

CITY OF WINCHESTER 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Certified by Planning Commission on November 16, 2021

Adopted by Winchester Common Council on March 8, 2022

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Greetings:

On behalf of the Winchester Planning Commission and the Winchester Common Council, we are pleased to present this 2022 update of the City of Winchester Comprehensive Plan. Virginia Code requires Planning Commissions to prepare and recommend a Comprehensive Plan to the City Council. This Comprehensive Plan provides land-use guidance for today and the future.

This update represents a significant revision to the Plan. The Commission conducted an extensive review of existing conditions, capturing all development since the last update in 2011, and considered alternative future visions by geographic planning area. This revised Comprehensive Plan includes input from citizens from across the City. It focuses on many areas where change is desired and needed.

Modern comprehensive planning that provides guidelines for future growth in Winchester dates back at least to 1958, although planning started more than 250 years back when young George Washington served as a surveyor for Lord Fairfax. Winchester's founder, Col. James Wood worked with Lord Fairfax to plan and chart the City.

This updated Plan offers strategic guidance for future public and private redevelopment decisions, that will impact the physical form of land development. Sustainable growth must be pursued in a manner that respects the preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources. Environmental, economic, and social factors must also be considered. This update emphasizes the need to work together as one community with our neighbors in Frederick County since many issues transcend corporate political boundaries.

Consistent with State Code, this Plan incorporates principles of New Urbanism, Urban Development Areas, and Traditional Neighborhood Design. Adherence to this Plan will serve to improve the quality of life for the citizens of this community well into the future.

The City of Winchester is indebted to all the Planning Commissioners past and present who, without compensation, gave generously of their time over the past several years working on this Plan update.

A blue ink signature of Mark A. Loring, written in a cursive style.

Mark A. Loring
Chairman, Planning Commission

A blue ink signature of John David Smith, Jr., written in a cursive style.

John David Smith, Jr.
Mayor

"To provide a safe, vibrant, sustainable community while striving to constantly improve the quality of life for our citizens and economic partners."

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2022

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

**Sustainability –continuing into the future without decaying or collapsing.
–meeting today’s needs without sacrificing the future.**

That is the key principle of Winchester’s future vision. This Plan charts a new path toward environmental, economic, and social sustainability. It promotes a walkable community made up of vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods that honor Winchester’s rich history and use the latest technology. This Plan reflects City Council’s philosophy of proactively improving citizens’ quality of life. It is a strategy to make vision into reality –to make Winchester a Community of Choice.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Making this Plan involved a new and highly public approach. Early in the process, elected officials and city staff undertook a careful and comprehensive analysis of community conditions. Citizens helped develop citywide goals and objectives, as well as specific neighborhoods’ issues. The focus of this strategic planning document shifts from a citywide perspective to look at the city as a series of neighborhoods organized within ten Planning Areas.

Using the framework of the ten Planning Areas, the Plan states specific objectives and actions to improve the City. Alternative Development Concepts illustrate a future vision of the City consistent with New Urbanism: higher densities and walkable community. It maintains stable single-family residential neighborhoods but, advocates for either infill or redevelopment embracing a mixed-use approach to land use and zoning. This Traditional Neighborhood Design is consistent with Winchester’s heritage and may also bring new vigor and prosperity to its communities.

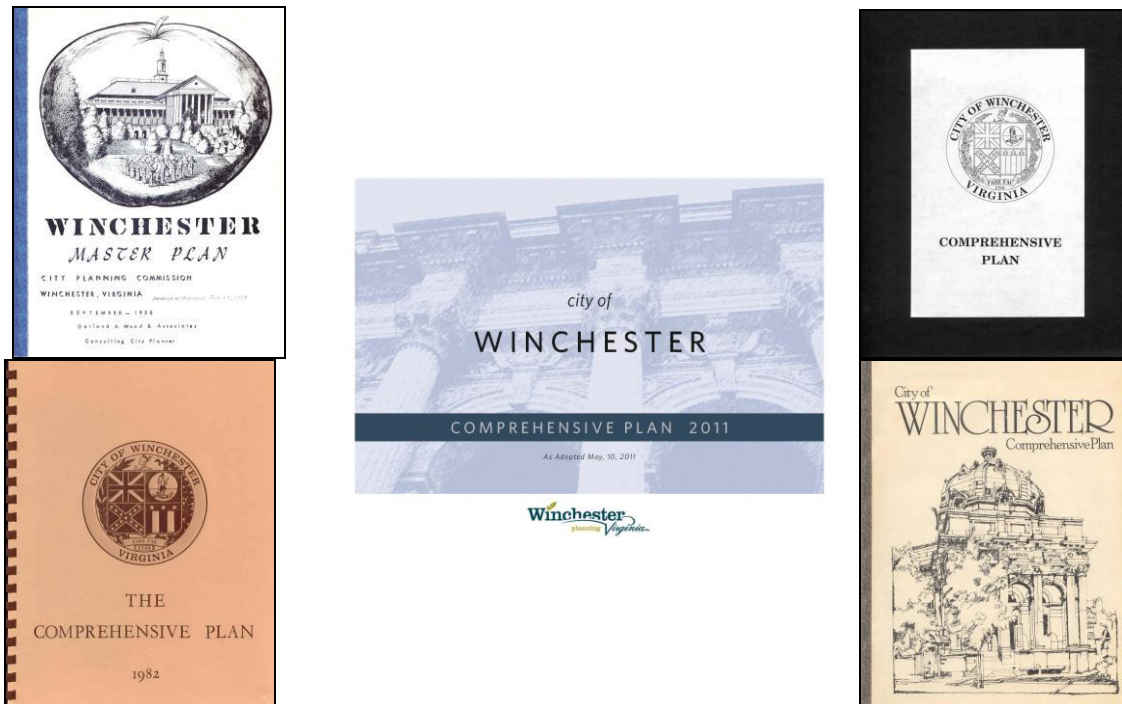
PLANNING HISTORY

This is an extensive update of Winchester’s fifth major comprehensive plan, finished in 2011. In the mid-1700s Colonel James Wood and Lord Thomas Fairfax drafted the original master plan layout of the old grid street town. Winchester officially became a city in 1874 and grew in a largely organic way. The City grew geographically by way of annexations of Frederick County land in 1905 and 1921 resulting in an area of 2.35 square miles by 1921.

In 1958, the Common Council adopted the first modern Comprehensive Plan. At that time, Winchester was much smaller geographically and population-wise than it is today and only partly subject to a zoning ordinance and zoning map. Interstate 81 was just a set of blueprints.

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The City Council adopted the second comprehensive plan in 1974. It followed the city's completion of the Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall and its near tripling in size through annexation of 5.8 square miles in early 1971 that brought the City to its current size of 9.3 square miles. The Division of State Planning and Community Affairs prepared the 1974 plan. It was a detailed document covering all aspects of city development, including analyses of physical conditions, land use, transportation, and community facilities.



Covers of the 1958, 1974, 1982, 1991, and 2011 Comprehensive Plans.

In 1982, a third comprehensive plan was adopted. It responded to the shift of department stores from Old Town to the then newly constructed Apple Blossom Mall, and only supplemented the earlier version, noting changed conditions and new approaches to old problems. Winchester was generally seeking the status quo, and the 1982 Plan lacked a chapter on implementation.

The fourth comprehensive plan, adopted in 1991, echoed the 1982 and 1974 efforts. It reflected the concerns about development pressures from the Washington metropolitan area on Winchester and Frederick County. The 1991 Plan resulted in extensive City-sponsored rezonings as it continued to grow in a suburban way.

In 1999 and 2005, the Comprehensive Plan was updated in parts. The 1999 Plan rewrote the transportation and future land use chapters and examined the inconsistencies between the existing zoning map and the future land use map. Again, the City undertook rezonings. Many of the changes were aimed at further reducing renter-occupied

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apartment and townhouse development and increasing suburban style ownership of single-family homes.

The 2005 Plan update primarily focused on a changed vision for the Meadow Branch Avenue corridor south of the hospital. It was the first Plan to advocate New Urbanist principles outside of the historic downtown area and resulted in a significantly different zoning pattern that permitted higher densities and mixing of land uses in an area previously zoned for low density, single-family residential use only.

By 2009, the City recognized the need for a whole new format for the Comprehensive Plan, one that emphasized sustainability and better integrated economic development initiatives with planning and zoning goals and objectives. The resulting 2011 Comprehensive Plan included chapters on two types of sustainability - economic and environmental. It also addressed social equity as a third form of sustainability. The Transportation chapter was retitled the Mobility chapter to deemphasize road building and instead focus more on alternative modes of transportation including walking and cycling.

Perhaps the two biggest changes included in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan were the inclusion of redevelopment scenarios for each of ten geographic planning areas in Chapter 11 and the replacement of a traditional Future Land Use Map with a Character Map to reflect the growing interest in mixed use development and a greater focus on identifying areas of the City where change is advocated as compared with other areas where the existing character of development should be preserved.

The 2011 Plan was recognized by the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association in 2013 as the Outstanding Comprehensive Plan for a Small City. The judges felt that the innovative format provided an excellent means for conveying the future vision of the City.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE PLAN

The Code of Virginia guides how Comprehensive Plans are to be prepared and adopted and what must be included. It specifically lays out the purpose of the Plan and who is responsible for preparing and adopting it. Appendix 1 provides further detail on the Virginia Code provisions for Comprehensive Plans.

The Plan must be made with the express purpose of “guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.”

Even though Winchester is completely included within the Winchester-Frederick County Metropolitan Planning Organization (Win-Fred MPO), the City must still develop a

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mobility plan that designates a system of infrastructure needs and recommendations. The Plan includes mobility options that support the recommended form of development: roadways, bike and pedestrian trails, sidewalks, railways, bridges, and public transportation facilities. The plan acknowledges a hierarchy of roads such as expressways, arterials, and collectors.

This Plan is a guide for a desired future vision, not an ordinance or code such as the City Zoning Ordinance. It outlines what should be done rather than what must be done. This update of the Plan continues to divide the City into ten Planning Areas for purposes of the careful studies and subsequent recommendations for redevelopment. It is strategic in nature and calls out specific actions that can be undertaken both short term as well as long term. The Plan is closely associated with the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which spells out expenditures for reinvesting public funds in the community.

PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

To create this update of the Winchester Comprehensive Plan, citizens, elected officials, and the Planning Commission worked closely with a cross-section of City staff. There were four public input sessions held in 2019, allowing residents to provide input.

The City engaged the services of EPR, PC consulting firm to prepare updated graphics for the Redevelopment Scenarios in Chapter Eleven to update the citywide Character Map. Otherwise, the Plan update was undertaken by City Planning Department staff, including assistance from various college and high school interns, thus saving the City the expense of hiring outside consultants to rewrite the Plan.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Winchester citizenry and economic community helped shape the future vision presented here. Outreach efforts by city staff included a webpage devoted to the Comprehensive Plan on the City's website, a 2019 Citizen Survey, a Visioning Exercise, a series of initial public inputs sessions, a public feedback session, and the state-mandated public hearings before final Planning Commission's and City Council votes. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the public participation outreach efforts.

One of the first major steps in the City's Comprehensive Plan update process was to conduct four public input meetings through July and August of 2019. At the input sessions, groups of citizens conducted a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-&-Threats (SWOT) Analysis for the future of Winchester. Following the SWOT Analysis, participants joined small breakout groups to conduct mapping exercises in which they marked up base maps to identify features to preserve and others to change, add, or improve.

Some common themes and ideas emerged during the SWOT exercises at the four initial input meetings.

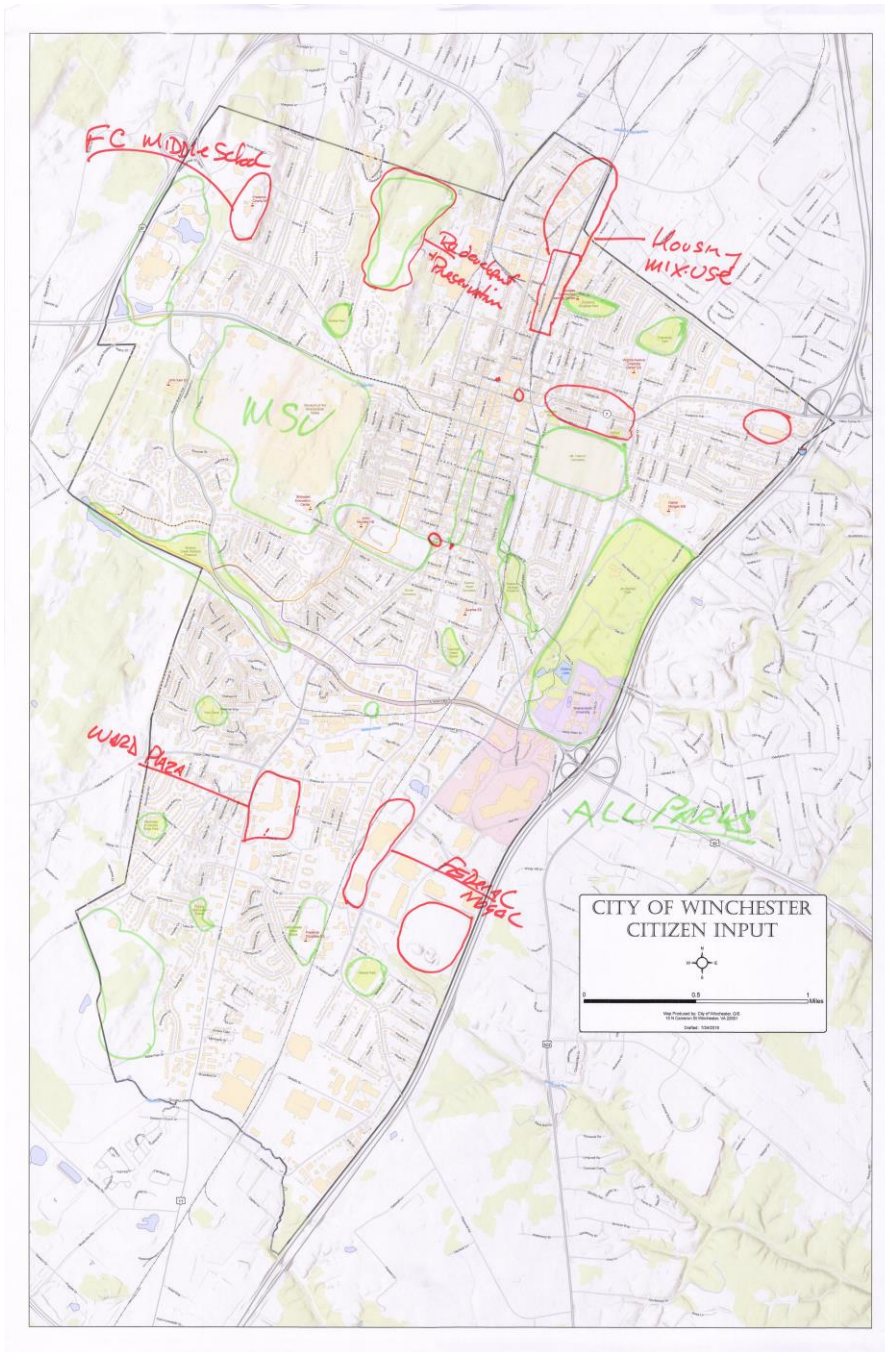
Strengths and Opportunities were:

- Diverse demographics
- Public facilities
- Shenandoah University
- Historic character & architecture
- Local government & civic engagement
- Friendly people
- Cultural opportunities & institutions
- Winchester Medical Center

Weaknesses and Threats were:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited transit & regional transportation
- Lack of walkability
- Lack of access to grocery stores
- Failure to address homelessness issue
- Lopsided focus on downtown
- Historic income split
- A need for diversity on City Council
- Insufficient directional information

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There was substantial general agreement among participants on many ideas, including:

- The need for revitalization and redevelopment of various key sites, especially Ward's plaza, and other older, underused commercial and industrial sites
- The need for continued efforts at historic preservation and rehabilitation, especially in the downtown area, including new uses, mixed uses, and somewhat greater intensification
- The need to preserve, enhance, and expand the existing parks and trails system, including completing the Green Circle Trail
- The need for infrastructure upgrades, especially key street connections and sidewalks, including completing the connection of Meadow Branch Avenue.

There also seemed to be a broadly felt, generally positive view toward growth and revitalization within the City, including the New Urbanist principles of mixed-use, connectivity, and human-scale, pedestrian-friendly development. There was also a generally positive view toward the trend of diversity in population and housing. There also appeared to be broadly shared concerns about the impact of rising fuel costs, the impact of growth in the County that could compete or conflict with the City's efforts to attract jobs, the recognition of the need for higher educational levels in the local labor force, and the need to find a competitive niche for commercial and industrial growth.

SYNTHESIS OF INPUTS

Armed with a wealth of detailed studies and surveys, as well as the extensive citizen input from formal and informal public outreach, the City Planning Commission then worked closely with City staff to refine citywide goals and objectives, stated in Chapter 3.

The Planning Commission dedicated time during many work sessions and meetings to discussing what would go into this update. Chapter 11 focuses on sustainable growth in each of the ten Planning Areas, noting critical properties with scenarios for how they might change.

Citizens gave good input as to where change should occur and where neighborhoods should stay the same. Planning for the City's future is less about controlling future land uses and more about achieving a shared vision for neighborhood revitalization and economic development citywide. The Character Map and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan will help the City guide and promote the kind of change and vitality called for in its future vision. They may also enhance individual property rights. These maps show the broad character of each neighborhood, as well as specific ideas for redevelopment on key sites. They are the cornerstone of the City's new vision for the future. The Character Map and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan are described in further detail in Chapter 9.

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PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on this Comprehensive Plan's composing, review, and approval process. Public endorsement of the Comprehensive Plan was either delayed considerably or moved online. As is standard, staff posted early drafts of the Comprehensive Plan to the City's website for public viewing. The Planning Commission was able to hold an open house and public hearing on August 31, 2021. After considering revisions subsequent to the public hearing, the Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Planning Commission at its October 19, 2021 regular meeting and the Commission certified a copy of the Plan to City Council at its November 16, 2021 regular meeting. It was then forwarded to the Planning & Economic Development Committee where it was reviewed at committee for several months and forwarded to Council on January 27, 2022. City Council conducted an open house and public hearing on March 1, 2022. The Plan was officially approved by City Council on March 8, 2022.

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CHAPTER TWO

PLANNING STUDIES

This chapter presents background information about Winchester and its ten neighborhood Planning Areas. The analysis here supports the sustainable vision of Winchester, the specific citywide goals, and the Planning Area objectives for particular neighborhoods.

Summary

The first part of this chapter describes Winchester's current and projected future conditions under the same policies. According to recent ACS studies, six important qualities about the city in 2020 are:

- The current population is about 28,078.
- 11.3% of residents are African American, and 18.3% are Hispanic.
- The years from 2008 and 2018 saw an increase in household size.
- The median household income is \$53,797.
- 41% of Winchester's residents have no college degree.
- 16.4% of population is 65 years of age or older.

Four important trends into the future include:

- A gradually growing population to 32,770 by 2040.
- A gradually aging population with more retirees and senior workers.
- Fewer households with married couples and children.
- A more diverse city, with a dramatic rise in Hispanic population predicted between 2020 and 2040.

The second part of this chapter describes current land use. Winchester previously adhered to the traditional Euclidean zoning approach, which segregates different land uses: homes, stores, and factories all in separate places. Residents and visitors under this approach must use cars to move about the city. Reliance on cars for so many everyday tasks contribute to lost time and money, stress, and pollution. Even the current street design creates pollution and complicates walking.

Winchester mixed land uses for the first 200 years of its history. It was intended back then that most people would walk to work, school, or when out shopping, which works well with mixed land use. This changed however following the Second World War with the widespread adoption of the automobile. City planning instead emphasized Euclidean principles and a more spread out, commuter-centric street design.

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Downtown Winchester however never abandoned its mixed land usage and pedestrian focus, though new construction in the southern half of the City has generally followed the Euclidean approach. The 2011 Comprehensive Plan adopted New Urbanism in place of Euclidean zoning, emphasizing a return to a more pedestrian and public transit friendly design. New mixed-use development tends to occur where property values are lowest, replacing vacant and blighted buildings with new apartments, homes, and businesses.

Later chapters of this plan outline how Winchester's government will promote a more sustainable and vibrant city. From zoning to street design, policy changes can enhance the entire community. This chapter presents background information to place the new plan in a helpful context.

Data Analysis

The U.S. Census provides detailed information about our neighborhoods. Data from the 2010 census is the primary source for the neighborhood-level statistics and charts in this chapter. Detailed data from the 2020 Census was not complete in time for this Plan, and detailed information will likely not be available until early in 2022.

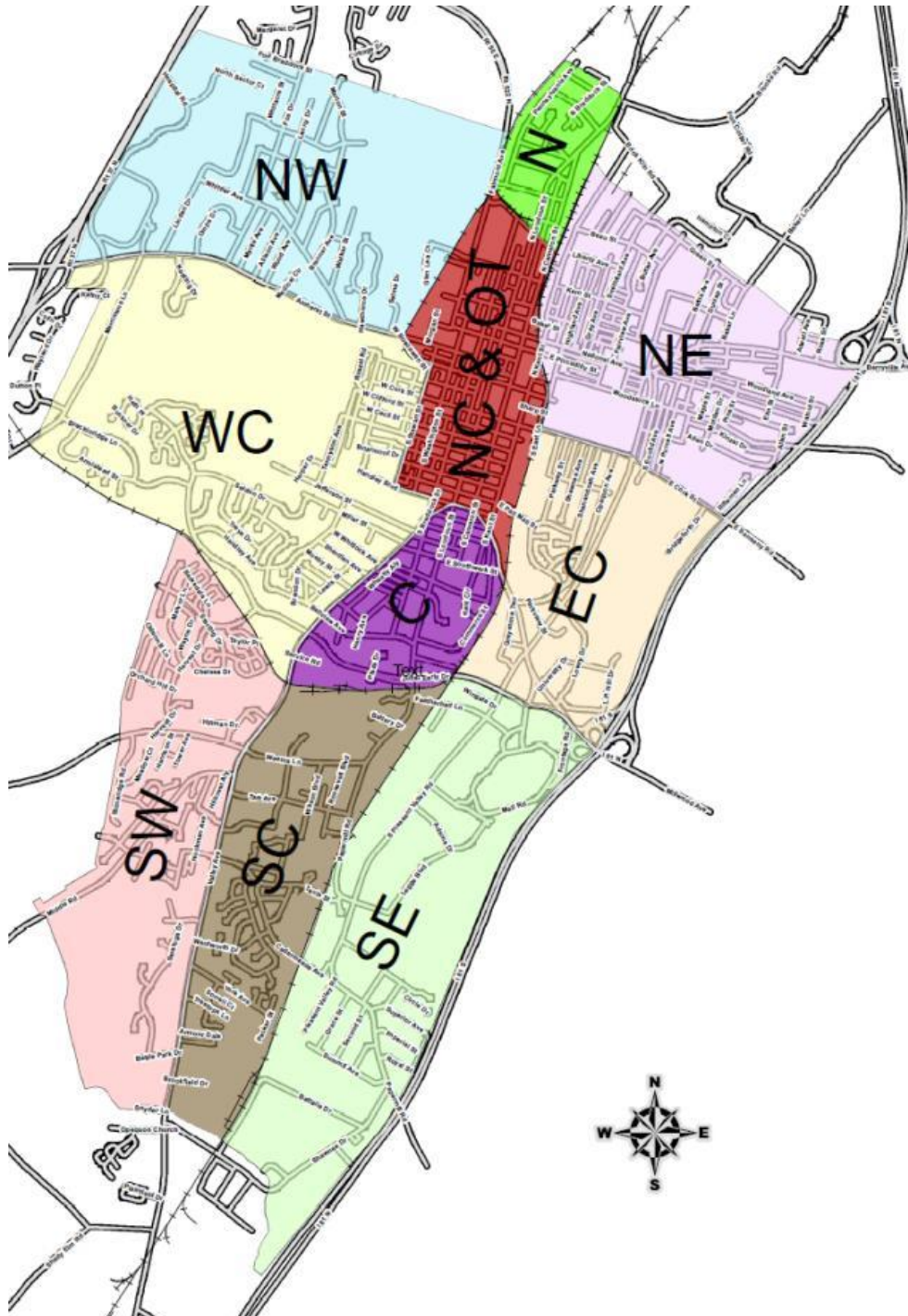
To bridge this long gap, the Census Bureau also conducts the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS does not question every person in the United States, but only a statistical sample. Because of the random sampling, recent data exists only for Winchester as a whole and not for individual neighborhoods. The first part of this chapter explains trends and current conditions in the city using neighborhood data from 2010 and citywide survey data from the 2014-2018 ACS five-year estimate.

Some charts in this chapter compare Winchester to peer localities. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides a baseline. Farther down the Shenandoah Valley, Martinsburg has some similar characteristics of population and history. Closer to Washington, D.C., Leesburg, and Manassas predict trends related to urbanization. The peer cities have similar commitments to strong downtowns, historic preservation, and sustainable growth.

For planning purposes, city staff divided Winchester into ten geographic planning areas. The map on the left shows their borders. The boundaries reflect some of the diversity of Winchester's neighborhoods. For example, the west central area has distinctive low-density housing and the Glen Burnie historic sites. The south-central area has higher density housing, businesses oriented around Valley Avenue, and industrial sites. The planning areas' boundaries also align with boundaries used by the U.S. Census, making it easy to compare neighborhoods using reliable data.

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This having been said, the data maps below divide Winchester into its five census tracts, which merge the 10 planning districts. Data for these maps was drawn from the 2013-2017 ACS 5-year estimate.



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Population Change

In 2010, the city of Winchester had 26,203 residents. The preliminary population count for 2019 was 28,078, a 7.1% increase. However, certain demographic groups grew more than others. If current trends continue, Winchester's population will continue to grow, and the city will also become more diverse in many ways.

The graph below shows Winchester's population growth during the 20th century and the best projection through 2040. The city's population has grown steadily, except for a surge during the 1920s and a slump during the 1960s. Annexation of land from Frederick County contributed to the sharp increase during the 1970s.

Population change has two causes: natural increase and migration. Natural increase is births minus deaths, but local government policy does not have much effect. Migration is movement into or out of the community, and government policy can make a place more or less attractive for new families and the businesses who serve and employ them.

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The table below shows population change in Winchester and its peers. Winchester’s population grew during the last 20 years, but Frederick County grew at a much faster pace. New immigrants preferred the county and cities of the D.C. suburbs.

