enough to absorb the market changes and business fluctuation, which will occur over time. A diverse economy provides a wider variety of job opportunities that are suited to a wide-range of skill levels in the work force. Diversified local economies are more adaptable, stable, and less vulnerable to natural and regional economic fluctuations.

A stronger tax base enables the community to support a higher quality of life through reinvestment in community services amenities. Washington County has pursued a strong economic development program over the course of a number of years. The county has recognized that economic development has direct consequences for land use, transportation, housing, and provision of community services and facilities.

The following background data includes information on income, employment data and primary employers in the area. The concluding strategies address the direction the county will take to achieve the economic development goals.

Background Data

The economy of Washington County has diversified from a primarily rural, agricultural economy to one that is recognized for its strong, mixed industry base and strategic transportation connections. The county is part of the Tri-Cities TN/VA region that was recognized in 1999 as the first region in America to be named an All-American City. The Tri-Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Region includes a population of almost 500,000 people.

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) provides specific employment and wage data for cities and counties within the Commonwealth. This economic data, which forms the basis of many tables in this section, consists primarily of data produced by the Virginia Employment Commission, U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The VEC reports that as of March, 2014, the total civilian labor force (not seasonally adjusted) for Washington County was 28,575 of which 26,850 were employed and 1,725 were unemployed. The civilian labor force is defined as civilians 16 years old and over who are either employed or unemployed but excludes those people whose only activity consists of work around the house, unpaid volunteer work, institutionalized persons and those on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. Virginia is a right-to-work state and has a low unionization rate of only 5%.¹

Since 2003, the county's unemployment rate has trended lower than the national average but higher than the State. The median household income is \$42,844.² The average weekly wage in the county is \$766 for the first quarter 2013 as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is slightly higher than neighboring Southwest Virginia counties: Russell County, \$663; Smyth County, \$606; Scott, \$598; Grayson, \$503.

Based on 2011 commuter data, approximately 8,478 residents of the Washington County also work in the county. An additional 12,691 workers are commuting to other locations to work, with the majority going to City of Bristol, VA, Sullivan County, TN, and Smyth County, VA. Approximately 11,390 people commute to Washington County, VA, for work. Most of the in-commuting workers are coming from Sullivan County, TN, Smyth County, VA, City of Bristol, VA, and Russell County, VA.

Unemployment Rate Trends

Year	Washington County	Virginia	United States
2003	5.4%	4.1%	6.0%
2004	4.7%	3.7%	5.5%
2005	4.5%	3.5%	5.1%
2006	4.1%	3.0%	4.6%
2007	4.6%	3.1%	4.6%
2008	4.9%	4.0%	5.8%
2009	8.8%	7.0%	9.3%
2010	8.8%	7.1%	9.6%
2011	8.0%	6.4%	8.9%
2012	7.1%	5.9%	8.1%
2013	6.9%	5.5%	7.4%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Top 10 Places County Residents are Commuting TO		Top 10 Places Workers are Commuting FROM	
Area	Workers	Area	Workers
City of Bristol, VA	2,876	Sullivan Co., TN	2,104
Sullivan Co., TN	1,677	Smyth Co., VA	1,472
Smyth Co., VA	1,443	City of Bristol, VA	1,282
Wise Co., VA	618	Russell County, VA	1,067
Russell Co., VA	573	Lee County, VA	582
Washington Co., TN	479	Wise County, VA	474
Tazewell Co., VA	417	Dickenson Co., VA	444
Wythe Co., VA	266	Tazewell Co., VA	419
Fairfax Co., VA	214	Wythe Co. VA	304
Buchanan Co., VA	209	Scott Co., VA	267

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2011

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics

² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2008-2012

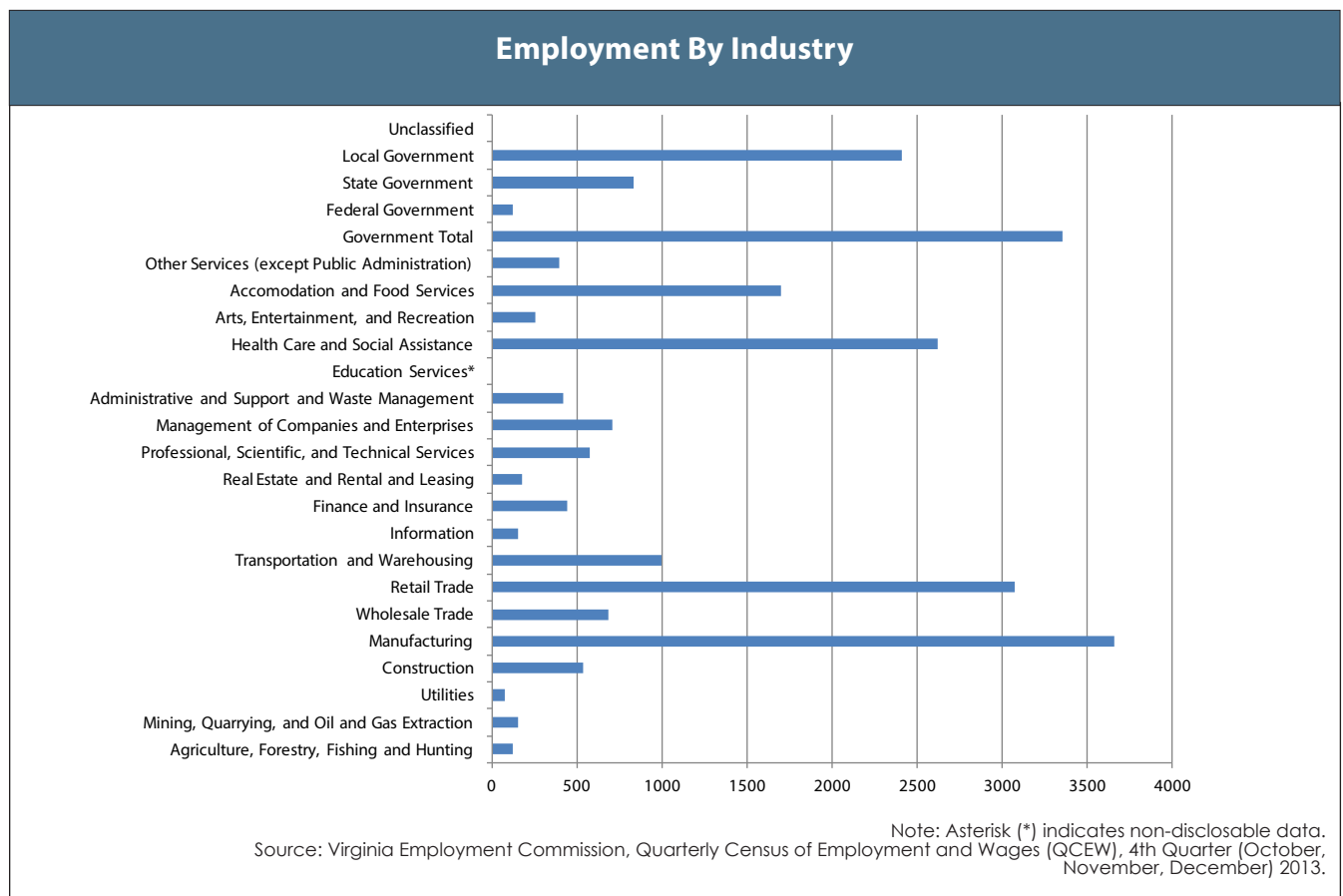
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The top employment sectors, those with the greatest number of employees, are manufacturing, government, retail trade and education. The Virginia Employment Commission reports approximately 20,553 jobs in the county, as of the 3rd quarter (July, August, September) of 2013. Most new hires are in the retail trade or accommodation/food services industries. The top five largest employers are Food City, Washington County Schools, Mountain States Health Alliance, Bristol Compressors International and Camac Corporation. The largest manufacturing employer is Bristol Compressors International.

The chart below shows Employment by Industry as reported by the Virginia Employment Commission. The chart represents 20,435 jobs.



Food City Corporate Office Headquarters



Top 50 Employers

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Food City | 18. Bristol City Utilities Board | 35. The First Bank and Trust Company |
| 2. Washington County Schools | 19. McDonald's | 36. Food Country U.S.A. |
| 3. Mountain States Health Alliance | 20. People, Inc. | 37. Sapphire Technologies LP |
| 4. Bristol Compressors International | 21. Kearney National, Inc. | 38. Kroger |
| 5. Universal Fibers (formerly Camac Corporation) | 22. Highlands Union Bank | 39. The Virginian Golf Club |
| 6. Utility Trailer Manufacturing | 23. K & S Management & Supply Inc | 40. Atwork Personnel Service |
| 7. Wal Mart | 24. Barter Foundation, Inc. | 41. The Farm Golf Club |
| 8. Washington County | 25. Abingdon Health & Rehab Center | 42. Washington County Service |
| 9. Virginia Highlands Community College | 26. Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority | 43. Sandvik Mining & Construction |
| 10. Lowes' Home Centers, Inc. | 27. Universal Companies | 44. Dutt & Wagner of Virginia, Inc. |
| 11. Emory and Henry College | 28. General Engineering Company of Virginia | 45. Carolina Steel Group LLC |
| 12. Paramount Manufacturing | 29. Grace Healthcare of Abingdon | 46. Meade Tractor |
| 13. Town of Abingdon | 30. Cracker Barrel Old Country Store | 47. VDOT |
| 14. Steel Fab (move to Russell Co./ early 2014) | 31. Cardinal Travel Center | 48. Wendy's |
| 15. Columbus McKinnon Corporation | 32. Abingdon Physician Partners | 49. Camberley's Martha Washington |
| 16. Professional Employment Services | 33. Target Corp | 50. Virginia Department of Social Services |
| 17. Alpha Natural Resources Service | 34. Appalachian Cast Products Inc | |

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, July-September 2013

Small businesses are a critical component and major contributor to the Washington County economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), a small business is independently owned and operated, exerts little influence in its industry, and generally employs fewer than 500 people. The SBA reports Within the county, the majority of business establishments, a total of 913, employ one to four employees. 1515 small businesses in the county employ less than 100 employees each and 67 establishments employ over 100 employees. One company located in the county employs over 1000 people. Small businesses help stimulate the economy by providing jobs, sparking innovation and they complement the economic activity of large organizations by providing components, services or distribution of their products.

Employers by Size of Establishment	
0 to 4 employees	913
5 to 9 employees	253
10 to 19 employees	197
29 to 49 employees	115
50 to 99 employees	37
100 to 249 employees	20
250 to 499 employees	6
500 to 999 employees	4
1000+ employees	1
Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 4th Quarter (October, November, December) 2013	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The county has a strong advanced manufacturing industry base of automotive components, plastics, metal working, fibers, pharmaceutical, and logistics and distribution companies. The following table includes a Business and Industry list compiled by the County's Economic Development Department in March of 2013. The information captures number of employees for each company, product manufactured or produced and the industrial park in which they are located if applicable.

Washington County, Virginia—Existing Industry				
	Company	Number of Employees	Product	Location
1	Abingdon Steel, Inc.	12	Structural Steel	WCIP
2	AGC Flat Glass of North America	79	Glass Coating	OAK PARK
3	Aggregates USA	14	Crushed Stone & Sand	
4	Alpha Natural Resources	250	Coal	
5	Andis Pallet Co., Inc.	15	Wood Pallets	WMCOLE
6	Appalachian Cast Products	100+	Die Cast	WCIP
7	Appalachian Plastics, Inc.	48	Mining Industry	
8	Appalachian Power (AEP)	47	Regional Service Center	HBP
9	AZZ Galvanizing – Bristol	24	Hot Dip Galvanizing	BWCIP
10	Boxley Materials	8	Concrete	WMCOLE
11	Big R Bridge	6	Bridge Manufacturer	
12	Blue Ridge Beverage	50	Beverage Distribution	Oak Park
13	Bristol Compressors Int'l	700	Hermetic Compressors	BWCIP
14	Bristol Home Infusion, Inc.	12	Home Infusion Services/ Long Term Care	OAK PARK
15	Brown Welding & Trailer Repair	1	Welding/Repair	WMCOLE
16	Cavitronix Corporation	3		BWCIP
17	Central Machine Shop	16	Machine Shop/Plate Metal	
18	Columbus McKinnon Corp.	232	Chain Hoists Division	
19	CNC Tool Corp	1 full time, 3 part time	Machine Shop	WCIP
20	Damascus Corporation	28	Battery & Diesel Powered	
21	DieCast Connections Co., LLC	10	Aluminum Castings	BWCIP
22	DSI American Commercial, Inc.	100	Manufacture & Refurbishment of	WCIP
23	Dutt & Wagner of Virginia	90	Whole Poultry & Egg	
24	Food City Distribution Center	813	Grocery Distributor	WCIP
25	General Engineering Company	141	Mining Equipment	WCIP
26	Glade Machine Co.	15	Machine Shop	
27	Glade Stone (W-L Construction)	10		
28	HAPCO American Flagpole	170	Flag & Lighting Poles	WCIP
29	Highlands Industrial Millwright	23	Millwright	
30	Hirschfeld Industries Bridge	80	Steel Plate Fabricator	BWCIP
31	Home Pride	24	Mobile Home Supplies	BWCIP
32	Hubs and Wheels of Emory	15-20	Industrial Wheels	
33	K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc.	Corporate Offices 403	Grocery Distribution	

Washington County, Virginia—Existing Business & Industry (Cont'd)

	Company	Number of Employees	Product	Location
34	Kwik Kafe of Tri-Cities	19	Food Distribution	WCIP
35	Lakeside Ready Mix	20	Decorative Rock and Concrete	
36	Leonard Iron & Metal Co.	6	Scrap Metal	WMCOLE
37	Metal Castings Co.	70	Custom Molded	BWCIP
38	Mink & Co.	13 full time (80 seasonal)	Promotional	WCIP
39	Mountain Top Custom Kennels	9	Canine Transportation Units	WCIP
40	MXI Environmental	60	Environmental Waste	WCIP
41	Paramont Manufacturing	185	Molded Truck Components	OAK PARK
42	ProBilt Body & Trailer, Inc.	18	Truck Bodies & Trailers	
43	Production Machine Company, Inc.	5	Industrial Machine Shop	WMCOLE
44	RX Services Inc. (Omni Care)	35	Pharmacy Service	Oak Park
45	Sandvik Mining & Construction	99	Mining Tools	BWCIP
46	Southern Region Machine Services		Industrial Commercial Machine Shop	BWCIP
47	SPIG Industry, LLC	6	Guard Rail	BWCIP
48	Steel Fab, Inc.	255	Pressure Tanks	
49	Sterling Hardware, LLC.	15	Casket Hardware	WCIP
50	Strongwell-Highlands Division	60	Fiberglass/ Concrete conduit boxes	WCIP
51	Universal Companies, Inc.	120	Spa Equip. & Supplies	OAK PARK
52	Universal Fibers, Inc.	530	Man Made Fiber	BWCIP
53	Utility Trailer of Glade Spring	575	Dry Freight Trailers	
54	Virginia Laser	8	Precision Laser Cutting	OAK PARK
55	Virginia Highlands Machining, Inc.	8	Industrial Machine Shop	WMCOLE
56	Virginia Insulated Products	10	Wire, insulated, magnetic, copper	
57	Virginia Metals, Inc.	15	Metal Fabricating & Stamping	WCIP
58	WireTough Cylinders, LLC	4	Cylinders, Compressed natural gas	BWCIP
59	Wolf Hills Energy, LLC	6	Electricity Generation Plant	BWCIP
60	Zenith Fuel Systems, LLC	26	Carburetors	BWCIP

*Location - Industrial Parks:
 WCIP - Washington County Industrial Park
 BWCIP - Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park
 WM A.COLE - William A. Cole Industrial Park
 OAK PARK - Oak Park: Center for Business & Industry
 HBP - Highlands Business Park
 STP - Stonemill Technology Park

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In terms of total revenue generated, agriculture and agriculture related industries represent the number one industry in Washington County; a \$76.5 million market value for products sold; \$69,866,000 (91%) in livestock sales and \$6,633,000 (9%) in crops sales. Livestock and dairy are the major components of agricultural industry in the County. Washington County is one of the largest livestock marketing centers east of the Mississippi, selling over \$40 million in livestock annually between three markets located in the County; Tri-State Livestock Market, Abingdon Stockyard, and C H Cattle Company. Tobacco, horticulture (vegetables and fruit, greenhouses and nurseries), Christmas trees, farm supply businesses, lending institutions and equipment dealers are integral crops or related businesses considered as a part of the agriculture industry in Washington County. The agriculture industry employs 1,058 workers which represents \$4.324 million in wages¹.

Washington County Agriculture Profile			
	2012	2007	% Change
Number of Farms	1,602	1,791	-11
Land in Farms	192,123 acres	198,850 acres	-3
Average Size of Farm	120 acres	111 acres	+8
Market Value of Products Sold	\$76,500,000	\$43,961,000	+74
Average Per Farm	\$47,753	\$24,546	+95
Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture			



Wilson Farm, Glade Spring, VA

¹ 2012 Census of Agriculture

Other top economic engines in the county are retail sales, food distributors, education sector (Washington County Schools, Virginia Highlands Community College, Emory and Henry, and Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center), and medical sector. Several areas of the county benefit greatly from tourism and tourism related businesses. Tourism related industry shows continued growth in Washington County which is evident in data produced by the Virginia Tourism Corporation. Though tourism suffered during the recession, as was common throughout the nation, expenditures have increased since a low point in 2009.



Economic Impact of Travel - Washington County						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Economic Impacts						
Employment	1,201	1,135	1,112	1,127	1,133	1,136
Expenditures	\$92,356,396	\$82,854,277	\$86,798,127	\$93,501,077	\$96,200,200	\$96,470,068
Local Tax Receipts	\$2,339,819	\$2,123,040	\$2,169,279	\$2,227,791	\$2,264,753	\$2,304,190
Payroll	\$19,733,596	\$18,724,549	\$19,008,412	\$19,533,294	\$19,978,473	\$20,513,933
State Tax Receipts	\$4,133,916	\$3,963,148	\$4,026,128	\$4,142,315	\$4,236,225	\$4,228,803
Local Excise Tax Rates						
Admissions Excise Tax Rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Food Service Excise Tax Rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lodging Excise Tax Rate	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Local Excise Tax Collection						
Admissions Excise Tax Collected	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Food Service Excise Tax Collected	\$2,216,029	\$2,639,299	\$2,650,780	\$2,759,594	\$2,770,907	\$2,601,775
Lodging Excise Tax Collected	\$672,831	\$733,979	\$813,920	\$903,223	\$946,406	\$725,172
Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation						

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VEC industry employment projections show growth in the construction, transportation/housing, professional/scientific/technical, and administrative/support/waste management fields by the year 2020 but the most substantial growth is expected in the health care and social assistance industry. The table below shows projected growth for the New River/Mt. Rogers area (Local Workforce Investment Area II) as a whole, specific data for Washington County is not available. Long term occupation employment projects show growth in office and administrative support occupations, sales, and food preparation and serving related occupations.

The following tables show projected long term employment projections for the New River/Mount. Rogers area. Long term employment projections show growth in the fields of Healthcare Support Occupations, Personal Care and Service Occupations, and Computer and Mathematical Occupations. Occupations poised for growth include Marriage and Family Therapists, Home Health Aides and Personal Care Aides.

Long Term Industry Employment and Projections					
	Employment			Percent	
	Estimated 2010	Projected 2020	Change	Total	Amount
Total, All Industries	142,957	161,445	18,488	12.93%	1,22%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	***	***	***	***	***
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	***	***	***	***	***
Utilities	272	268	-4	-1.47%	-.15%
Construction	4,798	6,167	1,369	28.53%	2.54%
Manufacturing	23,574	24,230	656	2.78%	.27%
Wholesale Trade	3,248	3,654	406	12.5%	1.18%
Retail Trade	17,879	20,145	2,266	12.67%	1.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	2,852	3,502	650	22.79%	2.07%
Information	1,265	1,331	66	5.22%	.51%
Finance and Insurance	2,445	2,724	279	11.41%	1.09%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,303	1,480	177	13.58%	1.28%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,000	5,159	1,159	29.98%	2.58%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,230	1,281	51	4.15%	.41%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	5,632	6,833	1,201	21.32%	1.95%
Educational Services	21,056	23,088	2,032	9.65%	.93%
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,048	19,867	4,819	32.02%	2.82%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,059	1,239	180	17%	1.58%
Accommodation and Food Services	12,898	14,700	1,802	13.97%	1.32%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,165	3,741	576	18.2%	1.69%
Note: Asterisks (***) indicate non-disclosure data. Projections data is for New River/Mt. Rogers (LWIA II).					
No data available for Washington County.					
Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Long Term Industry and Occupation Projections, 2010-2020.					

Growth Occupations							
	Employment			Average Annual Openings			Average Annual Salary
	Estimated 2010	Projected 2020	Change	Replacements	Growth	Total	
Marriage and Family Therapists	66	119	80.3%	1	5	6	\$30,088
Home Health Aides	***	***	***	***	***	***	\$18,633
Personal Care Aides	1,156	1,996	72.66%	9	84	93	\$17,292
Physical Therapist Assistants	101	151	49.51%	2	5	7	\$55,356
Physical Therapists	172	256	48.84%	2	8	10	\$90,783
Software Developers, Systems Software	162	238	46.91%	2	8	10	\$91,450
Software Developers, Applications	302	436	44.37%	3	13	16	\$76,666
Veterinarians	122	174	42.62%	2	5	7	\$102,333
Helpers - Carpenters	80	114	42.5%	2	3	5	N/A
Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants	208	289	38.94%	7	8	15	\$22,052
Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	211	293	38.86%	6	8	14	\$19,360
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	214	294	37.38%	6	8	14	\$55,685
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	***	***	***	***	***	***	\$18,965
Pharmacy Technicians	425	572	34.59%	7	15	22	\$25,505
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	229	306	33.62%	5	8	13	N/A
Dental Hygienists	191	255	33.51%	4	6	10	61,671
Nursing Assistants	1,714	2,244	30.92%	22	53	75	\$22,610
Medical Assistants	272	356	30.88%	4	8	12	\$25,927
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	130	170	30.77%	2	4	6	\$44,166
Healthcare Social Workers	111	144	29.73%	3	3	6	\$49,333
<p>Note: Asterisks (***) indicate non-disclosure data.</p> <p>Projections and OES wage data are for New River/Mt. Rogers (LWIA II). No data available for Washington County.</p> <p>Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Long Term Industry and Occupation Projections, 2010-2020 and, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, 2012.</p>							

Long Term Occupation Employment and Projections

	Employment			Openings		
	Estimated 2010	Projected 2020	Change	Replacements	Growth	Total
Total, All Occupations	142,957	161,445	12.93%	3,397	1,918	5,315
Management Occupations	4,735	5,021	5.64%	102	30	132
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,724	4,277	14.85%	77	56	133
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,504	1,887	25.47%	28	38	66
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,607	2,766	6.1%	58	17	75
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	911	1,010	10.87%	25	10	35
Community and Social Service Occupations	2,829	3,330	17.71%	63	50	113
Legal Occupations	577	658	14.04%	10	9	19
Education, Training and Library Occupations	14,017	15,566	11.05%	276	155	431
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,317	1,492	13.29%	35	19	54
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	7,320	8,975	22.61%	152	166	318
Healthcare Support Occupations	3,310	4,572	38.13%	46	126	172
Protective Service Occupations	2,155	2,298	6.64%	57	15	72
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	13,049	14,914	14.29%	465	187	652
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	5,143	5,754	11.8%	92	61	153
Personal Care and Service Occupations	3,785	5,073	34.03%	82	129	211
Sales and Related Occupations	16,896	18,798	11.26%	548	192	740
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	21,162	23,589	11.47%	484	262	746
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	450	498	10.67%	13	5	18
Construction and Extraction Operations	5,900	6,836	15.86%	128	96	224
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	6,503	7,387	13.59%	143	89	232
Production Occupations	16,429	17,093	4.04%	307	97	404
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	8,616	9,651	12.01%	208	108	316

Note: Asterisks (***) indicate non-disclosure data.

Projections data is for New River/Mt. Rogers (LWIA II). No data available for Washington County.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Long Term Industry and Occupation Projections, 2010-2020.

Current Economic Development Program

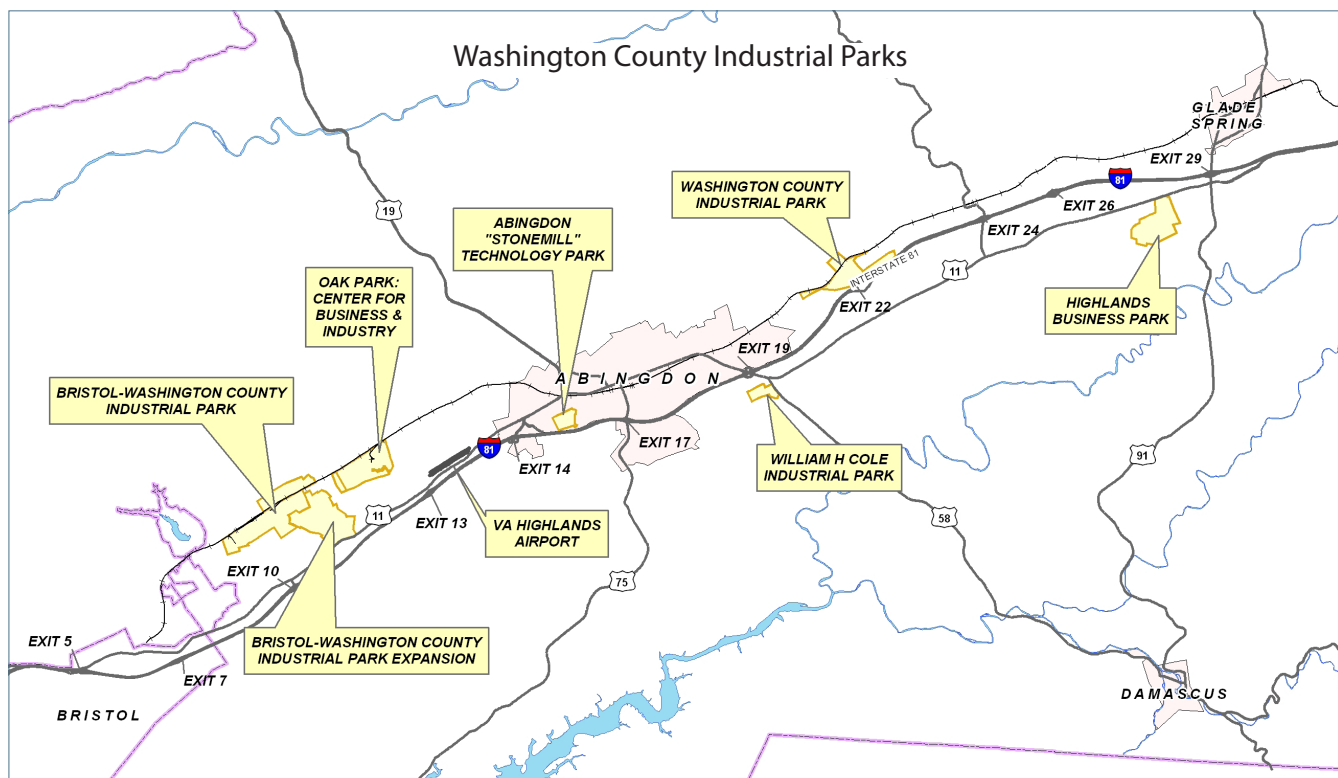
The Department of Community and Economic Development is responsible for economic development activities in the county. Their mission is to attract and retain quality jobs, diversify the economy, and broaden the tax base in Washington County. This is accomplished through the creation of a desirable quality of life, competitively positioned industrial sites, a strong and well-trained workforce, and a pro-business environment which encourages new investment and enterprise. Economic development strategies for Washington County include industrial retention and recruitment, small business development, tourism and commercial development. The Washington County Economic Development Office works closely with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Virginia's A-Corridor, an eight county regional marketing organization, to provide external marketing and attraction of new investment.

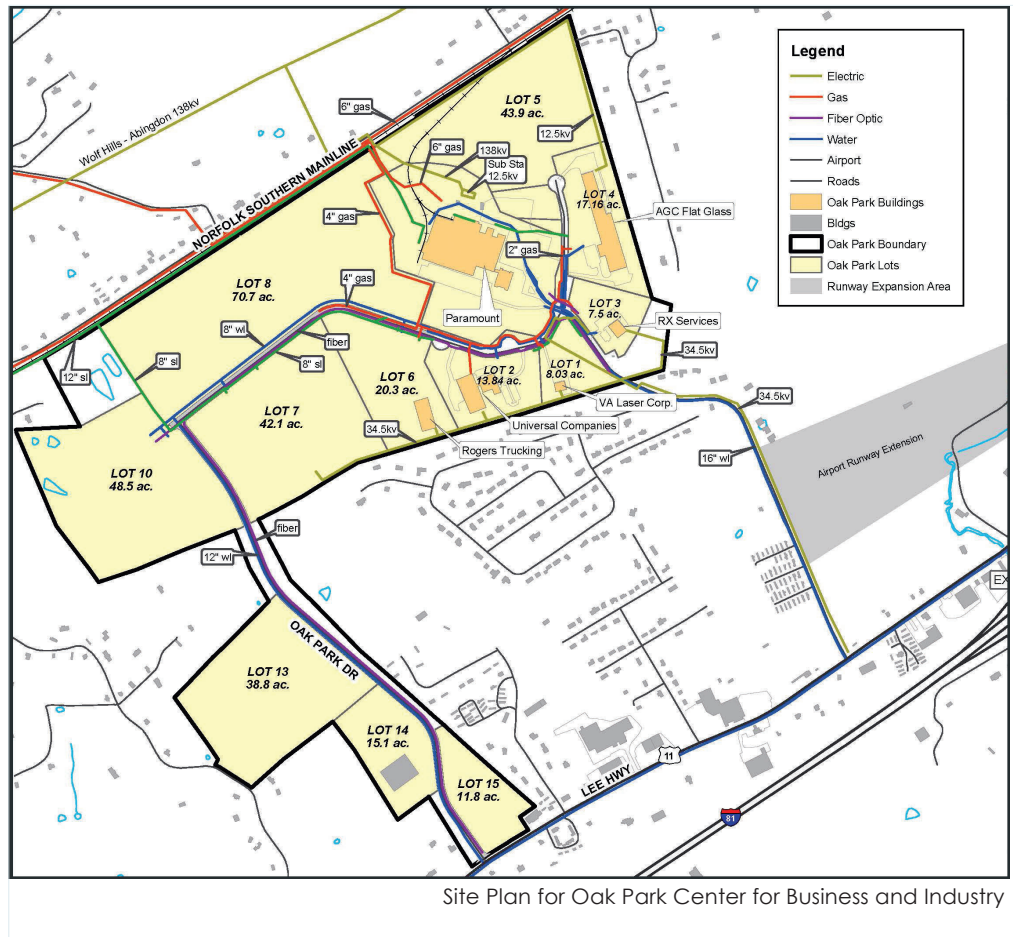
The Washington County Economic Development Committee provides review, oversight, investigation, development of recommendations and reporting on matters involving coordination of county economic development activities between the Board of Supervisors and Washington County Industrial Development Authority (IDA).

The Washington County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is the primary organization responsible for industrial development within Washington County, including the development of publicly owned industrial parks and a variety of financing mechanisms to assist in the location or expansion of industry within the County. The IDA is composed of a seven member Board of Directors appointed at-large by the Board of Supervisors for four year terms. Five industrial parks and a technology park are located within the County. As of 2014, only two industrial parks are marketed with space available, Highlands Business Park and Oak Park.

Oak Park is owned exclusively by Washington County and Highlands Business Park is owned and operated by Smyth County and Washington County.

Through a joint venture in 2003, Washington County partnered with the Town of Abingdon to build a 40,000 square foot incubator space for business, the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator. The Incubator nurtures start-up business by providing hands-on management assistance, access to financing, and exposure to critical business or technical support services.





Regional incentives utilized for economic development programs in the County include:

- VA Governor's Opportunity Fund: a "deal closing" fund used at the discretion of the Governor of Virginia to secure a competitive economic development project which can be used for: site acquisition and development, transportation and utility infrastructure, construction or build-out of buildings, and training.
- VA Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund: This program provides discretionary cash grants to the locality to assist with the recruitment of economic development projects.
- VA Enterprise Zone Job Creation Grants: For companies creating at least four net new qualifying jobs with health benefits and paying at least twice the federal minimum wage rate, a job grant amount up to \$4,000 is available for each job over the four job threshold.
- VA Enterprise Zone Real Property Investment Grant: For companies investing in qualifying industrial, commercial, or mixed use, real property may receive a cash grant in an amount equal to twenty percent of depreciable real property investments for the calendar year the property is placed in service.
- Foreign Trade Zone: Allows merchandise of every description to be held in the Zone without being subject to customs duties and other ad valorem taxes. The tariff and tax relief is designed to lower the costs of U.S.-based operations engaged in international trade.

In 2014, the County engaged Ady Voltedge, a firm with expertise in strategic economic development services to conduct an analysis of the County's current economic conditions and help define specific industry to target in the future. The resulting strategic plan will be critical to identifying particular industries that the County should target with its economic development strategy and marketing plan.

Potential for Growth

Washington County has tremendous assets to attract and support future economic growth. The County's location, natural beauty and commitment to education and infrastructure provide an excellent framework for business growth. In efforts to strengthen our framework of assets to support future growth and development, the county should keep in mind some of the following:

- GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION:** The county is strategically located along Interstate I-81 and is surrounded by a network of interstates (I-77, I-64-I-40, and I-75) that offer market access to two-thirds of the U.S. population within a day's drive. In addition, a major rail line, Norfolk Southern's Crescent Line, bisects the County.
- TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE:** Washington County has a sound transportation network, which offers efficient land transportation connections from the northeast through the Tennessee Valley via the Interstate Corridor. Interstate 81 is a very positive asset for business recruitment in addition to the County's substantial internal road network, availability of rail access and general aviation airport.
- REGIONAL WORKFORCE:** The population of the region (Tri-Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area) includes 469,865 people. Access to a skilled, regional workforce is very attractive to businesses and the participation in efforts to improve workforce training opportunities in the area would provide economic benefits. Workforce training can support current manufacturing business as well as future advanced manufacturing.
- WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE:** Significant investment in water and wastewater infrastructure has been provided for commercial and industrial development. Planning for future business need should be coordinated between the Washington County Service Authority, Industrial Development Authority and Economic Development Department.
- HIGHER EDUCATION:** Emory & Henry College, Virginia Highlands Community College and Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, very successful and high learning institutions located strategically within Washington County.
- AGRICULTURE:** The county has a strong agricultural and agricultural support business economy which is important for its direct contribution to local economy, as well as to Washington County's character and culture.
- SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:** Small business is very important to the Washington County economy. Most business establishments in the county employ less than 500 employees. Effort to help small business thrive and expand will be important in the future.
- HUMAN CAPITAL FLIGHT:** Many comments were made during community meetings that the county is losing our young people. This is common in many rural areas across the country refers to the problem in which a community is unable to retain their young talent after they leave for secondary education. According to a report produced by Friends of Southwest Virginia, SWVA Economic Analysis Report, Southwest Virginia has seen an increase in the number of Southwest Virginians (25 and older) with Bachelor's Degrees but the overall percentage is still below the state and nation. This phenomenon is important to examine because retention of young people benefits the county for many social reasons as well as contributes to greater economic growth.
- DATA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE:** The availability and reliability of the telecommunications network within Washington County offers connectivity and network opportunities for existing and emerging industries in the region and beyond. Multiple infrastructure providers, including Bristol Virginia Utilities and Century Link, ensure diversity and capacity for high demand users. The county's high-quality network infrastructure, coupled with the region's low energy costs, may encourage information technology centers and technology-based businesses to locate in Washington County in the future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM:

The county has a growing tourist economy supported by the presence of heritage resources, historic sites, natural environment, recreation amenities and cultural institutions.

CREATIVE/CULTURAL ECONOMY: A creative/cultural economy refers to a variety of types of jobs, people and industries, including visual, performing and literary arts, as well as applied fields such as graphic design, marketing, and architecture. Regional efforts have been made in recent years to capitalize on our unique assets for economic development; music, art, craft, natural beauty and recreation. A strong cultural economy can help the county attract new and visiting populations, help us retain our young people and contribute to the development of a skilled workforce.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

Quality of life can mean different things to different people but is used to describe various, intangible factors that make a community an attractive place to live. Washington County has a superior quality of life for many reasons; a unique mix of rural character and historic towns, good schools, easy commutes, quality healthcare, low crime rate, low cost of living, etc. More study is needed on this to determine how to expand and add to the county's quality of life factors.

Economic Development Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Vision Statement

The following economic development objectives focus on achieving a diversified and balanced economy for Washington County by attracting new industry and expanding and promoting existing economic sectors to achieve a combination of results: job creation and retention, overall growth of the county's tax-base and economic stability.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: **Washington County is the industrial, commercial, medical, and government service center for all of Southwest Virginia.**

Washington County has a robust and diverse economic base that provides employment for its citizens and Southwest Virginia as a whole. The county's long-standing commitment to creating wealth and employment opportunities is evident in the strategic investments that local and state government has made in industrial park development, high tech infrastructure, and training programs for new, expanding, and small businesses. These investments have enabled the county to leverage significant levels of state and federal grant funds to improve local economic resources. Easy access to interstate, rail, air service, and advanced telecommunications infrastructure allow citizens and businesses in Washington County to interact seamlessly in a global marketplace. A wide variety of employment opportunities are available in the areas of manufacturing, agriculture, government, professional services, tourism, education, and health care. Commercial development offers a variety of nationally franchised and locally owned and operated restaurants and retail stores that attract shoppers from Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. Johnston Memorial Hospital provides excellent medical care and well-trained health care professionals and operates a state of the art regional cancer center and outpatient surgery center. Over 50 state and federal agencies, along with a federal courthouse, have regional offices in Washington County, making it a thriving center for legal, medical and professional specialties.



Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: To continue a coordinated and effective economic development strategy to recruit new business.

STRATEGIES

1. Target industries identified as driving growth and economic assets in the Economic Development and Marketing Plan.
2. Execute the marketing strategies included in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
3. Look for ways to increase support for local business development including support for local start-up businesses.
4. Develop a specific website for economic development to provide information, attract business and showcase economic development potential.

OBJECTIVE: To retain existing businesses and industries located in Washington County and encourage their vitality and expansion.

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage the expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses through business retention and expansion program.
2. Continue to expand communication and outreach to the business community and encourage participation by local business owners in economic development activities.
3. Study ways to provide opportunities for local businesses to network and link local businesses to local produce, materials, and products.
4. Research potential to increase local business development opportunities and support for expansion of existing businesses.

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that there is sufficient land and adequate infrastructure to accommodate quality commercial growth.

STRATEGIES

1. Identify and preserve quality commercial and industrial properties.
2. Encourage new commercial and industrial facilities to locate within close proximity to surface transportation and public facilities. Encourage the appropriate timing and location of commercial and industrial development consistent with provisions of public facilities.
3. Encourage thoughtful residential development in areas identified with potential for economic development with the purpose of protecting access to these sites.
4. Encourage the development of commercial and industrial sites that are compatible with the adjacent area. Consider development of voluntary design standards to guide aesthetics of commercial projects.
5. Continue to promote an infrastructure system including; accesible transportation, water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and fiber optic that will support industrial and commercial growth and development along I-81 and US-11.
6. Work to minimize adverse environmental and physical impacts of development.
7. Utilize the Virginia Highlands Airport as a tool for business recruitment and support plans for expanding capacity to meet commercial demand in the future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE: Promote agriculture and agriculture related business in Washington County.

STRATEGIES

1. Continue dialogue with farm industry stakeholders through the Agriculture Committee to study and promote the impact of agribusiness in Washington County.
2. Develop content for the county's website to promote agriculture as a key economic sector in the county, provide links to partner agencies, technical information and farm profiles to highlight the importance of agriculture in the county.

OBJECTIVE: To promote travel, tourism and cultural economy opportunities throughout Washington County.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote tourism and cultural assets as economic development opportunities, quality of life factors, and a growing source of employment.
2. Work with towns and regional partners to market these resources and to study the impacts of these industries on the overall economy.
3. Develop website content for the county's website to highlight tourism opportunities and the many festivals and events held throughout Washington County during the year.
4. Study means to quantify and emphasize quality of life factors as attractors for economic development; such as education, recreation, arts and culture.

OBJECTIVE: To partner with other agencies and county departments in a cooperative manner to further economic development opportunities in Washington County.

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage activities which improve coordination and cooperation between federal, state, and local entities charged with making decisions and taking action which affect economic development in Washington County.
2. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and agencies to study issues that impact economic development in the region.
3. Work with Washington County School System, vocational and technical schools, and colleges to train the existing and future labor force.
4. Promote trade and work force training as a way to attract additional manufacturing to the area and support location of a "Center for Excellence" in Washington County.
5. Develop, maintain and improve administrative practices to track economic data and improve reporting on economic development activity.
6. Continue staff-level "technical review" meetings with developers to facilitate an efficient development and permit process in Washington County.
7. Develop "Development Guide" for citizens and developers to use as a reference guide for building or developing in Washington County.

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Washington County is rich with natural and historic resources that represent a strong community identity. These scenic features not only contribute to the environmental health and quality of life for Washington County residents, they are tourism assets.

The natural environment often dictates how we use land. Development potential for land is dependent on many physical characteristics. Soil conditions, slopes, flood frequency and wetlands all affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. These and other environmentally sensitive features, such as surface water, ground water and air quality, should be given consideration in the planning process.

The history of Washington County is important, and awareness and preservation of historical assets is an important activity to continue in the future. Our historic and cultural resources attract visitors to our area, provide us a touchstone to our past and contribute to the sense of place that makes Washington County a special place to live.

Since natural and cultural resources may be affected by future growth and development, it is important to consider these assets when planning the future of Washington County.

Natural Resources

Physical Geography

The majority of Washington County land (95%) lies in the Valley and Ridge physiographic province of Virginia. The Whitetop Mountain area (approximately 5%) in the extreme southeastern corner of the county lies in the Blue Ridge physiographic province. The county consists of a broad valley which extend in a northeast to southwest direction. The valley is bordered by the dominant ridges of Clinch Mountain on the northwest and Iron Mountain on the southeast. Elevations range from 1,330 feet near Mendota to 5,524 feet at the summit of Whitetop Mountain, the second highest peak in Virginia. Slopes in excess of 20% are included on the Constraints to Development Map on the following page. Steep slopes often preclude land development due to their erosive tendencies and high development costs.

Washington County is underlain by sedimentary rocks consisting of limestone, shale, and sandstone. Limestone is the dominant rock underlying the valley and sandstone and shale form the ridges. Rocks in the Whitetop Mountain area (Blue Ridge physiographic province) are predominately metamorphosed rocks of igneous origin, including rhyolite, greenstone, granite and some inclusions of quartzite and quartz pebble conglomerates.¹

Washington County is identified as a Virginia county containing karst topography. Karst topography is characterized by a landscape developed in limestone, dolomite, marble, or other soluble rocks and characterized by subsurface drainage systems, sinking or losing streams, sinkholes, springs, and caves. Karst landscapes supply water and provide habitat for animal and plant species.²

Soils

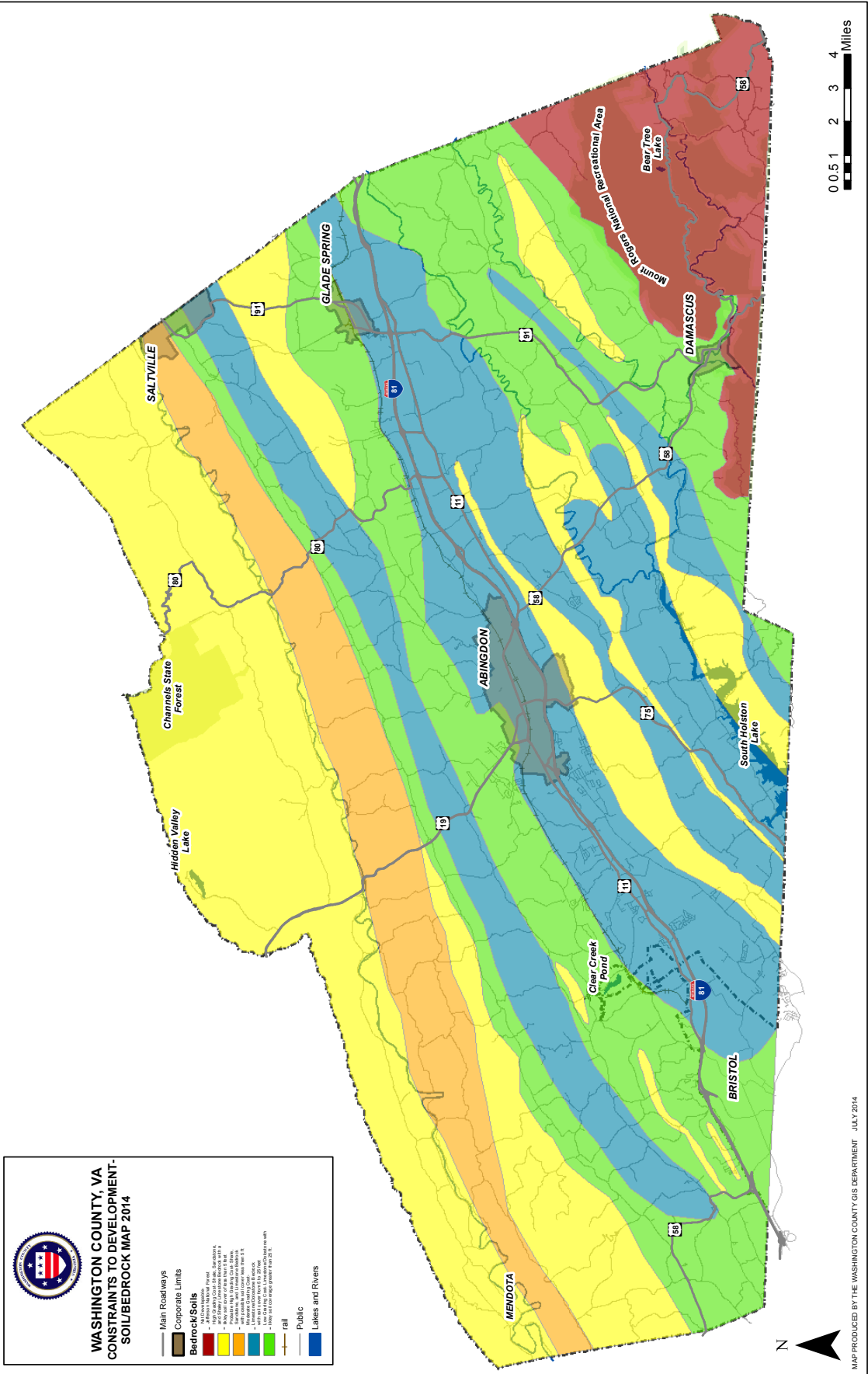
Detailed soil maps and descriptions are contained within the "Soil Survey of Washington County Area and City of Bristol, Virginia," report completed in 1992. The report provides a description of soil properties and qualities, their location and a discussion of their suitability, limitations, and use and management considerations. Washington County was included in the "Soil Survey of Washington County Area and the City of Bristol, Virginia," a publication of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. This project was a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture and other Federal and State agencies, including the Agricultural Experiment Stations and local agencies. Full copies of the report and soil maps may be obtained through the Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District.

Soil information contained within the soil survey is essential to the comprehensive plan to inform land use decisions and identify special practices needed to ensure proper performance. Differences in soil properties can occur within short distances and can determine usability of the land. Some soils are seasonally wet and subject to flooding, others are poorly suited to use for septic tank absorption fields. The protection of agricultural soils is critically important as the county works to promote the economic impact and tradition of farming in the community.

The Constraints to Development Map shows soils and bedrock and illustrates the suitability of soils and bedrock for development. Areas that are predominately shale, sandstone and shaley limestone with a likely soil cover of less than five feet present high grading costs. The same soil types with possible soil cover of less than five feet have probable high grading costs. Limestone and dolostone bedrock with a likely soil cover from five to 25 feet have moderate grading costs, and lower grading costs are associated with limestone and dolostone bedrock with a likely soil cover greater than 25 feet.

¹ Soil Survey of Washington County Area and City of Bristol, Virginia

² "Introduction to Virginia's Karst", VA Department of Conservation, http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/IntroVAKarst.pdf (accessed February 25, 2014).



Hydrology

Hydrology is the study of the waters of the earth on and below the surface of the planet. It involves the study of various properties of water and its relationship with the living and nonliving environment. (Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Virginia.¹ Water is vital natural resources in Washington County as we rely on them for drinking water and scenic/recreation resources.

Surface Water

Washington County is home to all three tributaries of the Holston River; the North, Middle and South Forks. These forks serve to drain the Washington County area and all forks flow in a southwesterly direction, parallel to the main valley. The Middle and South Fork meet in Washington County, southeast of Abingdon. The three forks meet their confluence near Kingsport, Tennessee. The North Fork begins in Bland County, the Middle Fork in Wythe County and the South Fork in Smyth County. From their confluence near Kingsport, the river flows 136 miles until meeting with the French Broad River east of Knoxville. This point is considered to be the start of the Tennessee River.

South Holston Reservoir, located on the South Fork of the Holston River, is an important resource in Washington County. The reservoir is formed by the South Holston Dam which impounds the South Holston Lake of approximately 7,550 acres. Construction on the dam was begun in 1942 and completed in 1950. The reservoir was created for several purposes; power production, aquatic ecology, flood control, and augmentation of water flow during dry periods.

Several major streams are present in Washington County and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality released the 2012 Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report in January 2014. The report determined whether Virginia waters meet water quality standards and established a schedule to restore waters that are impaired. The list of impaired waters in Washington County may be found on the Department of Environment Quality website.

Watershed

A watershed is simply the area of land that drains into a particular body of water. Bodies of water used to define a watershed may be a creek, pond or river. Virginia has defined 14 major watersheds and the entirety of Washington County lies within one of these, the Holston River Watershed. The three forks of the Holston River, North Middle and South, serve as drainage for the county. Watershed consideration is critical to maintain and improve water quality and ensure that future generations have adequate water supplies.

Wetlands

The term "wetland" means an area that is that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support – and that under normal circumstances do support – a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas."² The physical, chemical, and biological properties of the Commonwealth's wetlands work in concert to perform "wetland functions."³ Wetland functions may include storage of water, ground water recharge, sediment trapping, transformation of nutrients, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands are some of the most productive habitats on earth, providing nursery grounds for fish and other wildlife.

Washington County derives benefits from our wetlands including flood reduction, water purification, and wildlife habitat. When wetlands store water along a larger body of water, they often serve to absorb the impact of periodic flood waters. The process of storing water also slows water to trap sediment and pollutants caused by over land or upstream water flow. As wildlife habitat, wetlands provide hunting and fishing opportunities.

Floodplain Management

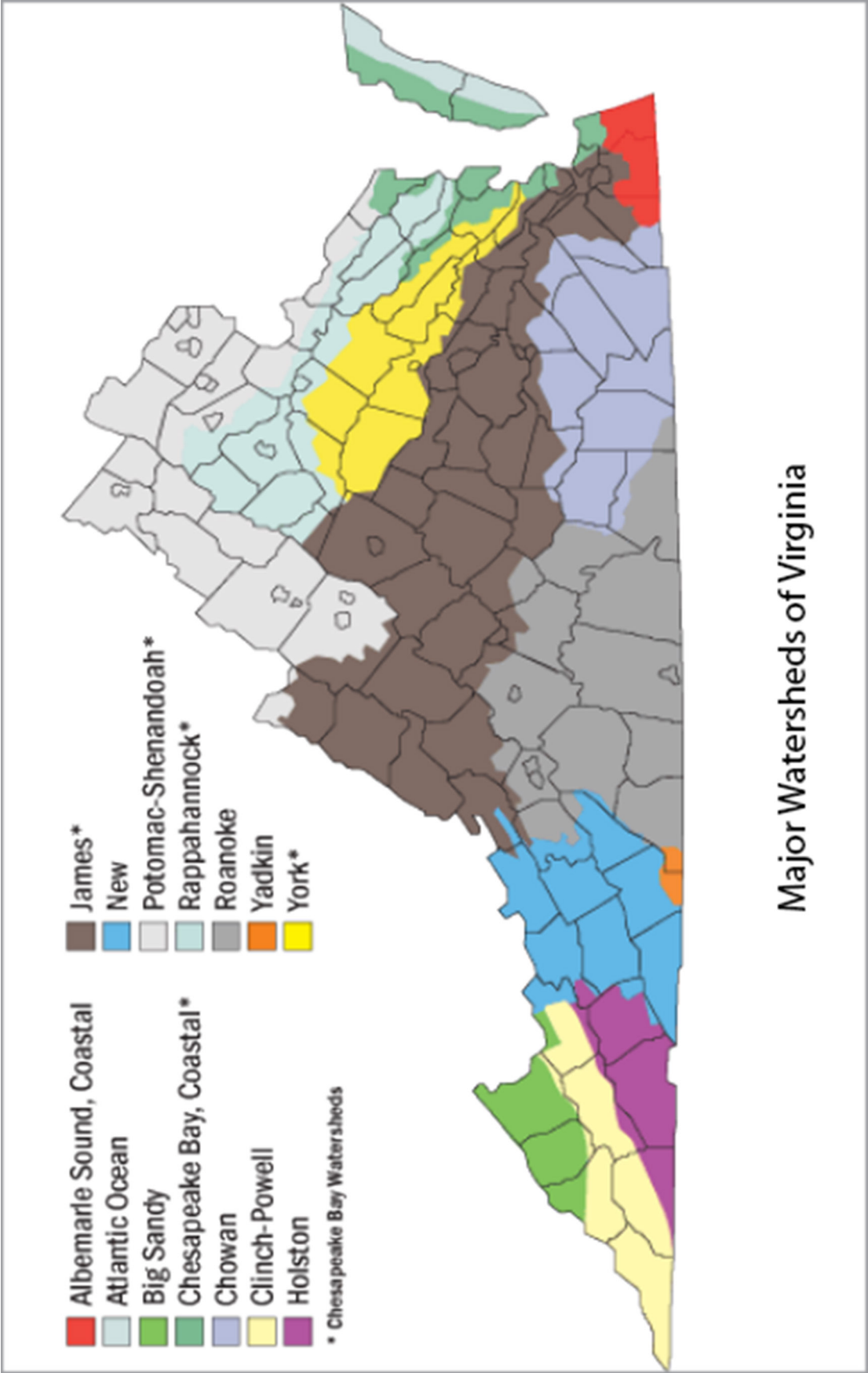
A floodplain is any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source. These areas are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and managing them appropriately is important for several reasons including: protecting life, health and property, minimizing rescue and relief efforts, minimizing business interruptions, minimizing public expenditures for costly flood projects or damage to public facilities, and to prevent increases in regional floods.

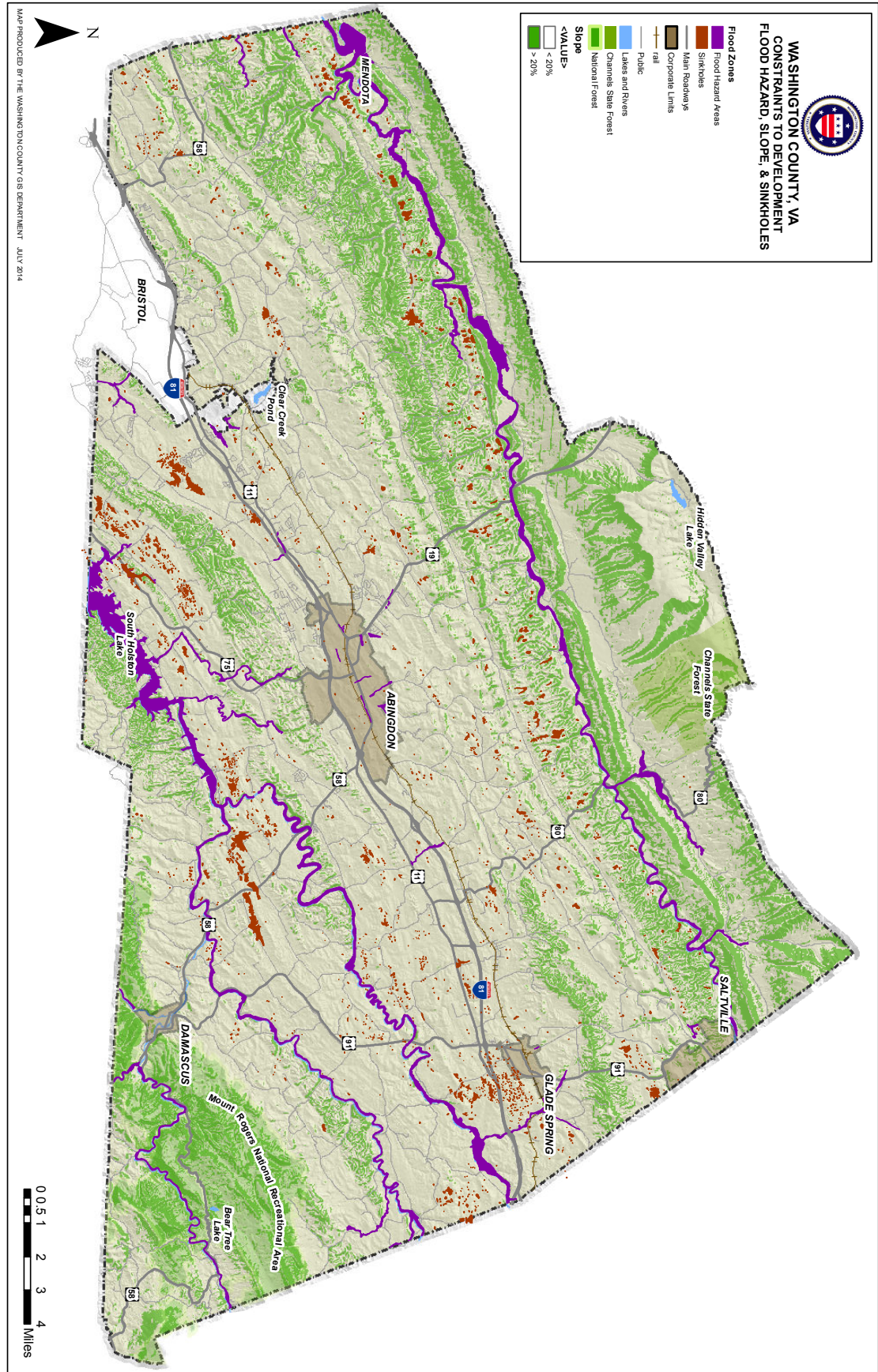
Washington County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered by FEMA. In order to maintain eligibility of county property owners to purchase flood insurance, the county Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for the regulation of construction and other activities in designated flood hazard areas of Washington County. These designated flood hazard areas are established by FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Washington County which have been incorporated into the official County Zoning Map available through the county's netGIS database. The specific county Zoning Ordinance regulations governing flood hazard areas are found in Chapter 66 of the County of Washington, Virginia (2002), Flood Hazard (FH) District Regulations.

¹ <http://www.evsc.virginia.edu/research/hydrology/> (accessed February 24, 2014)

² U.S. Army Corp of Engineers definition.

³ Virginia DEQ - Wetlands, <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WetlandsStreams/Wetlands.aspx> (accessed March 2014)





Air Quality

Air quality essential to our quality of life factor for residents of Washington County but this is not a subject that has been studied comprehensively in the county. Air quality can be affected by sources such as internal combustion engines, industries, and livestock. Poor air quality can cause an impact on the community including; negative health impacts, especially among the very young and very old, and damage to natural resources. It is important to consider poor air quality because it can make an area less attractive to live or visit which can impact both quality of life for residents, tourism and recruitment of businesses to an affected area.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Air Division, is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the Virginia Air Pollution Control Law, as well as meeting Virginia's federal obligations under the Clean Air Act. The Air Division's programs protect and enhance public health and the environment by controlling present and future sources of air pollution. The division ensures the safety and quality of the air in Virginia by monitoring and analyzing air quality data, regulating sources of air pollution, and working with local, state and federal agencies to plan and implement strategies to protect Virginia's air quality.¹

Washington County is in the Southwest Monitor Network. The pollutants monitored in this network include O₃ (Ozone), PM₁₀ (Course Dust Particles), PM_{2.5} (Fine Particles), and Lead. The O₃ monitor is located in Rural Retreat, VA. The PM₁₀ monitor is located at Gladeville Elementary School in Galax, VA and the PM_{2.5} monitor is located at Highland View Elementary School in Bristol, Virginia. Lead is monitored at a station in Buchanan County. Two additional O₃ stations are located in Blountville, Tennessee, and Kingsport, Tennessee. Since air quality is a regional concern, the county may work with other localities to stay informed on air quality issues and work with to obtain a regional air quality study.

Wildlife/Ecoregion

Virginia's landscape also is commonly categorized by seven ecoregions. According to the U.S. EPA, "Ecoregions reflect areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources, they are designed to serve as a spatial framework for the research, assessment, management, and monitoring of ecosystems and ecosystem components" (Woods et al. 2003)². Virginia is divided into seven ecoregion and each ecoregion contains a distinct collection of natural communities and species. The biodiversity of flora, fauna, and ecosystems that characterize an ecoregion tend to be distinct from that of other ecoregions.

Washington County is located in the Ridge and Valley ecoregion. This northeast-southwest trending, relatively low-lying, but diverse ecoregion is sandwiched between higher, more rugged mountainous regions with greater forest cover. The region is characterized by roughly parallel ridges and valleys which have a variety of widths, heights, and geologic materials. These geologic materials including limestone, dolomite, shale, siltstone, sandstone, chert, mudstone, and marble. Springs and caves are relatively numerous. Present-day forests cover about 50% of the region. The ecoregion has a diversity of aquatic habitats and species of fish.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries produced "Virginia's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy" in 2005. The document was produced to assess Virginia's wildlife resources, develop partnerships, to identify key species and habitats in need of conservation and to prioritize action and research. The document shows that Washington County is an area rich in species with the potential and/or confirmed habitat for "Tier One" species in Virginia. Tier One is a classification utilized in the report to identify species of greatest conservation need.

1 VA Performs website, <http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/naturalResources/airQuality.php>

2 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality website, <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WetlandsStreams/Wetlands.aspx>

Forests, Trails and Open Space

Washington County is rich in natural resources that also serve as recreation and tourism amenities for both citizens and visitors to the county. These resources are important community resources that should be promoted, protected and expanded to enhance the quality of life in the county as well as economic well-being. New opportunities to add to the list of resources should be a priority in the future.

Designated state and national forests in Washington County are managed and operated by state and federal control and comprise hundreds of acres of land for public use for recreation. In addition to designated forests and trails, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation extends voluntary legal agreements to landowners in the form of conservation easements. The conservation easement is a tool to preserve land for agriculture or forestry uses or to protect against development or to preserve open space. This land may be preserved through government ownership or voluntary private easements. The 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan reports 37,888.29 acres of land in the county are conserved through ownership and 4,971.6 through easements for a total of 42,859.89 acres. Land trusts and conservation programs operating in the county include, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia Department of Forestry, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and The Conservation Fund. Washington County has a Purchase of Development Rights ordinance in place but as of 2014, only one landowner has gone through this process.

Washington County utilizes land use taxation as a tool to preserve farm and forested land. The Land Use Program is adopted by ordinance and offers people a discount on their real estate taxes if they have land used for agriculture or open space purposes. A minimum of 5 acres without a dwelling is required in order to qualify for the program. If a home is located on the property, there is a minimum of six acres to qualify for the program. Once property is enrolled in the Land Use Program, it is no longer taxed at the fair market value. There are three main categories in the program: tillable property, pasture land, and woodland. These values override the fair market assessments for taxable purposes.



Forests and Open Space

Jefferson National Forest

The George Washington National Forest in west central Virginia and the Jefferson National Forest in southwest Virginia were administratively combined in 1995 to form the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The two national forests contain nearly 1.8 million acres; one of the largest blocks of public land in the eastern United States. The forests include 1,664,110 acres in Virginia, 123,629 acres in West Virginia, and 961 acres in Kentucky. The forest headquarters is the Forest Supervisor's Office in Roanoke, Virginia. The forests include the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and seven Ranger Districts.¹

The forests are primarily Appalachian hardwood and mixed pine-hardwood forest types located within the Blue Ridge, Central Ridge and Valley, Allegheny, and Cumberland Plateau provinces. Forests are managed for multiple uses and provide many products and benefits. Developed recreation opportunities are offered at over 200 sites on the forests (including campgrounds, picnic areas and boat launches), along with nearly 2,200 miles of trails, and 1,700 miles of open roads. Elevations range from 5,729 feet at Mount Rogers to 515 feet along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River.

Mount Rogers National Recreation Area

The Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) manages approximately 200,000 acres of National Forest land near Mount Rogers. The area features four Congressionally designated wilderness areas; the Virginia Creeper Trail; the Mount Rogers Scenic Byway which traverses over 50 miles offering views of the National Recreation Area and open rural countryside; the 5000 acre Crest Zone featuring elevations over 4,000 feet, large rock formations, and a mixture of mountain balds and spruce-fir forests; a herd of wild, free-ranging ponies; and the highest elevated road in the state of Virginia leading to the summit of Whitetop Mountain. The Mount Rogers NRA was officially established and designated a National Recreational Area by the Secretary of Agriculture in 1966.

Many activities are available in the area including camping, picnicking, sight-seeing, bird watching, trout fishing, hunting, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and swimming. The U.S. Forest Service has 3 rental cabins and 11 campgrounds in the Mount Rogers NRA, four of which are set up for horseback riders. There are over 500 miles of trails in the area, including 60 miles of the Appalachian Trail, 18 miles of the Virginia Creeper Trail, and 67 miles of the Virginia Highland Horse Trail. Over one million visitors come to Mount Rogers every year.²

Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area

Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area is located in Washington County and is bordered by Russell County along the area's northwest boundary. This 6,400-acre property is mostly forested mountain land with the exception of a number of small openings, developed and maintained to enhance wildlife habitat. Two thousand feet at its lowest elevation, the area's highest elevation exceeds 4,000 feet, indicating the rugged steepness of the area. Logged in the early 1900s when much of the area was virgin forest, the predominate forest is now mature, mixed hardwood. Hidden Valley Lake is situated at the head of the valley, from which flows Brumley Creek.³

1 USDA Forest Service website. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj> (accessed February 2014)

2 USDA Forest Service website. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gwj/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5302337> (accessed February 2014)

3 Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas/detail.asp?pid=27> (accessed February 2014)

Clinch Mountain Wildlife Recreation Area

A small area of the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Recreation Area is located within Washington County's border. The area is dominated by mountains rising steeply from narrow valley floors. Due to a difference in elevation, a unique forest developed. Tree species from both southern and northern forests are found. Elevations range from 1600 feet to 4700 feet atop Beartown Mountain. There is considerable water on the area; a 330-acre man-made lake, one major stream and several tributaries. The land that forms Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area was virgin forest until the late 1800s. Evidence of the narrow gauge railroad used while logging can still be seen, and some of the old rail bed is now part of the management area's present road system.¹

Channels State Forest

The Virginia Department of Forestry purchased what is now the Channels State Forest from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in early 2008. The purchase was made possible through funding from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. TNC had purchased the property a few years earlier for the purpose of protecting and conserving this unique and valuable resource. Within the boundary of the 4,836-acre property is a 721-acre parcel that has been dedicated in perpetuity as the Channels Natural Area Preserve under the provisions of the Natural Area Preserve Act of 1989. The preserve is to be managed by the Department of Forestry in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation.²

Trails

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a continuous, marked footpath extending approximately 2,180 miles from Katahdin, Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia, along the crest of the Appalachian mountain range. In 1968, Congress established a national system of trails and designated the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail (in the west) as the initial components. Virginia has the longest section of the Appalachian Trail, with about 536 miles. Approximately 1.2 miles of the trail lies within the corporate limits of the town. Usage has increased tremendously since the 1966 Act of Congress designating the area around Damascus as a National Recreation Area. Surveys show that the greatest increase is among weekend and week-long hikers utilizing not only the Appalachian Trail, but also the many loop trails to which it connects.³

Virginia Creeper Trail

The Virginia Creeper Trail is a multi-use (footpath, bicycle, horse) trail that connects Abingdon with the Virginia-North Carolina border 1.1 miles east of Whitetop Station, Virginia. Its total length is 33.4 miles. From the Town of Damascus, Abingdon is 15.5 miles northwest and the Virginia-North Carolina line is 17.9 miles southeast. Approximately three miles of the Virginia Creeper Trail lies within the corporate limits of the town. The Town of Damascus owns the former railroad right-of-way from its corporate limits west to Drowning Ford. The town jointly owns the right-of-way (with the Town of Abingdon) from Drowning Ford west to Abingdon. Since its designation by Congress in 1985 as a National Recreation Trail, there has been a tremendous increase in its use. This has had a positive impact on tourism in Damascus and has led to substantial growth in town businesses, such as bike shuttle services.⁴

Iron Mountain Trail

The Iron Mountain Trail is one of many recreational trails in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and Jefferson National Forest. A trailhead is located at the end of Fourth Street in the Mock Hollow section of the town where the trail travels down Damascus Drive to join the Virginia Creeper and the Appalachian Trail within the corporate limits, continuing to Orchard Hill Road, where it reenters the woods and proceeds south into Tennessee.⁵

Trail at Beaver Dam Creek

The Trail at Beaver Dam Creek is the newest addition to Damascus' pedestrian and bicycle network. This rail-trail conversion will utilize what remains of the old Virginia-Carolina Railway and the Beaverdam Railroad railbed and corridor that ran from Damascus to Shady Valley, Tennessee; a link that was shut down in 1926. This trail has received funding through the Federal Highway Administration's T-21 program for trails, bicycles, and pedestrian facilities. The Trail at Beaver Dam Creek will be a multi-use, partially paved recreational trail with handicap accessible trail and fishing pier access. The trail will link to the Virginia Creeper Trail at Beaver Dam Creek where it heads south and

1 Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas/detail.asp?pid=21> (accessed February 2014)

2 Virginia Department of Forestry. <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/stateforest/list/channels.htm>. (accessed February 2014)

3 Town of Damascus Comprehensive Plan

4 Town of Damascus Comprehensive Plan

5 Town of Damascus Comprehensive Plan

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

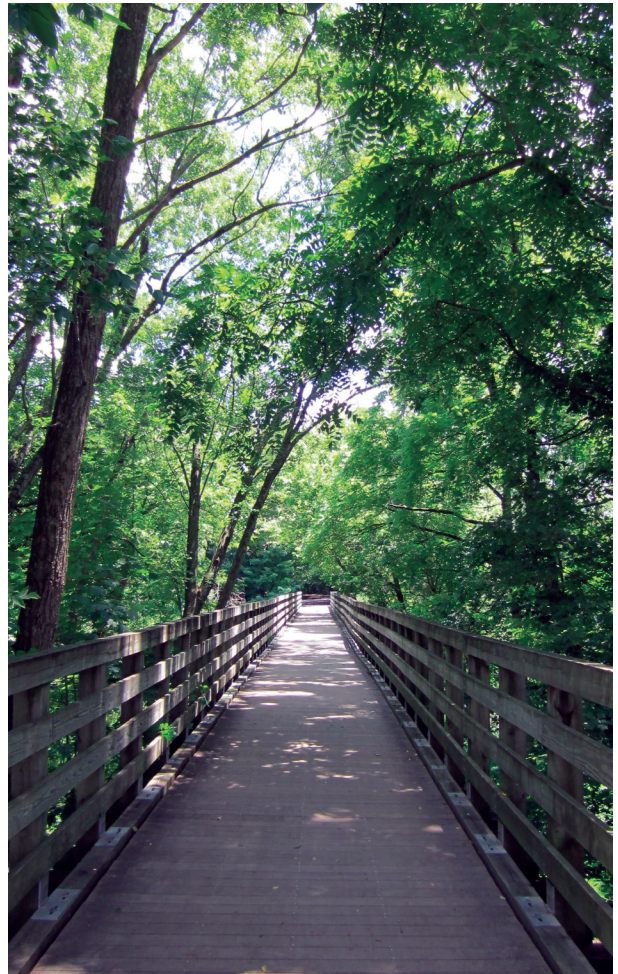
circles the old Smethport Extract Company (Bayer Chemical Corporation) site. The trail will then follow Route 716 to the Jefferson National Forest in Phase I, approximately 1 mile. Phases II and III of this project (if supported) will follow Route 716 into the Cherokee National Forest, Backbone Rock, and Shady Valley, Tennessee (TN Route 133), potentially converting nearly 15 miles of abandoned rail bed.⁶

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail

The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail commemorates the campaign leading to the Battle of Kings Mountain by following the historic route of the Patriot Militia Men of the Revolutionary War from Abingdon to the Battle of Kings Mountain, South Carolina. Currently, the National Park Service has placed signs along major roads, such as Hwy 11-E and Hwy 19-E depicting the Commemorative Motor Route of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. One sign exists on State Route 75 in Washington County. Route 75 is part of the Commemorative Motor Route. 11 miles of pedestrian trail are located in Virginia, three miles are within The Town of Abingdon, and eight are within Washington County. The Town of Abingdon has constructed a portion of the trail within the town limits and has developed the Abingdon Muster Grounds to serve as a trailhead and interpretive center.⁷

Virginia Salt Trail

The Virginia Salt Trail is a multi-use trail that connects the towns of Glade Spring, Virginia and Saltville, Virginia. The trail is approximately 8 miles long and runs along an old Norfolk and Western railroad bed between the two towns. The rail line was built in 1856 to haul salt out of Saltville and trains ran on the line until the 1980s.⁸



⁶ Town of Damascus Comprehensive Plan

⁷ National Park Service Website. http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/ip/OVVI_LRIP.pdf (accessed March 2014)

⁸ Salt Trail Info, <http://vasalttrail.com/> (accessed March 2014)

Trail Opportunities

Several opportunities exist to add to Washington County's trail network. Potential new segments include:

Extension of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail

Of the eleven miles of trail in Virginia, three miles have been constructed in Abingdon. An additional eight miles of trail could be extended south from Abingdon to the Tennessee state line to link to the work completed in Sullivan County, Tennessee. Ultimately, the trail could provide an interpretive and recreational link between Abingdon and Kings Mountain, South Carolina. The trail would cover 300 miles and traverse four states. The trail could provide a recreation facility for county residents as well as tourism and economic opportunities. There are only 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails in the United States. Examples of other trails include the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail and Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Laurel Mountain Trail

Located in the Taylor District, an opportunity exists to connect the Virginia Creeper Trail to a network of trails created by the Johnson County Trails Association in Johnson County, Tennessee. The trail is approximately two miles in length and presents some engineering concerns that require additional study. It also could weave into the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. The connection could build and enhance tourism, recreation, and economic opportunities in the Damascus area.

Beaches to Bluegrass Trail

This statewide trail will stretch west to east from the Cumberland Plateau to the Chesapeake Bay. Comprised of many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and may stimulate tourism by linking a wide variety of resources and provide opportunity for new business. The Beaches to Bluegrass Trail system follows along multi-use, non-motorized, and motorized and includes several regional and local trails. In Washington County, the Creeper Trail, Mendota Trail, and would comprise the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail although a new section of trail is needed along the rail line or Wyndale Road to connect the two.¹

Mendota Trail

The Mendota Trail will connect the City of Bristol to the Mendota community along abandoned railroad corridor. The City of Bristol maintains ownership over a large portion

of the trail. A citizens group has formed to study the issue.

Trail Link between Emory, Glade Spring and Meadowview

Many community meeting participants suggested a trail link between Emory, Glade Spring and Meadowview. This would require study as there is no alignment currently proposed.