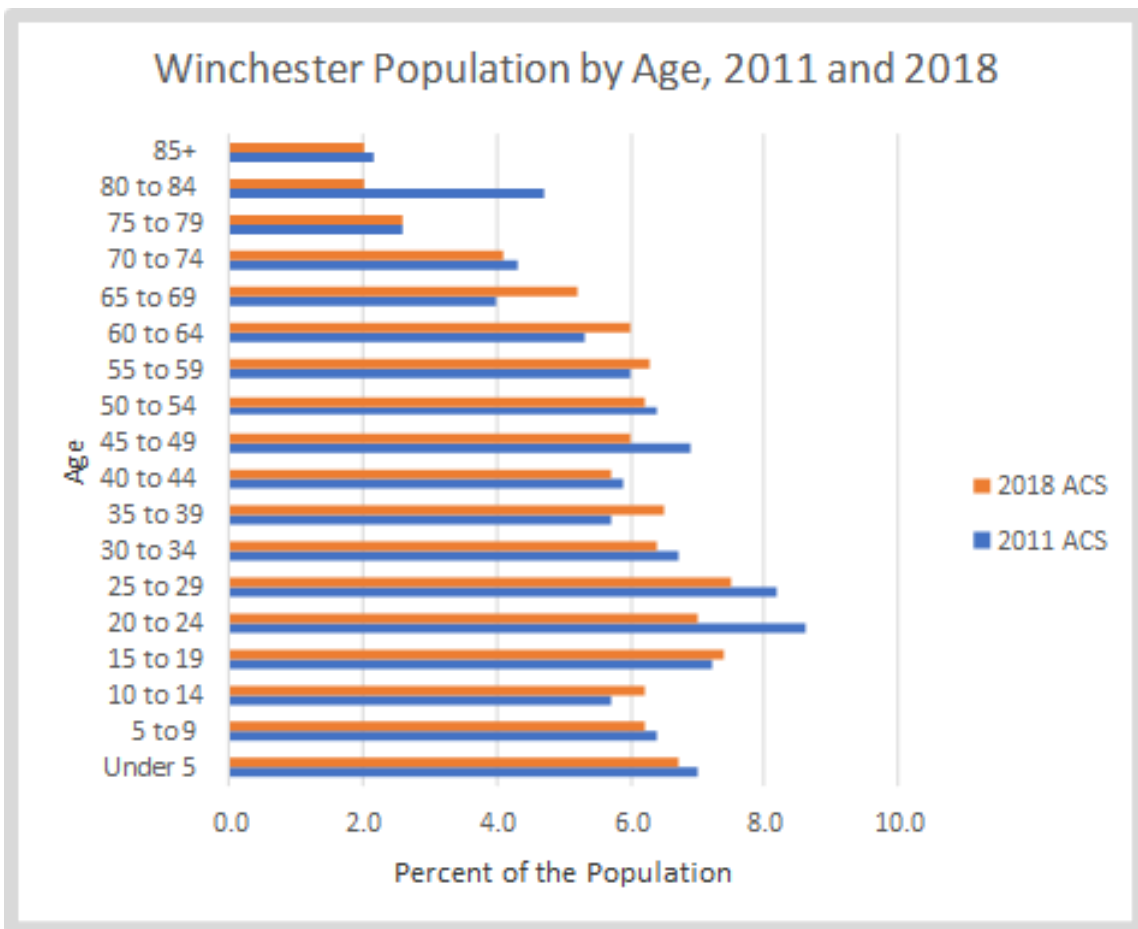
Geography Name	Total Population		
	2020	2030	2040
Virginia, Statewide	8,744,273	9,546,958	10,201,530
Clarke County	14,337	15,266	15,965
Frederick County	86,574	101,471	114,663
Page County	23,387	23,583	23,450
Shenandoah County	42,363	46,803	50,507
Warren County	39,925	44,444	48,256
Fredericksburg city	29,596	34,481	38,790
Hopewell city	23,302	23,557	23,482
Salem city	25,979	26,256	26,165
Staunton city	25,238	25,519	25,442
Waynesboro city	22,493	23,842	24,835
Winchester city	28,705	31,107	33,031

Forecasting population is not easy. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) created an estimate generated from migration, birth and death, and job forecast data. They project Winchester’s population to reach 31,000 by 2030, and more than 33,000 by 2040. However, population change depends on local policies like zoning and tax rates as well as national economic trends and immigration policies.

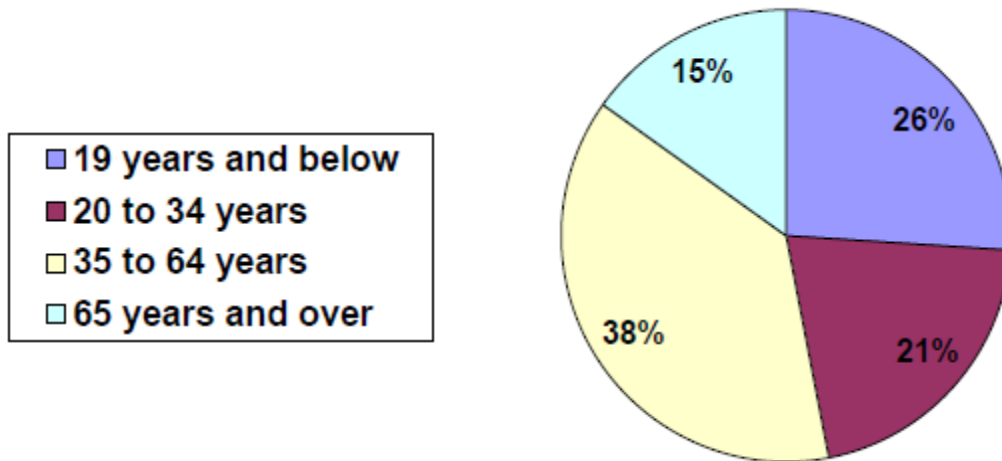
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From 2020 to 2040, the VEC projects Winchester's population to increase by 15%. It projects a 32% increase for Frederick County's during the same period. Land costs less in the county, and if all laws and conditions stay the same, more people will move there, and businesses will follow the residents away. This population shift means that without policy changes in Winchester and Frederick County, the city's historic role as an economic hub will diminish.

Over time, Winchester's demographics have also changed. The following pages discuss racial and ethnic change, but age is also important. The chart below shows the continued aging of the City's population since 2010. From 2010 to 2018, persons older than 65 became a larger part of Winchester's population. There was also growth in the youngest two age brackets of children. These children will soon cause elementary and especially middle school enrollments to grow.



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The table below shows age statistics for Winchester and its peers. A median age figure of 37.3 means that half the residents are younger than 37.3. The youngest and oldest residents tend to place greater demands on city services. Sometimes called the primary workforce, the 18-64 age group pays taxes which fund most city services. An aging population could mean less revenue for the city from sales and property taxes. Universities attract young residents and reduce the average age in a city. Winchester has a smaller primary workforce, and it is becoming known as a good place for retirement and aging. Like most changes, this trend presents both problems and opportunities.

Age Distribution in Winchester and Peer Localities, 2018				
Source: 2010 Census and 2014-18 American Communities Survey				
Locality	% Under 18	% 20 - 64	% 65 and Older	Change in Median Age, 2010 to 2018
Winchester	22.9	61.8	15.6	37 to 37.3
Leesburg	27.6	61.6	8.2	32.1 to 35.1
Manassas	26.9	61.7	9.1	33.3 to 33.7
Martinsburg	25.2	58.6	14.3	36.3 to 35.3
Virginia	22.2	60.3	14.6	37.2 to 38.1

Household size and family size measure another facet of communities. The Census defines a household as all the people who live together, whether or not they are related. A family is a group of related people who live together. So, a married couple with one child and tenant renting a basement suite is a family of three and a household of four.

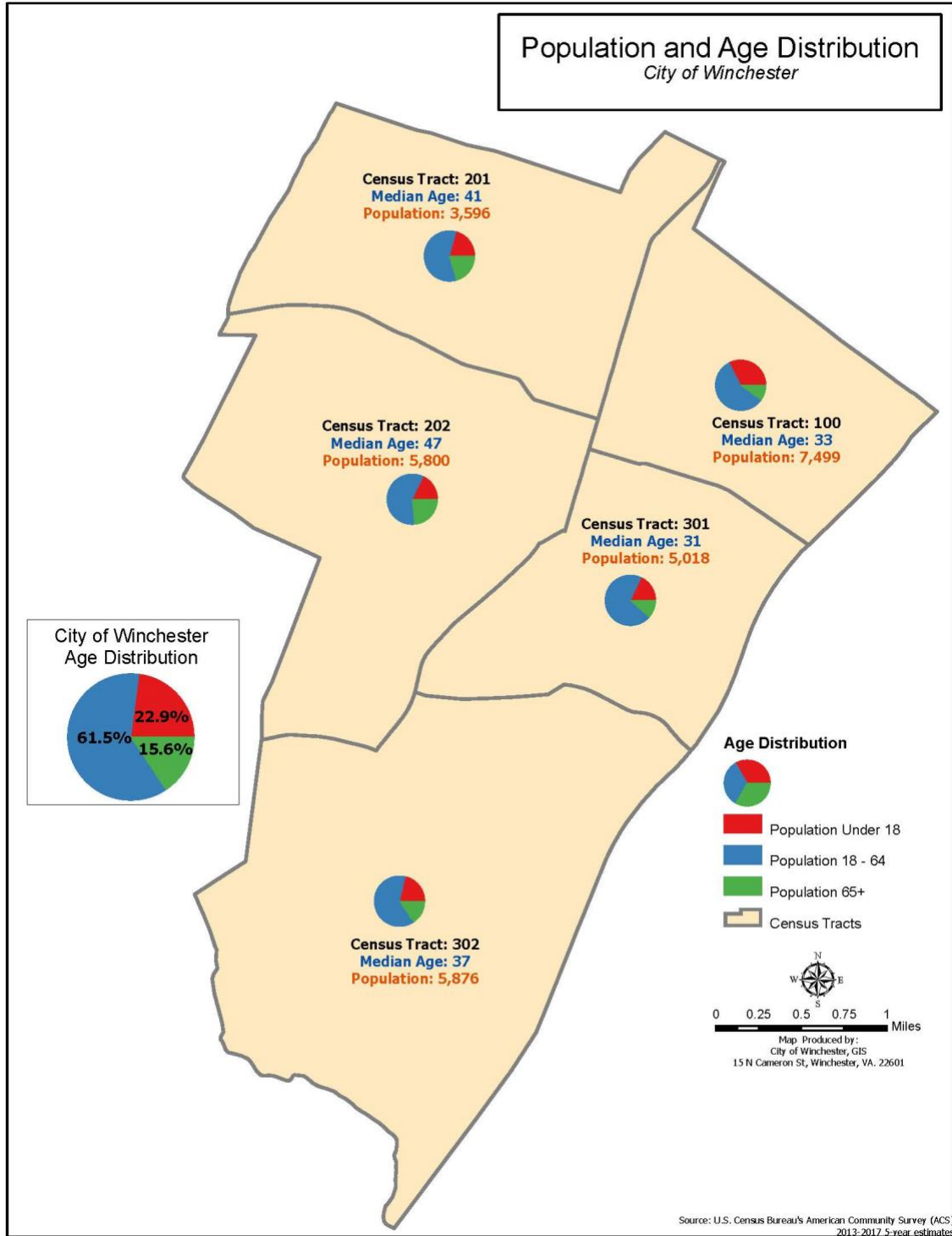
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Household and Family Size in Winchester, 2008-2018		
	Average Household	Average Family
2008 ACS	2.41	3.34
2018 ACS	2.54	3.32

The graph shows that almost half of Winchester’s households are not families. These may be college students, young professionals, widows, or transient residents. The increase in both household and family size is partly due to recession –in 2008, more families included a grandparent or high school graduate. Recent trends resulting in higher rent prices have resulted in more young people living with family members for longer periods. More often, renters shared houses and apartments.

The map on the next page shows the population and age distribution for Winchester’s five census tracts as of the 2017 ACS 5-year estimate. These are the most recent data on this level. The downtown and eastern neighborhoods are most populous, while the western and southern areas are among the least dense.

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Older and younger residents tend to live in different neighborhoods. The area around Shenandoah University has the lowest median age because of the many students living there. Shenandoah’s student body of 3,800 does not make Winchester as much of a “college town” as Harrisonburg, where the city median age is 23, or Blacksburg, where it is 22.

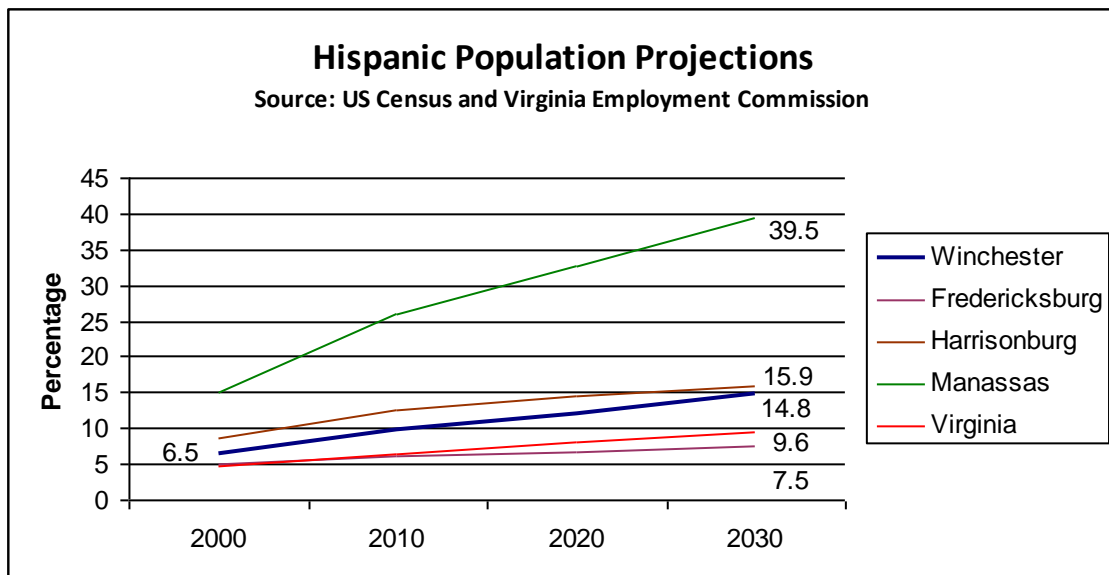
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The central neighborhoods are home to many families with children; western areas have larger populations of older families and retirees.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Shawnee, Iroquois, and Piscataway tribes hunted and traded in this area during the 17th century. Settlers from Britain and Germany founded the town in 1744. Slaves of African ancestry comprised up to 15 percent of the population in the mid-19th century, but after emancipation many African American families moved north. More recently, Winchester has proved attractive to newcomers from across the United States and around the world, especially Latin America. The city is becoming more culturally diverse.