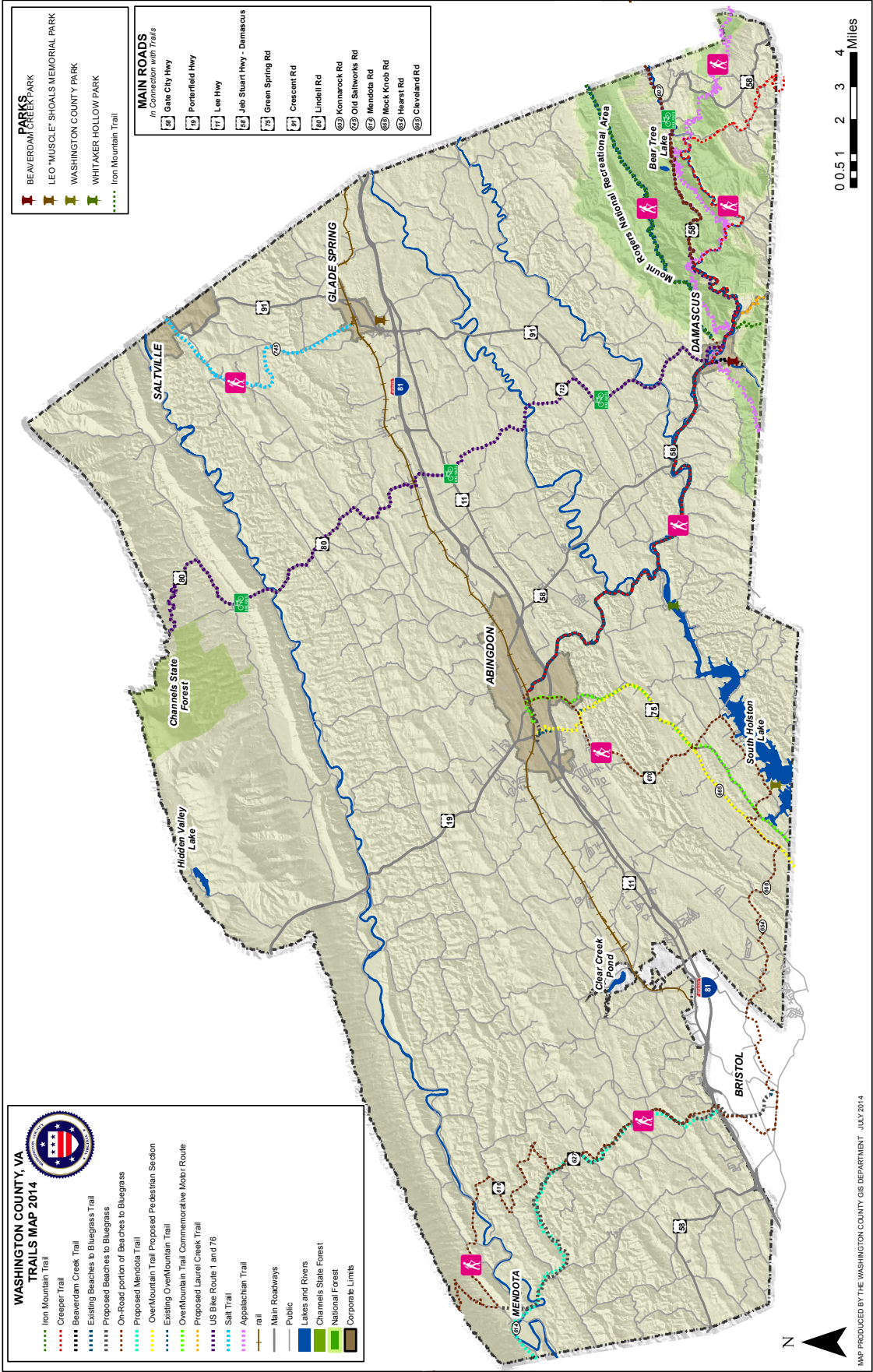
Extension of Virginia Salt Trail

The Salt Trail currently extends eight miles from Saltville to Glade Spring, north of the Town Square. The extension into the Town could build and enhance recreation in the northeastern section of the county and provide additional tourism or economic opportunity in the Glade Spring.

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Beaches to Bluegrass Trail - Department of Conservation and..., http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/trailb2b.shtml (accessed February 2014).

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



Cultural Resources

A Brief History of Washington County¹

Washington County was formed in 1776 from part of Fincastle County. It was the first area of the country named for General George Washington, before he was elected President in 1789. Washington County was formed from a long succession of splits from other counties. The parent county would consist of all territory originally encompassed in Augusta County, formed by the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1738; Botetourt County in 1770; Fincastle County in 1772; and Washington County established on December 7, 1776. Surrounding counties were created through the subdivision of the Washington County of 1776: Russell County in 1786, Lee County in 1793, Tazewell County in 1800, Scott County in 1814, Smyth County in 1832, Wise County in 1836, Buchanan County in 1858, Dickenson County in 1880.

Wild animals and Native Americans first inhabited Washington County and traveled the Great Valley of Virginia along an ancient trail known as Warrior's Path. The Warrior's Path would eventually become the Great Valley Road along which colonists traveled as they moved into the Great Valley. Highway 11 and Interstate 81 follow this same route today. Washington County was not inhabited by Native Americans though Cherokee and Shawnee had land that bordered the area, they maintained the Great Valley as a hunting ground for all tribes. Long Hunters, 18th-century explorers and hunters who made expeditions into the American frontier, such as John Findlay (Finley), James Patton, Stephen Holston, William Clinch, Charles Campbell, and Abrose Powell and Dr. Thomas Walker were early explorers of the county.

The first permanent settlers, which were of Scotch and Irish descent, began arriving in the area in the 1750s but returned to more populated areas due to the French and Indian War (1754-1763). In 1760, Colonel William Byrd and a regiment of men constructed Island Road from what is now Abingdon to the "Long Island of the Holston" in present day Kingsport, Tennessee. Island Road was a continuation of the Great Wagon Road which extended from Pennsylvania through the upper Tennessee Valley. Daniel Boone arrived in the area by 1775 and marked a trail into Kentucky known as the "Wilderness Road." This trail passed through Abingdon and for 20 years was the principal highway traveled by settlers in route to the West. A second wave of settlers arrived around the time in which Washington County was founded, in 1776. The new settlers traveled along the Great Wagon Road. Coming primarily from Northern Ireland (Ulster-Scots) and Germany, they heard of available land in the Great Valley and thousands came here to establish their homes.

Abingdon (first known as Wolf Hills and later as Black's Fort) was established as the county seat of Washington County. The community of Black's Fort was the first county seat of Washington County in 1776. Black's Fort was incorporated as the Town of Abingdon in 1778. In the summer of 1776, a war party of Cherokees entered Washington County, causing the settlers to seek refuge in Black's Fort, near the future town of Abingdon. Though the fort was not attacked, there were skirmishes between colonists and Cherokees.

In the fall of 1780, four hundred men from Washington County were mustered to travel under the command of Colonel William Campbell to overcome the British troops under the command of Patrick Ferguson. North Carolina and Tennessee militia from various counties joined with the Virginians to pursue the British and engage them at King's Mountain, South Carolina. The "Overmountain Men" were ordered to yell like Indians during this attack. The confusion that resulted from the yelling and exceptional marksmanship as well as other tactics helped cause the death of Ferguson and the defeat of his troops October 7, 1780. The defeat effectively halted the British Army in its westward campaign in the South.

The Notch

In 1665, an order was given to establish the new state line between Virginia and North Carolina, at the 36° 30' parallel. This line was to extend across the country.

In 1749, when Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas Jefferson, surveyed from about where Patrick County is today, he kept moving further north away from the assigned parallel till he discontinued his survey east of Damascus. In 1800, the northeast tip of the new state of Tennessee joined Virginia and North Carolina on Pond Mountain. Tennessee continues on that northern parallel in Washington County, until it jogs south but not to 36°30'. Three stories are told about the reason for the Notch: (1) the surveyor was inebriated (2) iron deposits in the Iron Mountains interfered with readings of the compass and (3) the strong will of Tennesseans prevailed.

¹ Information for this section was taken from the Washington County and Washington County Historical Society websites. <http://www.washcova.com/residents/about-washington-county>, <http://hswcv.org/history.html>

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Following the Revolutionary War, wilderness was turned into farmland and villages, new roads were built, and schools and colleges were established. By 1803, salt was being extracted in Saltville from underground deposits, some of which are within the present boundaries of Washington County. Emory and Henry was founded in 1836. Waterpower, harnessed by the combination of springs and elevation provided in the area, made for milling grains and for sawing lumber from the abundant stands of trees. The railroad arrived in 1856 creating new towns and improving travel in the area. Communities along the main route from Washington Springs to Goodson (now Bristol) included Glade Spring, Emory, Meadowview, Abingdon, Fractionsville, Wyndale and Wallace.

One rail line went from Glade Spring to Saltville by way of Litz, Keywood and Clinchburg; another rail line extended from Bristol to Mendota; another headed southeast from Abingdon to West Jefferson, North Carolina through of Watauga, Barron (now Alvarado), Delmar, Drowning Ford Station, Hellena, Damascus, Laureldale, Taylors Valley, Creek Junction, Cant Work and Green Cove.

Washington County sided with Virginia and the Confederacy during the Civil War (1861-1864). Though the county experienced no battles, a company of Federal troops passing through town in December 1864, burned buildings used by the Confederacy. Washington County, like much of the South, suffered following the Civil War. Eventually the economy was boosted by the development of the lumber industry, agriculture, coal mining industry in neighboring counties, and tourists coming to the country to escape the heat of summer. (Washington County Historical Society website)

During the 19th and 20th century, tobacco and farming were primary activities in Washington County. Manufacturing became a heavy economic activity in Washington County resulting from the construction of Interstate 81. A 52 mile stretch of Interstate was completed from Bristol to five miles east of Marion by November 1963. Interstate 81 had major impact by improving access to the county and stimulating economic growth. In recent years the county has gained recognition as a tourism destination due to its historic towns and buildings, cultural attractions such as the Barter Theatre, Martha Washington Inn, the Virginia Highlands Festival, the William King Museum, and recreational opportunities provided by the Virginia Creeper Trail and state parks.



Emory and Henry College, founded in 1836, was listed on the National Register in 1989.

Washington County Communities of Historical Importance

Abingdon

In the County Seat, history can be found within the record books of the Washington County Courthouse, in the cemeteries dating before the Revolution, in the homes throughout the historic district, and dedicated markers. One historic house constructed in 1832 was the home of Brigadier General Francis Preston. After General Preston's death the Holston Conference of the Methodist Church acquired the property. On March 15, 1860 classes began in Martha Washington College for women, the first such recognition of Martha Custis, the wife of George Washington. The Civil War interrupted classes while a hospital temporarily occupied the College. After the Civil War, classes resumed and continued until 1931.

Damascus

Recipients of Revolutionary Land Grants were some of the earliest settlers in the southeastern part of Washington County. Even though Daniel Boone was born in Pennsylvania and moved with his father's family to the Yadkin River in North Carolina, he played an important part in future migrations by other Mocksville, North Carolina residents. These residents, who followed the Daniel Boone Trail to Kentucky and beyond, were so pleased by the conditions in the valley carved out by the Beaver Dam Creek and the Laurel Creek that they stayed in what would later be named Damascus.

Emory

The village of Emory developed around the perimeter of Emory & Henry College for men, founded in 1836. Named for Bishop John Emory of the Methodist Church and Patrick Henry, the famed Virginia patriot and political leader, the college was planned by the Rev. Mr. Creed Fulton and Tobias Smyth, whose log cabin was moved from its original location to the campus, where it can be seen today. In 1861, all the students withdrew to join the army; and the main building became a hospital. In 1922, women were admitted to the college, which continues to be co-educational.

Glade Spring

Incorporated in 1875, Glade Spring is centered by a thriving town square. Glade Spring's railroad depot was initially called "Passawatamii," an Indian word meaning "here is the trail." Glade Spring may owe its name to a single spring at the head of the Old Glade Spring Presbyterian Church. The town square has seen significant investment in recent years and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.¹



Glade Spring, VA

Konnarock

The community known as Konnarock lies in the far southeast corner of Washington County. Logging of the virgin timber in the valley and up the sides of White Top Mountain by the Hassinger Lumber Company from 1906 to Christmas Eve, 1928 provided a boom economy in the form of new homes, company buildings and sawmills, and a railroad spur to an existing line. After all the large timber was gone, the town reverted to being a remote village of people who love

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Southwest Virginia Crossroads, Joe Tennis, page 74.

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to live at the north base of White Top Mountain.

Meadowview

"Meadow View" prospered as a railroad town in the early 1900s and was incorporated in 1914, but its government only lasted a few years. Meadowview's town square has been revitalized and is home to a restaurant, shops and a health clinic and community center.

Mendota

The community in the northwest corner of Washington County took the name given the area by native people, because the name means "bend in the river." For the five eastern tribes who fished the river and hunted the woods, Mendota was an excellent place to meet. High on the cliffs, there are overlooks for viewing the river in both directions. When settlers moved in they found that the soil in this valley was rich for farming.



Meadowview, VA

Saltville

Part of a sea was captured in the valley near the northeast corner where Washington County borders Smyth County. This salty lake attracted birds and animals, then hunters of various tribes, then a surveyor Charles Campbell who was granted 330 acres including the remaining lake and swamp by King George II in 1748. Settlers and soldiers traveled to "The Lick" to purchase salt, the product of crystallization during boiling of the salty water. When spring rains and melting snows raised the level of the North Fork of the Holston River, flat bottom boats were used to carry salt to Chattanooga and beyond. From 1893 chemical factories provided jobs, while sadly polluting the rivers. Discovery of Woolly Mammoth remains has led to further paleontological digs and the Museum of the Middle Appalachians.

National Register of Historic Places

The county possesses historic resources from different significant periods. These nonrenewable resources yield unique information about our past. Although many have been discovered, there are undiscovered cultural resources throughout the county. In addition to those listed on the National Register of Historic Places, historic homes, commercial buildings, mills, railroad resources, churches and cemeteries are scattered throughout the county.

Thirteen sites located in Washington County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

Washington County National Register listings include:

- Abingdon Bank
- Abingdon Historic District
- Baker-St. John House
- Brook Hall
- Crabtree-Blackwell Farm
- Edmondson Hall
- Emory and Henry College
- The Grove
- Mont Calm
- Moonlite Theatre
- Dr. William H. Pitts House
- Walnut Grove
- White's Mill
- Glade Spring Commercial District



Moonlite Theatre, photo from National Register Nomination Application

To be considered eligible, a property must meet certain criteria. The property must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or yield information important in history or prehistory.

Listings in the National Register can serve benefits to both the owner of the property and community. Listings can help build community pride in history and serve as tourism assets to help spur economic vitality. The related documentation that goes along with the nomination process can serve as educational tools to help the community understand why historic properties are important. Listed properties are also identified early in the planning process for federally funded and permitted projects as well as some state involved projects. Finally, listings to the National Register make applicable property eligible for grant funding or tax incentives. A listing on the National Register does not place restrictions on the property owner, nor does it preserve property in the future as a conservation easement would do. National Register status does not restrict the rights of private property owners in the use, development, or sale of their property, nor will it lead automatically to the creation of a regulated historic district.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources administers the Virginia Landmarks Register, also established in 1966. The Landmarks Register is the state's official list of properties important to Virginia history. The same criteria are used to evaluate resources for inclusion in the state register as are used for the National Register.

The Abingdon Historic District is currently the only area in the county protected under a local historic preservation ordinance by the Town of Abingdon. At present, the Washington County Historical Society and individual, private citizens carry out historic preservation activities.

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Significant field surveys have been conducted in Washington County by Vivian Coletti for the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks. The results of this collection would be very beneficial for the county to obtain and map.

Scenic Resources

Washington County's scenic beauty includes mountains, rolling hills, water features, forests, farm land, and historic architecture. Scenic resources contribute to the county's desirability as a place to live; it enhances tourism opportunity, and represents our rural character.

The Virginia Outdoors Plan 2013 identifies several Washington County sites as scenic resources, including Whitetop Mountain, the Appalachian Trail, Mount Rogers and the Virginia Creeper Trail. As discussed in the Transportation Chapter, Route 75, from Abingdon to the Tennessee state line, and Route 58, between Abingdon and Volney, is potential Virginia byways segments.

In addition to scenic byways, potential exists for river segments in Washington County to be designated as state scenic rivers. Whitetop Laurel Creek from Green Cove Creek junction is Grayson County to Damascus has been evaluated and deemed to qualify for Virginia scenic river designation. Other river segments are potential scenic rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

- The North Fork of the Holston River from the confluence with Big Brumley Creek to the Tennessee state line in Scott County.
- The Middle Fork Holston River from Seven Mile Ford to South Holston Lake.
- South Fork of the Holston River from Sugar Grove to South Holston Lake.
- Big Brumley Creek from Hidden Valley Lake to its confluence with the North Fork of the Holston River.



North Fork of the Holston River, Mendota, VA
Photo courtesy of River Cliff Cottage.

If designated as a scenic river, certain parameters apply:

- Designation encourages protection and preservation of the river.
- Designation declares the protection of a river's scenic values to be a beneficial purpose of water resource policy.
- Designation allows for a local administering committee that can be appointed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- Designation requires the Board of Conservation and Recreation, whose members are appointed by the Governor, to advise the Director of DCR on the federal, state or local plans that impact the designated river segment and give local citizens a voice in river-related issues.
- After designation, the General Assembly must approve construction of any dam that would result in an impediment to the natural flow of the river.
- For properties along designated scenic rivers, a special tax assessment may be given to reduce the tax liability, as valued by the State Land Evaluation Advisory Council, if adopted by the locality.

- The federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recognizes Virginia's designated Scenic River System. This acknowledgement of the program ensures that the qualities of the designated river are considered during licensing or relicensing of federal projects on that river.
- Designation allows for lands along designated corridor to receive grant funds.

A designation process is required, initiated by Washington County, before any river segment would be considered as a scenic river.

Natural and Cultural Resource Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Vision Statements

RECREATION: **Washington County is a premier leisure and adventure destination.**

Washington County is the center of recreational diversity in Southwest Virginia. Many hiking and biking trails crisscross our beautiful county, including the Appalachian Trail, Virginia Creeper Trail, Transcontinental Bike Trail, and Daniel Boone Memorial Trail. The County offers many outdoor activities including camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing in the Jefferson National Forest, Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area, and nearby Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Our high mountain streams and South Holston Lake offer excellent canoeing, kayaking, pleasure boating, and trout and bass fishing. The county is also the home of the Virginian Golf Course, a world-class golfing and gated residential community, along with many attractive public and private golf courses. Close proximity to the Bristol Motor Speedway offers the best of NASCAR - the ultimate venue in motor sports racing. Our regional sports complex accommodates all levels of field sport competition. Visitors to Washington County enjoy a variety of options for accommodations and dining ranging from charming bed and breakfast inns to internationally recognized four-star hotels.

ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORY: **Washington County is the champion of cultural heritage preservation and awareness.**

Washington County has a rich history of preserving and supporting its art, culture, and historical sites. The historic Barter Theatre, the state theater of Virginia, along with the William King Regional Arts Center and the Abingdon Arts Depot and many fairs and festivals attract visitors from all 50 states and many foreign countries. The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, runs through Washington County and Bristol, Virginia. Round the Mountain is a Southwest Virginia organization that promotes local crafts, which are featured in the Southwest Virginia Regional Artisan Center. Unique historic sites, colonial era architecture and a wealth of genealogical information attract many visitors to Washington County. Art galleries, cultural events, and historic sites are visited by groups representing many ages and points of origin, including public school students, senior citizens, and tour groups.

Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: **Identify, conserve, and protect natural resources and open spaces such as rivers, streams, creeks, forested and wooded areas, wetlands, floodplains, air and soil resources.**

STRATEGIES

1. Develop educational materials to encourage protection of ground and surface water resources and for the best management of storm water runoff.
2. Implement storm-water management program and continue erosion and sediment control program.
3. Partner with towns and/or other agencies and explore grant funding for a watershed study.
4. Include places on county property or parks for observing and learning about natural environments, such as geology, hydrology, landforms, wildlife, etc.
5. Collaborate with other agencies who provide technical assistance on natural resources such as the Holston River Soil & Water Conservation District, Washington County Cooperative Extension Office, Washington County Health Department and similar organizations to study information contained within the soil study.
6. Partner with regional localities and other agencies to explore grant funding or Department of Environmental Quality assistance with an air quality study.

OBJECTIVE: **Encourage voluntary easements, tax programs and scenic programs to promote natural and cultural resources in Washington County.**

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage use of voluntary conservation easements for lands that have agricultural, forestal, and scenic values.
2. Encourage purchase of development right programs by applying for grant monies to fund such programs.
3. Continue the Land Use Program as a tool to help conserve agricultural and forested land as well as land for open space.
4. Study the merits of designation in the Commonwealth's Scenic Rivers and Scenic Roads program.

OBJECTIVE: **Encourage new construction and development that utilizes best management practices and minimizes impact on natural resources.**

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage low impact and efficient development and construction techniques.
2. Encourage open space amenities in new subdivision design and study implementation of a density bonus program to reward developers for including open space in their design.
3. In conjunction with updates to the Zoning Ordinance, consider requiring stream buffers from the edge of wetlands and streams in new construction projects.

OBJECTIVE: **Explore opportunities for new trails and recreation amenities in Washington County.**

STRATEGIES

1. Partner with other localities, agencies, and organizations to study the feasibility of trail opportunities.
2. Expand and promote recreation uses in Washington County, such as; trails, public and private recreation facilities, and outdoor tourism uses.

OBJECTIVE: **Promote historically significant sites and structures and scenic views for the cultural, educational, and economic benefits they provide to county residents and visitors.**

STRATEGIES

1. Work with Washington County Historical Society and other history groups to promote and preserve historic resources in the county.
2. Develop and engage in heritage education programs that foster community pride and stewardship of the county's historic resources.
3. Develop and maintain a database of historic resources in Washington County.
4. Use GIS mapping to map location of all resources in the County and provide this information as a layer on the county's online GIS map.
5. Develop a driving tour of historic places in Washington County.
6. Assist homeowners and landowners with interest in nominating their properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
7. Promote voluntary measures for protection of historic and scenic resources.
8. Identify scenic views in Washington County and provide education as to their aesthetic, cultural, and economic value.



Photo courtesy of Earl Neikirk, Staff Photographer, Bristol Herald Courier

Public facilities and services help define a community and will play a significant role in the growth of Washington County. While some facilities provide essential services, such as delivery of water and fire protection, others establish quality of life, such as parks and recreation facilities. As the county considers long range planning issues, it is important to consider plans for the ongoing maintenance of existing facilities as well as need for additional services in the future.

Purposeful attention to public facilities and services is critical for a number of reasons. The successful delivery of services contributes to quality of life for county residents and is an important economic development tool in attracting new business, residents, and tourists. The availability of services is a driving factor land development and can serve as a trigger to stimulate growth and development. Community facilities may be funded at the federal, state or local level, but most are dependent on tax dollars therefore these services should be delivered in a responsible and cost-effective manner. Finally, the desires and needs of county residents may change in coming years, perhaps most notably as the population grows older. Additional or modified facilities may be considered as a result of changing demographics.

Community facilities and services include public services, buildings and utility infrastructure. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, this chapter addresses the following topics:

- Water and Wastewater
- Utilities – Electric, Gas, and Telecommunications
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety
- County Buildings
- Public Library System
- Parks and Recreation
- Solid Waste
- Schools
- Healthcare and Social Services

Water and Wastewater Facilities

Public water and wastewater services often drive growth in a community and the availability of these utilities is often key determinants of not only how land is developed but the rate at which it develops. The timing and location of future water and sewer extension projects is of critical planning concern. Effective long-range planning requires strong coordination between future land use plans and capital improvement projects undertaken by the service provider in the county, the Washington County Service Authority (WCSA).

The Washington County Service Authority provides public water throughout Washington County, as well as wastewater collection and treatment in portions of the county. WCSA began providing water service in 1910 and wastewater service in 1995. An independent authority, WCSA is composed of a seven-member board of commissioners appointed by the Washington County Board of Supervisors.

The WCSA consistently receives high rankings in operations excellence and over the past 20 years the Authority has completed projects totaling more than \$95 million dollars. Notable capital project include the expansion of the Middle Fork Drinking Water Plant from an overall capacity of 4.6 million gallons per day (MDG) to 12.0 MGD, an increase of 161%. This expansion, complete Spring 2014, will meet the needs of the county for 40 years. Beginning in 2011, the Authority began a three phase galvanized line replacement project to correct leaks, improve water quality and improve fire flow. This project impacts 200 miles or 22% of the WCSA system. The project is targeted for completion in 2020.

The WCSA commitment to upgraded water lines, pumps and tanks will help Washington County meet existing need and prepare for future growth. As the county continues to develop, the provision of sewer and water services may be used as a growth management tool. By targeting when and where these utilities are available, the county can accommodate development in areas prepared for growth and discourage sprawled development patterns in rural areas.

The WCSA will be a valued partner in educating the public on the importance of water conservation and efficient use of water.

Water System

The Washington County Service Authority serves approximately 90 percent of Washington County's population with drinking water, through 900 miles of pipeline over a 300-square-mile area. The remaining ten percent of citizens are served by private drinking sources, including wells, springs or cisterns. WCSA serves approximately 21,100

active drinking water connections. The water system also includes a 12.0-million-gallon-per-day surface water treatment plant, a 2.5-million-gallon-per-day membrane filtration plant, two springs, one well, 26 pump stations and 24 water storage tanks. The Authority has water purchase agreements with the Town of Saltville and Russell County Public Service Authority.

Under construction water project extensions will result in a five million dollar investment and over 150 new connections. The cost per connection will be \$33,000. Five future water project upgrades are planned costing an estimated 7.63 million.

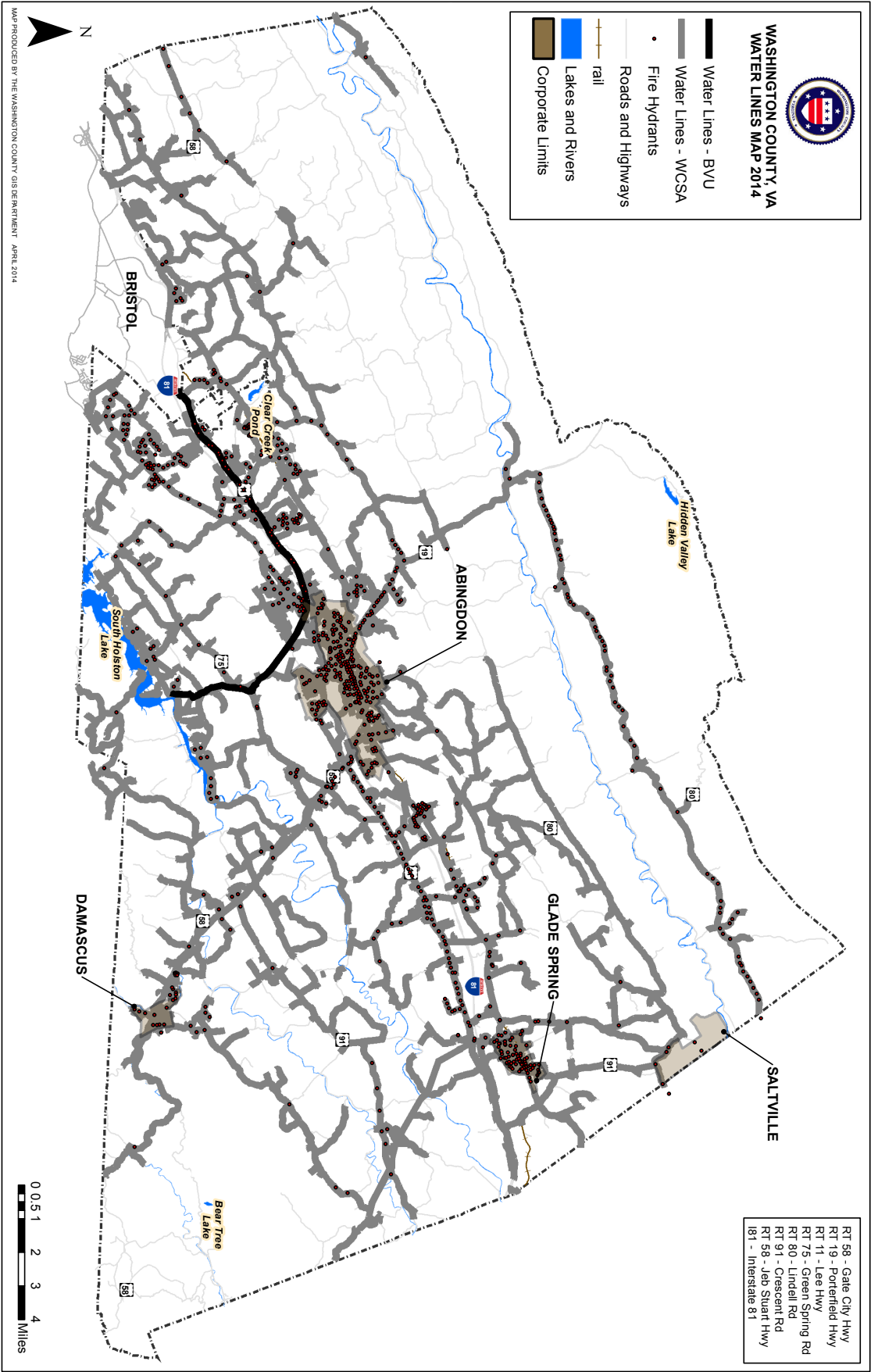
A January 2011, water study identified 1,000 existing county residents in the western part of the County who do not have access to public water. The estimated cost to extend water to this area is \$30 million. At a cost of \$30,000/connection to extend water to this area, creativity will be required to attain financial feasibility. A similar water study is being undertaken in eastern Washington County. Preliminarily, WCSA believes the number of county residents without access to public water is equal to western Washington County. However, if the development of source water is required to serve Konnarock and adjacent areas, the cost may be higher than western Washington County. The study should be complete in 2015. Combined, the two studies should not only identify the number of residents without access to public water and the cost to serve them, but layout a systematic approach for doing so. This, coupled with resident interest, should be the catalyst for future water system extensions.

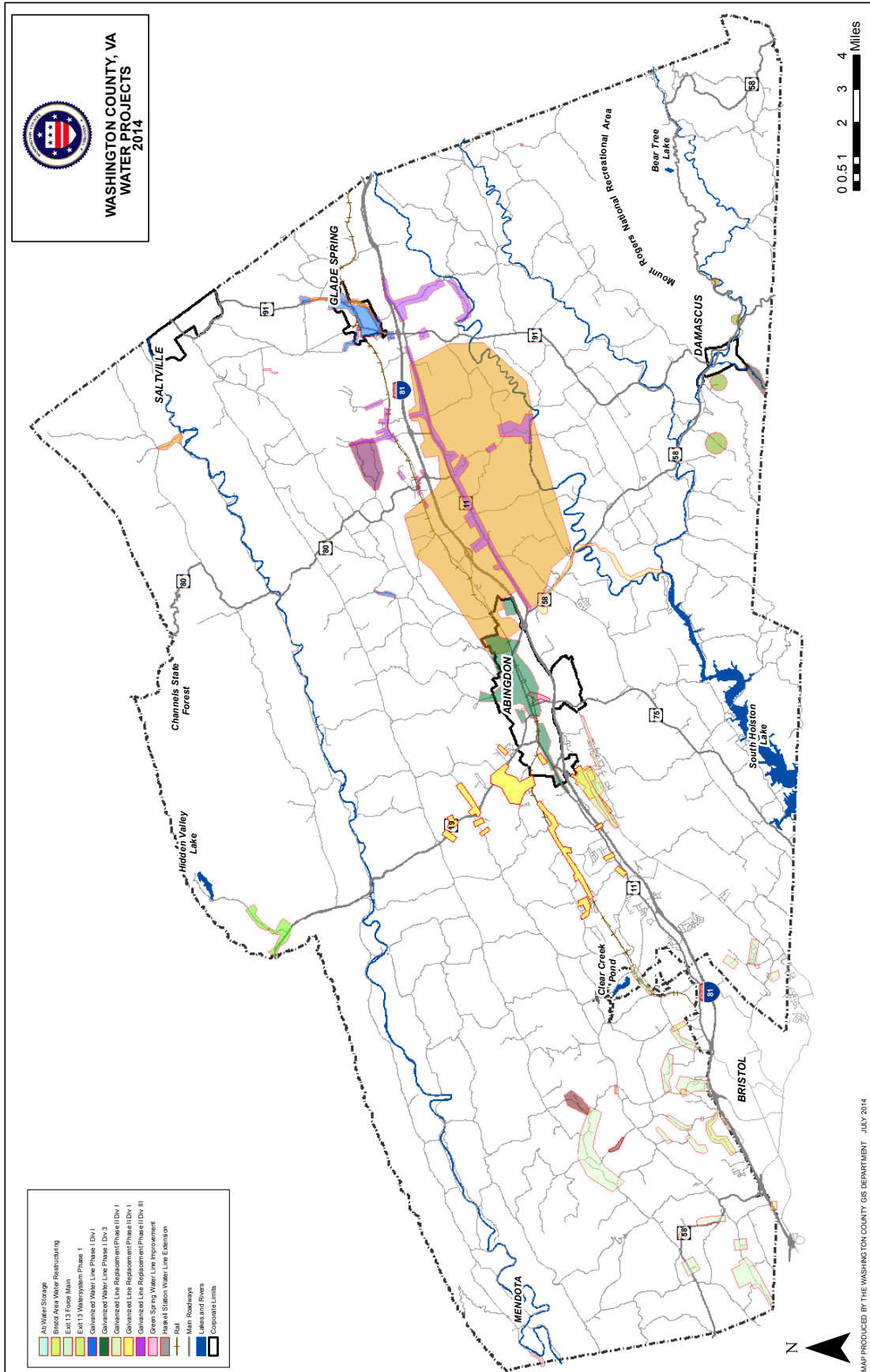
There are essentially three ways in which water lines are extended: 1) As land is developed, developers extend the system at the developers cost; 2) existing residents along with WCSA assistance extend lines (self-help or \$1500 projects); and 3) grant/loan funded extensions provided by WCSA. Developer extensions occur by the developer taking the initiative to design and construct the infrastructure required to meet their needs. WCSA reviews, approves, upgrades (if necessary and at WCSA expense) and accepts the infrastructure at completion of the project. Self-help extensions, for each existing county resident who agrees to take a new connection, WCSA provides \$1500 of materials, design and inspection services and the residents provide installation and any shortfall in project funding. Grant/loan funded extensions are typically those projects that are too large to construct as self-help and are considered on a case-by-case basis and as financially feasible.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

In 2014, WCSA completed the expansion of its primary drinking water facility; the Middle Fork Drinking Water Plant (MFDWP). Planning for this project began in the early 1990's. Though a withdrawal permit was issued in 1992 from the confluence of the Middle and South Fork of the Holston Rivers, it was in 2004 that WCSA began the permit renewal process that resulted in the expansion. Construction began in 2009 and was completed in 2014. The MFDWP was expanded from 4.6 to 12.0 million gallons/day and can be easily expended to 15.0 million gallons/day if necessary. This expansion is projected to provide sufficient water for Washington County for the next 40 years.

Under Construction Water Project Extensions		
Project	Cost	New Connections
Childress Hollow Road	\$.34M	12
Haskell Station	\$.23M	5
Hidden Valley Phase I	\$.96M	36
Hidden Valley Phase 2	\$.55M	15
Nordyke Road	\$.41M	12
Rich Valley/Whites Mill Road	\$ 1.68M	36
Sutherland Water System	\$.85M	43
Tumbling Creek/North Fork River Road	\$.24M	8
Future Water Project Upgrades		
Route 58 Corridor Water Supply	\$ 1.82M	-
Abingdon Water Storage Tank	\$ 1.55M	-
Mid-Mountain Water System	\$ 1.94M	-
Smyth Chapel	\$.47M	-
Mill Creek Water Plant	\$ 3.68M	-
Source: Washington County Service Authority		





Wastewater System

The Washington County Service Authority provides sewer collection and/or treatment to approximately 2,300 active collections with an average collection of 450,000 gallons/day (2012). The wastewater system consists of approximately 100 miles of wastewater collection lines and two conventional treatment plants: Hall Creek (630,000 gallons/day) and Damascus (250,000 gallons).

Several notable projects were completed between 2007 and 2013 which will greatly impact growth potential in a key area of the county between Interstate 81 Exits 7 and 13, along the Lee Highway (Highway 11) corridor. The Exit 13 Phase 1 Sewer Project extended sewer to some 255 existing residents in the Westwood and Westwood View neighborhoods. Included in this project was the Spring Creek Lift Station. Not only does the Spring Creek Lift Station meet the needs of the Exit 13 Phase 1 area but was sized to meet the future needs of the area. Subsequently, a line was extended from the Spring Creek Lift Station to Oak Park where a 500,000 gallon/day lift station was constructed. The Oak Park Project not only provides 500,000 gallons/day of wastewater capacity for new business and industry at Oak Park but includes service to 21 existing businesses along Lee Highway from Oak Park to the Spring Creek Road Intersection. Flow from both areas is conveyed to the Town of Abingdon's Wolf Creek Water Reclamation Facility where it is treated. Critical to these two projects and the future of the Lee Highway corridor between Exits 7 and 13 is the WCSA Town of Abingdon inter-municipal agreement. The agreement was reached in February 2010. Lastly, the Western Washington County Wastewater Study, which considered the most cost effective and systematic approach to providing wastewater treatment not only between Exits 7 and 13 but the area north of Bristol along I-81 from Exit 7 to the Tennessee Stateline.

Many wastewater projects are planned for the future representing a 24 million dollar investment and 1,300 new connections to the system. Project upgrades are planned for the Authority's conventional treatment plants at Hall Creek and Damascus which will ensure they continue to return safe water to our local streams.

In 2010, Washington County and WCSA commissioned wastewater collection and treatment study of the western portion of Washington County. A recommendation of the Study was the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility in this part of the county. Subsequently, the project Engineer and WCSA have been at work, locating and permitting the proposed facility. The location chosen is along Bordwine Road between Lee Highway and Clear Creek Road and provides for a treated effluent discharge into Beaver Creek. In 2014, WCSA secured a property purchase option from the landowner. Permitting the proposed facility with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, is in progress as of 2014.

Purposeful, ongoing communication should occur between the WCSA and Washington County to understand wastewater needs and coordinate future land use with capital improvement projects undertaken by the WCSA. Projects in WCSA's project pipeline indicate new growth is likely along Interstate 81 Exits 22, 24, 26, 29, along the Lee Highway (Highway 11) corridor and in the western end of the county should a new wastewater plant or expanded Town of Abingdon solution be implemented.

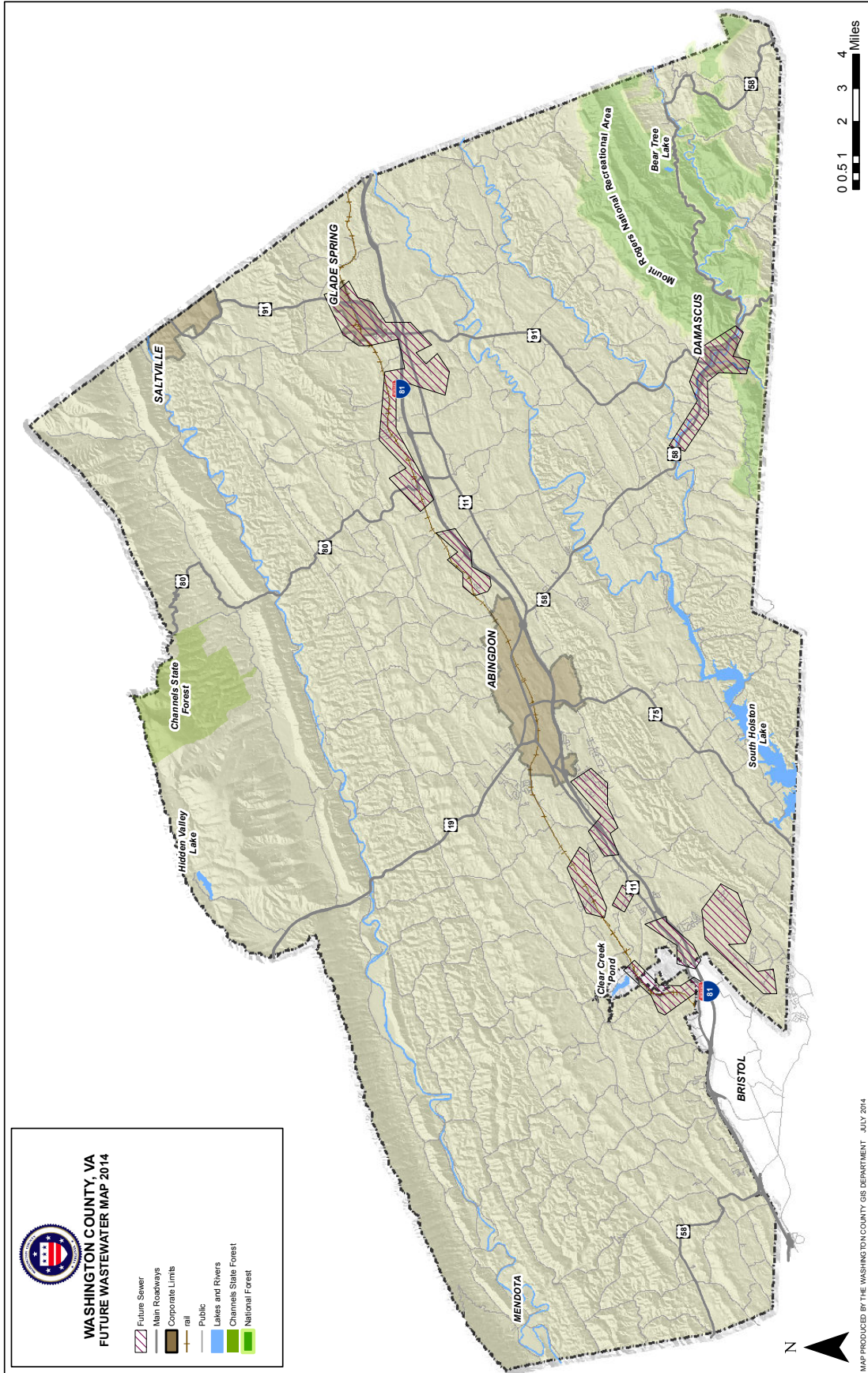
Like water, there are essentially three ways in which wastewater lines are extended: 1) As land is developed, developers extend the system at the developers cost; 2) existing residents along with WCSA assistance extend lines (self-help or \$1500 projects); and 3) grant/loan funded extensions provided by WCSA. Developer extensions occur by the developer taking the initiative to design and construct the infrastructure required to meet their needs. WCSA reviews, approves, upgrades (if necessary and at WCSA expense) and accepts the infrastructure at completion of the project. Self-help extensions, for each existing county resident who agrees to take a new connection, WCSA provides \$1500 of materials, design and inspection services and the residents provide installation and any shortfall in project funding. Grant/loan funded extensions are typically those projects that are too large to construct as self-help and are considered on a case-by-case basis and as financially feasible.

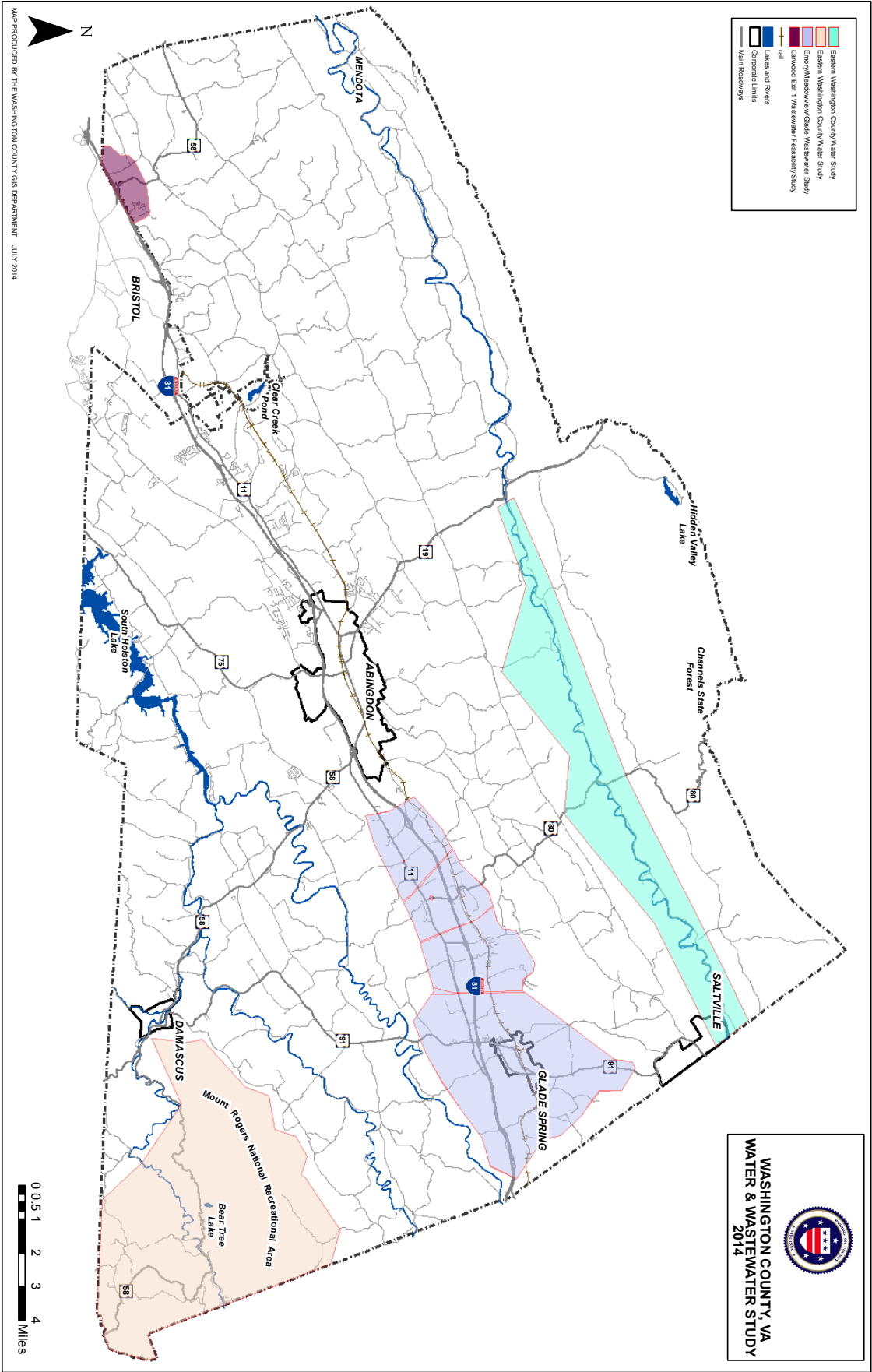
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Future Wastewater Projects		
Project	Cost	New Connections
Larwood Acres	\$2.5M	90
Exit 22 Wastewater	\$3.22M	134
Exit 24 Wastewater	\$2.96M	212
Exit 26 Wastewater	\$1.4M	112
Exit 29 Wastewater	\$1.86M	78
Deerfield Holston High School Area	\$2.1M	117
Hollyfield Community	\$.66M	25
Mountain City Road	\$1.1M	40
Lowry Hills	\$3.5M	215
Exit 13 Wastewater Collection System – Phase 2A	\$0.92M	52
Exit 13 Wastewater Collection System – Phase 2B	\$1.27M	65
Exit 13 Wastewater System – Phase 2C	\$1.93M	109
Exit 13 Wastewater System – Phase 2D	\$1.1M	53
Exit 13 Wastewater Collection System – Phase 2E	\$.64M	39
Future Wastewater Project Upgrades		
Hall Creek Wastewater Plant	\$1.6M	-
Damascus Water Plant	\$.44M	-
New Wastewater Plant		
Western Washington County Wastewater Plant	\$16M	-
Source: Washington County Service Authority		

Bristol Virginia Utilities provides wastewater collection in a portion of the western end of Washington County. Collected wastewater flows to a treatment plant in Sullivan County TN, which is jointly owned and operated by the cities of Bristol, VA, and Bristol, TN. The standard capacity of this plant is 15 million gallons per day but it is capable of treating up to 25 million gallons per day when necessary.







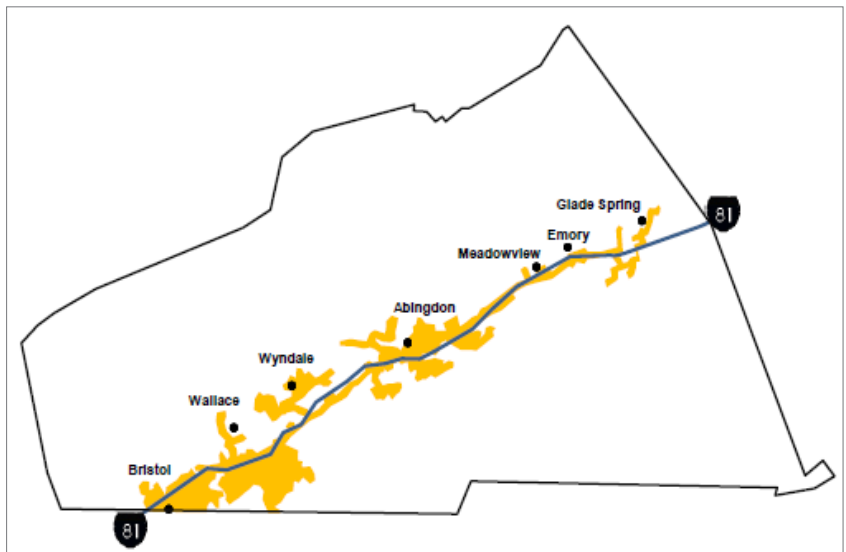
Utilities – Electric, Gas and Telecommunications

Electric service is provided to Washington County residents through two providers; Appalachian Power and the Bristol Virginia Utilities Board. Appalachian Power, a unit of American Electric Power (AEP), provides service to more than 1 million customers in West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and to the majority of Washington County. The Bristol Virginia Utilities Board (BVU) system provides power to over 16,000 customers in a 125 square mile service area, comprised of the City of Bristol, Virginia; Washington County, Virginia; Scott County, Virginia; and Sullivan County, Tennessee.

As growth occurs in Washington County, additional electric facilities will be needed to provide adequate and reliable service to citizens. Locations for such facilities should be chosen with the purpose of providing convenient service to the greatest number of consumers while mitigating the natural and cultural impacts and the visual impact of the facility on adjacent land uses. The federal and state guidelines recommend paralleling existing linear corridors where possible. Utilization of existing structures and poles through the collocation of facilities is encouraged wherever possible and the construction of underground transmission and distribution lines is desirable where practical.

Atmos Energy has supplied natural gas within Washington County for the past fifty plus years. As of 2015, Atmos has scheduled the addition of 9,500 feet of main line scheduled to be installed inside Washington County. Construction of this main line should begin in 2015.

Cable, internet, and telecommunication services are provided through private contract. Attendees at the some community meetings identified high speed internet as a needed utility in their area. Additional study should be undertaken to map areas of need. As additional telecommunication service is needed, the county should encourage new telecommunication service to be located on existing buildings, co-location on existing towers, poles, water tanks and other tall structures.



Atmos Energy Service Area Map

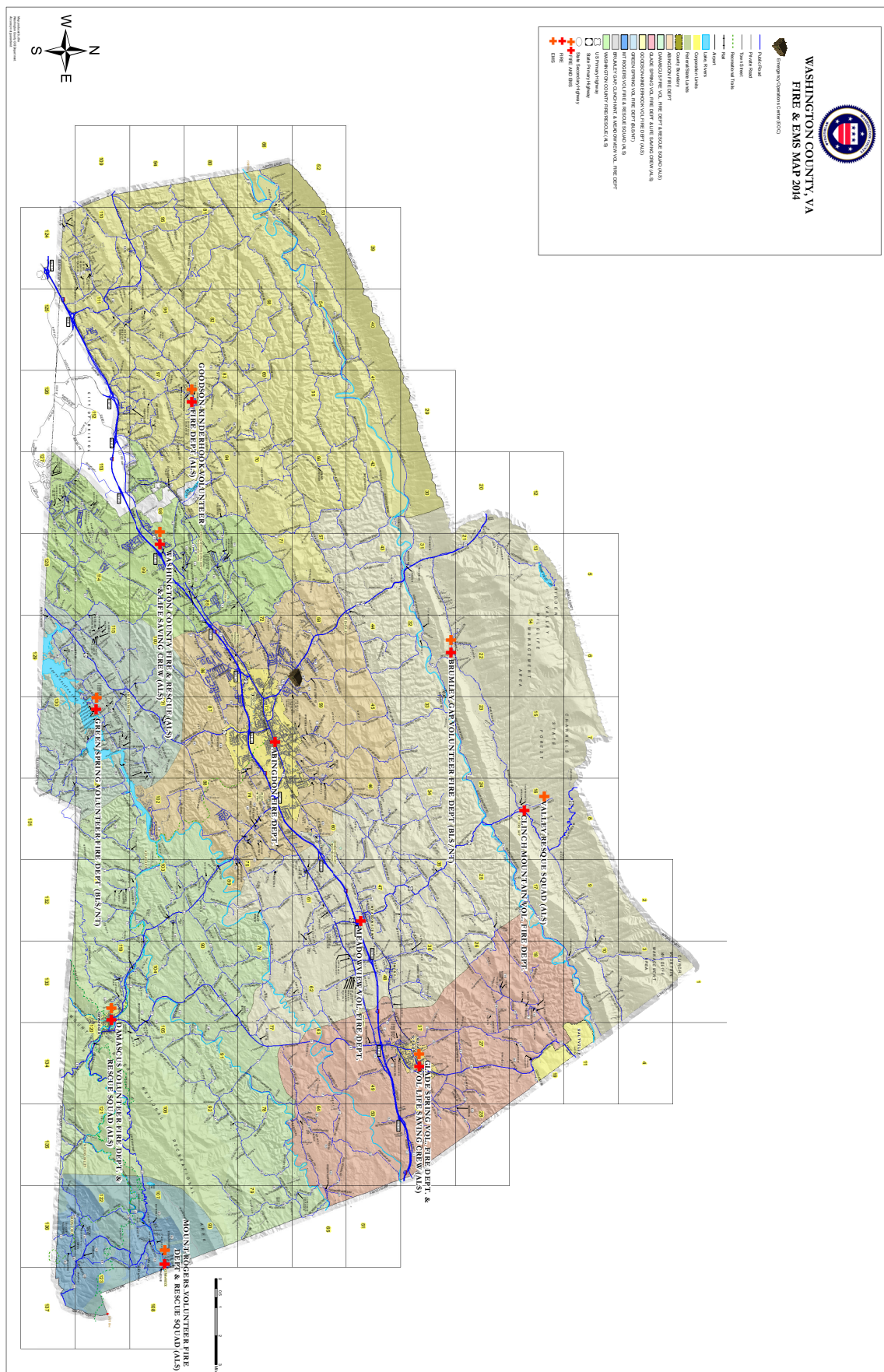
Public Safety

It is important to consider public safety services when planning for growth. The critical relationship between comprehensive planning and the provision of emergency services is the consideration of patterns of growth and patterns affect the number of facilities needed. For example, a compact community would likely need fewer fire stations than a sprawling community with the same population. This can create more of a cost burden for the sprawling community. Emergency services are important to consider over the twenty year planning horizon as the county's population is forecasted to increase and a larger segment of the population ages, these services will be in great demand.

Emergency Management

The Washington County Department of Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating emergency services activities within Washington County. The Department is responsible for maintaining a County Emergency Operations Plan and a Hazardous Materials Response Plan. The Department also serves as the point of contact for the Washington County's enhanced 9-1-1 (E-911) system. Recent projects, related to long range planning in Washington County include:

- Opened the Washington County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which provides space and equipment necessary to function as the Department's central location for response in the event of an emergency or disaster. When not in use as the EOC, it functions as a training room and meeting facility with the ability to accommodate a class of 36 people.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Met all requirements for StormReady recertification through the National Weather Services.
- Completion of the first fire and EMS vehicle/ apparatus assessment by the Fire and EMS Oversight Committee putting forth a recommendation for funding to the Board of Supervisors for the FY2014 budget.
- Met the requirements of the 2013 FCC Narrowbanding Mandate providing portable and mobile radios to Fire and EMS agencies.
- Commissioned an independent county wide radio system assessment to provide direction for meeting future communications needs.
- Partnered with Mount Rogers Planning District Commission to manage the Road Sign Replenishment Project.



Emergency Operations Center, dedicated on April 26, 2013

Three volunteer fire departments, four volunteer EMS departments and six EMS/fire combination departments provide fire and rescue services in Washington County.

EMS Agencies

Damascus Rescue Squad
Glade Spring Life Saving Crew
Washington County Life Saving Crew
Valley Rescue Squad

Fire Departments

Abingdon Fire Department
Meadowview Fire Department
Clinch Mountain Fire Department

EMS/Fire Combination Departments

Damascus Fire Department
Glade Spring Fire Department
Green Spring Fire Department
Brumley Gap Fire Department
Goodson-Kinderhook Fire Department
Washington County Fire Rescue

It is important to consider emergency services when planning for growth. The critical relationship between comprehensive planning and the provision of emergency services is the consideration of patterns of growth and patterns affect the number of facilities needed. For example, a compact community would likely need fewer fire stations than a sprawling community with the same population. This can create more of a cost burden for the sprawling community. Emergency services are important to consider over the twenty year planning horizon as the county's population is forecasted to increase and a larger segment of the population ages, these services will be in great demand.

Washington County Sheriff's Office

The Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police provide Law Enforcement within Washington County. The Washington County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the enforcement of all laws enacted by state and local governments. The Communications Section dispatches calls to all police, fire and rescue personnel within Washington County and the Towns of Abingdon, Damascus and Glade Spring. The Division of Animal Control oversees the enforcement of county ordinances and state laws pertaining to the control of domesticated animals and the operation of the C. C. Porter Animal Shelter. The Division of Litter Control handles litter complaints and operates the Assign a Highway Program.

Parks and Recreation

Washington County's parks and recreation programs are important and valued assets. They contribute to county residents' quality of life in many ways. They offer a place to meet, play, relax, exercise and provide access to the natural environment. The Department of Recreation works year-round to host a variety of youth and adult recreational programs. These activities include leagues, road races, summer day camps, after school child care. The department operates the Busy Bee After School Child Care Program to serve families and children of the county. As of 2014, the program serves Abingdon Elementary School, with plans to expand in the future.

This Department of Recreation is responsible for the maintenance and scheduling of events for the two county-owned multi-purpose Parks.

- Leo "Muscle" Sholes Memorial Park - Glade Spring, VA Named after Leo "Muscle" Sholes, a Glade Spring native and noted Appalachian League baseball player of the 1950's, this park offers a public pool, softball and baseball fields, picnic shelters and open space amenities.
- Beaverdam Creek Park is located on South Shady Avenue in Damascus. Beaverdam Creek Park consists of a lighted, youth baseball field, lighted youth softball field, a T-ball field, a multipurpose football/soccer field, restrooms, and parking for spectators.

In addition to these two parks, the Washington County Park located on County Park Road in Abingdon, VA, is located in Washington County and is owned, operated and maintained by the Washington County Park Authority. The Authority consists of an eight member Board of Directors who are appointed by The Washington County Board of Supervisors for four year terms. The park is located on South Holston Lake and offers camp sites, tent sites, trailer sites with electric and water, sanitation facilities, playground, picnic shelters, boat ramp.

The 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey identified several shortages of facilities within the Mount Rogers Planning District (Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe Counties, City of Bristol, City of Galax) including: basketball courts, baseball and softball fields, and water-based recreation. The 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan identifies public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use, trails for hiking and walking, and natural areas as the "most needed activities" for the Mount Rogers Planning District.

Area lakes and rivers provide much recreational opportunities for residents and tourists. South Holston Lake is the largest body of water at 7,580 acres and stretches 24 miles from Tennessee to Virginia. Whitaker Hollow is the only public boating access area on the southeast end of South Holston Lake and it is managed by the Department of Recreation. The park consists of a public parking lot, boat ramp and picnic tables.

Washington County is rich in water sport and outdoor recreation opportunities though relatively little public access exists to water resources, rivers and fishing streams in particular. Inadequate parking and access trails can create resource degradation, inconvenience and unsafe conditions. Additional public access to rivers and streams could improve outdoor recreation in the area and provide additional economic development opportunities. Recreation activities may include kayaking, canoeing, rafting, hiking, camping, fishing and hunting. Business opportunities created to support these activities could include restaurants, supply/convenience stores, and guide or outfitter services.

The only public water access point in Washington County is located at Whitaker Hollow Park.

Solid Waste

The Department of Solid Waste oversees the operation of the county's solid waste disposal operations, facilities and equipment. Presently, the Department collects solid waste through a series of fourteen Manned Solid Waste Convenience Stations (MCS) located strategically throughout the County and collects and transports the solid waste through county forces to one Solid Waste Transfer Station located in the Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park. The Transfer Station is limited to use by county-permitted private waste haulers, public solid waste collection operations and demolition and construction debris removal contractors. As of 2014, the Transfer Station is approximately 20 years old. It is important to note that while current operations and capacity are adequate, significant commercial or industrial growth in the county will create additional waste volume which could require expansion of the facility. This could be problematic because Transfer Station is land locked in the middle of the industrial park.

Curbside collection services may be contracted for through private waste collection and transportation companies, which have solid waste hauling franchises to the county. The Washington County Board of Supervisors annually issues or renews permits to collect and transport solid waste within the county. There is no active landfill in Washington County. The former county landfill located on Porter Lane in Abingdon has been closed since 1993 and is now monitored for methane gas release. Solid waste from Washington County is exported from the Transfer Station to an out-of-state landfill in Blountville, TN.

Manned Solid Waste Convenience Stations

Benhams Community
 Damascus Area
 Valley Institute Area
 Glade Spring Area
 Green Cove Community
 Green Spring Community
 Hayter's Gap Community
 Konnarock Community
 Abingdon Area (Old Landfill)
 Lodi Community
 Mendota Community
 Mud Hollow Area
 Greendale Community
 Tumbling Creek Area

In 2004 all Virginia localities were required to prepare and submit plans for the management of their solid waste in accordance with the requirements of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, either on an individual jurisdiction or regional basis. Washington County along with Smyth, Bland and Wythe Counties in Virginia and their incorporated towns participated in a regional plan prepared on their behalf by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Washington County adopted this regional plan on September 28, 2004. Goals and objectives for the region are listed in the following page.¹

Recycling

Each Manned Solid Waste Convenience Station facility has a recycling box for paper, plastic, and aluminum cans; the Abingdon Area MCS is the only facility that accepts glass, magazines, and large scrap metal items (i.e., old appliances, etc.). The Abingdon Area MCS is the also the only facility that accepts brush and tree trimmings. In 1989, the Virginia General Assembly adopted legislation that established a 25% recycling rate for localities. Beginning in Calendar Year 2016, the county will be required to submit a recycling rate report to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Since Washington County has a population of less than 100,000, a new report will be required for submission every four years after. The county currently tracks this information and provides reports to DEQ.

¹

Mount Rogers Planning District, Regional Solid Waste Management Plan For: Bland County, Smyth County, Washington County, Wythe County, and their incorporated towns

Goals and Objectives for the Region - Solid Waste Hierarchy

Element of Hierarchy	Goal	Objective
Source Reduction	To reduce the volume of solid waste entering the waste stream by curtailing waste generation.	Educate private citizens and the business community on the importance of source reduction as opportunities present themselves. Encourage teachers to discuss source reduction in class room.
Reuse	To reduce the volume of solid waste entering the waste stream through reuse of existing materials.	Educate private citizens and the business community on the importance of reuse as opportunities present themselves. Encourage teachers to continue to discuss reuse in class room. Consider developing a generic brochure on reuse that could be used by all members of the region.
Recycling	To divert recyclable quantities from the municipal solid waste stream to reduce the tonnage that must be transferred and to meet the mandated 25% goal.	Educate private citizens and the business community on the importance of recycling. Make the opportunities to recycle more available to all members of the region. For those members who do not currently track commercial and industrial recycling, assist with the development of a reporting program to track this recycling. Require all commercial and industrial facilities to report annually on the tonnage recycled by weight and material type. Increase public awareness of the cost of disposal and the potential benefits of recycling.
Waste to Energy	To remain informed on waste to energy technology so that new initiatives in the field can be evaluated.	Continue to share information among the members of the regions relative to waste to energy.
Incineration/ Volume Reduction	To remain informed on incineration/ volume reduction technology so that new initiatives in the field can be evaluated.	Continue to share information among the members of the region relative to incineration and volume reduction.
Landfilling	To continue to provide cost effective disposal for the wastes generated in the region.	Transfer stations to continue operation through the planning period. Transfer station owners will continue to assess their contracts for hauling and disposal to assure the cost effectiveness of the programs. Transfer station owners will continue to assess the disposal facilities for remaining life expectancy and compliance.

County Facilities

The Department of General Services provides direct support to the county's various offices, departments and agencies for facility needs and motor vehicle fleet management. The Department is responsible for the efficient and economic management of county owned properties in order to provide a safe and productive working environment for the county's employees, as well as, citizens who visit and conduct business in county facilities. The county owns and maintains 15 buildings throughout Washington County.

Major projects, completed since 2010, include the renovation and relocation of county administrative offices, County Treasurer's office, Commissioner of the Revenue's offices and Washington County Chamber of Commerce into the County Government Building and construction of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the Public Safety Building.

The most substantial capital project anticipated in the twenty year planning horizon is the Washington County Courthouse. The courthouse was built in 1869 and has been subject to three substantial building additions in 1870, 1954, and 1990, resulting in a courthouse complex building area of approximately 53,767 square feet on four levels. The adjacent Elliot Building

County Owned and Maintained Buildings

Government Center Building
Washington County Courthouse
Community Services Building
Public Safety Building
Animal Control Building
Elliot Building
Valley Street Building
Treasurers Building
Library – Main Branch
Library – Damascus
CID Building – Records Storage
Hayters Gap Community Center
Mendota Community Center
Green Cove Community Center
Clinchburg Community Center

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

contains approximately 8,640 SF on two levels. The first floor of the Elliot Building is occupied by the Commonwealth's Attorney and the second floor is unoccupied.

In fall of 2013, the Washington County Board of Supervisors voted to create a committee to study long-range issues for the complex. Issues include the need for adequate parking, adequate office space for employees, adequate storage space for records, accessibility issues as well as long term maintenance and security issues.

Washington County Public Library

The Washington County Library System operates a main library in Abingdon, four branch libraries located in Damascus, Glade Spring, Hayters Gap and Mendota and an extensive outreach program for people unable to visit the library including day care and afterschool programs, rest homes and senior centers. The library system contains 350,000 items in circulation, a total of 6.7 items per county resident. In 2013, the library reported more than 13,000 people visit the library each month.

Two library facilities have been constructed in recent years. The Damascus Branch Library was opened in September 2012. The building totals 6,500 square feet and includes a visitor center for the Town of Damascus. The Glade Spring branch on was constructed in 2010 on the town square in Glade Spring and the Hayter's Gap branch was expanded in 2009.

Consideration of a new main library has been underway for over ten years. Facilities plans for the library system have identified the need for a main branch with more space, parking, and dynamic interior space with potential space for future expansion. The Library worked with a group of design consultants to conduct a needs assessment study during the winter and spring of 2014. The consultants that determined that developing a new main public library facility



for Washington County Public Library System in the Abingdon area will necessitate a building of approximately 40,000 square feet. In their study, the determination was made that the building will need to be two stories in order to accommodate parking and other construction necessities including utilities and storm water runoff.

Three potential sites were presented along with a proposal for the renovation and expansion of the existing library. Each option presents advantages and disadvantages. A cost estimate is presented for site and building development. The costs included building construction, site construction, acquisition costs, furniture and equipment, fees and expenses. Estimated costs in 2014 dollars are as follows¹:

Current library renovation and expansion - \$12,400,000

Current site new library - \$12,960,000

Whites Mill Road site new library - \$12,520,000

VHCC Joint-Use library - \$19,700,000

1

Washington County Public Library Facility Needs Assessment, produced by Enteros Design, PC.

Schools Located in Washington County

Elementary

Abingdon Elementary School
Greendale Elementary School
High Point Elementary School
Meadowview Elementary School
Rhea Valley Elementary School
Valley Institute Elementary School
Watauga Elementary School

Middle

Damascus Middle School
E.B. Stanley Middle School
Glade Spring Middle School
Wallace Middle School

High School

Abingdon High School
Holston High School
John S. Battle High School
Patrick Henry High School

Private School (K-12)

Cornerstone Christian Academy

Vocational Centers

Washington County Technical School
Neff Center for Science and Technology

Colleges

Emory & Henry College
Virginia Highlands Community College

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center (partner universities and colleges include: Emory and Henry College, King University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Highlands Community College, and Virginia Tech)

Schools

Education is very important in Washington County and the county is served well by many educational assets. Three colleges, two vocational centers, one private, K-12 school, and fifteen public schools are located in Washington County.

The Washington County School System utilizes its own long-range facilities plan developed to assist the system in fulfilling its mission. Cycles have been developed for replacing and/or refurbishing buildings. Special consideration has been given to having buildings that are well maintained, safe and handicap accessible. Audits are conducted annually to provide safe environments for students and employees.

Health and Human Services

Johnston Memorial Hospital (JMH) is a not-for-profit, 116 bed facility which serves the residents of Washington County. The hospital was constructed in 2011 and is a member of Mountain States Health Alliance. JMH is the first "green" hospital in Southwest Virginia and has received Gold LEED certification. The JMH complex includes a 60,000 square foot Cancer Care facility.

Wellmont-Bristol Regional Medical Center, opened in 1994, a 422-bed facility located in Bristol, Tennessee also provides medical services to the residents of Washington County.

Social services are provided by the Washington County Department of Social Services. The department is responsible for determining eligibility for citizen participation in a wide variety of state and federal programs. The department has an annual program expenditure of over \$61 million and a staff of over fifty people who administer over two dozen medical, food, financial, and social service and benefit programs for the local, state and federal government. Currently over 95% of the agency's annual expenditures are spent on benefits and services for county citizens.

Highlands Community Services (HCS) has provided mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual disability services to the residents of Washington County and the city of Bristol, VA for over four decades. HCS offers valuable Children & Family Services, Parenting Programs, Outpatient Services, Intellectual Disability Services, Psychiatric Services, Emergency Services, and Adult Recovery Services to thousands of children, adolescents, and adults each year.



Community Facilities Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Vision Statements

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES: Washington County citizens enjoy superior public water and sewer service, roads, and government facilities that create an enviable quality of life.

Washington County has made wise investments in public infrastructure to promote orderly growth and development. Centralization of county offices has proven beneficial and efficient in delivery of government services. The county has successfully extended public water services to make it available to all areas of the County and works diligently to match this success with its provision of sewer service. The County government has carefully developed a Capital Improvement Plan that provides an excellent framework for decision-making. The County's Service Authority maintains the best in water quality technology which results in national recognition of the purity of its product.

RECREATION: Washington County is a premier leisure and adventure destination.

Washington County is the center of recreational diversity in Southwest Virginia. Many hiking and biking trails crisscross our beautiful county, including the Appalachian Trail, Virginia Creeper Trail, Transcontinental Bike Trail, and Daniel Boone Memorial Trail. The county offers many outdoor activities including camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing in the Jefferson National Forest, Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area, and nearby Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Our high mountain streams and South Holston Lake offer excellent canoeing, kayaking, pleasure boating, and trout and bass fishing. The county is also the home of the Virginian Golf Course, a world-class golfing and gated residential community, along with many attractive public and private golf courses. Close proximity to the Bristol Motor Speedway offers the best of NASCAR - the ultimate venue in motor sports racing. Our regional sports complex accommodates all levels of field sport competition. Visitors to Washington County enjoy a variety of options for accommodations and dining ranging from charming bed and breakfast inns to internationally recognized four-star hotels.

EDUCATION: A diverse spectrum of educational resources complements our cultural and historic setting and creates a strong foundation for lifelong learning in Washington County.

Washington County has long been a leader in providing high quality and innovative educational programs for all ages. Our educators are dedicated to providing our children with academic and life skills to enhance their lives far beyond the classroom. Cultural and historical assets of the County enrich the educational experience. Our school system is careful to foster in our youth an appreciation of our region's unique cultural heritage. A broad range of higher educational opportunities complement basic educational foundations. These resources include Emory and Henry College, Virginia Highlands Community College, Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and its College for Older Adults, County Adult Skills Center, and Neff Technical School. The county's dedication to its library system is evidenced by its catalog of titles and electronic resources, as well as its branch locations throughout the county.

Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: Continue to provide public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible manner.

STRATEGIES

1. Monitor and pursue State and Federal grant programs to help fund need and projects identified by county departments.
2. Develop and implement a capital improvement program.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to provide efficient water and wastewater service delivery systems to serve existing and anticipated needs of future development.

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage new development in areas with available water and sewer systems.

2. Encourage necessary infrastructure and utilities to be expanded concurrently with new development.
3. Continue quarterly meetings of the Joint County Utility Committee to foster communication about utility issues between the Board of Supervisors, WCSA and Industrial Development Authority.
4. Continue to monitor water and wastewater fee structure and implementation.
5. Work with WCSA to encourage implementation of services where financially feasible and in areas where service is needed.
6. Assess the feasibility and desirability of the formation of a regional water and sewer utility.
7. Partner with the WCSA to educate Washington County citizens on the importance of efficient use of water.

OBJECTIVE: **To support provision of private electricity, telephone, natural gas, wireless, and internet service in Washington County.**

STRATEGIES

1. Promote an infrastructure system including electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, wireless and internet service that will support existing need and future growth in Washington County.
2. Seek grant opportunities to assist with funding of infrastructure projects to areas of the county with need.
3. Collaborate and communicate with utility providers on future plans to ensure projects conform to the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Encourage new telecommunication services to be located on existing buildings, co-location on existing towers, poles, and structures.

OBJECTIVE: **To enhance community safety and security through the provision of efficient and effective emergency management services and law enforcement.**

STRATEGIES

1. Complete fire and EMS vehicle and apparatus assessment update on an annual basis.
2. Identify where and when existing response times are longest and evaluate ways to mitigate development impact on these response times.
3. Develop communication between Planning and Zoning Departments with Emergency Management Department and Sheriff's Office on future growth plans and large commercial or housing development proposals to ensure agencies are prepared for such development.
4. Develop communication between Building and Development Services Department, Emergency Management Department and Sheriff's Office to implement a program to encourage property owners to display the address of their building.
5. Study opportunity for more accessible, visible location for the C.C. Porter Animal Shelter.

OBJECTIVE: **Enhance and increase recreational opportunities that will serve all Washington County citizens and visitors while preserving open spaces.**

STRATEGIES

1. Consider expansion of after school child care program to additional elementary schools if needed.
2. Evaluate opportunities to provide safe public access to recreational waters.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

3. Cooperate with other localities and agencies to increase park and recreation amenities across Washington County.
4. Participate on committees to study trail opportunities in the county.
5. Pursue grant funding to maintain, improve or add to park amenities in Washington County and increase recreation programs.

OBJECTIVE: **To continue to provide efficient solid waste program to serve existing need and anticipated future requirements.**

STRATEGIES

1. Continue to provide facilities for the use of citizens for the disposal of household waste.
2. Increase recycling opportunities at all Manned Solid Waste Convenience Stations for those who wish to recycle.
3. Maintain the Washington County Transfer Station and monitor capacity needs as growth occurs.
4. Remain informed on waste to energy technology so that new initiatives in the field can be evaluated.
5. Consider placement of recycling bins in county buildings.
6. Continue tracking recycling information for DEQ reporting requirements.

OBJECTIVE: **To continue to provide preventative, essential and emergency maintenance services for the county's existing inventory of buildings, grounds and real estate holdings and future building needs.**

STRATEGIES

1. Prioritize maintenance and expansion of existing facilities if they can meet adequate level of service.
2. Locate complimentary county functions near one another for maximum efficiency when possible.
3. If new facilities are necessary, design new projects to accommodate existing and future service needs and to permit expansion as necessary.
4. Encourage all new facility projects to be energy efficient.
5. Continue meetings of the Long Range Courthouse Planning Committee to discuss and determine solutions and prioritize completion of tasks.
6. Work with Washington County Library on future library needs including new branch library project.
7. Consider obtaining an energy audit for all county owned buildings to see where opportunities exist improve energy efficiency and lessen energy costs.
8. Consider facility usage study to determine if certain facilities are cost effective to operate.