The growth of Winchester’s Hispanic population is one of the most important demographic changes in the city. Depending on their background, some Hispanics may also consider themselves white, black, Native American, or multiracial: “Hispanic” is not a race, but an ethnic label based upon national origin. Winchester’s Hispanic community is not a homogenous group. Slightly under half (2,128 of 4,842 in the 2018 ACS) declared Mexican ancestry, but others arrived from the many nations of Central and South America. According to the 2018 ACS, 47 percent of Latinos speak English very well, and about 5 percent of the population does not speak English very well at all.

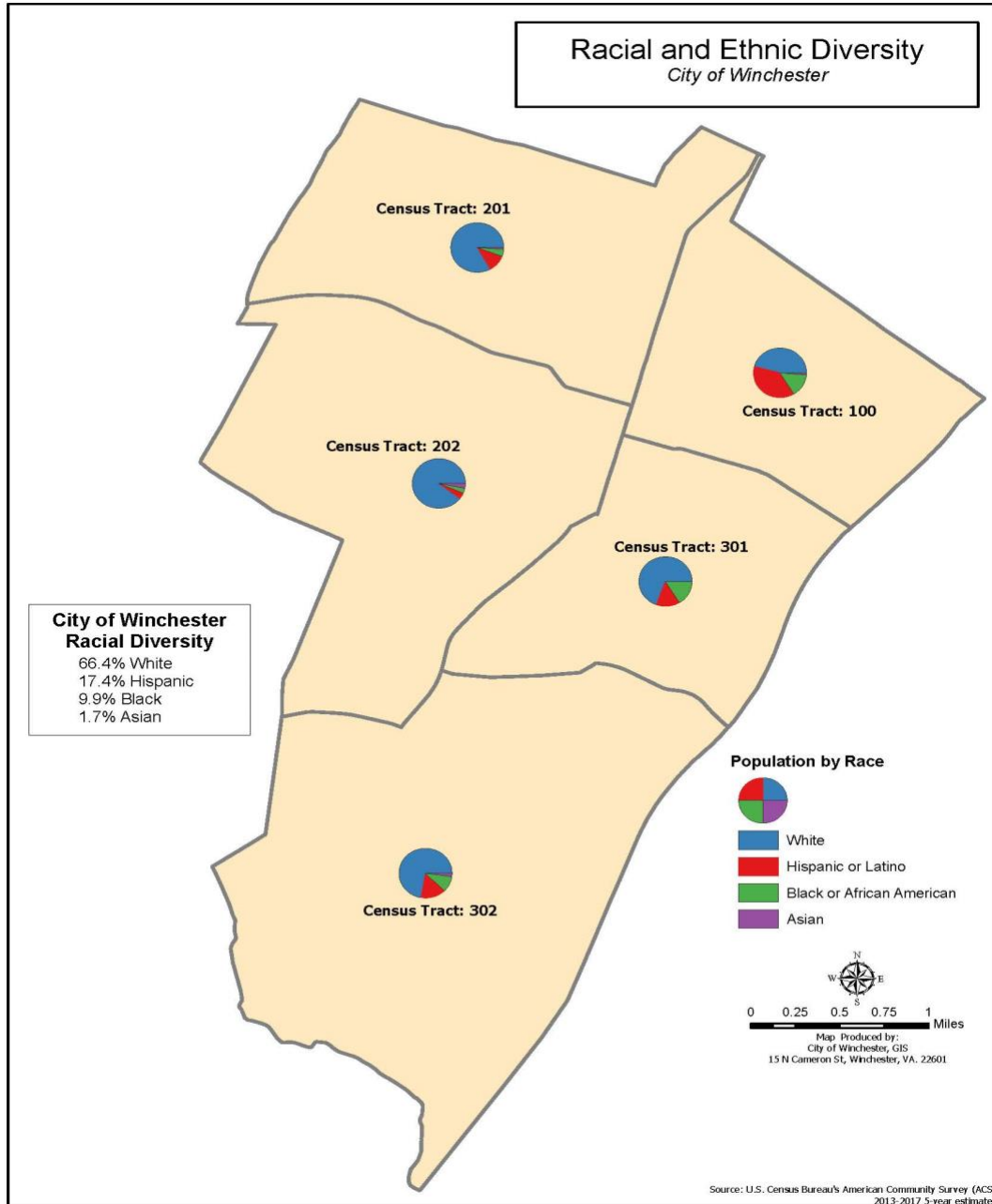


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The graph above shows projected growth of Hispanic communities in Winchester and some peer localities. Winchester will see a larger increase than the state average. The Virginia Employment Commission estimates that the number of Latinos in Winchester will increase significantly through 2030, and a little under half of The City's population will be Hispanic by 2040. The city's future growth entails increased diversity.

The map on the next page shows the distribution of different racial and ethnic groups in Winchester. More minority families live in the central and eastern neighborhoods, especially the northeast. An overwhelming majority of residents in the western areas are white. In 2010, the eastern neighborhoods had the largest Hispanic populations, and the concentrations shown in the map remain fairly accurate. The 2020 Census will likely reveal larger Hispanic communities in every part of Winchester.

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(Note: Populations that identify as white or black in the chart above identify as just that ethnicity. Percentages do not include populations that identify as both black and Hispanic or white and Hispanic.)

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Income, Poverty, and Education

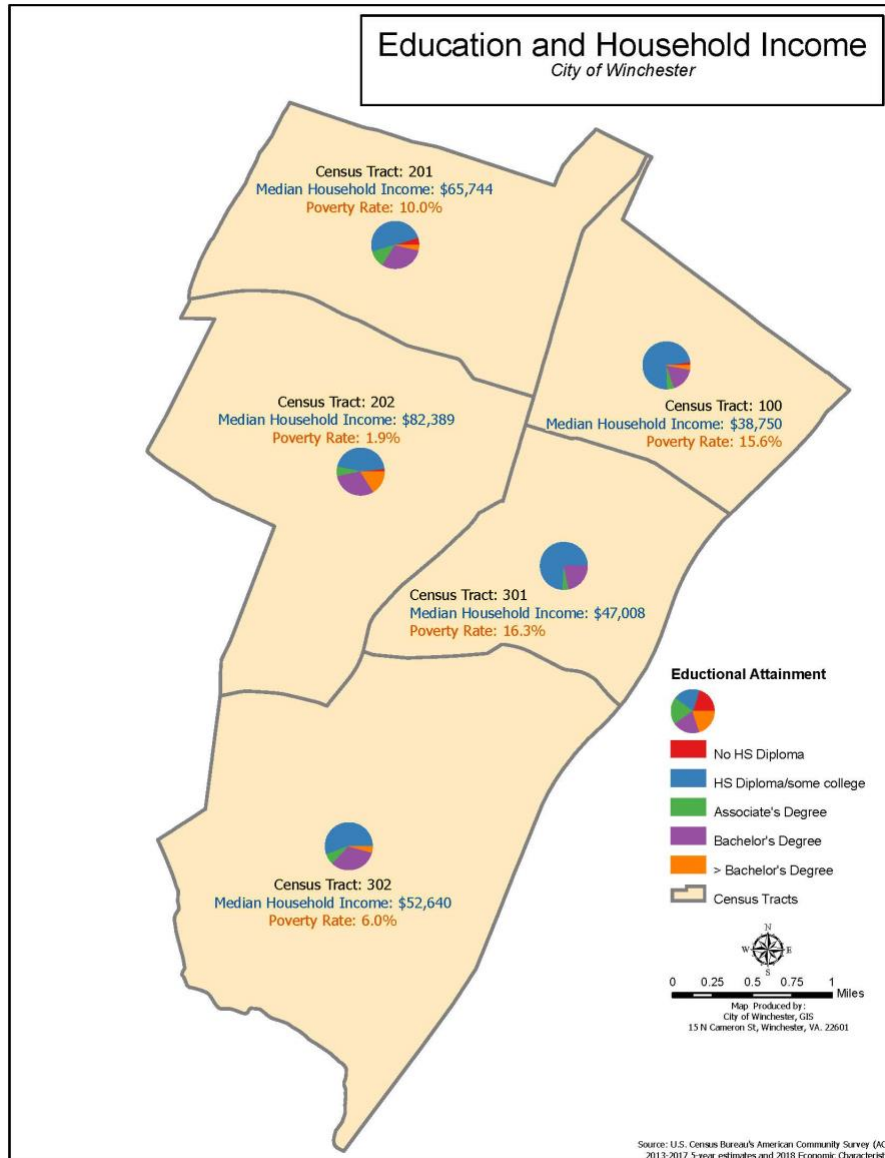
Winchester currently faces challenges related to income, poverty, and education. While many city residents enjoy high incomes and hold advanced degrees, many others live in or near poverty. Almost 16% of the city’s adults aged 25 years of age or older have no high school diploma, and in 2019, 13.3% of residents were living in poverty. 48% of Frederick County’s households were at or below the poverty, compared to 37% for Winchester. Additionally, a significant portion of the City’s population fit the ALICE profile, being Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed. In surrounding Frederick County, 63% of the population fit the ALICE profile, as opposed to 26% in Winchester.

The table below shows the most recent income statistics for Winchester and peer localities. The city’s residents have incomes around the group average, but lower than the state average despite lower unemployment. This table shows that half of the city’s families (related persons living together) earn less than \$66,557 per year. The figure for nonfamily households is lower partly because it includes students, retirees living alone, and many households where only one person works. The table shows the impact of proximity to high-wage government and technology jobs in the capital area. Please note that these figures are from before the coronavirus pandemic.

2018 Income Statistics for Winchester and Peer Localities				
Source: ACS and 2010 Census and BLS for Martinsburg	Median Family Income	Median Nonfamily Income	Persons Living in Poverty, Past Year	Persons Unemployed
Winchester	\$66,557	\$37,739	15%	3.8%
Leesburg	\$127,975	\$67,558	4.9%	2.7%
Manassas	\$83,744	\$54,000	8.6%	5.7%
Martinsburg	\$47,328	\$32,414	27.1%	11.9%
Virginia	\$86,628	\$43,168	10.9%	5%

The map on the next page shows an association between income, poverty, and education in Winchester’s neighborhoods. The western neighborhoods’ residents are most likely to have undergraduate and graduate degrees, and they also have the least poverty and highest income. Central and eastern neighborhoods’ residents are less likely to have finished high school and more likely to have low incomes. Chapter Four examines Economic Sustainability.

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City-wide, 41% of adults have no college education. 14.9% of Winchester’s adults have graduate degrees. The city’s neighborhoods reflect this gap: the median household income of the wealthiest area, census tract 202, is more than double that of census tract 100 in the northeast. City-wide, the median household income for 2018 was \$53,797, but the average household income was much greater, \$75,613. This means that half of Winchester’s families make less than \$53,797 per year, but a small number are much wealthier. With a majority of its working adults lacking any college education, Winchester faces constrained prospects for attracting high-wage jobs. Chapter Eight examines Education as part of Community Services and Facilities.

(Note: info on map supplemented with 2018 Economic Characteristics because ESRI’s published dataset that looks at poverty levels considered the past 12 months of income data. This accounted for significantly higher poverty rates in each census tract.)

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Housing

Winchester currently lacks enough high-quality rental housing. The 2014-2018 ACS reported 5.9% of rental units vacant; some of these vacant properties are blighted and unsafe to use, though this number has decreased significantly over the decade. The median rent payment is \$1011. Because Winchester's rental housing tends to be at lower rents and of lower quality, some citizens associate home ownership with a higher standard of living and a healthier neighborhood.

This is not necessarily true. Homeownership has more to do with density than poverty. The outer neighborhoods have many owner-occupied detached houses. Rented duplexes, townhouses, and apartments are common in central neighborhoods. In the central corridor of planning areas, and in the southwest, detached single-family units comprise a minority of the housing stock. More densely populated neighborhoods tend to have more rented properties. Neighborhoods with little homeownership may not be poor: for example, an area might have many luxury apartments and wealthy residents but little homeownership.

While many persons in many stages of life may choose to rent, homeownership has often been a path to safe investment and wealth creation. There is some evidence that homeowners are more attentive to maintaining their property, to the benefit of the entire community. Homeowners may also be more likely to live in the same place for many years.

With the city's population nearing 30,000, and with little open space left to build on, only denser construction and mixed use can accommodate new residents. Planning goals emphasize high-quality, denser housing in appropriate mixed-use neighborhoods. New buildings and renovations of current ones will provide new opportunities for both renting and owning. Chapter Seven examines Housing.

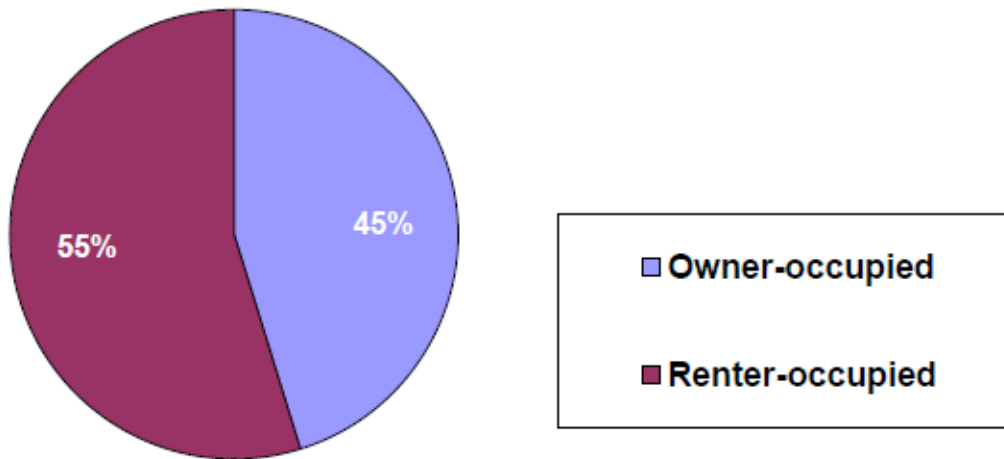
Transience

Transience refers to residents living in a community for a short time. There are many reasons for a person to live in Winchester for only a few years. A university student may graduate and move elsewhere. A contracted builder or computer programmer may finish a job and move on. Or a young family may have just moved in from another city. So, some transience is not necessarily unhealthy for a neighborhood or a city.