OBJECTIVE: **To work with Washington County School System to communicate on development issues and partner on projects that benefit Washington County and the School System.**

STRATEGIES

1. Develop communication between Planning and Zoning Departments and Washington County Schools to provide notice of planned subdivisions or housing proposals to ensure schools are prepared for the additional students that may result from such development.
2. Consider working with school system on joint energy audit to see if opportunities exist to improve energy efficiency and lessen energy costs for public buildings in Washington County.

OBJECTIVE: To partner with healthcare and social service agencies to improve the health of all Washington County residents.

STRATEGIES

1. Collaborate with healthcare and social service agencies in the area to retain medical services in the area and plan for future needs.
2. Collaborate and communicate with providers on future plans to ensure projects conform to the Comprehensive Plan.



A safe and efficient transportation system is a critical service provided by the government. It provides for the mobility of goods and links people to their jobs, schools, shopping and community activities. The local transportation system is likely to face challenges in the future; higher energy prices, aging infrastructure, limited funding, and demographic shifts. Opportunities exist to address these challenges which may include evolving technology, use of alternative fuels, market demand for efficiency, utilization of alternative work arrangements, and willingness to utilize multiple modes of transportation.

As Washington County continues to experience growth, careful attention must be given to the relationship between land use and transportation. The county must consider the impact land use and transportation decisions have on local and regional travel patterns and seek balance between the two. Continued coordination of land use and transportation can better accommodate job and population growth as well as the affordability of public infrastructure.

Washington County has many transportation partners including the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and the Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The county works with these agencies to ensure an efficient and functional transportation system that is harmonious with land use patterns and community character. Though the primary mode for transportation in Washington County is currently by automobile, the Comprehensive Plan supports mobility, accessibility and alternative modes of transportation.

Air Travel

Passenger air travel in Washington County is primarily served by Tri-Cities Regional Airport located in Blountville, TN. Virginia Highlands Airport, located in Abingdon, VA, provides general aviation services for the community. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) classifies airports into five categories. Tri-Cities Regional is classified as a commercial service airport, nonhub, that has more than 10,000 passenger boardings each year but accounts for less than 0.05% of total U.S. passenger boardings. General aviation airports, such as Virginia Highlands Airport, are largest single group of airports in the U.S. system. This category includes privately owned and public use airports that enplane 2,500 or more passengers.

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS AIRPORT is operated by the Virginia Highlands Airport Authority. The membership is appointed by the Washington County Board of Supervisors, one seat is appointed per election district. The airport totals 250 acres and home to 72 based and a Virginia State Police Medflight Unit. The medflight unit serves all of southwest Virginia providing emergency medical flights and aerial law enforcement.

Changes in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements have made it necessary to extend Runway 6 from 4,500 linear feet to 5,500 linear feet. The construction of the additional 1,000 feet is needed to retain the current air traffic, to meet future corporate aircraft demand, and to achieve greater safety and utility. A partial parallel taxiway to Runway 6 at Virginia Highlands Airport will be constructed. The project will be funded primarily through FAA grants. Currently, the project is planned in phases. An Environmental Assessment for the proposed runway extension was completed and approved by the FAA in 2010. Standard steps for the extension of the runway will require property acquisition, design and permitting, relocation of State Route 611 (Providence Road), stream relocation, and construction. It is critical to maintain good road access to the airport in the future. The Virginia Department of Aviation has identified accessibility as a key factor in the viability of the state's airports. A concept design for the extension project is included on the following page but is subject to change and will require final approval by both the Federal Aviation Administration and the Virginia Department of Aviation.

TRI-CITIES REGIONAL AIRPORT celebrated 75 years of aviation service in 2012. The airport is governed by an Airport Authority of members appointed by the airport's owners; the cities of Kingsport, Tennessee; Johnson City, Tennessee; Bristol, Tennessee; Bristol, Virginia; Washington and Sullivan Counties, Tennessee. The property covers approximately 1,200 acres and includes a passenger terminal building, Air Cargo Logistics Center, corporate hangars, and air traffic control tower. U.S. Customs and Border Protection Port #2027 and Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) #204 are located in the Air Cargo Logistics Center. Three commercial airlines, Delta Connection, U.S. Airways Express and Allegiant operate daily flights from the airport.

Two major projects are underway as of 2014, which will provide improved safety, efficiency and capacity. Taxiway R will be extended to provide a full parallel runway south of the airport's main runway and the primary runway will be rehabilitated which includes the milling and overlaying a new asphalt surface, installation of new in-pavement lighting and drainage systems improvements at the edges of the runway.



Tri-Cities Regional Airport, photo courtesy of Tri-Cities Regional Airport



Rail

Norfolk Southern operates the only rail line within Washington County. The line bisects the county running parallel to Interstate 81. Norfolk Southern operates approximately 21,000 route miles in 22 eastern states and 2,100 miles in Virginia. The rail line serves all major eastern ports and operates two intermodal corridor routes in Virginia. The north-south mainline throughout Virginia bisects Washington County and is part of the Crescent Corridor. This corridor spans many states extending from New Orleans/Memphis to New Jersey. The line through the county terminates in Memphis. The principal train types on the Crescent Corridor are domestic intermodal, general merchandise and auto trains. As of first quarter 2014, the average train trips were 12 per day.¹ There is no passenger rail service in the region. Amtrak's Northeast Connector passenger train, currently originating and ending in Lynchburg, Virginia, will be extended to Roanoke by 2017. Extension of passenger train service on to Bristol from Roanoke will be beneficial for commuters and tourism in Washington County.

Recommended future projects for the Crescent Corridor included in the Virginia Statewide Rail Plan are intended to divert freight shipments from highway, expand rail capacity, and to facilitate the expansion of Amtrak service to Roanoke and Bristol. Funding for these projects will be programmed through the Six-Year Improvement Program.

Washington County has supported rail in years past. The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution supporting "Steel Interstate" service along the I-81 corridor in 2009. This system includes a network of electrified railroad mainlines designed to provide maximum diversion of truck freight to rail and accommodate passenger and freight service on the same system. The line proposed would be double-tracked and grade separated. This line follows a portion of the Norfolk Southern Crescent Corridor but the plan is not supported by Norfolk Southern.



Crescent Corridor Map, courtesy of Norfolk Southern.

¹ Information provided by Norfolk Southern Project Management Mid-Atlantic Division.

Road Network

The primary mode of transportation in Washington County is the road system. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintains, improves and develops state roads and road infrastructure. Though maintenance of transportation infrastructure occurs at the state level, transportation planning occurs on a national, state, regional and local level. It is important for the county to study transportation issues to ensure the needs of Washington County citizens are reflected in regional and state plans.

Interstate 81

Interstate 81 (I-81) runs northeast to southwest through Washington County and is one of the primary corridors on the eastern seaboard for both passenger cars and truck freight. It is important to county residents for the purposes of access to employment, shopping, airports and medical centers. The interstate provides the majority of goods movement throughout the region and serves as a link for through traffic between Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York with connections to I-40, I-80 and I-90. The I-81 corridor functions as a freight corridor for both trucks and rail. This interstate links twenty plus colleges and universities and many tourism sites including state parks, recreations areas, Civil War battlefields and national forests. Interstate 81 is identified as one of the twelve Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) in Virginia in VTrans 2035, Virginia's long range transportation plan. The corridor represents a multimodal connection between the Commonwealth's activity centers and it facilitates the movement of people and goods move between Virginia's regions and areas outside Virginia.

Interstate 81 connects a northern terminus at the US-Canadian border along the Saint Lawrence Seaway to a southern terminus at Interstate 40 in Dandridge, TN. Interstate access is available in Washington County at Exits 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29 and 32. Several of these exits, Exit 7, 14, 17 and 19 are in need of improvement to ensure safety and efficiency in the system. The annual average daily traffic along I-81 in Washington County is 39,838 vehicles. Measurements along segments are as follows: 44,700 trips between Exit 13 and 14, 41,000 trips between Exit 14 and 17, and 41,000 trips between Exit 17 and 19.

Primary and Secondary Roads

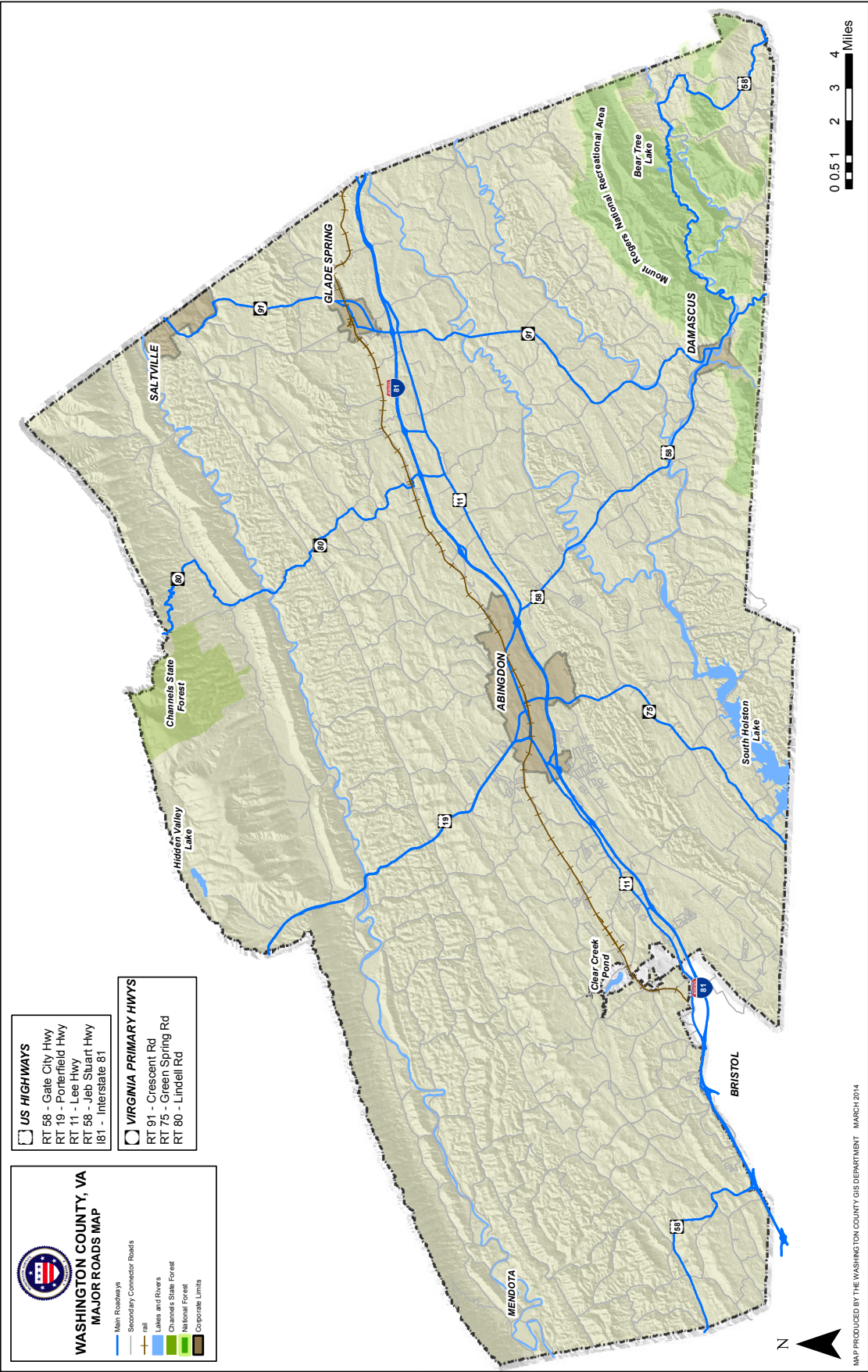
Washington County's road network includes 1963.63 of lane mileage. 253.31 lane miles are designated as primary and the remaining 1525.77 miles are classified as secondary roads. VDOT maintains, improves and develops state roads and road infrastructure in the Washington County.

The Route 58 and Alternate Route 58 constitute the Southside Corridor of Statewide Significance. Route 58 runs east to west through Washington County, with Alternate Route 58 splitting off from Route 58 at Abingdon, looping northward, and rejoining Route 58 at Jonesville, in Lee County. The Southside Corridor services localities along Virginia's southern border, from the City of Virginia Beach to the Cumberland Gap.

Roads in the overall system perform specific functions with the goal of minimizing traffic and land use conflicts, improving safety, and enhancing mobility. Roads in cities and towns with populations over 5,000 receive an "urban" designation from VDOT and those with populations under 5,000 are designated as rural. A descriptive list of VDOT road classifications is included in the table below.

As of July 1, 2005, Washington County has required all new roads, whether public or private, to be constructed to VDOT's applicable standards. The agency's Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements (SSAR) became effective on July 1, 2009. These requirements set out the rules that newly constructed streets must meet in order to be accepted for maintenance by VDOT. Prior to July 2009, VDOT's Subdivision Street Requirements (SSR) were effective.

Virginia Department of Transportation Road Classifications	
Rural Functional	Rural minor arterial/primary Links cities and large towns (and other generators, such as major resorts), Spaced at such intervals so that all developed areas of the state are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway, Provides service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by rural collectors or local systems, Design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall speeds, with minimum interference to through movement
	Rural minor collector/secondary Spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, Collects traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road, Provides service to the remaining smaller communities, Link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland
	Rural major collector/secondary Provides service to any county seat not on an arterial system, to larger towns not directly served by higher systems, Links the above to nearby larger towns or routes of higher classification, Serves the more important intra-county travel corridors
	Rural local Serves primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land , Provides service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems, All facilities not on one of the higher systems
Urban Functional	Urban principal arterial/primary Serves the major centers of activity of a metropolitan area, Highest traffic volume corridors, Roads serving the longest trip desires, Carry a high proportion of the total urban area travel on a minimum of mileage, Carries significant amounts of intra-area travel
	Urban minor arterial/primary Interconnect with and augment the urban principal arterial system and provide service to trips of moderate length at a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials Include all arterials not classified as a principal and contains facilities that place more emphasis on land access, and offer a lower level of traffic mobility
	Urban collector/secondary Provides land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas, Distributes trips from the arterials through these areas to their ultimate destination, Collects traffic from local streets and channels it to the arterial system
	Urban local All facilities not on one of the higher systems, Serves primarily as direct access to abutting land, Serves as access to the higher order systems, Through traffic movement is deliberately discouraged.



Rural Rustic Roads

The Rural Rustic Road program is an approach to paving Virginia's low volume unpaved roads. The concept was enacted by the 2002 Session of the General Assembly as a pilot program. The 2003 Session amended the legislation to provide that this method be considered as a first alternative for improving unpaved roads, creating the Rural Rustic Road Program under § 33.1-70.¹ The program ensures that VDOT practices environmental and financial stewardship while providing basic paved access to more of Virginia's rural countryside.¹ The Local Assistance Division, in consultation with the Location and Design Division, is responsible for the program and has periodically updated guidelines for the program. Eligibility criteria includes:

- The road must be an unpaved road already within the State Secondary System (SSYP).
- The road must carry no more than 1,500 vehicles per day.
- The road must be a priority (line item) in the locality's approved SSYP if the funding source is from secondary system allocations. If SSYP funds are not used, the project is not required to be in the SSYP. However, the applicable provisions for public involvement must be met.
- The road must be used predominately for local traffic.
- The road must have minimal anticipated traffic growth. The County Board of Supervisors should limit growth on roads improved under the Rural Rustic Road Program, through the comprehensive planning process to develop adjacent lands consistent with rural rustic road concepts.
- Requires resolution by the Board of Supervisors designating the road as a Rural Rustic Road.

As of December 2013, approximately 19 miles of rural road projects have been completed in the county, this represents a cost savings of \$5,323, 863.² Washington County should continue to implement this program on eligible roads to help minimize costs and preserve the rural character of the county.

Level of Service

Maintaining and improving roads will be a challenge for the future due to limited funding and it is important to consider Level of Service when prioritizing projects. Levels of Service (LOS) is a measure assigned to a roadway based on operating conditions. Designations are assigned A through F. A level of A represents the best operating conditions and Level F, the worst. The Virginia Department of Transportation maintains an inventory of the existing road network which includes functional classification, Level of Service, and daily/weekly traffic volumes.

Road segments identified in the Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035 as having volume/capacity problems in the year 2035 are listed in the table below.

LOS F	LOS E	LOS D
Interstate 81 northbound, north end of three-lane section to Exit 13 gore	Interstate 81 southbound, Exit 13 gore to Exit 13 merge	Interstate 81 southbound, Exit 1 merge to state line
Interstate 81 northbound, Exit 13 on-ramp to cordon line north	Interstate 81 northbound, Exit 13 gore to Exit 13 merge	Interstate 81 northbound, state line to Exit 1 gore
Interstate 81 southbound, cordon line north to Exit 13 off-ramp	Junction Drive, Old Jonesboro Road to Kings Mill Pike	Lee Highway, Astor Road to Halls Bottom Road
Interstate 81 southbound, Exit 13 merge point to north end of 3-lane section	Lee Highway, cordon line north to Astor Road	Lee Highway, Majestic Drive to Industrial Park Road
	Lee Highway, Halls Bottom Road to Industrial Park Road	Lee Highway, Old Dominion Road to Bristol corporate limits
	Spring Creek Road, Lee Highway to Exit 13 north ramps	

¹ VDOT Rural Rustic Road Program Manual

² VDOT Website, "Local Assistance Division." <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-programs.asp> (accessed September 25, 2014)

Access Management

The number, location and spacing of commercial entrance and exits onto a road combined with street intersections, traffic signals, and median opens can create conflict causing vehicles to stop, slow and even crash. Better management of access points can reduce these conflicts while improving safety and highway efficiency. Several techniques may be used in an access management program to help prevent problems in the future: increasing spacing between signals and interchanges, better driveway location, spacing and design, use of exclusive turning lanes, median treatments, use of service and frontage roads, and land use policies that limit right-of-way access to highways.¹ Access management can be a tool to protect road investments and improve mobility.

The 2007 General Assembly approved legislation directing VDOT to develop access management regulations. The regulations were developed with the goal of limiting conflicting traffic movements, reducing need for new highways or road widening by maximizing the performance of existing roads, supporting economic development, preserving public investment in road projects and ensuring private property has reasonable access to highways.

Traffic congestion has increased along certain corridors in Washington County. Some of the congestion is related to development that has occurred along the corridor. Several corridors in Washington County are likely to experience continued commercial growth. These corridors could benefit from an Access Management program including sections of U.S. 11/Lee Highway between Exits 7 and 10 and in the vicinity of Johnson Memorial Hospital and along U.S. 19/Porterfield Highway. Washington County should consider working with VDOT to develop such plans and implement them to improve safety and efficiency and to minimize future costs for remedial roadway improvements.

Travel Demand Management

The goal of Travel Demand Management (TDM) is to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips (SOV). TDM strategies can include encouraging companies to establish tele-working or flexible hours, encouraging car and van pooling, utilization of transit, biking, and Park and Ride lots. One Park and Ride parking lot is located in the Town of Abingdon. The lot is owned and maintained by VDOT. The lot has 45 spaces (2 accessible spaces) and no fee to park. An additional facility is proposed as a part of the Exit 14 project and will be located between I-81 and Dennison Road.

TDM services are provided in Virginia through a partnership between the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Virginia Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Planning District Commissions, and local governments.² These services can be used to improve transportation congestion, expand mobility, and support economic development and land use planning. The Statewide Public Transportation and Transportation Demand Management Plan identifies "Expanded Rural Transit Service" as a long term enhancement need for the Mount Rogers Planning Commission District.³ Examples of these services include demand response bus service, deviated fixed route bus service, commuter/express buses, and rural regional bus routes.

Public Transit

District Three Public Transit (DTPT) is operated by the District Three Governmental Cooperative and is the public transit provider for Abingdon, Galax, Marion, Wytheville, and the Counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe. The service is provided by local governments in cooperation with federal, state and regional organizations. Service is provided for the benefit of all citizens regardless of age, income, ability, or any other factor.

Service includes shopping routes, transportation to congregate nutrition sites operated by District Three Senior Services, and town transit in Abingdon, Galax, Marion, and Wytheville. Routes are divided into the following types of service:

- **TOWN TRANSIT** – Town transit routes typically operate as request based service in the morning and flexible fixed route in the afternoon. Because request based service is an inefficient method for providing public transit service DTPT is currently exploring options to extend flexible fixed route service for the entire day.

¹ VDOT *Benefits of Access Management* brochure.

² VDRPT *Statewide Public Transportation and Transportation Demand Management Plan*, page 2-6.

³ *Ibid*, page ES-4.

- **COUNTY TRANSIT** - Because of the wide area covered on county transit routes they all operate on a request basis. Callers must call to schedule trips no later than 4:00 p.m. on the previous business day to be sure of being on the schedule on a given day. County transit routes serve most parts of our member counties at least once per week.
- **NEW FREEDOM (REGIONAL TRANSIT)** –New Freedom routes operate on a flexible fixed route basis, but are primarily reservation driven. The New Freedom routes are designed to assist those who need to get to places outside of our district for medical treatment or shopping. These routes operate on a fixed schedule weekly, making one round trip to regional medical and shopping centers outside the district. Because of the great distance covered outside the service area and the tight schedule only very small deviations are allowed from the fixed route. ⁴

Taxi Services are provided by private companies.

The county should monitor public transit as these services benefit residents with limited access to personal vehicles for various reasons. The projected increase in the aging population of the county may result in a greater need for public transit in the future.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Washington County has access to many trail facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian use. Trail facilities include the Appalachian Trail, Creeper Trail, and systems within the Jefferson National Forest/Mount Rogers National Recreational Area. U.S. Bike Route 76, also known as the Transamerica Route, traverses the state west to east but runs south to north through Washington County.

VDOT's 2004 *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations* requires highway construction and maintenance projects to be initiated with the presumption that the project shall accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. VDOT adopted a Statewide Bicycle Policy Plan in 2011 that provides a framework to implement the bicycle portion of that policy and establishes a vision for the future of bicycling in the Commonwealth. A pedestrian policy plan is under development as of 2014. It builds upon past initiatives to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are an integral component of the transportation system. Washington County offers a variety of scenic and historic areas and miles of rural roads, some of which may be very suitable for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Scenic Byways

The Virginia Scenic Byways program is managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The program was enacted in 1966 and recognizes natural, cultural, historical, recreational and archeological amenities of Virginia's scenic roads. Eligible road sections must be a minimum of 10 miles and the designation process involves the locality, citizens and the state, all of whom cooperatively determine if the road warrants designation. Benefits of designation include participation in the National Scenic Byway program and becoming a part of the coordinated promotional strategy for Virginia tourism but designation may limit placement of outdoor advertising signs.

A portion of the National Forest Mount Rogers Scenic Byway is located in Washington County. The Byway follows along Route 58 east from the Town of Damascus 32.5 miles to the community of Volney. The route offers access to the "High Country" of the national recreation area. Two potential road segments are identified in the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan as Virginia byways: Route 75 from Abingdon to the Tennessee state line and Route 58 between Abingdon and Volney.

Long Range Transportation Planning

A number of regional, long-range transportation plans have been completed that contain recommendations and strategies important to the future of Washington County. Long range transportation planning is important because it focuses on current and future transportation needs which greatly impact other factors in the community; economic development, safety, public mobility, and future land use. Long range transportation considers population projection and travel demand and often requires a regional approach through cooperation with other localities and state partners.

Long range transportation plans critical to the future of transportation infrastructure of Washington County are the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan, VTrans, the Virginia Surface Transportation Plan, and the Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan.

2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) on June 2, 2011. This plan serves as a strategy for the regional transportation network and is a component of the VTrans2035, the Commonwealth's multi-modal long range plan. The plan is updated every five years and VTrans 2040 is in development as of 2014.

Regional transportation plans serve as the building blocks for the State Highway Plan and are developed in cooperation with planning districts commissions throughout the Commonwealth. The Rural Long Range Transportation Plan includes analysis of those areas of the county outside of the boundaries of the Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization. The document was developed as a vision plan to address future needs of the transportation system. Funding is not available or identified for each project.

Major Washington County objectives identified in this plan include:

- Improvements to I-81 interchanges at Exits 7, 14, 17 and 19.
- Continued improvements to U.S. Route 58.
- Improvements to increase utilization of rail for industrial access and public transportation.
- Creation of intermodal exchange locations for rail truck movement of goods.

The plan identified roadway system deficiencies in each county of the MRPDC. Washington County recommendations were determined by deficiencies and focus on infrastructure improvement needs, safety and travel demand. A map and description of each recommended project are included as a part of the Comprehensive Plan on the following three pages.

Common Rural Long Range Plan Goals

- GOAL 1.** Enhance the connectivity of the existing transportation network within and between regions across all modes for both people and freight.
- GOAL 2.** Provide a safe and secure transportation system.
- GOAL 3.** Support and improve the economic vitality of the individual regions by providing access to economic opportunities, such as industrial access or recreational travel and tourism, as well as enhancing intermodal connectivity.
- GOAL 4.** Ensure continued quality of life during project development and implementation by considering natural historic, and community environments, including special populations.
- GOAL 5.** Preserve the existing transportation network and promote efficient system management in order to promote access and mobility for both people and freight.
- GOAL 6.** Encourage land use and transportation coordination, including but not limited to, development of procedures or mechanisms to incorporate all modes, while engaging the private sector.

- 1 **US 19 (R Portenfield Hwy.)/VA 633 (Black Hollow Rd.)**
Long-term improve sight distance by correcting vertical alignment.
- 2 **US 19 (R Portenfield Hwy.)/VA 700 (Rich Valley Rd.)**
Long-term lengthen eastbound right turn bay and apply access management.
- 3 **VA 700/VA 625 (Jasper Creek Rd.)**
Long-term reconstruct intersection to design standards.
- 4 **VA 700/VA 625 (Pine Hill Rd.)**
Long-term reconstruct intersection to design standards.
- 5 **US 11/Empire Rd.**
Mid-term widen north leg to provide right turn lane and add signal.
- 6 **US 11/-1-81 Exit 19 Southbound Off-ramp**
Mid-term widen north leg to provide right turn lane and add signal; Long-term improve interchange (project in environmental stage).
- 7 **US 11/US 58 (Lee Hwy.) from 1-81 Northbound Ramp to US 11 (Lee Hwy.)/US 58 (Jebb Stuart Hwy.)**
Long-term monitor roadway for additional improvements.
- 8 **1-81/Exit 19 Northbound Off Ramp (US 11/US 58)**
Long-term improve interchange (project in environmental stage).
- 9 **US 19 (R Portenfield Hwy.)/VA 1502**
Deficiency with low priority; Continue to monitor for potential improvements.
- 10 **US 11 (Lee Hwy.)/US 58**
Deficiency with low priority; Continue to monitor for potential improvements.
- 11 **US 11 (Lee Hwy.)/VA 80/VA 803**
Short-term maintenance and improve signage; Mid-term add signs and fishers to warn of turning vehicles; Long-term apply access management.

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2035 Rural Transportation Plan Recommendations (Cont'd.)

Recommendations (continued)

- 28 VA 611 from I-81 Ramps to US 11 (Lee Hwy.)**
Long-term widen to urban four-lane roadway with median.
- 29 VA 611 (Providence Rd.) from US 11 (Lee Hwy.) to VA 645 S. (Wyndale Rd.)**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 30 VA 689 (Brumbly Gap Rd.) from US 19 (R Porterfield Memorial Hwy.) to VA 687**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 31 VA 80 (Hayers Gap Rd.) from VA 689 to Russell Co. Line**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 32 VA 80 (Hayers Gap Rd.) from VA 830 to VA 703 S.**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 33 VA 609 (Hillman Hwy.) from N. ECL of Abingdon to VA 879**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 34 VA 740 (Old Saltworks Rd.) from NCL of Abingdon to VA 699**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 35 VA 677 (Watauga Rd.) from VA 75 (Green Spring Rd.) to US 58 (Jeb Stuart Hwy.)**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 36 VA 711 from VA 710 to VA 712**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (10-foot lanes).
- 37 VA 833 from VA 711 to US 58 (Jeb Stuart Hwy.)**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (10-foot lanes).
- 38 VA 91 (Monroe Rd.) from VA 762 to VA 734**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 39 VA 91 (Monroe Rd.) from VA 734 to VA 1320 S.**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 40 VA 604 (Bishop Rd.) from VA 605 N. to VA 762**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 41 VA 737 from US 11 (Lee Hwy.) to VA 609 (Hillman Hwy.)**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 42 VA 751 (Fleef Rd.) from VA 609 to US 11 (Lee Hwy.)**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).
- 43 VA 750 (Old Mill Rd.) from NCL of Glade Spring to VA 751 N.**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
- 44 I-81/Exit 29 interchange (VA 91)**
Short-term construct turn lanes on off-ramps.
- 45 VA 614/VA 621 (Barnrock Rd.) from VA 802 to VA 622**
Short-term reconstruct to urban two-lane standards.
- 46 VA 691 (Clinch Mountain) from VA 80 to end of State Maintenance (1.0 Mi.)**
Short-term pave roadway.
- 47 VA 725 (Taylors Valley) from VA 91/725 to VA 726**
Short-term reconstruct to urban two-lane standards.
- 48 US 58/VA 722 (Osceola Rd./Blue Spring Rd.)**
Short-term improve pavement markings and signage and assess need for turn lanes; Mid-term install turn lanes if warranted.
- 49 I-81 US 11 and 58**
Short-term replace southbound bridge; Long-term improve interchange (project in environmental stage).
- 50 VA 611/VA 647**
Short-term improve intersection as per Six Year Improvement Program.
- 51 VA 611 Bridge over Tumbling Creek**
Short-term replace southbound bridge.
- 52 VA 616 (Walnut Groove) W. of VA 625**
Short-term replace bridge.
- 53 VA 670 near VA 664**
Short-term replace bridge.
- 54 VA 747 Bridge over Tumbling Creek**
Short-term replace bridge.
- 55 VA 11 (Main St.) from VA 140 (Jonesboro Rd.) to VA 19 (Porterfield Rd.)**
Mid-term improve drainage; Long-term apply access management, close median breaks, and monitor traffic flow after improvements. (Abingdon)
- 56 VA 75 (Cummings St.) from Country Club Drive to SCL**
Long-term widen roadway to four-lane rural standards and install signal at Vance Mill Rd. (Abingdon)
- 57 VA 75 (Cummings St.) from Washington Crossing (Magic Mart Entrance) to Bradley St.**
Long-term apply access management, install signal at Green Springs Rd., and add southbound right turn bay and second eastbound turn lane at Cook St. (Abingdon)
- 58 VA 75 (Cummings St.) from Bradley St. to Valley St.**
Short-term add advance warning signs of railroad bridge; Long-term improve railroad bridge and apply access management. (Abingdon)
- 59 US 11 (Main St.) from Hillman Hwy. to I-81 Southbound Ramps (Exit 19)/Eastern City Limits of Abingdon**
Long-term widen roadway to four-lane standards with appropriate turn lanes and perform signalization study at Old Eleven Drive. (Abingdon)
- 60 I-81/Exit 14**
Short-term replace bridge; Long-term reconstruct interchange (project in environmental stage). (Abingdon)
- 61 I-81/Exit 17**
Long-term reconstruct interchange (project in environmental stage). (Abingdon)
- 62 Proposed VA 140 Extension (Jonesboro Rd.) from Intersection of US 11 and Jonesboro Rd to N. City Limits of Abingdon, near VA 848 (Brianwood Ln.)**
Long-term construct proposed VA 140 Extension. (Abingdon)
- 63 VA 140 (Jonesboro Rd.) from I-81 to US 11 (Main St.)**
Long-term monitor traffic flow after improvements on I-81 interchange completed (project in environmental stage). (Abingdon)
- 64 Valley St. from US 58 Alternate (Russell Rd.) to Whites Mill Rd.**
Deficiency with low priority; Continue to monitor for potential improvements. (Abingdon)
- 65 US 11 (Main St.) from Boone St. to Hillman Hwy.**
Deficiency with low priority; Continue to monitor for potential improvements. (Abingdon)
- 66 I-81 from VA 140 to WCL of Abingdon**
Long-term reconstruct to rural six-lane roadway with median (project in environmental stage). (Abingdon)
- 67 Whites Mill Rd. from Valley St. to Old NCL of Abingdon**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders). (Abingdon)
- 68 US 11 (Main St.)/Alt US 58 (Cummings St.)**
Short-term restripe westbound approach to accommodate a second left turn lane; Mid-term widen northbound approach to provide separate left turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 69 Alt US 58 (Porterfield Hwy.)/US 19 (Porterfield Hwy.)**
Short-term add signage at intersection to prohibit southbound left turns onto US 58 Alternate during peak periods. (Abingdon)
- 70 VA 140 (Jonesboro Rd.)/US 11 (Main St.)**
Short-term provide second northbound right turn lane and modify signal operations as needed. (Abingdon)



2035 Rural Transportation Plan Recommendations (Cont'd.)

Recommendations (continued)

- 71 Valley St./Court St.**
Short-term restripe roadway to add an eastbound left turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 72 US 11 (Main St.)/Old Reedy Creek Rd.**
Mid-term prohibit northbound left turn movement and sign Colonial Rd. to divert all left turning traffic to Main St./Colonial Rd. intersection. (Abingdon)
- 73 US 11 (Main St.)/Colonial Rd.**
Mid-term signalize intersection. (Abingdon)
- 74 VA 75 (Cummings St.)/Fairway Dr.**
Mid-term signalize intersection. (Abingdon)
- 75 US 11 (Main St.)/Pecan St.**
Long-term widen northbound approach to provide a separate left turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 76 ALT US 58 (Cummings St.) Kroger Entrance**
Long-term signalize intersection. (Abingdon)
- 77 Valley St./White's Mill Rd.**
Long-term signalize intersection. (Abingdon)
- 78 ALT US 58 (Cummings St.)/Cook St.**
Long-term widen southbound approach to provide a separate right turn lane and widen northbound approach to provide a second left turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 79 US 11 (Main St.)/Tanner St.**
Long-term widen southbound approach to provide a separate right turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 80 US 11 (Main St.)/Deadmore St.**
Long-term widen southbound approach to provide a separate short right turn lane. (Abingdon)
- 81 VA 75 (Cummings St.) from I-81 interchange to Country Club Dr.**
Long-term widen to four lanes and realign intersections with Commerce St. and Country Club Rd. into a single signalized intersection. (Abingdon)
- 82 US 11 (Main St.) from Alt US 58 (Russell Rd.) to Boone St.**
Short-term improve pavement markings, signage, and pedestrian crosswalks. (Abingdon)
- Nicholas St. from Morgan St. to US 11 (Main St.)**
Long-term reconstruct existing roadway and extend to Main St. at two-lane urban standards. (Abingdon)
- 94 S. Trigg St. from Nicholas St. to SCL**
Long-term reconstruct to two-lane urban standards. (Abingdon)
- 95 Stone Mill Rd. from US 11 (Main St.) to Colonial Rd.**
Long-term extend roadway to Main St. at two-lane urban standards, including new bridge over Norfolk Southern Railroad. (Abingdon)
- 96 Stone Mill Rd. from Colonial Rd. to SCL**
Long-term reconstruct to two-lane urban standards. (Abingdon)
- 97 Park St. from Tanner St. to Partington Place**
Long-term reconstruct to two-lane urban standards. (Abingdon)
- 98 Bonnycastle Drive extension from existing terminus to VA 647**
Long-term extend roadway to VA 647 at two-lane urban standards. (Abingdon)
- 99 I-81 from WCL of Abingdon to ECL of Abingdon**
Long-term reconstruct roadway (project in environmental stage). (Abingdon)
- 100 US 58 (Jeb Stuart Hwy.) from VA 1201 to VA 1202**
Long-term widen to rural four-lane roadway with median. (Damascus)
- 101 US 58 (Jeb Stuart Hwy.) from VA 1202 to VA 91 (Mountain City Rd.)**
Long-term conduct study for Damascus Bypass. (Damascus)
- 102 VA 1212 Bridge over Laurel Creek**
Short-term replace bridge. (Damascus)
- 103 VA 91 from I-81 Southbound On/Off Ramps to VA 752**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders). (Glade Spring)
- 104 VA 750 (Old Mill Rd.) from VA 609 to NCL of Glade Spring**
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders). (Glade Spring)
- 105 VA 91 (Main St.) from WCL to Smyth/Washington Co. Line**
Short-term reconstruct roadway to two-lane urban standards. (Saltville)

VTrans 2035 and Virginia's 2035 State Highway Plan

VTrans is the statewide long-range, multimodal policy plan that lays out transportation goals in the Commonwealth. The Code of Virginia and federal regulations require the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to update the plan every five years, with the next update due in 2015. The plan sets forth the transportation vision, needs, priorities and strategies for a 25 year planning horizon and involves Virginia's five statewide transportation agencies; the Department of Aviation, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Virginia Port Authority and Department of Transportation.

The 2035 Virginia Surface Transportation Plan (VSTP) builds upon VTrans by proposing solutions and recommendations based on the policy framework established by VTrans. Five regions were established for the purpose of organizing the recommendations included in the plan. Washington County is included in the "Valley and Ridge" region. Strategies for this region include:

- Construction of I-73
- Provide Safety Improvements
- Enhance Demand Response Transit
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Expand Freight Rail Service
- Increase Park and Ride Capacity
- Increase and Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The 2035 VSTP acknowledges slow population growth in the Mount Rogers District Planning Commission and suggests public transportation recommendations that focus on providing services to rural populations, especially older adults, persons with disability and persons with lower incomes. TDM strategies in the plan include promoting carpool/vanpool, promoting tele-working, integrating TDM into the land development process and encouraging mixed-use.

Washington County highway recommendations, incorporated in the 2035 VSTP, include:

- **INTERSTATE 81** - Interchange improvements at Exit 14, 17, and 19 in Washington County. Improvements at Exit 7 in the City of Bristol including added capacity on ramps and cross streets.
- **JEB STUART HIGHWAY** - Widening/Improvement along Route 58 to Route 712 North (Zion Church Road) and on to Route 1202 (South Beaver Dam Avenue)
- **ROUTE 140 EXTENSION** – New Route 140 extension from the north corporate limit of Abingdon to Route 19 (Porterfield Highway).