The U.S. Census asks residents how long they have lived at their current address. Between 2010 and 2018, 30% of the Winchester population moved to a different house; the rest lived in the same house through that entire period. Compared to surrounding communities and the United States as a whole, Winchester has lower rates of owner-occupied housing and higher rates of renter occupied housing.

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Housing Tenure, 2018



In 2018, Winchester's northwestern, central, and northeast neighborhoods had the most stable populations. The residents there are more likely to have children in school or be retired and also have a working-class or greater income. Parts of the central corridor, east central, and southwest also have considerable transience, but for various reasons, including:

1. Turnover in apartments. Some apartments are meant for short lease terms. Many university students, for instance, do not live in the same place a full year.
2. New construction. When a new house is built, the owner cannot have lived there for a long time. New houses in Winchester's southwest create a temporarily high transience figure, even if those families intend to stay there for many years.
3. Job-related turnover. Some good careers require workers to move frequently. These jobs may be in consulting, sales, or construction. Winchester is a temporary home for some of these workers, who may inflate transience figures.
4. Poverty. A person or family with unsteady income may frequently move to find affordable housing. There is a rough correlation between poverty and transience. Everything else the same, a poorer neighborhood may have higher transience than a wealthier one.

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Workforce and Commuting

The table below shows Winchester’s workforce by industry according to the ACS. The table illustrates the city’s role as a regional hub for education, healthcare, and retail. The city also has a balanced base of manufacturing, management, and information services. Chapter Four addresses specific industry analyses and growth potential in greater detail.

Winchester Workforce by Industry, 2014-2018 ACS

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	Education, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	Retail trade	Agriculture, Forestry, and Mining	Construction	Arts, Hospitality, and Food Services
14,253	3,197	1,668	271	912	1,776
64.3%	23.3%	12.2%	2%	6.6%	12.9%

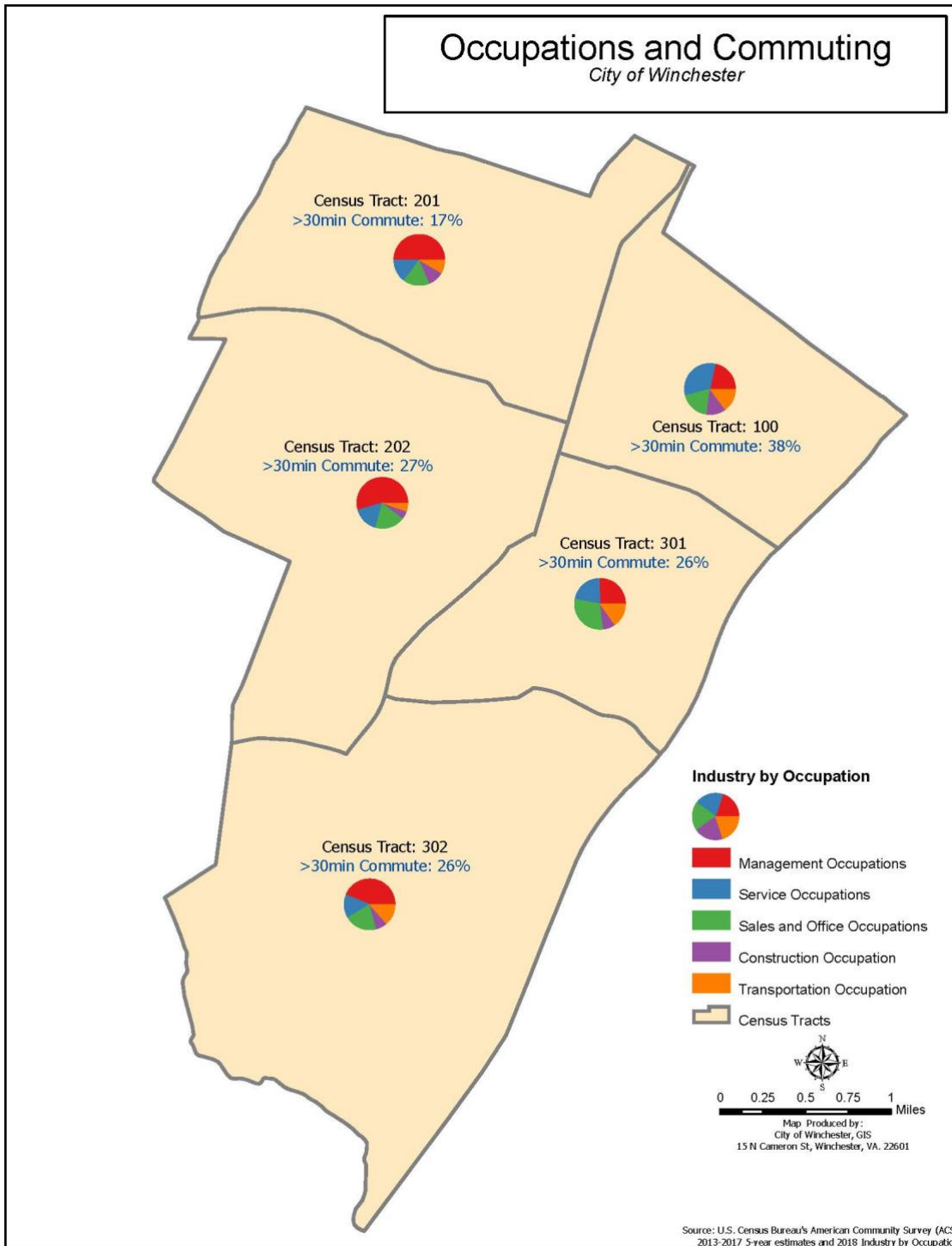
Other services, except public administration	Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative services	Manufacturing (Includes food production)	Transportation, Warehousing, Wholesaling, and Utilities	Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	Public administration
746	1,611	910	503	668	883
5.4%	11.7%	6.6%	3.7%	4.9%	6.4%

The map on the next page shows what kinds of jobs are most common in each neighborhood and how long residents commute each morning. Work in the Management/Professional category tends to pay the most. The western neighborhoods of the city have the highest concentrations of workers in this category. They also have the highest incomes.

A fraction of workers in every neighborhood has long commutes. Residents in census tract 201 in the northwest corner of the map have the shortest commutes, as it contains residential areas close to one of the city’s largest employers: Winchester Medical Center. Winchester, a commute of 30 minutes or more includes jobs to the north beyond Martinsburg and to the west beyond Capon Bridge in West Virginia, to the south beyond Front Royal, and to the east beyond Round Hill in Loudoun County. Likewise, most residents of Frederick, Clarke, Berkeley, and Jefferson counties can easily commute to Winchester. Many Winchester residents commute east towards Washington. They may work there as welders, teachers, or lawyers, but they face the same transportation problems. Only about three percent of Winchester’s adults walk to work.

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(Note: map supplemented with Industry by Occupation table from 2018 because ESRI did not have a ready to use dataset published.)



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Existing Land Use in Winchester

Euclidean Zoning ordinances segregate many sections of the city for certain uses. Winchester created such zoning between 1940 and 1960. This long history of segregated land use result in the following characteristics today:

- The downtown area has a mix of businesses and apartments.
- The western neighborhoods feature a regional medical center and many single-family homes.
- The northern and eastern neighborhoods have important commercial and industrial areas, along with housing spanning a range of densities and values.
- To the east is a university, a large park, and several neighborhoods of single-family homes.
- The southern areas contain commercial and industrial projects along the main roads, and a variety of housing in a range of densities and values.
- Newer single-family homes and a large battlefield preserve dominate in the southwest.
- Schoolyards, the Glen Burnie Estate, the Kernstown Battlefield, and cemeteries supplement the green space of parks.
- There are three small farm properties, two of which have conservation easements, still inside the city limits.

Chapter 11 describes the bounds and character of each planning area in greater detail.

The [zoning map](#) shows the location of Winchester's 16 zoning districts. Each district has a set of rules for what kind of structures may be built and how those structures may be used. These rules specify the maximum height of buildings in different parts of the city, how large a space must separate buildings, what kinds of business may be conducted, how many people may live in a building, and so on. The zoning map generally shows:

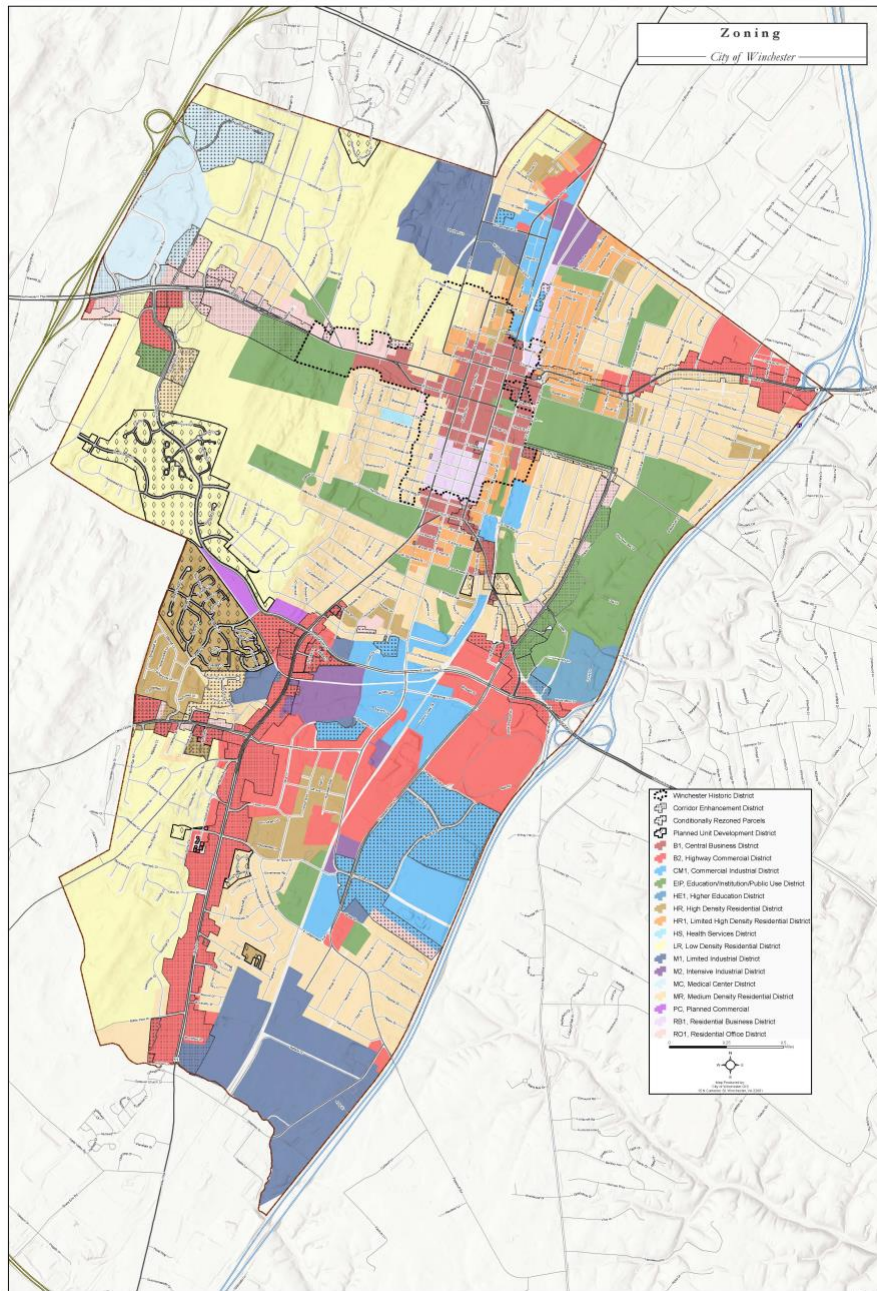
- Low-Density Residential districts in the western neighborhoods.
- Medium-Density Residential districts in the eastern and central neighborhoods.
- High-Density Residential areas downtown and in pockets of the north, south, and east.
- A Central Business District area which allows mixed uses.
- Industrial activity mostly on the northern and southern edges with two large industries in the south-central portion of the city.
- Large commercial districts along the main roads into the city.
- The university on the eastern edge and the hospital in the northwest corner.

The zoning map also shows three special overlay zoning areas. Each of these overlays several zoning districts but establishes additional rules. The Historic Winchester District downtown preserves traditional architecture and design. Multiple Corridor Enhancement Districts follow main roads into the city and promote mobility and good first impressions.

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And Planned Unit/Planned Commercial Districts regulate new flexible design development to protect the environment and prevent crowding. Finally, the Floodplain Districts described in the Zoning Ordinance does not appear on the Zoning Map.

The City Council can change the rules for each zoning district. It can also rezone parcels of land into a different zoning district. Because they affect the choices of builders, businesses, and home buyers, these two actions are important ways that Winchester's government influences the future of the city. The [Zoning Ordinance](#) is a powerful tool to realize the future vision of Winchester.



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Euclidean Zoning

Like most towns and cities, Winchester has until recently used Euclidean zoning to plan land use. Euclidean zoning segregates different land uses. Houses can only be built in some places, apartment buildings in others, shopping centers and factories in yet others. The biggest benefit of Euclidean zoning is that it prevents unpleasant mixing of land uses. It ensures that a factory will not be built in the middle of a quiet neighborhood. Under Euclidean zoning, some districts of a city may be exclusively residential, others may have only shops and stores, and still others will have only offices and factories.