The 2035 VSTP Update was completed in April 2013. The purpose of the update was to identify and focus on key needs; areas where applying limited resources will have the greatest impact. The highway recommendations included in the update are listed on the following page.

Chapter 729 - Local/State Plan and Program Consistency

Chapter 729 of the 2012 Acts of Assembly changed the required transportation elements that must be included in a locality's comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans must be consistent with VTrans, the statewide transportation plan, they must reflect any significant new, improved or relocated projects in the Six-Year Improvement Program and route locations selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Localities must provide VDOT a copy of the draft plan at least 90 days prior to adoption of the plan a copy of the final plan once complete.

2035 VSTP Update - Highway Recommendations - Washington County

Jurisdiction	Rte #	Facility Name	From	To	Length (Miles)	Improvement Type	Estimated Cost (1,000)	Description
Washington	11	Lee Highway	North Corporate Limits Bristol	Route I-81 (Exit 10)	2.42	Widening	\$55,000	Widen Route 11 (Lee Highway) to a found-lane divide typical for added capacity
Town of Abingdon	11	Lee Highway	Intersection of 11 (West Main Street) and Route 140 (Old Jonesboro Rd)	---	---	Intersection Improvement	\$12,000	Realignment of the intersection to improve capacity.
Town of Abingdon	11	Lee Highway	Intersection of 11 (Main Street) and US 19	---	---	Intersection Improvement	\$9,000	Realignment of the intersection to improve capacity.
Abingdon-Washington	81	I-81	Exit 17 - Route 75 (Cummings Street)	---	---	Interchange Improvement	\$20,000	Interchange improvement at Exit 17 Cummings Street (Route 75)
Smyth-Washington	81	I-81	Exit 35 - Route 107 (Whitetop Road)	--	--	Interchange Improvement	\$25,000	Interchange improvement at Exit 35 Whitetop R
Washington	81	I-81	Exit 19 - Route 11 (East Main Street)	---	---	Interchange Improvement	\$54,000	Interchange improvement at Exit 19 (Route 11)

Note: Costs represent planning estimates only. Actual construction costs are determined in the project development costs

Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035

As a member of the Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Washington County participates in the development of a regional, long range transportation plan with MPO partners. The Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035 is intended to create a plan of action to maintain a functional transportation plan for the Bristol urban area. For transportation projects to be eligible for federal funding, they must first appear in the long-range transportation plan.

Washington County projects included in this plan are listed as follows. A chart including estimated project cost and potential funding sources is provided in the full text of the Bristol Urban Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is important to note that the projects included are collected from a variety of sources and address different needs such as roadways with inadequate volume/capacity ratios, local governmental visions of roadway networks, consultant analysis of the interaction of land use and transportation to safety and maintenance issues. Some of these projects are “carry-overs” from previous long-range plans.

Virginia Roadway Projects: 2010-2020

PROJECT V1-1: Lee Highway, Alexis Drive to Old Dominion Road; Clear Creek Road/Old Airport Road, north and south of Lee Highway and Interstate 81 (Bristol/Washington County). This project would take the series of isolated traffic signals along Lee Highway (US 11-19) from Alexis Drive in Bristol to Ole Dominion Road in Washington County, and the traffic signals at Clear Creek Road and the shopping center entrance as well as the two traffic signals at Old Airport Road and the Exit 7 interchange, and connect them into a single coordinated traffic signal system. As of December 2010, there are currently ten traffic signals in this area in Bristol and three in Washington County.

PROJECT V1-3: Providence Road Relocation (Route 611) (Washington County). Relocation of a portion of Providence Road from Lee Highway to a point south of Repass Street is proposed in order to make room for an extension of a runway at Virginia Highlands Airport, which is located immediately east of Providence Road. This relocation would remove the portion connecting to Lee Highway adjacent to Exit 13, and move the roadway to connect to Lee Highway at Westinghouse Road. Design work for the relocation of Providence Road is underway as of 2014.

PROJECT V1-4: Spring Creek Road (Route 611) from Lee Highway (US 11-19) to Old Jonesboro Road (Route 647) (Washington County). This project would replace the existing two-lane facility with its weight-posted narrow bridge over Spring Creek and replace it with a new two-lane facility with an improved alignment, widening shoulders and a new bridge.

Virginia Roadway Projects: 2021-2035

PROJECT V2-1: Lee Highway, Kerin Drive to North Corporate Limits (US 11-19, Bristol/Washington County). This project would extend the multi-lane portions of Lee Highway from near Kerin Drive to the northern corporate limits north of Clear Creek Road/Old Airport Road. This project involves widening of this roadway to four through lanes with additional lanes at intersections, as appropriate; some short sections may have to be accommodated with a center two-way left-turn lane cross-section. This project could also include an extension of Bonham Road and/or Travelite Drive northward (while remaining south of the railroad tracks) to connect to the large shopping center area east of the Walnut Hill Cemetery near its northern edge.

Bridge work (replacement and/or widening) integral to this project include the Lee Highway bridge over Goose Creek and the Bonham Road bridge over Beaver Creek that is immediately adjacent to Lee Highway; the latter bridge should be widened to at least six lanes for proper intersectional operation. For project phasing, a logical break point is the existing four-lane divided short section beneath the Norfolk Southern Railway overpass east of Alexis Drive.

Virginia Projects: Illustrative

PROJECT VIL-4: Kings Mill Pike/Old Jonesboro Road (Route 647), Bristol Corporate Limits to cordon line east (Washington County). This project involves widening the roadway (while remaining a two-lane facility) with horizontal and vertical curve modifications, bridge upgrades, and left-turn lane installations at Sinking Springs Road (Route 648), Junction Drive (Route 649), High Point Road (Route 649), Mock Knob Road (Route 666), Halls Bottom Road (Route 808), and Spring Creek Road (Route 611). For multiple phases, any of these proposed left-turn lane installation locations could serve as a break point.

Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Bristol Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization was established in 1982 and is responsible for carrying out the metropolitan planning process for implementing a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. The MPO planning area consists of the Bristol, Tennessee, Bristol, Virginia, as well as areas of Sullivan County, Tennessee and Washington County, Virginia. The MPO area is defined by the Bristol TN/VA urbanized area (designated by the 2000 U.S. Census). The 2010 Census designation of urbanized areas will require the MPO planning boundary to be expanded to include additional areas of Washington County and the Town of Abingdon. The boundary adjustment must be approved by state and local agencies.

Virginia Roadway Projects: Regional

PROJECT VR-1: Gate City Highway (US 58/US 421) Modifications, western cordon line to Exit 1 (Washington County). The replacement of the existing US 58 roadway between Weber City (in Scott County, Virginia, in the Kingsport study area) and Exit 1 with a multi-lane facility is proposed as part of the larger statewide initiative to provide a multi-lane continuous US 58 facility from Cumberland Gap to the Atlantic Ocean. The portion in the Bristol study area would extend from the Scott County line to the Miller Hill Road intersection immediately north of the recently reconstructed Exit 1 interchange of Interstate 81. A major challenge for this new roadway design is the crossing of Walker Mountain between the Reedy Creek Road (Route 633) and Rich Valley Road (Route 700) intersections. Logical break points for phasing the work would be near the two Reedy Creek Road intersections (Route 633) and at Rich Valley Road (Route 700).

PROJECT VR-2: Interstate 81 Exit 11 and Connector to the Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park (Washington County). The construction of a new interchange (Exit 11) of Interstate 81 and a new four-lane connector roadway between it and the Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park is proposed. This could also serve in the future as the western leg of a proposed Abingdon bypass between Interstate 81 and Porterfield Highway heading towards Russell County. Such a roadway would include an intersection, perhaps signalized, at Lee Highway (US 11-19) just north of Interstate 81. This project is unlikely to be constructed due to current design of Exit 10 and 13.

PROJECT VR-3: Interstate 81 Modifications from LM 8.3± to cordon line east (Washington County). This project would involve modifications to Interstate 81 from the northern end of the current six-lane section at LM 8.3± to the eastern cordon line just east of Exit 13 and beyond in accordance with findings from studies undertaken and decisions made by the legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PROJECT VR-4: Lee Highway, Bristol North Corporate Limits to Majestic Drive (F-310) (US 11-19) (Washington County). This project includes widening of Lee Highway from the Bristol corporate limits north of the Clear Creek Road/Old Airport Road intersection to Majestic Drive in Washington County to a four-lane divided highway cross-section, with additional lanes as required at selected intersections and bicycle facilities.

PROJECT VR-5: Lee Highway (US 11-19), Majestic Drive (F-310) to cordon line east (Washington County). This project would continue the widening of Lee Highway to a four-lane cross-section with turn lanes at intersections and bicycle facilities from Majestic Drive (the access roadway at Exit 10) to the eastern cordon line just east of Spring Creek Road (Route 611, the access roadway to Exit 13). Depending on the timing of the projects, design of this project should also accommodate the future Exit 11 project described above. This project is unlikely to be constructed.

Tennessee-Virginia Roadway Projects: Regional

PROJECT SR-1: "Bristol Beltway" (Sullivan County/Washington County) Since the 1960s, various alignments have been proposed for extending Tennessee State Route 394, popularly known as the "Bristol Beltway," eastward into Virginia to intersect with Interstate 81 northeast of Exit 7. As time goes on and the urbanized area continues to expand, proposed alignments have moved further and further from the central city area. This plan identifies that goal with three projects that provide improvements to existing roadways: The Washington County portion of the project consists of the widening of Green Spring Road in Washington County from the Virginia/Tennessee state line to the northern cordon line of the study area near the Spring Creek bridge (about one mile north of the state line); the route would ultimately extend to Interstate 81, Exit 17. Though identified in the plan, this project has minimal support and is unlikely to be realized.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four-year funding program that identifies how federal transportation funds are expended. The TIP is prepared by the MPO. It is financially constrained and must be consistent with Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035, as well as the transportation plans of local governments. Transportation projects originate with the development of the long-range transportation plan and the TIP serves as a management tool used to complete the objectives of the long-range plan.

The Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2014-2017 includes one project for Washington County. This project is for the reconstruction of Lee Highway from Mr. Vernon Drive to Interstate Exit 10 (Route F-310). The reconstruction will result in a four lane highway with raised median and shared use path. The project cost for Phase I of the project is \$31 million and Phase II is \$28 million. The anticipated completion date is 2020 but that is subject to change based on funding

Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035 Goals

GOAL 1. SYSTEM EFFICIENCY AND MAINTENANCE

Develop and maintain a transportation system to move people and goods at the most effective level of efficiency.

GOAL 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Provide transportation resources to support economic growth and strengthen the local economy.

GOAL 3. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Develop a transportation system to preserve and enhance the natural environment and improve quality of life.

GOAL 4. MOBILITY

Develop a transportation system that provides an opportunity for a choice of mode for the movement of people and goods.

GOAL 5. USER SAFETY AND SECURITY

Develop a transportation system for the movement of people and goods, which is safe and provides security for users of any mode.

Six-Year Improvement Program

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is a critical document that outlines planned spending for transportation projects proposed for preliminary engineering or construction. The SYIP is updated annually and is the means by which the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meets its statutory obligation to allocate funds to interstate, primary, secondary and urban highway systems, public transit, ports and airports and other programs for the immediate fiscal year. The SYIP also identifies planned program funding for the succeeding five fiscal years. The CTB allocates funds for the first fiscal year of the SYIP but the remaining five years are estimates of future allocations. The CTB updates the SYIP each year as revenue estimates are updated, priorities are revised, project schedules and costs change, and study results are determined.

Development of the SYIP begins in the fall and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) hosts a series of meetings seeking public comment with various other multi-modal transportation agencies. A draft SYIP is presented to the CTB and made available for public comment each spring. SYIP funds are allocated for the following types of projects:

- Fund deficits on current project phases.
- Redirect inactive balances on projects.
- Maximize use of federal funds to meet federal strategy.
- Support development of public-private partnerships.
- Fund project phases under way, as well as project phases that start in the current federal fiscal year.
- Allocate funds consistent with planned obligations and expenditures.
- Fund deficient bridges and paving projects.
- Increase funding for preliminary engineering.
- Fund Appalachian Development Highway System planned projects with an average of 4% of total federal maintenance and construction funds over the next 6 years.
- Fund deficient bridges with an average of 13% of total federal maintenance and construction funds over the six years.

The Six-Year Improvement Program database is available on VDOT's website. The project list for Washington County can be exported in both draft and final format from the database. The database history contains project lists for the past ten years.

Secondary Six-Year Plan

The Code of Virginia requires the development of separate programs for the secondary system state highways in each county known as the Secondary Six-Year Plan. This plan is administered differently from the SYIP. Each county oversees their own secondary roads plan which is approved each year by the Board of Supervisors. Decisions on which projects are included are based on traffic counts, immediate safety need, and projects that provide the most benefit for dollars spent. Funding allocations for each locality is often insufficient to meet the needs of the locality. Even after a project is approved for the Secondary Six-Year Plan, the project might be delayed for numerous reasons, including: changes in local government priorities and needs, funding availability, escalating land costs and environmental concerns. Changes to both the SYIP and Secondary Six-Year Plan may occur each year.

Washington County projects included in the Secondary Six-Year Improvement Plan are listed in database provided on VDOT's website.

House Bill 2

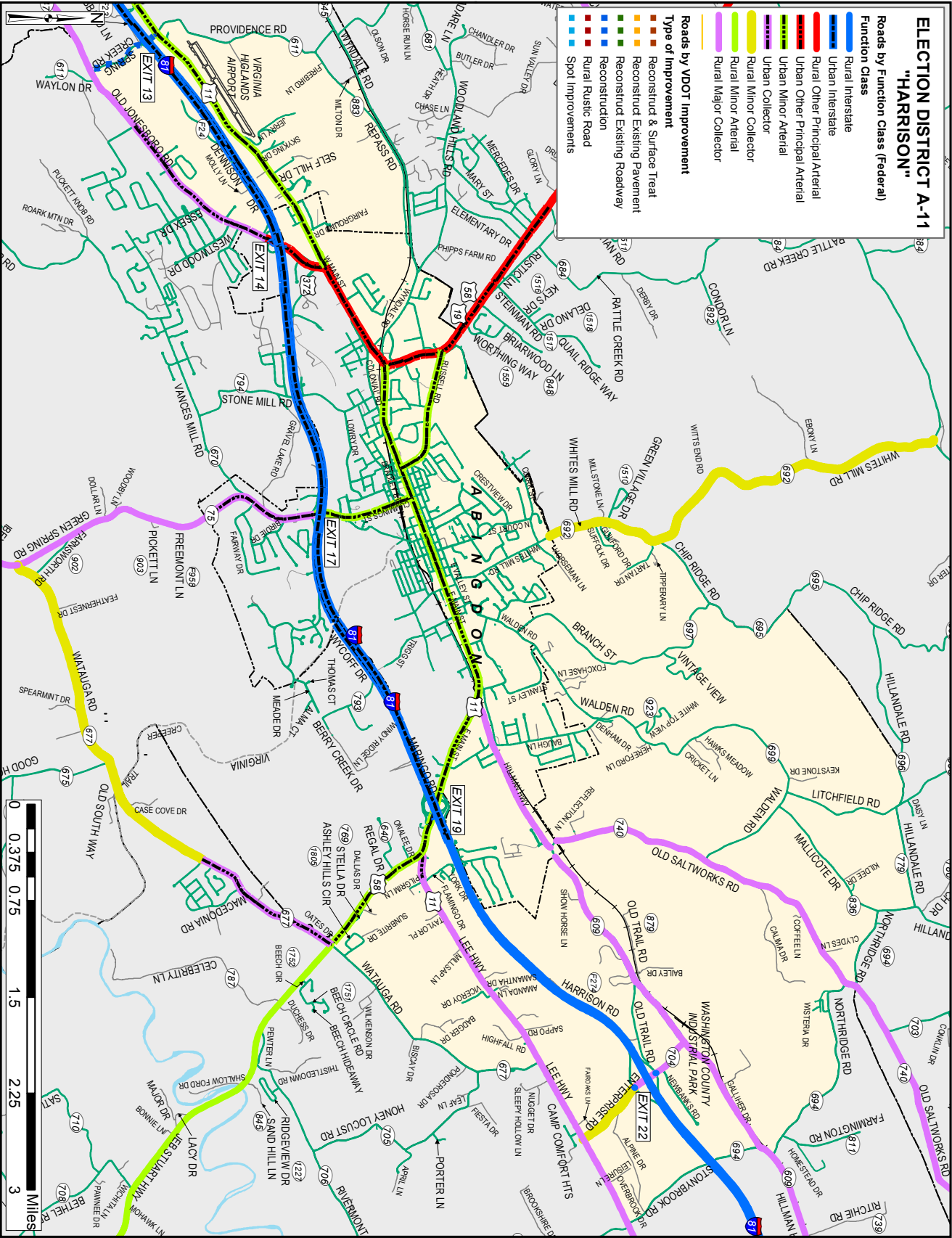
House Bill 2, legislation passed unanimously by the Virginia House of Delegates in 2014, represents a reform in how the Commonwealth prioritizes and spends transportation dollars. The bill mandates a prioritization process for projects funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Prioritization weigh factors will be based on congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality and be applied within each highway construction district.

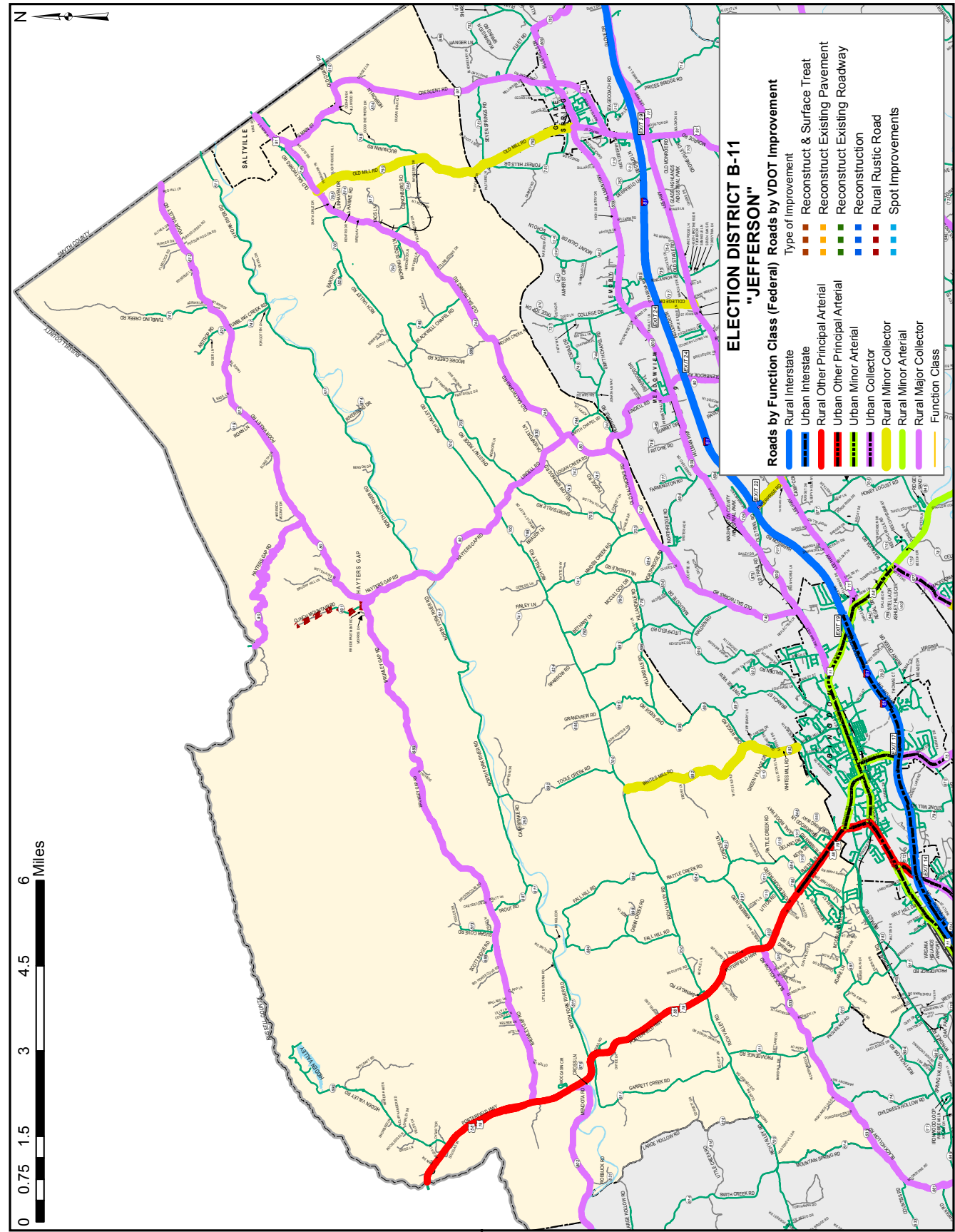
The Bill has implications for the Six-Year Improvement Program. Projects submitted by localities will be sreened to determine whether they meet a need identified in VTrans 2040. If they do, the project is then evaluated and scored using the prioritization process. Projects planned for Fiscal Year 2017 and later will be reevaluated through the prioritization process.

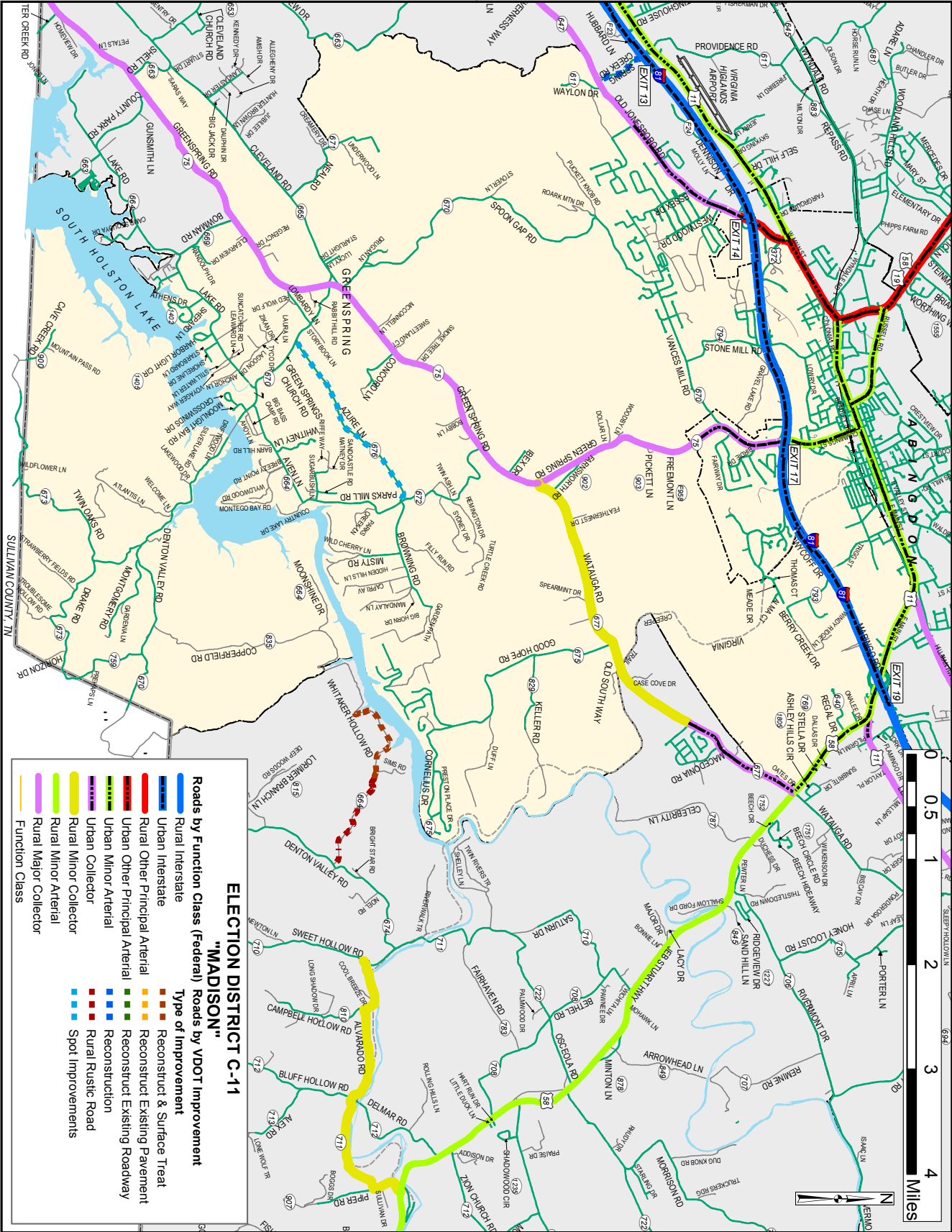
Future Road Improvements

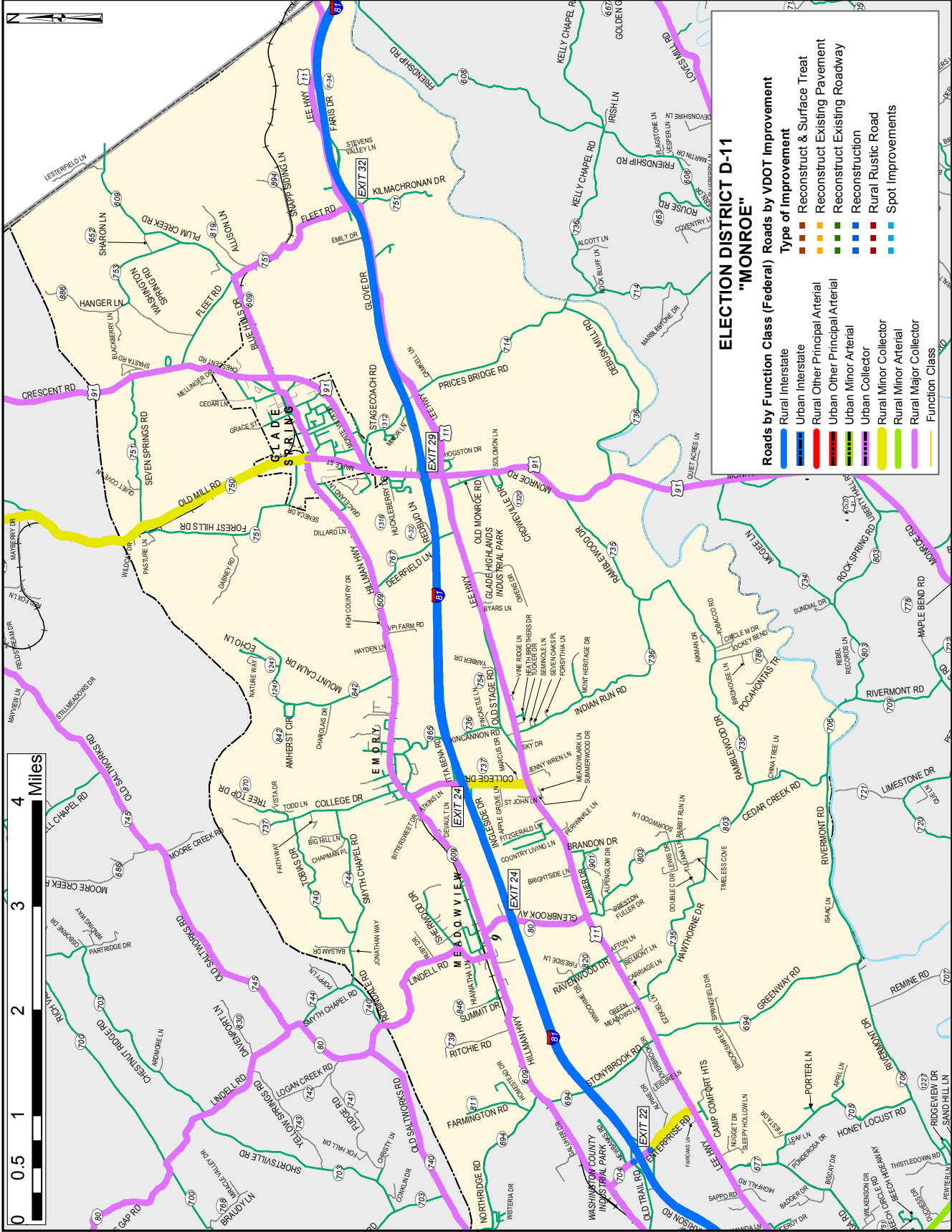
The maps on the following pages show county roads by functional classification and illustrate types of road improvements needed. These improvements are likely be programmed through the Slx-Year Improvement Plan. A map for each election district is included.

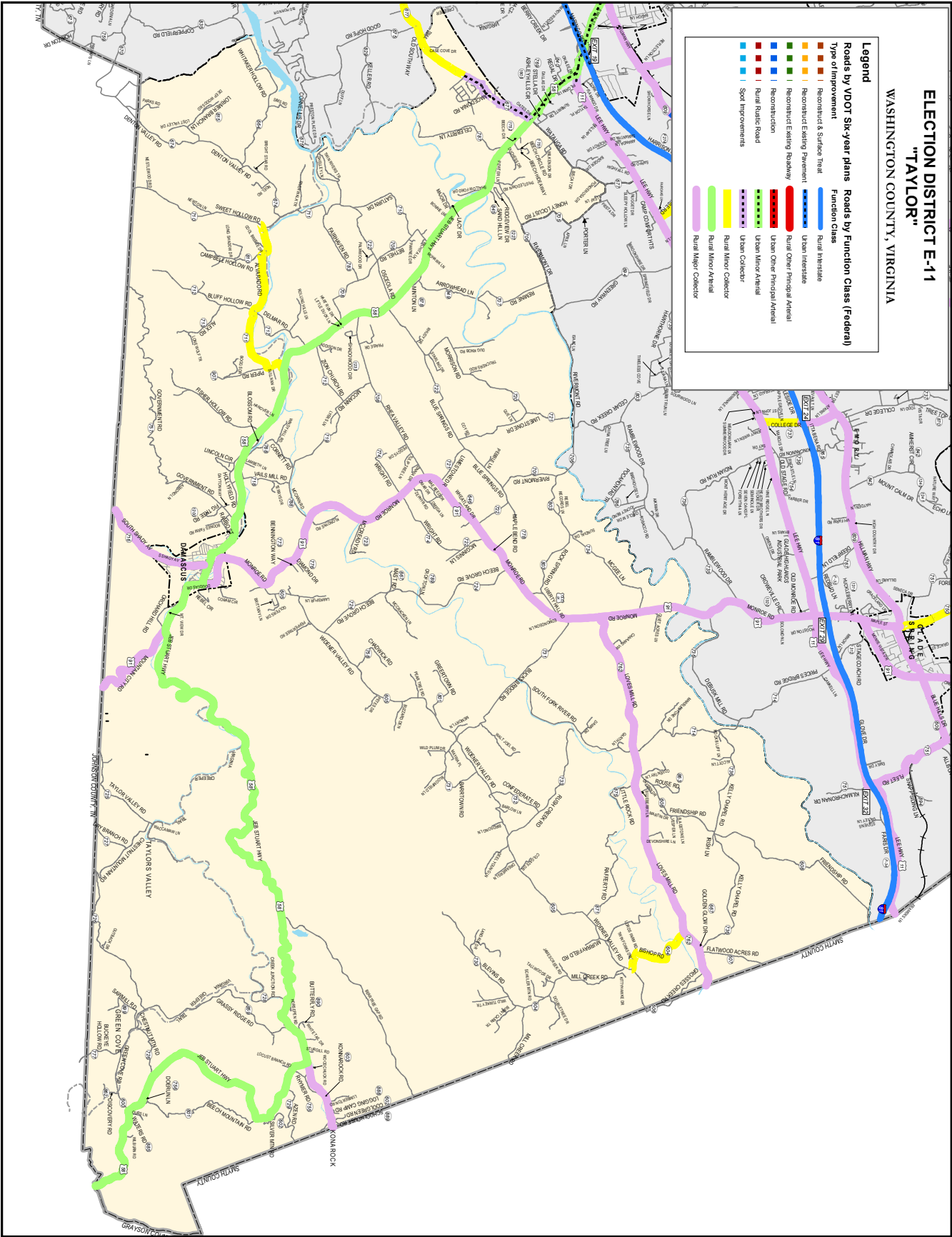
- Election District A-11: Harrison District
- Election District B-11: Jefferson District
- Election District C-11: Madison District
- Election District D-11: Monroe District
- Election District E-11: Taylor District
- Election District F-11: Tyler District
- Election District G-11: Wilson District

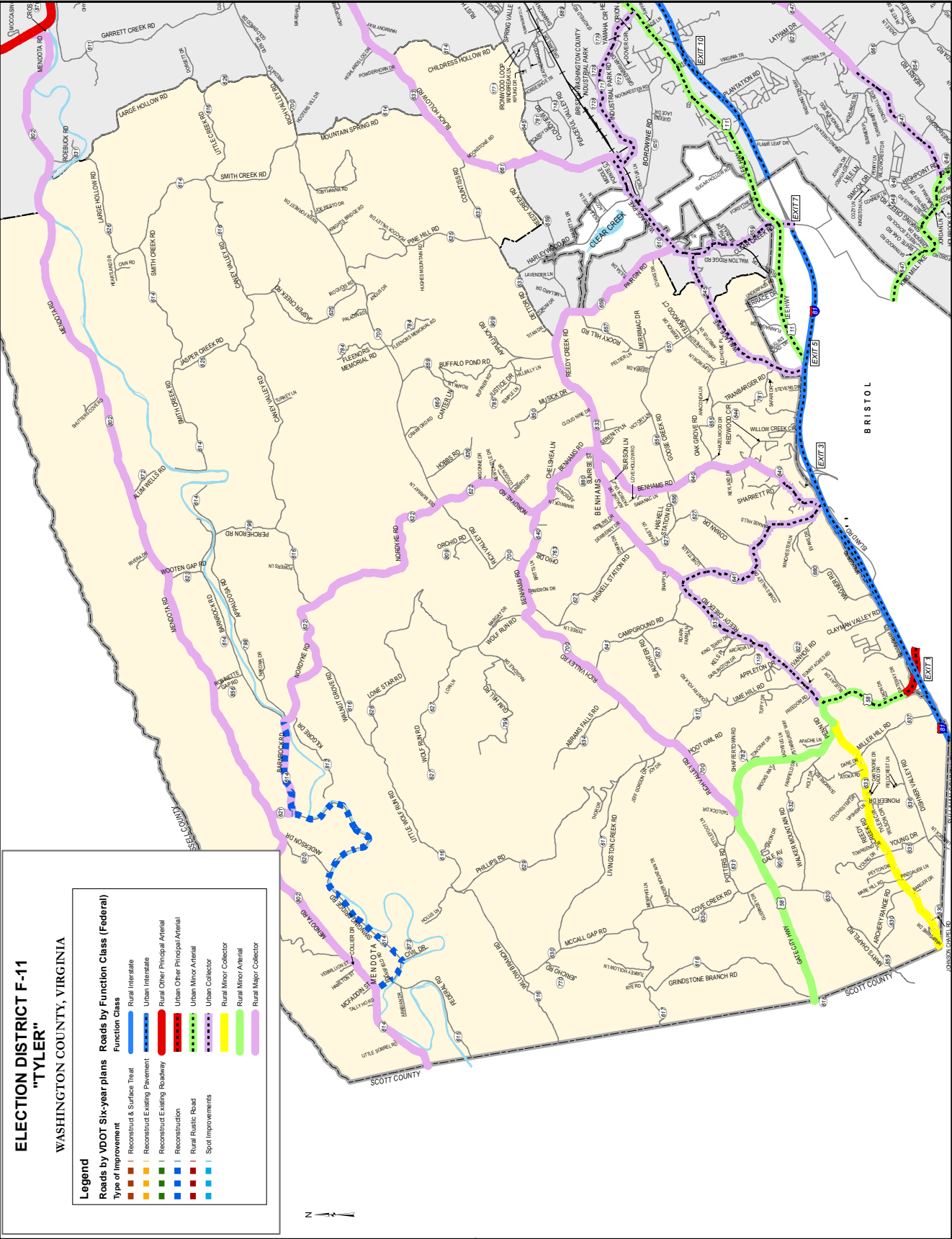


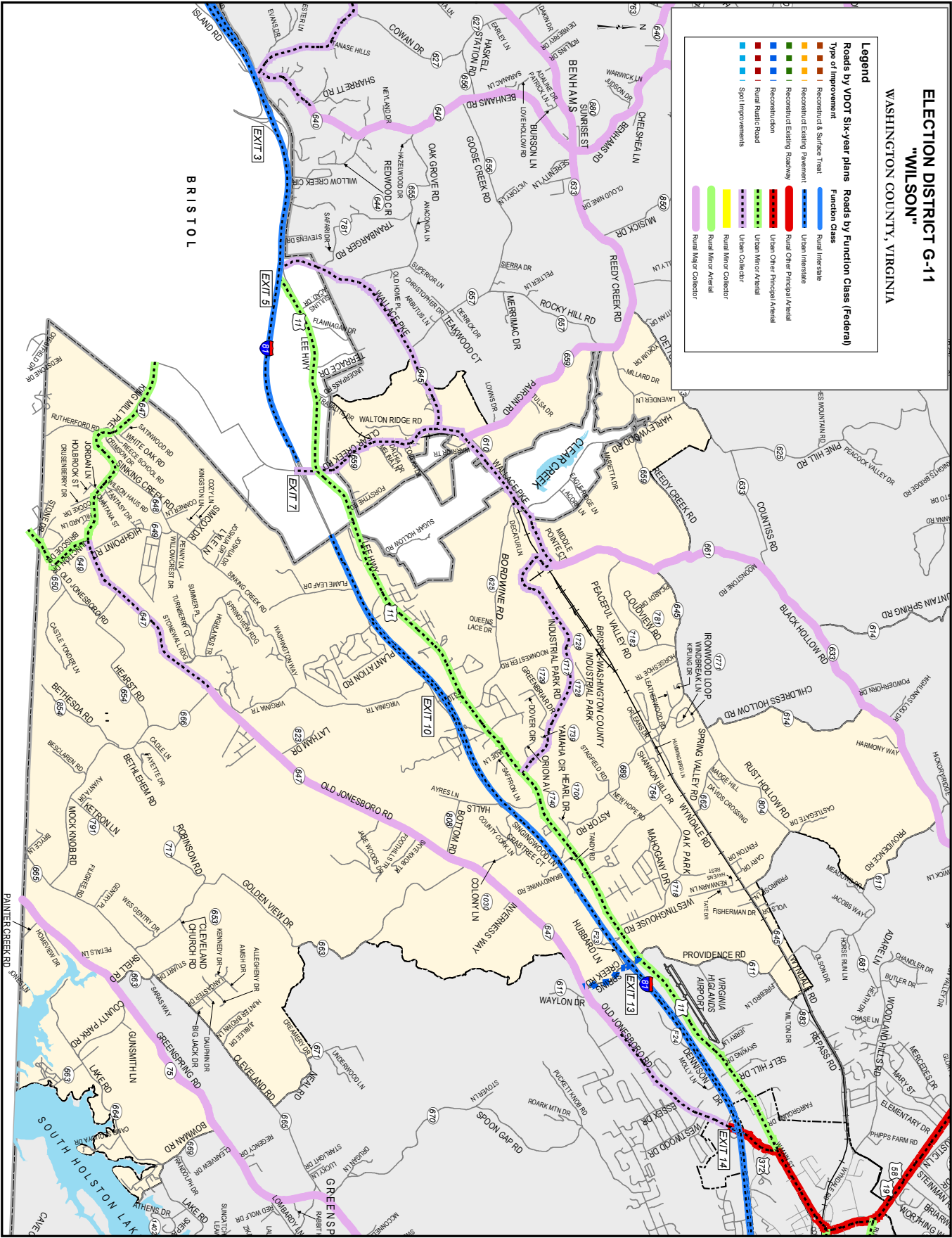












Transportation Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Vision Statement

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES: Washington County citizens enjoy superior public water and sewer service, roads, and government facilities that create an enviable quality of life.

Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: To promote a safe and efficient transportation network designed to serve residents, business, industry and the general public.

STRATEGIES

1. Support projects designed to improve safety, increase capacity and manage traffic congestion.
2. Support projects designed to increase connectivity in the transportation network.
3. Maintain safe and effective transportation options while preserving rural roads to retain the county's rural heritage and scenic beauty.
4. Work with VDOT to develop access management corridor plans along key highways where future growth is anticipated.
5. Support road construction that follows natural topography to reduce costs and water runoff concerns.
6. In coordination with land use objectives, study implementation of traditional neighborhood design elements that are typically designed around narrow street cross sections.

OBJECTIVE: To participate in long range transportation planning efforts with partner agencies to ensure the transportation needs of Washington County residents are met.

STRATEGIES

1. Participate with the Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to coordinate on regional transportation matters affecting Washington County.
2. Continue participation in the Six-Year Improvement Program and Six-Year Secondary Planning process to ensure Washington County's needs are reflected.
3. Participate in state, regional and local transportation planning efforts.
4. Support recommended projects included in this chapter from VTrans 2035, Virginia's 2035 Surface Transportation Plan, 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan and the Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan.

OBJECTIVE: To support and improve transportation projects with the objective of improving economic opportunity.

STRATEGIES

1. Support airport and rail projects designed to improve safety, efficiency, access and capacity demand for business expansion and recruitment potential.
2. Evaluate tourism opportunities for transportation related projects including designation of eligible roads for the Virginia Byways program and the extension of passenger rail service through Washington County.

OBJECTIVE: To study and support alternative modes of transportation and travel demand strategies.

STRATEGIES

1. Support travel demand management strategies such as rideshare, car pooling, park and ride lots.
2. Encourage consideration for the accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists in the planning of all road projects.
3. Study opportunities to improve public transportation options for elderly and other non-drivers with partner agencies including the Department of Rail and Public Transportation and District Three Public Transit.
4. Support the creation and extension of community bicycle and pedestrian networks.
5. Support extension of passenger rail service from Roanoke to Bristol.
6. In coordination with land use objectives, study implementation of traditional neighborhood design which typically includes alternative street cross sections.

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate county administrative procedures to ensure administrative framework is in place for efficient transportation planning.

STRATEGIES

1. Evaluate roadway bonding requirements for new subdivisions and revise Subdivision Ordinance if necessary.
2. Review and revise Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance as needed to reflect recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan
3. Consult with VDOT on all rezoning proposals that may substantially impact transportation on state highways.
4. Consult with VDOT on site plan and subdivision plat submittals in order to gain insight on potential impacts of land development on state highways and possible measures to mitigate such impacts.
5. Consider development of system for prioritizing transportation improvement projects to best utilize limited funding.
6. Consider creation of internal system to collect data regarding citizen and business transportation concerns and needs.



Land use patterns are a critical factor in determining how a community functions and grows. Through an analysis of current land use we can determine which patterns and worked well in the past and which need to change to facilitate growth in the future. By establishing a future growth and development map, the county can work toward creating a desirable pattern of development in the future. Planning for roads, utilities and other public services depends in part on effective planning for future land use. Future land use also informs the zoning which is important to residents and business owners who depend on zoning to create predictability in uses around where they live or work.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will establish a general framework for the physical development of the county. It includes an analysis of existing conditions and recommendations for where residential and commercial growth should happen and where there are important resources that should be protected. The land use plan ties the location of growth areas to the provision of utilities and public facilities discussed in other chapters of this document.

Existing Land Use

Land Use regulation is administered through various programs in the county including the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Building Code, Erosion and Sediment Control Flood Plain Management Program and Storm Water Ordinances. These programs help implement goals included in the comprehensive plan.

Zoning Ordinance

"Zoning" or "to zone" means the process of classifying land within a locality into areas and districts, such areas and districts being generally referred to as "zones." It is an important function of local government and Washington County has administered a land use zoning program since December 29, 1971. The current ordinance is included as Chapter 66 of the County Code. The ordinance is revised through amendments approved by the Board of Supervisors. The zoning map is amended through the rezoning process upon approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Subdivision Ordinance

While zoning regulations define permitted uses and ways in which land may be developed, subdivision regulations identify procedures for land divisions and contain requirements for infrastructure to serve new lots. A subdivision in Washington County is defined as the act, process, or result of the apportionment of a lot of land into three or more lots for the purpose whether immediate or future, of sale, transfer or building development, including the establishment of a condominium regime or two lots which involves the extension of any public water or public sewer service and/or that results in the creation of, or change in any street, road, easement or right-of-way. The county's first Subdivision Ordinance was adopted on December 11, 1967, and the most current update was adopted on July 1, 2005. The Subdivision Ordinance is included as Chapter 52 of the County Code. The purpose of the document is to establish standards for the division and subdivision of land and subsequent development. It also establishes standards for boundary line adjustments and the vacation of plats.

Building Code

Washington County enforces the Uniform Statewide Building Code Act, Code of Virginia, § 36-97 et seq. The provisions of the building code apply to existing and proposed buildings or structures in the county and controls all matters concerning the construction, alteration, addition, repair, removal, demolition, use, location, occupancy, maintenance and inspection of all buildings and structures, and all other functions which pertain to the installation of all plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems vital to

all buildings and structures and their service equipment as defined by the building code.

Floodplain Management

Washington County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In order to maintain eligibility of county property owners to purchase flood insurance, the County Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for the regulation of construction and other activities in designated flood hazard areas of Washington County. These designated flood hazard areas are established by FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Washington County which have been incorporated into the official county zoning map available through the county's netGIS database.

Erosion and Sediment Control

The Washington County Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance was adopted in October of 2008. The purpose of this ordinance is to prevent the degradation of properties, stream channels, waters and other natural resources of the county by establishing requirements for the control of soil erosion, sediment deposition and nonagricultural runoff and by establishing procedures by which these requirements are administered and enforced.

Storm Water Ordinance

The Washington County Stormwater Management Ordinance was adopted in 2014. A recent change to the Virginia Stormwater Management Program resulting from House Bill 1065 has mandated that all counties and cities adopt and administer a local stormwater management program. The purpose of the program is to protect water quality and to ensure that adequate measures are in place to effectively handle stormwater flows in natural or manmade channels.

Current Zoning

The zoning map shows current zoning in Washington County. As of 2014, the county utilizes 15 zoning district classifications. The Table titled “Land Use Statistics by Zoning District” provides an analysis of the number of parcels and acreage per zoning classification. The table includes the number of parcels which contain an addressed building and the number of vacant parcels available in each district.

The majority of land in the county in reference to both number of parcels and land mass is zoned A-1, Agriculture, Limited District. As of 2014 there are 11,325 parcels of land zoned A-1, Agricultural, Limited, representing 170,152 acres. The average parcel size in this district is 15.024 acres. The second largest zoning district land mass is the C-R, Conservation Recreation District, which contains much of the county's designated park land. The second largest zoning district in terms of number of parcels is in the A-2, Agricultural, General District, with 8,162 parcels.

Land Use Statistics By Zoning District						
Zoning District	Number of Parcels	Number of Addressed Buildings	Number of Vacant Parcels	Total Acreage in Zoning District	Average Parcel Size Per District	% of Land
A-1, Agricultural, Limited	11,325	6258	5,848	170,152 acres	15.024 acres	48.8%
A-2, Agricultural, General	8,162	5493	3,606	57,075 acres	6.99 acres	16.4%
Airport District	39	15	35	260 acres	6.66 acres	0.07%
B-2, Business, General	804	757	289	1,739 acres	2.16 acres	0.5%
CR, Conservation Recreation	2,437	1431	1,228	61,715 acres	25.32 acres	17.7%
HR, Highland Recreation District	659	266	421	25,978 acres	39.42 acres	7.5%
Konnarock District	303	184	148	3,573 acres	11.79 acres	1.0%
M-1, Industrial, Limited	115	63	60	1,609 acres	13.99 acres	0.5%
M-2, Industrial, General	95	46	56	1,474 acres	15.5 acres	0.4%
MHR, Residential, Manufactured Home	14	45	4	42 acres	3.0 acres	0.01%
P-1, Planned Unit Development, Limited	113	62	51	70 acres	.62 acres	0.2%
R-1, Residential, Limited	2,381	1725	688	4,446 acres	1.87 acres	1.3%
R-2, Residential, General	6,937	4839	2,307	15,082 acres	2.17 acres	4.3%
SR, Shoreland Recreation	986	700	471	4,145 acres	4.20 acres	1.2%
Village District	551	448	154	758 acres	1.38 acres	0.2%
Source: Washington County GIS, 2014						

Summary of Zoning Districts

AGRICULTURAL, LIMITED DISTRICT (A-1) - The A-1 limited agricultural district covers the portions of the county which are occupied by various open uses, such as forests, parks, farms, lakes or mountains. The A-1 limited agricultural district is established for the specific purpose of facilitating existing and future farming operations, conservation of water and other natural resources, reducing soil erosion, protecting watersheds, and reducing hazards from flood and fire. Uses not consistent with the existing character of the A-1 limited agricultural district are not permitted.

AGRICULTURAL, GENERAL DISTRICT (A-2) - Generally, the A-2 general agricultural district covers the portion of the county into which urban-type development could logically expand as the need occurs. As a general rule, it surrounds residential sections. Domestic water and sewerage facilities, police and fire protection, and other services necessary to accommodate urban-type development already exist in the district or can be economically extended as urbanization takes place. The A-2 general agricultural district is established for the specific purpose of providing for the orderly expansion of urban development into territory surrounding incorporated areas within or adjacent to the county, confining such development to such locations as can feasibly be supplied urban-type facilities, and discouraging the random scattering of residential, commercial and industrial uses into the area.

AIRPORT DISTRICT - The airport district is intended for the protection of the utility of the Virginia Highlands airport and the public investment in the facilities located at the airport now and in the future, and to further the economic development of the county through providing necessary air transportation services to the county, to prevent obstructions that have the potential for endangering the lives and property of the users of the airport and the residents of the county, reduce the size of areas available for landing, takeoff and maneuvering of aircraft, or otherwise destroy or impair the utility of the airport. It is declared that in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare that the creation or establishment of the airport district is of benefit to the county because of the enhanced potential for economic development and interstate commerce derived from the airport facility.

BUSINESS, LIMITED DISTRICT (B-1) - The primary purpose of the B-1 limited business district is to establish and protect a business district that will serve the surrounding residential districts. Traffic and parking congestion in the B-1 limited business district is to be held to a minimum to protect and preserve property values in the surrounding residential districts, and insofar as possible all neighborhood business development shall take place in a limited business district. The minimum

area of such the B-1 limited business district shall be one block and only include such activities as are necessary for the day-to-day operation of a normal household. In most instances the B-1 limited business district is not located on major traffic arteries. (Note: No property within Washington County is zoned B-1)

BUSINESS, GENERAL, DISTRICT (B-2) - Generally the B-2 general business district covers that portion of the community intended for the conduct of governmental, professional and general commercial (predominately retail) business to which the public requires direct and frequent access, but which is not generally characterized either by constant heavy trucking other than stocking and delivery of light retail goods or by any nuisance factors other than occasioned by incidental light and noise or congregation of people and passenger vehicles. Other uses of a predominately nonretail commercial character or those which may significantly contribute to nuisance factors may be permitted in the B-2 general business district by special exception on a case-by-case basis after evaluation of the relative impact of such uses or activities on the surrounding area and establishing mitigating conditions for such uses where deemed necessary.

CONSERVATION RECREATION DISTRICT (CR) - The objective of the CR conservation and recreation district is the preservation of open space for recreation and other compatible uses consistent with some of the present characteristics. In order to prevent future indiscriminate development, it is the intent of this division to promote orderly, but limited, growth. Since much of the land area in this district has slope steepness in excess of 20 percent, it precludes intensive development for most uses. This district includes, but is not limited to, all of the land north of the north fork of the Holston River. Any new growth that occurs in this district should not be in conflict with the existing public recreation facilities. Thus, such development must be of particular interest to the whole community, and it must be planned for before development occurs. In all instances, the development should be limited to sparse occupation for purposes of safety, health, convenience, order, etc., of the community.

HIGHLAND RECREATION DISTRICT (HR) - The HR highland recreation district consists of all of the National Recreation Area (NRA) within the county as designated by the United States Congress. In order to accomplish the necessary controls for this area, the boundaries of this district shall be concurrent with those of the national recreation area. The intent is to keep the use of privately owned land within the national recreation area and on this designated perimeter in harmony with the rural American theme of the national recreation area. It is not intended that these lands should develop intensively for residence, either year round or second homes. It is the intent that the primary uses will be forestry and

agriculture together with certain recreational activities appropriate to the mountains.

KONNAROCK DISTRICT - Konnarock, by its proximity to the main attractions of the National Recreation Area around Whitetop Mountain and Mount Rogers, must be guarded from development that would be detrimental to the natural beauty and culture of the region. It is the intent of this division to help with maintaining its uniqueness while still permitting orderly development.

INDUSTRIAL, LIMITED DISTRICT (M-1) - The primary purpose of the M-1 limited industrial district is to permit certain industries and businesses that may have an adverse effect in the business districts, which with appropriate restrictions should not detract from adjacent residential uses. The limitations on or provisions relating to height of buildings, horsepower, heating, flammable liquids or explosives, controlling emission of fumes, odors or noise, landscaping, buffering requirements, restrictions on proximity to adjacent uses, and the number of persons employed in the M-1 limited industrial district are imposed to protect and foster adjacent residential desirability.

INDUSTRIAL, GENERAL DISTRICT (M-2) - The primary purpose of the M-2 general industrial district is to establish an area where the principal use of land is for heavy commercial and industrial operations, which may create some nuisance and businesses that may have an adverse effect in the business districts, and which are not properly associated with, nor particularly compatible with, residential, institutional and neighborhood commercial service establishments. The specific intent of the M-2 district is to:

- (1) Encourage the construction of and the continued use of the land for heavy commercial and industrial purposes and

businesses that may have an adverse effect in the business districts.

- (2) Prohibit residential and neighborhood commercial use of the land and prohibit any other use which would substantially interfere with the development, continuation and expansion of commercial and industrial uses in the district.

- (3) Encourage the discontinuance of existing uses that would not be permitted as new uses under the provisions of this chapter.

RESIDENTIAL, MANUFACTURED HOME DISTRICT (MHR)

- The MHR manufactured home residential district is composed of certain quiet, low- to medium-density residential areas plus certain open areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur. The regulations for the MHR manufactured home residential district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district, to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life and to discourage all activities of a commercial nature. To these ends, development in the MHR manufactured home residential district is limited to relatively medium concentration, and permitted uses are limited basically to single-family and two-family dwellings, manufactured homes, plus certain additional uses which are complementary to the residential uses.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, LIMITED, DISTRICT (P-1)

- The planned unit development (PUD) is a concept which encourages and permits variation in residential developments by allowing deviation in lot size, bulk or type of dwelling, density, lot coverage, and open space from that required in any other residential district. The purpose of deviation is to permit the developer to create a unique residential environment in terms of character, amenities and spatial elements.



Appropriate commercial uses may be provided in addition to a variety of residential uses. It is intended that commercial development if provided be limited to a scale appropriate to the support of the residential uses within the planned unit development; provided that additional commercial activity may be permitted upon a finding that the area in which the planned unit development is to be located is not adequately served by such uses.

RESIDENTIAL, LIMITED DISTRICT (R-1) - The R-1 limited residential district is composed of certain quiet, low-density residential areas plus certain open areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur. The regulations for this district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district, to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life where there are children, and to prohibit all activities of a commercial nature. To these ends, development in the R-1 limited residential district is limited to relatively low concentration; and permitted uses are limited basically to single-unit dwellings providing homes for the residents plus certain additional uses, such as schools, parks, churches, and certain public facilities that serve the residents of the district. No home occupations (including room renting) are permitted in the R-1 limited residential district.

RESIDENTIAL, GENERAL DISTRICT (R-2) - The R-2 general residential district is composed of certain medium to high concentration of residential uses, ordinarily located between residential and commercial areas, plus certain open areas where similar development appears likely to occur. The regulations for the R-2 general residential district are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the district; to promote and encourage, insofar as compatible with the intensity of land use, a suitable environment for family life composed of an adult population with some children; and to permit certain commercial uses of a character unlikely to develop general concentration of traffic, crowds of customers, and general outdoor advertising. To these ends retail activity in the R-2 general residential district is sharply limited, and this district is protected against encroachment of general commercial or industrial uses. All residential types of structures for both permanent and transient occupancy, including institutions, are permitted, plus structures for commercial uses conforming to the pattern of the district. The R-2 general residential district is not completely residential as it includes public and semipublic, institutional and other related uses. However, the R-2 general residential district is basically residential in character and, as such, should not be spotted with commercial and industrial uses.

SHORELAND RECREATION DISTRICT (SR) - The SR shoreland recreation district contains the land area adjacent to the South Holston Reservoir. The regulations for this

district are designed to provide standards for the orderly development of land surrounding the reservoir, to protect the public access to the reservoir and to prevent pollution, including sedimentation. This district should be low-density development from the maximum contour elevation of 1,747 feet to State Route 664; and in all other areas surrounding the lake, the outside boundary line shall be located 500 feet from the Tennessee Valley Authority easement boundary line. This district shall also include all land located below the 1,747-foot elevation subject to flowage easements rights required by the Tennessee Valley Authority for the operation of South Holston Reservoir.

VILLAGE DISTRICT - Certain conglomerate communities exist in the county, and for the most part these communities remain as crossroad developments. In order to prevent the continuation of such haphazard development of mixed uses in a limited space, it is proposed to control the potential growth by these regulations. This is necessary because none of these communities is large enough to institute effective controls adequately and efficiently by its own contrivances. In these smaller compacted communities, it is desirable to establish a set of standards for expanding growth. The basic elements contained in this division are created to permit orderly growth to occur so that these communities may become viable local trade and service centers of the county. Included in this array of smaller unincorporated communities are Clinchburg, Emory, Greendale, Meadowview, Mendota and Taylor's Valley.

FLOOD HAZARD DISTRICT (FH) - The purpose of the FH flood hazard district is to prevent the loss of life and property, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and governmental services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief, the impairment of the tax base, and the loss of recognizable ecological values, by:

- (1) Regulating uses, activities and developments that, acting along or in combination with other existing or future uses, activities and developments, will cause unacceptable increases in flood heights, velocities, and frequencies.
- (2) Restricting or prohibiting certain uses, activities and development from locating within areas subject to flooding.
- (3) Requiring all those uses, activities and developments that do occur in floodprone areas to be protected and/or floodproofed against flooding and flood damage.
- (4) Protecting individuals from buying lands and structures that are unsuited for intended purposes because of flood hazards.

Development Patterns and Trends

Development trends can be examined through several sources including building permit data, aerial photography, and land use (rezoning, special exception and plat) applications. Over the past decade, Washington County has seen trends in rezoning proposals, special exception applications and plat applications as illustrated in the following tables.

In the ten year time frame between 2004 and 2014, 70 rezoning applications were filed and 65 were approved. Applications requesting rezoning from R-2 to A-2 were most numerous with 15 requests. Requests from A-2 to B-2 were second with 11 requests. The peak year for rezoning requests was 2008. 17 applications were filed that year. The most common rezoning requests made during that year were from R-2 to A-2 (15 requests) and from A-2 to B-2 (11 requests).

114 Special Exception Permit applications were filed between 2004 and 2014. 101 of those applications were approved. An analysis of Special Exception Permit data shows that similar requests were made multiple times between 2001 and 2014. The most frequent request, six in total, was for mini storage warehouse. This was followed by requests for manufactured housing units (five requests) and applications to operate a day care (four requests). Repeat applications were made for the expansion of a rest home, telecom uses, RV parks, restaurant and a horse barn.

Between 2005 and 2013, the Washington County Office of Zoning Administration processed 1,547 plats. This total includes plats processed for the purpose of creating new parcels and plats processed to adjust a boundary line. An analysis of all plats show that 787 new parcels were created in Washington County between 2005 and 2013. 161 parcels of the 787, were created from family divisions.

Washington County Rezoning Applications 2004-2014

2004	1 Application	1 Approved
2005	15 Applications	12 Approved
2006	11 Applications	11 Approved
2007	2 Applications	2 Approved
2008	17 Applications	16 Approved
2009	1 Application	1 Tabled
2010	7 Applications	7 Approved
2011	1 Application	1 Approved
2012	2 Applications	2 Approved
2013	13 Applications	13 Approved
2014	2 Applications	2 Approved
2004 - 2014	72 Applications	67 Approved

Source: Washington County Zoning Department, 2014

Special Exception Applications and Approvals 2004-2014

Year	Number of Applications	Result
2004	26 Applications	23 Approved
2005	17 Applications	17 Approved
2006	21 Applications	19 Approved
2007	9 Applications	7 Approved
2008	11 Applications	11 Approved
2009	10 Applications	8 Approved
2010	6 Applications	5 Approved
2011	3 Applications	3 Approved
2012	2 Applications	2 Approved
2013	10 Applications	10 Approved
2014	17 Applications	14 Approved, 1 Tabled, 2 Continued
2004 - 2014	132 Applications	119 Approved

Source: Washington County Zoning Department, 2014

The population forecast in Washington County suggests growth through 2040. To accommodate population growth, it is important to consider the approximate number of dwelling units that may be needed to house additional population. It is possible to project a simple approximation of units that may be needed in the future. This assessment is based on assumptions: population estimates and the premise that current household size will be maintained in the future. It is also important to note that this estimate does not account for unknown variables, positive or negative, which may drive housing needs. These factors may include economic circumstances, natural disasters, and external private factors, such as the location or vacation of a large business or industry. The formula to determine an estimate for the additional number of housing units needed is summarized as follows:

$$\text{Population Estimate (By Year)} - \text{2010 Population} = \text{Population Increase}$$

$$\text{Population Increase} / \text{Household Size} = \text{Additional Number of Housing Units Needed}$$

Population Estimate Year	Population Estimate (Weldon Cooper)	2010 Population (U.S. Census)	Population Increase	2010 Household Size (U.S. Census)	Additional Number of Housing Units Needed
2020	57,040	54,876	2,164	2.32	932
2030	58,800	54,876	3,924	2.32	1691
2040	60,402	54,876	5,526	2.32	2382

Based on these projections and the number of vacant lots available in Table "Land Use Statistics", adequate buildable lots are likely available through 2040. The residential zoning districts alone, R-1 and R-2, contain almost 3,000 vacant parcels however it is important to note that many zoning districts allow for single family residential homes. Only the R-2 zoning district allows multi-family development by right. It may be appropriate to consider rezonings to provide additional space for multi-family units should market demand it. The B-2, Konnarock, and Village Districts provide a special exception process for approval of multi-family projects. By-right subdivisions will continue to occur during the planning period which will provide additional inventory and other mixed use projects which include a housing component may be desirable.

Building permit data shows a decline in residential building permits since 2000 as was the trend across much of the nation. Between 2000 and 2014, 2,262 new single family homes were permitted in Washington County. 1,811 mobile homes were added to the county's housing stock. Approximately 4,213 total housing units were added between 2000 and 2013.

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Building Permit Data 2000-2013				
Calendar Year	Residential - New Single Family Permit	Residential – New Multifamily Permit	Residential – Other*	Mobile Homes
2000	247	9	101	259
2001	200	16	144	210
2002	212	16	122	194
2003	186	9	119	187
2004	246	17	103	152
2005	238	5	98	136
2006	202	18	33	128
2007	179	8	101	100
2008	133	23	96	94
2009	92	4	86	97
2010	91	7	79	73
2011	95	4	124	47
2012	72	3	86	75
2013	69	1	81	59
2014	54	2	93	59
Total	2316	142	1466	1870
Source: Washington County Department of Building and Development Services, 2014 *Permits issued to existing units for repairs, rehabilitation, additions.				

Approximately 3,083 acres of land or 210 parcels in the county is zoned for industrial uses. 109 parcels of this land are utilized and 116 parcels are vacant. The county has five established industrial parks with vacancies in Oak Park and Highlands Business Park. With vacancies available in existing parks and industrial zoned parcels available, the amount of land needed for industrial development may be adequate. Additional need may be driven by manufacturing or industry requests. The county should monitor market demand and consider rezoning additional prime industrial tracts, especially those with rail access, as needed to support economic development efforts.

1,739 acres of land is currently zoned B-2 or Business, General, District. 289 parcels out of 804 are vacant. B-2 zoning is currently the only defined commercial zoning in the county but i other zoning classifications, including M-1 and M-2, allow for commercial uses. A-1 and A-2 allow some business uses by right or through special exception approval. The Zoning Ordinance contains a defined zoning classification of B-1, or Business, Limited District but no parcel in the county is zoned B-1. The purpose of the B-1 District is to establish a business district that will serve surrounding residential districts. The district allows business uses which support residential areas and do not generate noise or traffic. Should the Zoning Ordinance be amended in the future, careful study should be undertaken to determine the best use for the B-1 zoning district.

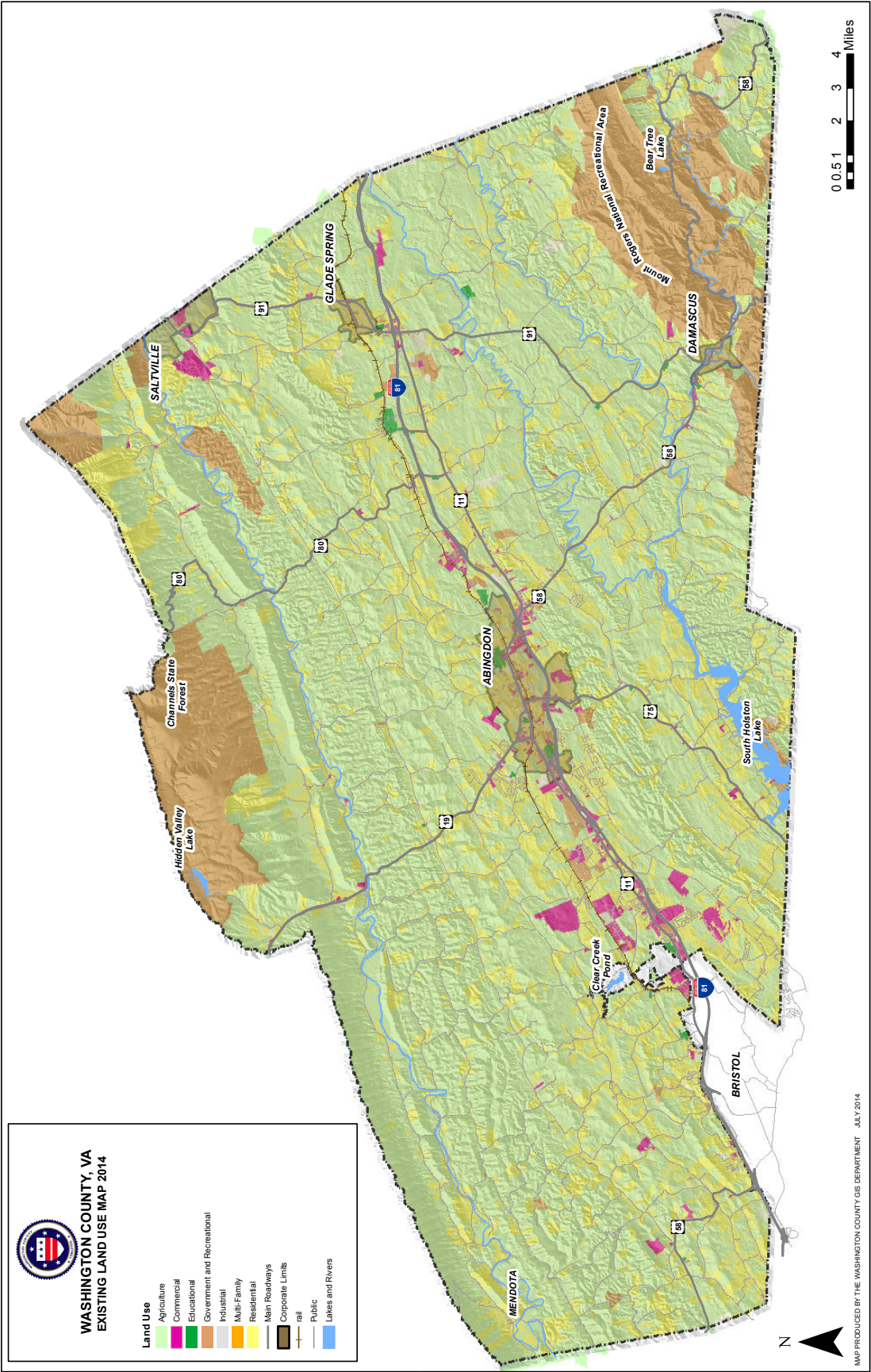
Existing Land Use Map

The existing character and land use pattern in Washington County is semi-rural and with commercial growth along a few key corridors. The more rural areas of the county are characterized by small farms, forests and residential development and the majority of growth in the county has occurred in the past three decades. Commercial growth has occurred along the U.S.11/Lee Highway corridor and around the exits along Interstate 81. Several suburban style subdivisions have been located in the more rural areas of the county as large family farms and estates have occasionally been subdivided into smaller lots to provide additional single-family development.

Since adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the county has seen more concentrated develop occur along the central corridor of the county, along Interstate 81 and Lee Highway/U.S. 11. The County has witnessed commercial growth along the Lee Highway/U.S. 11 corridor with the development of the Highlands Shopping Center near Exit 7 and the adjacent to the new Johnson Memorial Hospital between Exit 19 and 22. Two truck stops have been approved at Interstate 81 Exits 24 and 29. The truck stop approved at Exit 29 has been constructed. Major commercial projects have included large shopping strip centers with big box retailers, smaller strip centers with neighborhood retail and business development in industrial parks. Small businesses which serve the neighborhood centers are scattered throughout the county.

The existing land use map illustrates current land uses utilizing real estate assessment data obtained in 2013. and existing zoning information.

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Future Growth

Factors that Impact Growth and Development

Washington County's location, physical features, transportation network, business climate, and quality of life are assets to drive future growth and development. As the county focuses on economic development and population forecasts suggest an increase, growth is inevitable. However, natural features can also impact potential growth. Natural features are important because they provide a sense of place but they may influence development. Examples of these features are wetlands, bodies of water, karst formations, flood plain areas and steep slopes. These features are described in the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of this document.

In addition to physical features, water and wastewater infrastructure are important determinants of future growth. Development should be encouraged in areas that are served by public utilities, are planned for service within a rational timeline or can be economically extended. A discussion of current and planned infrastructure projects is included in the Community Facilities chapter of the document.

Planning Challenges and Opportunities

AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION

The county has roots as a rural community where farming was, and still is, very important to the overall character and economic strength of the county. Preserving our agricultural resources also provides opportunities to conserve and efficiently use other resources such as water, scenic, and environmentally sensitive features. It is evident from community participation results that working to minimize the loss of agricultural land and preservation of rural character is important to the citizens of Washington County. The rural areas of the county provide space for agriculture, forestry and open space.

Between 2007 and 2012, the number of farms in the county decreased from 1,791 in 2007 to 1,602 in 2012. The total acreage of farm land in the county also decreased from 198,850 in 2007 to 192,123 acres in 2012. The average size of farms in Washington County as of 2012 is 120 acres.¹

As discussed in other chapters, the cost of providing infrastructure to rural areas is great and residential development of agricultural land can cause conflict between residential and agricultural uses. The county should develop a program to promote appreciation of agriculture in the community. The program could educate county residents about economic value, the importance of preserving large, un-fragmented parcels and tools available for land conservation. Because rural living is attractive to many people relocating to the area, the program could educate potential residents in rural areas that there may be disagreeable aspects to rural living such as noise, odor and slow moving farm equipment in roadways but that our rural areas are places for agricultural business as well as countryside to be enjoyed.

One of the most important ways to minimize the loss of agricultural land and maintain rural land uses is to maintain large, un-fragmented tracts of land. Large lot zoning is farmland protection technique utilized by some municipalities. It establishes a large minimum lot size for non-agricultural residential development. Past efforts to increase the minimum parcel size have been unsuccessful therefore other tools must be utilized to minimize development pressure in rural areas. Such tools may include:

- Continue the Land Use program which helps preserve rural lands by reducing tax rates for qualifying lands utilized for agricultural or open space purposes. A minimum of five acres without a dwelling is required in order to qualify for the program. If there is a home on the property, six acres is required to qualify for the program.
- Developing a guide for conservation development or cluster development in rural areas and revise zoning ordinance if needed to allow for such development. Such development can reduce the impact of residential development in rural areas by encouraging effective land use and maximizing open space. Cluster development may allow development on smaller parcels in exchange for open

¹ Census of Agriculture, 2012.

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space which protects agricultural land. This style of development can reduce lower development costs to the landowner or developer.

- Study ways to offset financial pressure to subdivide land through alternative land use opportunities such as home occupations, farm stands, wineries, special event facilities or businesses related to outdoor or heritage tourism.
- Encourage agricultural preservation through voluntary easement programs.
- Study means to amend zoning ordinance to allow farm structures on land that is currently farmed to be rebuilt without requiring special exception or rezoning approval.
- Consider a sliding scale for number of dwelling units permitted large tracts of land regardless of type of dwelling unit. This could provide opportunity for farm or land management housing by allowing additional mobile homes on large parcels. Such a technique should not be used to encourage manufactured home parks without appropriate infrastructure.

WESTERN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The western portion of Washington is poised for potential growth, generated by additional wastewater capacity provided by a new wastewater treatment facility planned along Bordwine Road, between Lee Highway and Clear Creek Road, and the development of the area west of Interstate 81, adjacent to the Virginia/Tennessee state line. Potential exists for a commercial, office, residential or a mixed-use project in this area. The county should work to study this area to anticipate future development needs.

INTERSTATE 81, EXIT 7

Exit 7, west of Interstate I-81, near U.S. 11, has continued to experience commercial growth. Recent Washington County projects include the Highlands Shopping Center and Southwest Virginia Clean Energy Research and Development Center. Development will be encouraged by transportation improvements in the area and a water line upgrade. The county should continue to monitor this area and anticipate future development needs.

INTERSTATE 81, EXIT 10

Possibility for redevelopment and expanded commercial development exists near the Exit 10 area. Development may be stimulated by transportation improvements and waste water upgrades.

INTERSTATE 81, EXIT 13

Potential exists for redevelopment and/or commercial development in the vicinity of Exit 13. This exit provides primary access for Oak Park and the Virginia Highlands Airport. Improved wastewater capacity in the area will present commercial prospects for large, vacant commercial sites between Exits 13 and 14.

INTERSTATE 81, EXIT 19

Significant commercial development has occurred in the vicinity of Exit 19 in the past ten years. Opportunity exists for additional commercial development but the county should monitor need and impact in the area for traffic and access given that Exit 19 is in need of upgrades. The Johnson Memorial Hospital, constructed along U.S. 11, between Exits 19 and 22, will continue to spur development in the area.



U.S. ROUTE 58

Road improvements along Route 58 from Abingdon to Damascus may create development pressure along the corridor. Consideration and study should be given to the type development that should be encouraged to take place along the corridor.

OFFICE LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

Currently the Zoning Ordinance does include general office as an allowed use in the business, B-2 District. This should be remedied should a corporate office or office complex desire to locate in Washington County.

ENERGY RESOURCES

Significant advances in energy research have occurred in the past ten years and present opportunity for the production or extraction of wind, solar, biomass and natural gas sources in Washington County. The county should investigate and implement ordinances as appropriate to allow for exploration of these energy sources while protecting environmentally sensitive areas and minimizing impact on adjacent residential and commercial areas.



Solar Panels located at the Clean Energy Research and Development Center.

NEW VILLAGE DISTRICTS

Consider opportunities for new Village Districts or crossroad areas suitable for rezoning to the Business, Limited, District (B-1). The Village District zoning district acknowledges need for commercial development at certain crossroads in smaller communities. The ordinance establishes standards to permit orderly growth in certain communities so that they may become local trade and service centers of the county. Included as examples are Clinchburg, Emory, Greendale, Meadowview, Mendota and Taylor's Valley. Due to the rural nature of the county, additional village nodes may be appropriate in other areas of the county. Additional study is required to determine appropriate location and uses for new commercial crossroads.