Euclidean zoning works best when it is easy to move between districts. In a town where almost everyone has a personal automobile, where roads are wide and parking is ample, residents and visitors can move between residential, industrial, and commercial areas without stress or delays. They can drive to work and then to a commercial area and still have a peaceful neighborhood. This is the ideal of the American suburb.

On the other hand, if a city becomes larger and lacks good mobility options, Euclidean zoning quickly becomes dysfunctional. When residential, industrial, and commercial areas are separated, it takes a long time to move between them. Every resident and visitor have to drive across the city to enjoy any part of it. Too many cars delay everyone, waste time and money, cause residents to feel stressed, and pollute the environment.

Today, Winchester suffers some negative effects of Euclidean zoning. Residents and visitors rely on cars for most movement around the city, which causes several problems:

1. Parking lots waste space which could be used for businesses or parks.
2. Traffic congestion wastes time, and high fuel costs waste money.
3. Exhaust emissions pollute the air.
4. Traffic endangers pedestrians and bicyclists.

Additionally, reliance on cars tends to push new development to the edges of Winchester, where wider roads and bigger parking lots make driving easier. This pattern neglects the downtown area, which may become increasingly blighted. Finally, recent commercial development just beyond the city limits creates competition for sales tax revenue with Frederick County, potentially harming cooperation, and service delivery in both places.

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes the limitations of Euclidean zoning and has instead opted to embrace New Urbanist principles of compact, mixed use development. The plan preserves quiet, stable neighborhoods while revitalizing unproductive and blighted areas. Revising the City's zoning promises to make Winchester more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

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New Urban Development

In some ways, New Urbanism resembles Winchester's growth patterns during its first 200 years. New Urban, mixed use development recognizes that some land uses complement each other. It zones areas of land so a variety of buildings can exist together, with an eye for improving mobility without the use of a car.

In a mixed-use area, residents and visitors do not have to drive as much. Some of the places they like to go are close enough to walk to. These neighborhoods can be more sustainable and more fun to live in. They also advance the basic property rights of landowners by providing more freedom to build and use different structures. The picture below is an example of New Urbanist Development. The main street running left to right across the middle of the image shows Berryville Avenue, one of the City's vital arteries.



Rather than dividing the area up between commercial and residential zones, this mixed-use development proposes the construction of buildings with commercial space on the ground and residential space on the floors above. By positioning the new street's entrance in front of the highway ramp, visitors will be able to access things like restaurants and lodging without needing to merge onto Berryville Avenue. Residents and workers, both here and in surrounding areas, will be able to access new commercial space by foot or bike, further decreasing traffic congestion.

Mixed Use development has its dangers and drawbacks. When residential and commercial areas mix, some residents may be offended by noise, foot and vehicle traffic, or the kinds of business activity which occurs for example, some people like living close to a bar, and some do not. They may leave, and then many of the businesses will fail. It is important to strike a balance between land use patterns. Recognizing that, this plan strives to preserve stable neighborhoods and focus new mixed-use construction in areas of blight and neglect.

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Urban and Suburban Growth in Winchester

In previous decades, developers of new homes and businesses in Winchester could easily build on vacant land or farmland inside the city limits. Such construction cost relatively little and increased the city's tax base.

The oldest part of the city is the current downtown area. Many of the buildings their date to the eighteenth and nineteenth century and retain historic value. The next ring of growth came during the first half of the twentieth century, in what are now the central and northeast planning areas. Before personal automobiles became common, the city grew in a dense and compact way. Businesses and homes mixed together, and most residents could easily walk to work, school, and shopping.

After World War II, the city's population grew steadily, and in 1974 Winchester annexed land from Frederick County. Many of the homes in the east central, northwest, and west central planning areas were built during this period, along with the commercial areas along Valley Avenue. In the last thirty years, new residential construction filled the west central and southwest areas, and large commercial chains concentrated in the southeast, including the Apple Blossom Mall and the South Pleasant Valley Road "big box" corridor.

Since the 1950s, many more families have bought homes, and multiple automobiles per household have become the norm. Winchester grew "out" rather than "up," as cheap land on the edge of the city was developed from farms into homes and businesses. With cars, families could easily move between residential subdivisions and commercial strips. Winchester's growth has thus been more suburban than truly urban. Population density today is lower than it was in 1950. Downtown is less important to residents' daily routines.

Winchester's population is projected to grow steadily and reach 33,000 by 2040. Nearly all of the available grassy land has already been built on, and what remains is precious to the community: Glen Burnie Farm, Jim Barnett Park, and Mt. Hebron Cemetery, among other places. The only way for more people and businesses to come to Winchester is for denser housing and shopping to replace the current low-density construction. Planners call this "infill redevelopment."

Chapter Ten of this Plan addresses Historic Preservation and Urban Design.

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CHAPTER THREE

VISION, PRINCIPLE, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Recognizing that the main purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a vision for the future of the community, this chapter sets out the updated vision for Winchester based upon the adopted principles of Sustainability. Also included in this chapter are the adopted citywide goals and objectives. More specific objectives and actions are provided for each of the ten geographic Planning Areas in Chapter Eleven.

CITY VISION STATEMENT

The City Council adopted this mission statement at its 2008 retreat:

To provide a safe, vibrant, sustainable community while striving to constantly improve the quality of life for our citizens and economic partners.

The statement emphasizes a proactive local government that values safety and sustainability while recognizing the need to continually seek partnership opportunities for enhancing the quality of life of the entire community.

As part of the 2021 review and update to the Plan, the Planning Commission noted the oddity of the phrase “***while striving to constantly improve the quality of life for our...economic partners.***” It is not so much the ‘quality of life’ that the City strives to improve for businesses (many of which are not based in Winchester) but rather to constantly improve the local business environment. The Commission suggests that a slightly modified Mission Statement could read:

To provide a safe, vibrant, sustainable community while striving to constantly improve the quality of life for our citizens and business climate for our economic partners.

In addition, the City adopted the following Citywide Vision Statement, which helps to guide the Economic Strategic Plan:

To be a beautiful, vibrant city with a historic downtown, growing economy, and great neighborhoods, with a range of housing options and easy movement.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE- SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the key principle woven through this Plan update. Sustainability is measured in three areas consisting of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Energy is a fourth area of sustainability that is sometimes identified. In the case of this plan, the environmental concept includes energy. These three aspects of sustainability are

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envisioned to guide decision making by the City, including the formulating of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the enacting of local public laws, and the deliberation of public and private development proposals.

‘COMMUNITY OF CHOICE’ VALUES

This Plan envisions Winchester as a ‘Community of Choice’ and includes strategic elements to ensure that the vision is realized. In defining a Community of Choice, an important step was to state Winchester’s core values related to quality of life. The following ‘Quality of Life’ values define the ‘Community of Choice’ envisioned by the City Planning Commission and City Council:

Quality of Life Values

- EDUCATION- Highly educated citizenry
- PROSPERITY- Economic opportunities and the spread of wealth
- DIVERSITY-Vibrant, age diverse population that is properly served
- STEWARDSHIP- Environmentally sustainable
- PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS- Enhanced environmental, natural, recreational & cultural opportunities
- HERITAGE, CONTEXT- Preservation of historic, architectural & cultural resources
- SHELTER- Neighborhood preservation, affordable & new housing
- SAFETY- Safety conscious planning and design
- EFFICIENCY- Convenience, mobility
- ORDER- Diverse land use, Redevelopment
- CIVIC INVOLVEMENT- Engaged public, Social sustainability

CITYWIDE GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION

From the values above, Winchester’s citywide goals were formulated. The goals consider the extensive research of existing conditions and careful analysis of emerging trends shown in Chapter Two. Goal formulation also considered the perceptions of where the city wants to go to as expressed during the extensive public input process. This includes input in the form of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis as well as the Preserve/Change exercise. The goals also factor in feedback as expressed in the Citizen Satisfaction Survey which measured satisfaction levels and ratings on the importance of various City services. Details from these outreach efforts are

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provided in Appendix 3 of this Plan. This comprehensive synthesis of inputs is critical to formulating relevant goals, objectives, and alternatives for Winchester.

While some of the eleven Quality of Life values translated directly into goals, several of them were re-characterized under Goal Headings as follows:

<u>Quality of Life Values</u>	<u>Goal Heading</u>
Education	Education
Prosperity	Economic Development
Diversity	Health and Human Services
Stewardship	Environment, Public Utilities
Pursuit of Happiness	Recreation and Culture
Heritage/Context	Design
Shelter	Housing
Safety	Public Safety
Efficiency	Mobility
Order	Land Use
Civic Engagement	Communication

Rather than attempting to prioritize any of the values or goals above the others, the major goal headings, for the twelve selected citywide goals are presented in alphabetical order as follows:

- COMMUNICATION
- DESIGN
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION
- ENVIRONMENT
- HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
- HOUSING
- LAND USE
- MOBILITY
- PUBLIC UTILITIES
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- RECREATION & CULTURE

CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES

For each of the major goal headings above, several citywide objectives were identified as outlined below.

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COMMUNICATION

GOAL: Create a community where people are informed and are comfortable participating in local decision-making.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Provide an extensive array of communication services providing outreach to the community in an effective, timely and coordinated manner.
- 2) Ensure that underrepresented populations are provided with means to participate in local government.
- 3) Strengthen communications with local businesses to ensure that local, state, and federal policies and regulations are understandable and do not unreasonably impact sustainable growth.

DESIGN

GOAL: Promote an architecturally appealing and walkable urban form while also respecting Winchester's significant historic identity, image, and integrity.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Employ New Urbanism Principles in new development and redevelopment including:
 - a. Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly road design
 - b. Interconnectivity of new local streets w/ existing local streets
 - c. Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks
 - d. Preservation of natural areas
 - e. Increased density using bonuses
 - f. Mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods, including mixed housing types
 - g. Reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and
 - h. Reduction of street widths and turning radii at intersections
- 2) Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City.
- 3) Guide the physical form of development along key tourist's entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.
- 4) Ensure that all new development in the City is of a high quality regardless of use.

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- 5) Pursue green building techniques (e.g., LEED certifiable) on major public construction projects and provide incentives for private development to do so as well.
- 6) Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Facilitate proactive and sustainable economic development that maximizes economic partnerships

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase sales tax revenue accruing to the City and taxable land uses.
- 2) Increase Median Household Income of City residents and increase income levels of all employable citizens.
- 3) Raise the average income of employees in Winchester.
- 4) Inventory buildings, properties, and areas of the city with underutilized potential.
- 5) Identify and facilitate new infrastructure development to enhance and stimulate commercial development.
- 6) Protect the vitality of Winchester Medical University, Shenandoah University, and other key employers.
- 7) Work with owners and investors interested in developing properties in the city.
- 8) Solicit interest in the community by prospective new businesses.
- 9) Make property owners, developers, and prospective new businesses aware of financing and incentive options available.
- 10) Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.
- 11) Preserve the vitality of the downtown area as a major economic center.

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EDUCATION

GOAL: Constantly improve the level of educational attainment for all citizens, regardless of age and socioeconomic background, so that they can realize their full potential.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Ensure support of a rigorous and relevant education for all City public school students demonstrated by readiness for post secondary education or career entry.
- 2) Maintain a world-class public-school division which exceeds all State and Federal benchmarks relating to student achievement.
- 3) Increase the percentage of citizens with a post-high school graduation education and participation in track-based education.
- 4) Promote life-long learning as a means for improving the quality of life for all citizens by developing career opportunities to increase income potential.

ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: Proactively improve environmental sustainability and reduce impact on the natural environment.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Reduce exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.
- 2) Other than downtown, discourage new development within identified floodplain fringe areas, and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.
- 3) Work with the private sector as well as federal and state agencies to remediate brownfield sites, including railroad properties, within the city.
- 4) Promote water quality implementation plans and minimum control measures for stormwater management.
- 5) Work with surrounding jurisdictions as well as federal and state agencies to (a) monitor air and water quality, and (b) address regional environmental issues such as air quality, water quality, and solid waste management.
- 6) Reduce the city's carbon footprint and overall impact on air quality by examining how City business is conducted daily and encouraging residents and businesses to do their part.

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- 7) Explore alternatives to continue viable recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.
- 8) Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on our local streams and on downstream areas.
- 9) Preserve, restore, and create wetlands, wildlife corridors and other habitats.
- 10) Preserve healthy, mature trees, and promote an increase in the city's urban tree canopy.
- 11) Pursue changes to development regulations to encourage the use of environmentally friendly site measures such as pervious paving, 'Green' building techniques, naturally landscaped areas, and low impact development techniques.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GOAL: Ensure a higher level of social sustainability by providing basic health and human service resources to promote greater economic independence and healthy lives for a diverse and changing population.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Assist persons and families in overcoming poverty, abuse, and neglect.
- 2) Stem the rate of teen pregnancy and substance abuse in Winchester.
- 3) Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served.
- 4) Facilitate aging in place among older populations while providing opportunities and places for civic engagement and social life.
- 5) Promote a regional fair-share approach to meeting human service needs, including affordable housing.
- 6) Increase opportunities for childcare for younger populations.

HOUSING

GOAL: Provide opportunities for vibrant, high quality, mixed-income, and higher density housing of a diverse range in suitable living environments to facilitate economic and social sustainability.

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OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase the appreciation rate of City home values.
- 2) Provide opportunities for, and pursue effective action items to produce, new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.
- 3) Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.
- 4) Actively pursue the acquisition and demolition or redevelopment of economically obsolete residential structures, except those contributing architecturally to the historic district or Corridor Enhancement districts, including but limited to National Avenue.
- 5) Increase homeownership opportunities for prospective first-time home buyers.
- 6) Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals, college students, and empty nesters.
- 7) Ensure equal opportunity in housing.
- 8) Pursue means of recovering the costs of impacts associated with multi-family rental properties through alternative real estate tax assessments.
- 9) In coordination with surrounding local government jurisdictions and local non-profit organizations, actively support the homeless population.