UTILIZATION OF BUSINESS, LIMITED, DISTRICT (B-1)

The Zoning Ordinance contains a defined zoning classification of B-1, or Business, Limited District but no parcel in the county is zoned B-1. The purpose of the B-1 District is to establish a business district that will serve surrounding residential districts. A study should be undertaken to determine the if there are areas that may be better suited for the B-1 zoning district, defined as a commercial activity serving a neighborhood rather than general commercial activity as defined by the B-2, Business, General District.

CONSIDERATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The county should consider creating voluntary design standards for commercial projects along primary corridors such as Lee Highway/U.S. 11, Porterfield Highway/U.S. 19 and U.S. 58 and in the vicinity of I-81 Exits. Design Standards can guide and accommodate growth while maintaining and enhancing the character of the county.

CONSIDER ADDITION OF MIXED USE, TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN ORDINANCE AND REVISE EXISTING PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Consider addition of Mixed Use, Traditional Neighborhood Design Ordinance and/or revise Planned Unit Development Ordinance to allow different products if the market demands it. These projects can be efficient in terms of land use and service delivery but should only be encouraged where infrastructure is available.

CONSIDER ADDITION OF MODERN MANUFACTURING DEFINITIONS FOR USE IN THE BUSINESS, GENERAL, DISTRICT (B-2).

Manufacturing has changed in recent years and consideration of modern manufacturing uses that do not result in nuisance to adjacent properties should be considered in the B-2 District. Several sites in the B-2 District, in proximity to Exit 13 as an example, could be potential sites for manufacturing use once wastewater capacity is available. Modern manufacturing should be approved through the special exception permit process.

DEVELOP REVIEW STANDARDS FOR REZONING/SPECIAL EXCEPTION PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Develop standards of review to aid in evaluation of rezoning or special exception permit applications. These standards should be based on the "Matters to be considered in drawing and applying zoning ordinances and districts" as listed in Virginia Code §15.2-2284.

DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE INDEXING SYSTEM.

Develop administrative indexing system for all land use applications submitted to better collect, analyze and report information on land use activity.

Consider collaborating with nearby colleges and universities to conduct planning and design studies.

Future Land Use Map

The future land use map establishes a preferred land use pattern that proposes development in areas that are presently served by public utilities or planned for service. The map is general in nature and is not intended to be parcel specific. It does not prescribe specific land uses for parcels but describes an overall desirable pattern for future development within Washington County. The map directs development towards areas that can accommodate growth.

Future Land Use Classifications

COMMERCIAL – Commercial land use within the county provides goods and services needed to support suburban development, and generates tax revenues that enable the local government to perform necessary functions in support of the population.

Local consumer oriented commercial uses are not recommended to be located away from established surface transportation facilities and service centers. These are located at Interstate intersections with public services, and near established towns or existing development centers. Smaller scale convenience stores located near neighborhoods should be accommodated and encouraged.

Higher density residential projects, including apartments, condominiums, planned unit developments and mixed use projects should be considered in this land use classification.

INDUSTRIAL – Industrial land use provides employment opportunities for the county residents and the region, as well as a basis for supporting economic activity. Care should be taken that industrial land is maintained for industry. Introducing residential uses in and around industrial properties can create conflict between commercial and residential traffic.

OPEN SPACE – The Open Space category generally includes land with prime agricultural soils, working farms, agricultural accessory uses, forestry uses or currently zoned agricultural properties. This classification also includes rural residential areas of moderately low-density rural/suburban development patterns.

Agricultural land is valuable both as a commodity and as a natural resource, and this category is intended to help maintain and strengthen the agricultural economy as well as a way of life. Agriculture should remain the predominant use in these areas. However, non-farm uses may be considered acceptable if such areas are designed to conform to the rural atmosphere found in the surrounding area. It is recommended that the agricultural lands in the county continue to be divided into two zoning classifications: Agricultural, Limited (A-1) and Agricultural, General (A-2). The purpose of this recommendation is to acknowledge that certain farmlands in the county may transition to non-farm uses. These areas will provide some housing opportunities for the county as well as provide a buffering area for active farming operations.

- **AGRICULTURE, LIMITED (A-1)** will identify those lands, which should remain in farming for the foreseeable future. Non-farm commercial or industrial uses should not be permitted.
- **AGRICULTURE, GENERAL (A-2)** should apply to those areas that will preferably remain in farming but could experience some transition to non-farm use. Developments in these areas should incorporate open space into the developments and make use of planned unit development regulations or other site design tools whenever possible. Planned development regulations allow for the developer, or property owner, and the county to work together to design site plans that preserve the rural character while offering a variety of dwelling types and lot sizes. Industrial uses should not be encouraged.

HIGHLANDS – Open space and conservation uses are encouraged in the Highlands classification to preserve agricultural, forest, steep slopes (over 20% relief), flood plains, and karst topographic areas. Much of these areas are currently and will in the future be protected in varying degrees by other governmental agencies and regulations. Washington County should encourage protection of these sensitive lands through zoning, voluntary easements, and public open space initiatives.

RESIDENTIAL – The residential category includes residential developments of a variety of densities in areas where public water service is available, planned, or can be economically extended. This includes Traditional Neighborhood Developments, PUDs, and Planned Villages/Hamlets, and traditional single family detached housing. The areas having greatest potential for such expansion are those, which have relatively easy access to surface transportation, public utilities and suburban support services. These lie along the central growth corridor for the most part in close proximity to Bristol, Abingdon, and Glade Spring. The following conditions should be present for residential development:

1. The development should have access to a major roadway without using adjacent street or road. This would be necessary to accommodate the traffic volumes created by higher density development.
2. The development should be adequately serviced by public water facilities. Higher density developments should be encouraged in areas with adequate infrastructure.
3. Development should be in proximity to other high-density residential, commercial or industrial uses. The developments should be located adjacent to compatible uses to encouraged orderly growth, and should avoid building that is out of scale in size and density with the surroundings.

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS AIRPORT - This category includes land occupied by the Virginia Highlands Airport and land needed for future airport facilities. The intention for this classification is to protect the utility of the Virginia Highlands Airport, preserve airspace, preserve access and prevent obstructions that have the potential for endangering the lives and property of airport users and residents of the county.

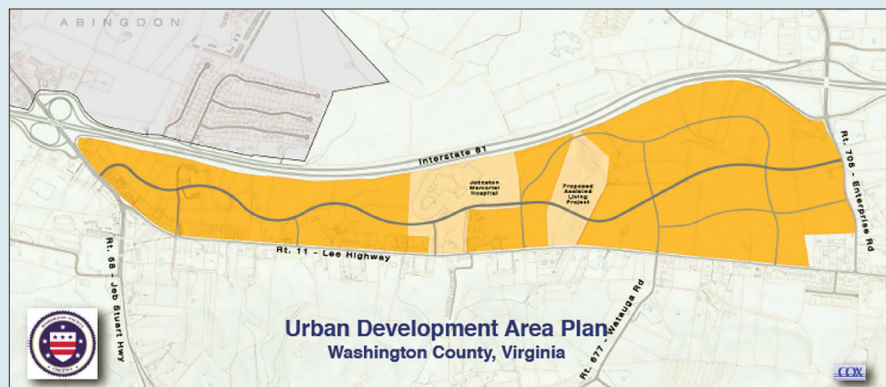
Urban Development Area

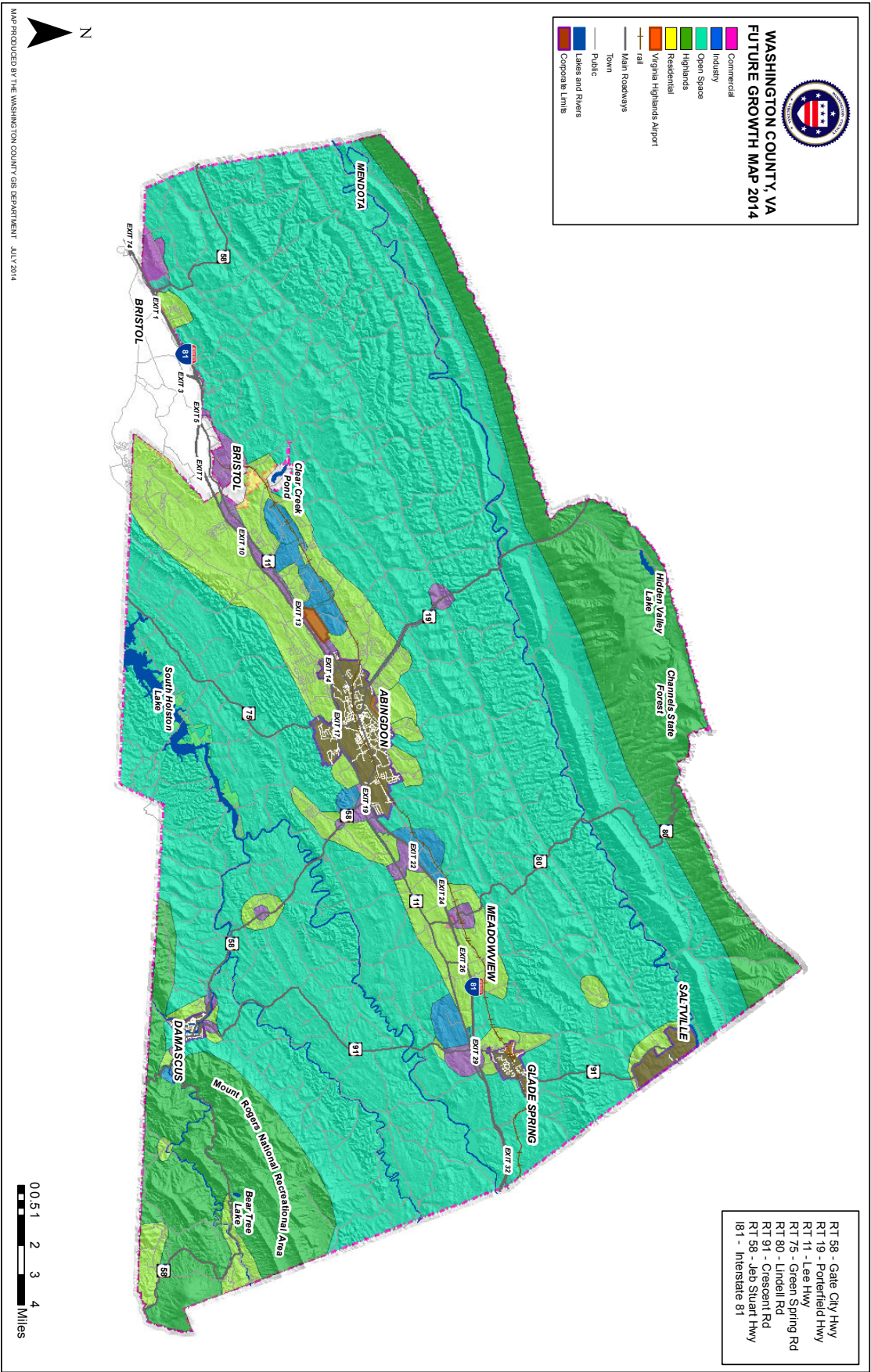
The Code of Virginia states that any locality may amend its comprehensive plan to incorporate one or more urban development areas. This legislation was added to the Code in 2007 for the purpose of addressing some of the negative effects of suburban sprawl and strip development, particularly on traffic and transportation. High-growth localities (those with a 5% growth rate or having a population of 20,000) were encouraged to amend their comprehensive plans to incorporate one or more Urban Development Areas (UDAs). UDAs were to be reasonably compact and should accommodate 10 to 20 years of projected growth.

To assist communities in revising their comprehensive plans and ordinances, the Virginia Department of Transportation created the Urban Development Area Local Government Assistance Program, providing consultant assistance to qualifying Virginia localities. Washington County was awarded a grant and Cox and Associates was selected to help Washington County study the issue.

Cox and Associates suggested a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) implementation program and suggested a new zoning district to plan, manage, and regulate the essential elements of TNDs: a mix of uses, different lot types and sizes, densities, neighborhood structure, phasing, and transportation elements. The goal of the TND District is to produce village-scaled development which could produce transportation benefits and balanced development. The area proposed for the TND District is in the vicinity of the new Johnson Memorial Hospital, along Lee Highway, between Exit 19 and 21.

The Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission held a joint meeting on April 23, 2012, to discuss the UDA concept but no action was taken to amend the Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Ordinance at that time.





Land Use Objectives and Recommended Strategies

The purpose of the Land Use chapter is to suggest a framework to encourage a balanced land use system that provides sufficient and compatible land areas to accommodate growth while protecting the natural environment and minimizing public facility and service costs. The following objectives and strategies are recommended to help facilitate this goal.

Guiding Vision Statement

LAND USE: Rural, residential, retail, and industrial endeavors prosper throughout Washington County in a mutually respectful and non-invasive fashion.

Washington County is a preserve of heritage and historical beauty. A drive through the county provides opportunity for relaxation and enjoyment of natural environments including flowing rivers, mountains, lakes, creeks, hills, and pastures. Historic landmarks are lovingly preserved and farmland and rural ambience are protected and productive. Residential neighborhoods are attractive, orderly, and serene with children playing safely in their yards. Commercial and industrial developments prosper without interrupting the peace and quiet in residential and rural areas. Visitors are delighted by the cleanliness of the county. Nestled within the hills and valleys of the county, distinct rural communities add unique character to the county's personality and create opportunity for socializing, entertainment, and grassroots involvement and education among local residents.

Objectives and Strategies

OBJECTIVE: To encourage development patterns that are aligned with the intent of the comprehensive plan, compatible with public service delivery and facilities, and protect natural features.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote well-planned developments that minimize public facility and service costs, preserve open space, and are sensitive to the natural environment.
2. Coordinate development with existing or proposed public facilities and services.
3. Encourage land uses that are in harmony with adjacent uses.
4. Consider physical constraints such as flooding, steep slopes and hydrology when considering development proposals as they may threaten the safety, health and welfare of residents.
5. Encourage infill development and reuse of vacant buildings as they likely possess adequate utility and transportation infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE: Preserve agricultural land and minimize adverse impacts of growth on farmland and rural character.

STRATEGIES

1. Work with partner agencies to promote appreciation of agriculture in the community. Formally recognize that farm land is a valuable and limited resource for Washington County, and is both a major industry and the basis of the county's unique rural character.
2. Educate residents about economic importance of agriculture in our county, the need for large unfragmented parcels and tools available for voluntary land conservation and use value taxation. Educate prospective residents about the nature of living in a rural area.
3. Develop guide for conservation development or cluster development in rural areas where appropriate and revise Zoning Ordinance to allow for this type of development.

4. Study ways to offset financial pressure to subdivide land through land use opportunities such as home occupations, farm stands, wineries, special event facilities or businesses related to outdoor or agricultural tourism.
5. Consider zoning amendment to allow farm structures on land that is actively farmed to be rebuilt without rezoning or special exception permit applications.
6. Encourage preservation of open space, forest and agricultural lands through voluntary conservation easement programs.
7. Consider implementation of a sliding scale for density of dwelling units dispersed over large tracts of land.

OBJECTIVE: **Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as needed to implement strategies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.**

STRATEGIES

1. Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as needed to reflect recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Amend the Zoning Map as needed to implement desired future land use.
3. Direct higher density, compact projects to locations adjacent to developed areas.
4. Consider an amendment to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to add provisions and specific criteria for traditional neighborhood design elements and mixed use projects and consider revising current Planned Unit Development Ordinance.
5. Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible or inappropriate land uses. Introduce landscape buffers to serve as screening to minimize potential conflicts.
6. Encourage new developments to provide stub roads to adjacent vacant property to facilitate future expansion of property and through road connection.
7. Encourage inter-parcel access on all projects.
8. Create voluntary design standards for commercial projects along primary corridors to guide growth while maintaining and enhancing the character of the county.
9. Consider expanding "manufacturing" definition to allow modern manufacturing in additional zoning districts.
10. Consider adding "offices" and "institutions" as permitted uses to appropriate zoning districts.
11. Consider opportunities for new Village Districts or B-1 zoning in appropriate locations for neighborhood commercial development throughout the county.
12. Study impact of housing density requirements if added to Zoning Ordinance.

OBJECTIVE: **Develop and improve administrative practices to ensure implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and county's land use planning program.**

STRATEGY

1. Refer to policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan and the Plan's future land use map when evaluating development or rezoning proposals.
2. Review the Comprehensive Plan on a biannual basis with a particular emphasis on the Land Use Section and Development Guide to determine the need for amendments. Present report on

LAND USE

comprehensive plan implementation progress to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission on a binannual basis.

3. Work cooperatively with adjacent jurisdictions and nearby cities to coordinate planning activities that transcend political boundaries and to serve as a “voice” of the region on State and Federal issues.
4. Consider collaborating with nearby colleges and universities to conduct planning and design studies.
5. Develop standards of review to aid in evaluation of rezoning or special exception permit applications.
6. Develop standard checklist for application materials needed for review of rezoning and special exception permit applications.
7. Develop administrative indexing system for all land use applications submitted to better collect, analyze and report information on land use activity.

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The Comprehensive Plan is only meaningful when implemented. To be most effective, the objectives and strategies defined throughout the document need to be evaluated and executed through implementation steps. Objectives outlined at the conclusion of each chapter may be carried out in a number of ways; through county regulations and programs such as the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations or through a future capital improvement program. Some objectives may be implemented through partnerships with other agencies while others may be achieved within the day to day tasks of county staff.

It is important to recognize that the Comprehensive Plan is a long range planning tool with recommendations for general development. Though the plan is written with a twenty year horizon in mind, unforeseen changes in the business and real estate market, new development forms, and innovations in industry and technology will impact Washington County. Recognizing that changes are inevitable, the county will need to periodically evaluate the plan to ensure that existing recommendations are being met and revised as necessary.

This focus of the implementation chapter is to outline the goals and objectives in each chapter and to define a general timeline for completion of each item. Short-term projects may be completed within one to three years, mid-term projects will take between three and five years, and long-term projects will likely take five to ten years. This chapter concludes with a description of the plan amendment process and recommended procedure for an annual review to monitor the effectiveness and progress of the planning program.

Chapter 2 Housing

Guiding Vision Statment: Rural, Residential, Retail, and industrial endeavors prosper throughout Washington County in a mutually respectful and non-invasive fashion.

Housing Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: To support the opportunity for decent, safe, sanitary, and efficient housing for all residents.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Encourage the preservation and improvement of aging housing stock.				X
Ensure that the existing housing stock is maintained and new units are constructed to appropriate building codes, standards, and guidelines..				X
Support non-profit agencies that provide housing rehabilitation programs..				X
Promote residential development in environmentally safe areas where conditions (soils, drainage, and topography) are favorable for development.				X
Encourage energy efficiency in new construction and housing rehabilitation projects.				X
Produce brochure to provide information on cost saving benefits of energy efficiency.	X			
Objective: To promote a variety of housing types and densities for a wide range of income, family size, age groups and life-style.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Support the opportunity for housing that meeds the needs of various ages and levels of mobility.				X
Support local agencies that provide residential living facilities for persons with disabilities and senior citizens.				X
Work with non-profit partners to promote the rehabilitation of existing residences and community improvement programs.				X
Work with non-profit agencies promote affordable housing.				X
Work with non-profit partners to study housing needs in Washington County.				X
Encourage affordable rental housing to satisfy community need.				
Work with partner agencies to study senior housing issues.				X
Work with the development and real estate community to monitor changes in the industry for the purpose of amending regulations as appropriate to reflect market changes.				X
Objective: Consistent with the Community Facilities and Land Use chapters, locate housing developments in areas where supporting infrastructure is available, including; transportation facilities, water and waste-water facilities and emergency services.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Encourage residential development in areas where infrastructure is available and adequate to support such development.				X
Encourage higher density development along major corridors where infrastructure is available with access to business, schools, parks, and transportation.				X

IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: To revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as needed to incorporate housing strategies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Revise the Zoning Ordinance to include regulations for mixed use development in appropriate districts to allow multiple housing types, including multi-family units. This offers flexibility to develop and provides opportunity for affordable housing and rental units.	X			
Revise "Planned Unit Development" regulations to encourage the provision of alternatives in housing types.	X			
Audit and revise Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and other policies as needed to implement housing recommendations included in this chapter.	X			
Audit and revise Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and other regulations as needed to remove any barriers which may impede opportunities for energy efficiency in residences.	X			

Chapter 3 Economic Development

Guiding Vision Statement: Washington County is the industrial, commercial, medical, and government service center for all of Southwest Virginia

Economic Development Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: To continue a coordinated and effective economic development strategy to recruit new business.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Target industries identified as driving growth and economic assets in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.				X
Execute the marketing plan developed through the Economic Development Strategic Plan.		X		
Evaluate methods to increase and support local start-up business development.		X		
Develop a specific website for economic development to provide information, attract businesses and showcase the county's economic development potential.	X			
Objective: To retain existing businesses and industries located in Washington County and to encourage their vitality and expansion.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Encourage the expansion of existing commercial and industrial businesses.				X
Expand communication and outreach to the existing business community and encourage local business owners to participate in economic development activities.	X			
Study ways to provide opportunities for local businesses to network and encourage businesses to source local materials, goods, and services.		X		
Research potential to increase local business development opportunities and support for expansion.				X
Objective: Ensure that there is sufficient land and adequate infrastrucutre to accommodate quality commercial growth.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Identify and preserve quality commercial and industrial properties and corridors.		X		
Encourage ne commercial and industrial facilities to locate within close proximity to transportation and public facilities. Encourage the appropriate timeing and location of development to be consistent with provision of public facilities.				X
Encourage thoughtful residential development in areas identified with potential for economic development for the purpose of protecting access to potential sites.				X
Encourage the development of commercial and industrial sites that are compatible with the adjacent area. Consider development of voluntary design standards to guide aesthetics of commercial projects.				X
Continue to promote an infrastructure system including; accessible transportation, water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications service, that will support industrial and commercial growth and development along I-81 and US-11.				X
Work to minimize adverse environmental and physical impacts from development.				X
Utilize the Virginia Highlands Airport as a tool for business recruitment and support plans for airport expansion to meet business demand in the future.				X

IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: To promote agriculture and agricultural related business in Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Continue dialogue with farm industry stakeholders through the Agriculture Committee to study and promote the impact of agribusiness in the county.				X
Develop website content for the County's website to promote agriculture as a key economic sector. The website can provide links to partner agencies, technical information, and farm profiles to highlight the importance of agriculture in Washington County.	X			
Objective: To promote travel, tourism, and cultural economy opportunities throughout Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Promote tourism and cultural assets as economic development opportunities, quality of life factors and a growing source for employment.				X
Work with towns and regional partners to market these resources and to study the impact these industries have on the economy.		X		
Develop content for the county's website to highlight tourism opportunities, festivals and events held throughout Washington County during the year.	X			
Study means to quantify and emphasize quality of life factors as attractors for economic development, such as; education, recreation, arts and culture.		X		
Objective: To partner with other agencies and county departments to further economic development opportunities in Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Encourage activities which improve coordination and cooperation between federal, state, regional, and local agencies charged with making decision which impact economic development.				X
Collaborate with other jurisdictions and agencies on issues which impact economic development in the region.				X
Work with Washington County School System, vocational and technical schools, and colleges in the area to train the existing and future labor force.				X
Promote trade and work force training as tools to attract manufacturing and support the location of a "Center of Excellence" in Washington County.				X
Develop, maintain and improve administrative practices to track economic data and improve reporting on economic development activity.		X		
Continue staff level "Technical Review" meetings with business owners to facilitate an efficient permit process in Washington County.				X
Publish "Development Guide" to use as reference guide for business owners interested in building or developing a project in Washington County.	X			

Chapter 4 Natural and Cultural Resources

Guiding Vision Statments: Washington County is a premier leisure and adventure destination. Washington County is the champion of cultural heritate preservation and awareness.

Natural and Cultural Resources Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: Identify, conserve, and protect natural resources and open spaces such as; rivers, streams, forested and wooded areas, wetlands, floodplains, air and soil resources.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Develop educational materials to encourage protection of ground and surface water resources and for the best management of storm water runoff.	X			
Implement storm water management program and continue erosion and sediment control program.	X			X
Partner with towns and other agencies to explore the grant funded opportunity for a watershed study.		X		
Include areas on county property for observing and learning about natural environments, such as; geology, hydrology, landforms, wildlife, etc.			X	
Collaborate with other agencies who provide technical assistance on natural resources such as the Holston River Soil and Conservation District, Washington County Cooperative Extension Office, Health Department and similar organizations to study information contained within soil study.		X		
Partner with regional localities and other agencies to explore grant fuding or Department of Environmental Quality assitance with an air quality study.			X	
Objective: Encourage voluntary easements, tax programs, and scenic programs to promote natural and cultural resources in Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Encourage use of voluntary conservation easements for lands that have agricultural ,forestal , and scenic value.				X
Encourage purchase of development right programs by applying for grant monies to fund such programs.				X
Continue the Land Use program as a tool to help conserve agricultural and forested land.				X
Study the merits of designation in the Commonwealth's Scenic Rivers and Roads programs.	X			
Objective: Encourage new construction and development that utilizes best management practices and minimizes impact on natural resources.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Encourage low impact and efficient development and construction techniques.				X
Encourage open space amenities in new subdivision design and study implementation of a density bonus program to reward developers for including open space in their design.				X
In conjunction with updates to the Zoning Ordinance, consider requiring stream buffers fro the edge of wetlands and streams in new construction projects.	X			

IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: Explore opportunities for new trails and recreation amenities in Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Partner with other localities, agencies, and organizations to study the feasibility of new trails in Washington County.				X
Expand and promote recreation uses in the county, such as; trails, public and private recreation facilities, and outdoor tourism related uses.				X
Objective: Promote historically significant sites and structures, and scenic views for the cultural, educational , and quality of life benefits they provide to residents and visitors.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Work with the Washington County Historical Society and other history groups to promote and preserve historic resources in Washington County.				X
Develop and engage in educational programs that foster community pride and stewardship of historic resources.				X
Develop and maintain a database of historic resources in Washington County.		X		
Use GIS mapping to locate all historic resources in Washington Coutny and include this information as a layer on the GIS map.		X		
Develop a driving tour of historic places in Washington County.		X		
Assist homeowners and landowners with interest in nominating their properties to the National Register of Historic Places.				X
Promote voluntary measures for protection of historic and scenic resources.				X
Identify scenic views in Washington County and provide education as to their aesthetic, cultural, and economic value.		X		

Chapter 5 Community Facilities

Guiding Vision Statments: Washington County citizens enjoy superior public water and sewer service, roads, and government facilities that create an enviable quality of life. Washington County is a premier leisure and adventure destination. A diverse spectrum of educational resources complements our cultural and historic setting and creates a strong foundation for lifelong learning in Washington County.

Community Facilities Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: To continue to provide public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible manner.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Monitor and pursue state and federal grant programs to help fund projects identified by county departments.				X
Develop and implement a capital improvement programs.		X		
Objective: To continue to provide efficient water and wastewater service delivery systems to serve existing and future need.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Encourage new development in areas with available water and wastewater infrastructure.				X
Encourage necessary infrastructure and utilities to be phased appropriately and expanded concurrently with new development.				X
Continue meetings of the Joint County Utilities Committee to foster communication about utility issues between the Board of Supervisors, WCSA and Industrial Development Authority.				X
Continue to monitor water and wastewater fee structure and implementation.				X
Work with WCSA to encourage implementation of services where financially feasible in areas where service is needed.				X
Assess the feasibility and desirability of the formation of a regional water and wastewater utility.			X	
Partner with the WCSA to educate citizens on the importance of efficient use of water.	X			
Objective: To support the provision of private electricity, telephone, natural gas, wireless, and internet service in Washington County.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Promote an infrastructure system, including; electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications, to support existing need and future growth in Washington County.				X
Seek grant opportunities to assist in funding infrastructure projects to areas of need.				X
Collaborate with utility providers on future plans to ensure projects conform to the Comprehensive Plan.				X
Encourage telecommunication services to be located on existing towers, poles and structures.				X

IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: To enhance community safety and security through the provision of efficient emergency management services and law enforcement.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Complete fire and EMS vehicle and apparatus assessment on an annual basis.				X
Identify where and when existing response times are longest and evaluate ways to mitigate development impact on these response times.		X		
Develop communication between Planning, Zoning, Emergency Management Departments, and Sheriff's Office on future growth plans and large developments to ensure agencies are prepared for growth.				X
Work with Building and Development Services , Emergency Management Department and Sherriff's Office to implement a program to encourage property owners to display the address of their building.		X		
Study opportunity for accessible, visible location for the CC Porter Animal Shelter.			X	
Objective: To enhance and increase recreational opportunities that will serve citizens and visitors while preserving open spaces.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Consider expansion of Busy Bee After School Child Care program to additional elementary schools.				X
Evaluate opportunities to provide safe public access to recreational waters.		X		
Consider opportunities to increase park and recreation amenities across Washington County.				X
Participate on committees to study trail opportunities in Washington County.				X
Pursue grant funding to maintain, improve, or add to recreation facilities in Washington County.				X
Objective: To continue to provide an efficient solid waste program to serve existing and future needs.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies				
Continue to provide accessible facilities for the waste disposal.				X
Increase recycling opportunities at Manned Solid Waste Convenience Stations for those who wish to recycle.			X	
Maintain the Washington County Transfer Station and monitor capacity needs as growth occurs.				X
Study waste-to-energy technology so new initiatives may be utilized as they become feasible.			X	
Consider placement of recycling bins in county facilities.		X		
Continue tracking recycling information for DEQ reporting requirements.				X

Objective: To continue to provide preventative, essential, and emergency maintenance services for the county's existing inventory of buildings and future building needs.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Prioritize maintenance and expansion of existing facilities if they meet an adequate level of service.				X
Locate complementary county functions near one another for optimization of space and ease of access for citizens.				X
If new facilities are necessary, design new projects to accommodate existing and future needs.				X
Encourage all future construction projects to be energy efficient.				X
Continue meetings of the Long Range Courthouse Planning Committee to determine solutions for Courthouse facility needs.		X		
Work with Washington County Library on future library facility needs, including a potential new branch library.			X	
Consider obtaining an energy audit for all county owned building to see if opportunities exist to improve energy efficiency and lessen energy costs.		X		
Consider facility useage study of county buildings to determine cost effectiveness of operation.		X		
Objective: To work with the Washington County School System to coordinate on development issues and partner on projects that benefit Washington County and the School System.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Develop communication between Planning and Zoning Departments and Washington County Schools to provide notice of planned subdivisions or significant housing proposals to ensure schools are prepared for additional students.	X			X
Consider working with school system on joint energy audit to see if potential exists to improve efficiency and lessen energy costs.		X		
Objective: To partner with healthcare and social service agencies to improve the health of Washington County residents.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Collaborate with healthcare and social service agencies in the area to retain medical services and plan for future needs.				X
Collaborate and communicate with providers on future plans to ensure projects conform to the Comprehensive Plan.				X

Chapter 6 Transportation

Guiding Vision Statment: Washington County citizens enjoy superior public water and sewer service, roads and government facilities that create an enviable quality of life.

Transportation Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: To promote a safe , accessible, and efficient transportation network designed to serve residents, businesses, industries, and the general public.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Support projects designed to improve safety and capacity along travel corridors and to manage congestion.				X
Support projects designed to increase connectivity in the transportation network.				X
Utilize the Rural Roads program to maintain safe and effective transportation options while preserving the character of rural roads in Washington County.				X
Work with VDOT to develop access management corridor plans along segments of highways where commercial or industrial growth is anticipated.		X		
Objective: To participate in long range transportation planning efforts with partner agencies to ensure the needs of Washington County residents are met.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Participate with the Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to coordinate on regional transportation matters affecting Washington County.				X
Continue participation in Six-Year Improvement program to ensure Washington County's needs are reflected.				X
Participate in all state, regional, and local transportation planning efforts as needed.				X
Support recommended projects included in this chapter from VTrans 2035, the Surface Transportation Plan, 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Bristol Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan Year 2035.				X
Objective: To support and improve transportation projects designed to improve promote economic development opportunities.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Support airport and rail projects designed to improve safety, efficiency, access and capacity demand for business expansion and recruitment potential.				X
Evaluate tourism opportunities provided by transportation projects such as the Virginia Byways program and the extension of passenger rail service through Washington County.		X		
Objective: To study and support alternatives for street design, modes of transportation and travel demand strategies.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Support travel demand management strategies such as rideshare, car pooling, and park and ride lots.				X
Encourage consideration for the accommodations of pedestrians and bicyclists in the planning of road projects.				X
Study opportunities to improve public transportation options for the elderly and other non-drivers.		X		
Support the creation or extension of community bicycle and pedestrian networks.				X
Support the extension of passenger rail service from Roanoke to Bristol.				X
In coordination with land use objectives, study implementation of traditional neighborhood design which typically includes alternative street cross sections.		X		

Objective: To evaluate County administrative procedures to ensure administrative framework is in place for efficient transportation planning.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Evaluate roadway bonding requirements for new subdivisions included in the Subdivision Ordinance and amend as needed.	X			
Review and revise Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as needed to reflect recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan.	X			
Consult with VDOT on all rezoning proposals that may substantially impact transportation on state highways.				X
Consult with VDOT on site plan and subdivision plat submittals to gain insight on potential impacts of land development on state highways and work to find measures to mitigate such impacts.				X
Consider development of system for prioritizing transportation improvement projects to make best use of limited funding.			X	
Consider creation of internal system to collect data regarding transportation concerns and needs reported by citizens and businesses.	X			

Chapter 7 Land Use

Guiding Vision Statment: Rural, residential, retail, and industrial endeavors prosper throughout Washington County in a mutually respectful and non-invasive fashion.

Land Use Objectives and Recommended Strategies

Objective: To encourage development patterns that are aligned with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, compatible with public service delivery and facilities, and protects natural features.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Promote well-planned developments that minimize public facility and service costs, preserves open space, and is sensitive to the natural environment.				X
Coordinate development with existing or proposed public facilities and services.				X
Encourage land uses that are in harmony with adjacent uses.				X
Consider physical constraints such as flooding, steep slopes, and hydrology when considering development proposals as they may threaten the safety, health, and welfare of residents.				X
Encourage infill development and the reuse of vacant buildings if they possess adequate utility and transportation infrastructure.				X
Objective: Preserve agricultural land and minimize adverse impacts of growth on farmland and rural character.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Strategies	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Work with partner agencies to promote appreciation of agriculture in the community. Formally recognize agricultural land is a valuable and limited resource and that farming both a major industry and the basis of the rural character of Washington County.	X			X
Educate residents about the economic importance of agriculture, the need for large un-fragmented parcels and the tools available for voluntary land conservation and use value taxation. Educate prospective residents about the nature of living in a rural area.		X		
Develop guide for conservation development or cluster development in rural areas where appropriate and revise Zoning Ordinance to allow for this type of development.	X			
Study ways to offset financial pressure to subdivide land through alternative land uses including; home occupations, farm stands, wineries, special event facilities, and businesses related to outdoor recreation and agricultural tourism.	X			
Consider zoning amendment to allow farm structures on land that is actively farmed to be rebuilt without rezoning or special exception permit applications.	X			
Encourage preservation of open space, forest and agricultural lands through voluntary conservation easement programs.				X
Consider implementation of a sliding density scale for dwelling units dispersed over large tracts of land.	X			

Objective: Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to implement strategies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Revise the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as needed to reflect recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.	X			
Amend the Zoning Map as needed to implement desired future land use.				X
Direct higher density, compact projects to locations adjacent to developed areas.				X
Consider amending zoning and subdivision ordinances to include regulations to allow traditional neighborhood and mixed use projects.	X			
Consider updating Planned Unit Development regulations.	X			
Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible or inappropriate land uses. Consider introducing landscape buffers in the Zoning Ordinance to serve as screening to minimize potential conflicts.	X			
Encourage new developments to provide stub roads to adjacent vacant property to facilitate future expansion of the property and through-road connection.				X
Encourage inter-parcel access on all projects.				X
Create voluntary design standards for commercial projects along primary corridors to guide growth while maintaining the character of the county.	X	X		
Consider expanding "manufacturing" definition to allow modern manufacturing in additional zoning districts.	X			
Consider adding "offices" and "institutions" as permitted uses in appropriate zoning districts.	X			
Consider creating additional "Village Districts" or utilizing the B-1 zoning classification in appropriate locations to encourage neighborhood commercial development.	X			
Study the impact housing density requirements may have if added to the Zoning Ordinance.	X			
Objective: Develop and improve administrative practices to ensure implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and land use planning program.	Timeframe (Years)			
	1-3	3-5	5-10	Ongoing
Refer to policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan and the future land use map when evaluating development and rezoning proposals.				X
Review the Comprehensive Plan on a bi-annual basis with particular emphasis on the Land Use chapter to determine need for amendments. Present report on implementation progress to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on an annual basis.				X
Work cooperatively with adjacent jurisdictions to coordinate planning activities that transcend political boundaries and to serve as a "voice" of the region on state and federal issues.				X
Consider collaborating with colleges and universities to conduct planning and design studies.				X
Develop standards of review to aid in evaluation of rezoning or special exception permit applications.	X			
Develop standard checklist for application materials needed for review of rezoning and special exception permit applications.	X			
Develop administrative indexing system for all land use applications submitted to better collect, analyze, and report information on land use activity.	X			

Monitoring the Plan's Effectiveness

Once adopted, it is important to monitor the Washington County's progress in implementing the objectives outlined in the plan. The process of monitoring and reporting progress will allow the county to evaluate the progress of implementation efforts and make adjustments or revisions as needed. The monitoring process also provides an opportunity for the community to stay engaged in dialogue about the plan.

In an effort to monitor performance on an annual basis, a summary update on implementation activities should be included as a part of the Planning Commission's annual report to the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission should schedule a work session every two years for the purpose of discussing the plan and determining if revisions are needed to reflect current trends or to implement updated strategies. The bi-annual review need not necessarily produce a plan amendment. As the plan is long-range in nature, minimal amendments can often maximize effectiveness.

Amending the Plan

The Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-2230) requires the Planning Commission to review their Comprehensive Plans at least once every five years. The Washington County Comprehensive Plan is evaluated more frequently to consider changes in the county and to conduct plan maintenance and implementation.

When plan amendments are needed, the Planning Commission must provide public notice and hold a public hearing before recommending the adoption of amendments to the Board of Supervisors. The Board must also provide public notice and hold a public hearing before adopting amendments to the plan.