LAND USE

GOAL: Guide the physical development of the City in a sustainable manner that preserves vibrant, livable neighborhoods and encourages mixed-use, mixed-income development to meet the needs of a changing population.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Facilitate development, zoning changes, and growth of the city in accordance with the City Character Map.
- 2) Incentivize the construction of new mixed-use, mixed-income projects as a viable reuse of obsolete strip commercial and industrial properties.

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- 3) Provide the citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.
- 4) Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units to attract new residents and ensure that Winchester residents are provided with a decent home in a suitable living environment while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential areas designated in this plan.
- 5) Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporates a mix of retail, service, and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer a selection of consumer goods (especially grocery stores offering healthy foods) and viable growth potential.
- 6) Retain and expand upon a diversified, sustainable light industrial base at compatible and appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce, in harmony with other community development, and which attracts higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.
- 7) Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.
- 8) Minimize the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses or ensure that payments in lieu of taxes are provided to cover the expense of city services such as public safety.
- 9) Work with Frederick County to create complementary development strategies and maintain a strong working relationship.

MOBILITY

GOAL:

Create and maintain a safe, efficient, and environmentally sustainable mobility network that is interconnected, multi-modal, and that facilitates walkable urban land use patterns less dependent upon personal vehicle use.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

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- 2) Employ a hierarchy of functional street categories including thoroughfare streets for major traffic movements through and within the community at higher speeds; collector streets to channel major traffic movements into and out of separate areas of the community at moderate speeds; and local streets to provide access to individual properties at lower speeds.
- 3) Encourage the use of alternate modes of mobility including walking, bicycling, and public transportation by all sectors of the population to reduce the dependency upon private automobile use.
- 4) Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.
- 5) Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.
- 6) Employ access management and consider use of roundabouts to provide for traffic calming and improved safety.
- 7) Investigate the needs for multimodal transfer facilities.
- 8) Work closely with Frederick County and Stephens City to extend public transportation between the City and destinations such as Laurel Ridge Community College, DMV, the Employment Commission/Job Training office, and the regional detention facilities, as well as urbanizing areas of the County and Town.
- 9) Promote Telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work.
- 10) Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.
- 11) Expand and improve general aviation, air cargo, and air passenger operations at the Winchester Regional Airport.
- 12) Pursue development of projects and works that are in line with the Vtrans 2040 Master Plan.
- 13) Pursue development of bike share program that serves Winchester through stations at Shenandoah University, Old Town, and the Medical Center.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL: Achieve a community where people feel safe and are comfortable engaging in a full range of community life.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Provide the highest quality of police, emergency preparedness, communications, and fire and rescue services available, with properly trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in an effective and coordinated manner.
- 2) Improve the quality of life of all people by preventing crime through enforcement of the law, creation of partnerships through communication and education, and by problem-solving using innovative policing strategies.
- 3) Continually improve emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts to ensure the restoration of City services and normal enjoyment of life following a natural or manmade disaster.
- 4) Encourage CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) Practices
- 5) Mitigate and improve blighted properties.

PUBLIC UTILITIES (Water & Sanitary Sewer)

GOAL: Provide capacity for safe drinking water and wastewater treatment sufficient to serve current and future needs of the City.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Ensure that the environmental quality of the drinking water produced, and wastewater treated is in full accordance with the rigorous standards established by the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to assure safety to the consumer and the environment.
- 2) Identify and fund necessary infrastructure improvements that increase water capacity and reduce water system loss on a system wide basis to support current and future needs associated with economic expansion and increased residential density.
- 3) Work with Frederick County to address water capacity and supply issues.

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RECREATION & CULTURE

GOAL: Develop, provide, and maintain quality recreation opportunities at multiple park and open space facilities to meet the growing active and passive recreation and fitness needs of our diverse community.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Develop quality active recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and points identified as critical needs in the Needs Assessment included in the City Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- 2) Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open spaces that provide safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.
- 3) Provide quality recreational programs that meet the growing needs of our diverse community through a commitment to dedication, community focus, teamwork, diversity, and integrity.
- 4) Ensure that existing and new residential development has reasonable proximity to neighborhood parks as well as convenient bike and pedestrian access to trails in open space areas.
- 5) Preserve existing parks and pursue opportunities to create new neighborhood and linear parks.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability means continuing into the future without decay or collapse, meeting today's needs without sacrificing those of the future. Winchester should be economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. This chapter focuses on Economic sustainability. For Winchester to become a community of choice then it is important that the City take deliberate affirmative actions to achieve this objective.

SWOT Analysis

While there are numerous rankings of cities and places nationwide which blend statistical data with subjective indices to arrive at scored lists of the best places to live, some of the best data comes from residents themselves. To better understand the perception that Winchester residents had of their own community, one of the first major steps in the City's Comprehensive Plan update process was to conduct a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-&-Threats (SWOT) Analysis during input sessions in 2019.

Some common themes pertaining to economic sustainability emerged during the SWOT exercises. Among the listed Strengths and Opportunities were location, major institutions, public facilities, people, diversity of the city and balance of small town feel within commuting distance of the big city. Among the listed Weaknesses and Threats were lack of grocery stores, large homeless population, aging city infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, lower than average educational levels, relatively low income, county development pulling business away from the city, income inequality among residents, historical & architectural partnerships, and the city's size limitations.

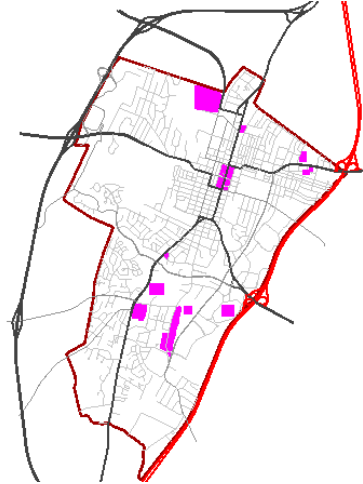
Participants agreed on many economic issues, including the need for revitalization and redevelopment of older, vacant, underused commercial and industrial sites like Ward Plaza, Federal Mogul and Zero Pak. Citizens found consensus on the need for continued historic preservation and rehabilitation work, especially in the downtown area, which could benefit from new uses, mixed uses, and greater residential density.

Citizens felt positively about growth and revitalization, and supported New Urbanist principles of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development. They shared concerns about rising fuel costs, growth in the county that could compete or conflict with the city's efforts to attract jobs, the need for higher education levels in the local labor force, and competition with wealthier communities closer to Washington D.C. for quality teachers.

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Along with the SWOT Analysis, public input was solicited in the form of a mapping exercises in which citizens marked up base maps to identify features worth preserving and others to change, add, or improve upon. Among the key sites called out to change, improve, or add to be the following, shown in this map:

- Ward Plaza
- Berryville Avenue corridor
- N. End of Fairmont Avenue
- Papermill Road corridor
- Old Town
- Apple Blossom Mall
- Eastgate Plaza
- Federal Mogul (Abex)
- Zero Pak (including the railroad land)



Citizen Survey Findings

In 2017, the City of Winchester undertook a fourth Citizen Satisfaction Survey. It allowed residents to provide feedback to the City on the importance of certain public services and the public’s level of satisfaction with said services. Appendix 3 explains the survey and data in greater detail, summarizing key results.

Winchester Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results			
Survey Question	Excellent or Good	Average	Fair or Poor
Place to work	69%	17%	14%
Place to live	82%	13%	6%
Quality of life	80%	14%	7%
Moving in the right direction	62%	23%	16%
City’s Growth Management	48%	30%	22%
Place to raise children	77%	16%	8%

While quality of live, living and working conditions, and family appeal, and direction of the city received a strong endorsement, citizens were less confident about the management of future growth. This finding supports the need for long range, comprehensive planning, and changes in the city’s trajectory.

The Virginia State Code requires that certain surveys and studies related to economic sustainability be made when preparing a Comprehensive Plan including the following:

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- Use of Land
- Character & Condition of Existing Development
- Trends of Growth or Change
- Employment & Economic Factors and Needs
- Urban Development Area (UDA)

Chapter Two of this Plan provides a comprehensive overview of planning studies, including those pertaining to economic sustainability. A few major trends and statistics bear repeating in this chapter.

Employment

In 2018, the American Community Survey run by the Census Department estimated Winchester’s population to be 27,789. Of these, 21,421 were over the age of 18. However, the city labor force was only 14,281. This can be attributed to Winchester’s gradually aging population and its attractive character to retirees. The labor force participation rate, then, was 69 percent, and 56 percent of the overall population works. The female labor force participation rate was lower, with 60 percent of those over age 16 working.

The figures in the table below show how Winchester is transitioning away from its historically notable industrial base into a twenty-first century service economy. The table shows the sectors in which Winchester’s residents work, though not the sources of employment within the city. Almost all of the City’s agricultural and mining workers, for instance, go outside the limits to work.

The city maintains a reduced core of manufacturing jobs, however healthcare, finance, IT, and professional services employ more people, though not necessarily at higher wages. This Plan seeks to facilitate the natural economic change from industrial to service and bring jobs to the city while relieving the hardship of families hurt by this flux.

Employment of Winchester’s Workers			
Sector	Example	Workers	Percentage (and trend since 2005)
Education, healthcare, social	Public schoolteacher	3,284	24.9 ↗
Retail Trade	Clerk at Wal-Mart	1,466	11.1 ↗
Arts, food service, hospitality	Cook at Snow White	1,904	14.5 ↗
Agriculture, forestry, mining	County quarry workers	252	1.9 ↘
Management, administrative, professional	Lawyer	1,342	10.2 ↗
Manufacturing	Continental	1,019	7.7 ↘
Public Administration	City planner	697	5.3 ↘
Other: construction, finance, IT, wholesale, and shipping	BB&T banker	2,469	18.78 ↗
(American Community Survey 2013-2017, Industry by Sex and Median Earnings)			

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Commuting Patterns

Winchester's population increases during the workday. According to the Virginia Employment Commission 2014 Profile report, Winchester had more people commuting into the city to work than residents commuting out. Barely more than 4,000 persons both lived and worked in the city, down from the 2000 Census. The number of City residents commuting to jobs outside of the city was more than 8,200 persons. However, over 22,400 workers commuted into the city, nearly half of them from surrounding Frederick County. The net in commuting was over 14,281 workers, an increase from the 2000 Census.

According to the latest ACS five-year estimate, the average commute for workers residing in Winchester is 23.1 minutes. Commuting times have gradually increased over the last decade, though whether this is due to more people working farther away or to greater traffic congestion is not clear. There are some anomalies with commuting patterns when viewed at the Planning Area level in Winchester. About 18% of the workers residing in the Old Town/North Central area, where there is the highest concentration of opportunity for 'live-work' arrangements and the greatest concentration of walking and transit facilities, nonetheless commuted 45 minutes or longer to work. That compares with only 2% of the workers residing in the Northwest, and 8.1% in the East Central area.

Wage and Income Analysis

According to the Virginia Employment Commission's 1st Quarter 2019 Census of Employment and Wages, the average weekly wage in Winchester was \$750. Broken down by industry, there are huge disparities. These range from a figure of \$1,858 for Federal workers down to \$338 for those working in Accommodation and Food Services.

Among the industries most prevalent in Winchester, the average weekly salaries for those sectors were as follows: Education (\$965), Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$1,135) Retail Sector (\$532), and Construction (\$814). Figures were suppressed for Agriculture, Forestry & Mining. Among the highest paying sectors, below Federal government, the next three highest sectors were: Management (\$1,434), and Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$1,135).

Poverty Status

The official definition of poverty compares a household's income to a figure three times the cost of adequate food for that family. A family of four with two children and annual income less than \$25,750 is impoverished. For a single parent with one child, the threshold is \$17,308. The relationship of poverty rates between Winchester and Frederick County is similar to that of other Virginia cities and their surrounding counties. Rates of child poverty are notably higher than the rates for total poverty and especially among larger families with a female head of household where no husband is present.

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Approximately 26% of the region's ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed), a category used to denote households that are not impoverished, but who lack considerable expendable income, reside in Winchester. See Table for more detail.

According to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey, the median household income in Winchester is \$53,797. The mean household income is \$75,613. Family income is higher, with the median income at \$66,557, and the mean at \$90,327. There are just under 5000 children under the age of 17 who are currently living at or below the poverty line, the majority are under the age of 12.

Educational Attainment

While the employment distribution noted above clearly shows Winchester transitioning away from an industrial center, the education levels of adults (those 25 years of age or older) does not support significant expansion of high-paying service sector jobs. For this reason, improved adult education is identified as a key component of the City's economic sustainability strategy. Adult education rate estimates as included in the 2014-2018 American Community Survey indicate that about 80 83.1% of the adult population are high school graduates, only 33.9% of which have a bachelor's degree or higher.

With regard to on-time graduation rates at John Handley High School, the only public high school serving the City of Winchester, the 2019 on-time graduation rate for all students was 89.2% a 7-point increase from 2009. This compares with a Virginia rate of 91.50% which increase to 92.8% when GED or other certificate of completion figures are added in. On-time graduation rates for Winchester students of Hispanic origin was 85.5% as compared to a statewide figure of 80% for that cohort. Also, notably lower than the overall average was the on-time graduation rate for students with limited English proficiency which was 85.5% for Winchester and 71.1% statewide.

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City schools do not track how many students graduating from the local school system return home to live or work.

While Shenandoah University reports that 237 of 408 admitted freshmen are from Virginia high schools, there is not a documented count of how many are from Winchester and to what extent SU is really a local education resource. Likewise, there is not good data on how many SU graduates choose to settle and work in the city.

The City's construction of the new Shihadeh Innovation Center will provide opportunities in Health Sciences, Advanced Technologies, and Professional Skills to residents, without the need to attend a university. The building facilities will include medical, anatomy, physical therapy, cyber security programs, computer tech and welding labs, and a cybersecurity room. This in addition to the trade programs, which are facilitated and run by Laurel Ridge Community College (LRCC) (formerly Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC)). Both Shenandoah University (SU) and LFCC provide opportunities for varying fields of medical research as well.

Economic Development Master Plan

The Economic Development Master Plan has two listed objectives, which pertain to Winchester's economic development:

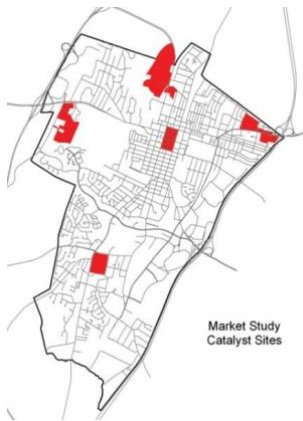
1. Encourage sustainable growth and partnerships through business and workforce development,
 - a. Increase the effectiveness of workforce development efforts by building on existing collaborative partnerships between the City and local organizations.
 - b. Increase the effectiveness of business retention, attraction, and expansion efforts.
 - c. Support local businesses through destination branding and marketing to visitors.
2. Promote and accelerate revitalization of catalyst and other areas throughout the city.
 - a. Continue to promote redevelopment/development of previously identified catalyst sites.
 - b. Identify additional targeted areas and promote redevelopment or development of areas not previously identified as catalyst sites.

Shown in red on the map below are Winchester's five "catalyst sites," parts of the city which have been deemed most in need of major development or redevelopment. These spots largely overlap with those identified by citizens during initial outreach efforts, namely 2019's SWOT analysis. The sites are examined more closely in Chapter 11, which focuses in on key redevelopment sites within each of the ten geographic planning

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areas. The five key redevelopment sites that were identified as catalyst sites in the analysis were:

- 1) The Downtown Area
- 2) Meadow Branch Avenue
- 3) National Fruit Area
- 4) Berryville Avenue Area
- 5) Ward Plaza Area



In 2019, city officials released the “Shaping Winchester” survey, which covered a range of subjects, including economic development. In response to the question “*What would you like Winchester to look like in twenty years?*” 77 responses involved businesses. A number of responses to questions regarding the multiple Corridor Enhancement Districts also emphasized a desire for greater economic development, specifically along the Valley Avenue and Berryville Avenue Corridors. These responses primarily included a desire for an increase in the number and quality of businesses along Berryville Avenue, and the redevelopment of Ward Plaza in Valley Avenue.

Revitalization Principles

The Economic Development Master Plan notes that implementation of the catalyst site conceptual development plans should be multi-pronged. Action is needed simultaneously on a number of fronts. Partnerships between city and other governmental bodies and private property owners are critical to success. Approaches to implementation can be categorized as follows.

Encourage Private Investment- Private Investment in the catalyst sites needs to be encouraged. By working directly with property owners, construction of public improvements, and an array of regulatory incentives, private property owners can be attracted to invest in revitalization in ways that are consistent with the City’s principles and guidelines. The City can articulate, through design guidelines and policy statements, the actions that it wishes private property owners to consider. In order to provide greater

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flexibility in a changing market outlook, mixed-use development proposals should be encouraged over developments that consist of only residential or only nonresidential use.

Incentives beyond investments in public infrastructure make sense when a project yields clear and direct positive cash on cash returns on public investment. The City should publicize the various incentive programs available. Below is a list of a wide variety of potential incentives for developers and property owners:

- Dedicated bond issues
- Direct grants or loans through tax increment finance districts or from special assessments
- Tax abatements, credits, or waivers
- Below market gap financing
- Density bonuses or other zoning waivers
- Expedited permitting
- Grants of publicly owned land or property
- Collaborative public/private partnerships through Community Development Authorities

Public Investment and Operational Changes- The most direct way to encourage a physical change within the Catalyst sites is to use public resources to directly fund improvements and take what actions that the city can to transform the character of the areas around each site. Directing resources to support the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities helps to maintain the value of investments made by the private sector and puts the City in a better position to attract private investment in new construction and rehabilitation in the catalyst sites. For example, extending a street into an undeveloped area increases accessibility and opens this underutilized property for development.

Examples of specific recommendations for public sector improvements are listed in the Market Study. Not all can be pursued at once, and priorities need to be established for consideration as resources allow. Projects are categorized below by level of effort and expenditure required.

Short Term (1-2 years):

- Work with individual property owners of all the catalyst sites to establish mutual objectives for revitalization or redevelopment and develop agreed-upon concept plans to pursue a public-private implementation approach
- Develop a marketing and branding strategy for City revitalization and integrate catalyst site redevelopment with the overall marketing strategy.
- Evaluate the possibility of further revisions to, or a complete rewrite of, the City's zoning ordinances.

Medium Term (2-5 years):

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- Develop selected pedestrian improvements along portions of Valley Avenue and Pleasant Valley Road near the catalyst sites (crosswalks, planters, sidewalk improvements).
- Acquisition of Ward Plaza site to connect Taft Avenue to Middle Road (Potential to solicit private developers through an RFP for a public private partnership that would use and tax increment financing for most of the infrastructure. This will improve parking along with a partial rebate of up to 20% of the business taxes along with the local portion of sales tax).
- Improve pedestrian crosswalks and connections between key sites, the downtown and the City-wide trail system.
- Establish trolley service to connect select areas with downtown.
- Replace light fixtures and street furniture with a more historic character.

Long Term (5-10 years):

- Develop a shared-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians along selected railroad rights-of-way if they become vacant.
- Finish the Green Circle trail segments and tie into a sidewalk/trail system that links all the catalyst sites to each other and the downtown.
- Create civic open space in association with trails and redevelopment areas along Valley Avenue and Pleasant Valley Road.
- Place additional emphasis on grant writing to secure additional resources. Possibilities can include use of Community Development Block Grant 108 loan funds, more aggressive advocacy of tax credit programs related to historic properties, and funding from VDOT and the MPO for specific projects that improve the safety and character of individual development nodes along key corridors.

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite- Encouraging private investment is a good economic development strategy, however directly funding public improvements is necessary for those large-scale projects that cannot be accomplished otherwise. It is also necessary to adjust the City's current zoning regulations to remove obsolete barriers to investment, ensure the provision of needed public improvements, and guide the form of new private development consistent with other city goals.

There are three types of zoning adjustments that should be considered:

1. Market-based adjustments to allow activity that meets the City's revitalization objectives.
2. Requirements that prescribe standards and procedures to upgrade the overall character of new development.
3. Incentives to encourage activity of a type that cannot be required.

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(1) Market-based Regulatory Adjustments: Zoning regulations should not get in the way of property owners whose development goals are consistent with the City's own objectives. Revisions that would expand property rights while advancing the goals of this plan include permitting residential uses in commercial districts, allowing small-scale commercial uses in residential districts, allowing accessory apartments in dwelling units in or close to downtown, and allowing existing downtown uses to expand without triggering additional parking requirements.

(2) Regulatory Requirements: Zoning regulations can also be adjusted in a manner that requires new development (or redevelopment) to meet more rigorous standards, and/or to provide public infrastructure that will be needed as a result of the development. Examples include requirements for off-site improvements and expanded landscaping requirements, or to mitigate traffic impacts through contribution to the development of the greenway network or off-site road improvements.

(3) Regulatory Incentives: Zoning regulations can be adjusted in a manner that provides incentives for property owners to take actions that are in the public interest. The Zoning Ordinance can prescribe a structure and process for the use of the incentives described above. Formulas and rules clarify the expectations of developers and prevent the arbitrary use of subsidies. For example, a rule might permit greater residential density if a structure meets higher-level LEED certifications (silver, gold, or platinum). Or a project previously studied by special working groups might be exempted from some of the normal review processes.

In pursuit of these ideas to amend zoning regulations, the approach could take one of three potential routes:

- Amendments to the base zoning districts covering the catalyst sites
- Creation of one or more new overlay zoning districts for the sites and surrounding areas
- Modification of current PUD requirements to allow more flexibility to develop urban mixed-use projects as anticipated in the concept plans.

Implementing a process to expedite plan and permit approval for catalyst sites- The Master Plan emphasizes that prompt, thorough review of catalyst projects and the timely issuance of permits can reduce the holding cost of land for developers, which can make these projects more attractive. One stop shop, developer liaisons, priority review, and review deadlines are just a few ways the City can focus review resources on priority projects. The City should also encourage regulatory agencies to work together to make catalyst sites a high priority. Gaining political support from various review agencies can be done through behind the scenes networking or through a visible, institutionalized action.

In summary, the Economic Development Master Plan calls for catalyzing redevelopment in the City and identifying specific catalyst sites. Success will rely on the pursuit of all of

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the above actions, including Encouraging private investment, funding public improvements, making operational changes, and adjusting zoning regulations.

Citywide Economic Development Goal and Related Objectives

Chapter 3 outlined the citywide goal and related objectives for Economic Development. In Chapter 11 identifies specific objectives and actions at the neighborhood level, within each of ten geographic Planning Areas. On a citywide basis, the adopted Economic goal is:

Facilitate proactive and sustainable economic development that maximizes economic partnerships to improve the quality of life through increased earned income and prosperity for our citizens.

The Citywide Economic objectives are:

- 1) Increase sales tax revenue accruing to the City and taxable land use.
- 2) Increase Median Household Income of City residents and increase income levels of all employable citizens.
- 3) Raise the average income of employees in Winchester.

NOTE: These first three objectives were established by City Council during the 2009 Council Retreat and reiterated at the 2011 Council Retreat.

- 4) Inventory buildings, properties, and areas of the city with underutilized potential.
- 5) Identify and facilitate new infrastructure development to enhance and stimulate commercial development.
- 6) Work with owners and investors interested in developing properties in the city.
- 7) Solicit interest in the community by prospective new businesses.
- 8) Make property owners, developers, and prospective new businesses aware of financing and incentive options available.
- 9) Proactively redevelop properties where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.
- 10) Preserve the vitality of the downtown area as a major economic center.

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Economic sustainability is enmeshed with environmental and social sustainability, which upcoming chapters of this Plan address. Likewise, public, and private investments in housing, mobility, and community facilities should all be evaluated with multiple lenses to determine the consistency of those investments or actions in relationship to the vision of the City and the major goals established by City Council.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This chapter explains how Winchester should reduce impacts on the natural environment. Nature's bounty attracted early settlers, and stewardship of nature remains part of the local culture. The city advances the eleven objectives below because damage to the natural environment imposes real costs on residents, businesses, and government. Winchester's past success relied on nature, and the city will continue a tradition of stewardship to promote future growth.

Citywide Environmental Objectives

As noted in Chapter 3, City Council identified eleven citywide Environmental Sustainability objectives to address the citywide goal of *proactively improving environmental sustainability and reducing Winchester's impact on the natural environment*. This chapter explains what is already happening with each objective and what can be done in the future to further environmental sustainability. The eleven objectives are:

- 1) Reduce exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.
- 2) Other than downtown, discourage new development within identified floodplain fringe areas and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.
- 3) Work with the private sector as well as federal and state agencies to remediate brownfield sites, including railroad properties, within the city.
- 4) Promote water quality implementation plans and minimum control measures for stormwater management.
- 5) Work with surrounding jurisdictions as well as federal and state agencies to (a) monitor air and water quality; and (b) address regional environmental issues such as air quality, water quality, and solid waste management.
- 6) Reduce the city's carbon footprint and overall environmental impact on air quality by examining the way City business is conducted daily and encouraging residents and businesses to do their part as well to create a more sustainable and responsible community.
- 7) Explore alternative to continue viable recycling and reuse while seeking new markets for recyclable materials and decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.

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- 8) Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on our local streams and on downstream areas.
- 9) Preserve, restore, and create wetlands, wildlife corridors and other habitats
- 10) Preserve healthy, mature trees, and promote an increase in the City's urban tree canopy.
- 11) Pursue changes to development regulations to encourage the use of environmentally friendly site measures such as pervious paving, 'Green' building techniques, natural landscaped areas, and low impact development techniques.

1. Reduce exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.

Several kinds of environmental hazards threaten Winchester's residents, businesses, and visitors. Three of the most prominent are air pollution, water pollution, and dangerous chemical spills.

In recent years, Winchester has managed to meet EPA standards for ground-level ozone. While ozone gas high in the atmosphere reflects radiation, at ground level it is harmful to human life. Ozone puts children and the elderly especially at risk on hot summer days. Certain other gases and particulate matter also pose immediate and long-term health hazards. Relatively few are monitored regularly.

Pollution also threatens Winchester's five creeks and streams. Contaminated streams support less wildlife, have less recreational value for the city, and contribute to the poor health of the Chesapeake Bay and other drainage areas.

For both air and water pollution, federal laws create penalties which threaten a city's business prospects. If a city fails to meet the standards of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, there are federally required obstacles to new business development. If Winchester does not improve local air and water quality, developing new housing and jobs will be more difficult. The other objectives of this chapter detail how the city will reduce environmental hazards to protect both local jobs and public health.

Winchester maintains other efforts to reduce the public's exposure to environmental hazards. The building code enforcement staff cites instances of lead paint, asbestos, and other household toxins. The fire department works with local industry to prevent accidents and spills. Emergency responders cooperate with Frederick County and state authorities to prepare comprehensive responses and maintain hazardous materials (HazMat) systems to document hazards and respond to incidents.

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2. Other than downtown, discourage new development within identified floodplain fringe areas and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.

Floodplains exist along each of the city's five streams: Abrams Creek, Buffalo Lick Run, Hogue Run, Redbud Run, and Town Run. The city should continue to enforce its Zoning Ordinance provisions related to designated floodplain districts. City officials should also continue to coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the floodplain maps when and where needed.

Building on a floodplain presents a danger to the builder and to the broader community. A flood may destroy one property, but the debris may also pollute waters and threaten other families and businesses. About seven percent of the city's area is at risk of 1% annual chance flood event. That means that in any given year, there is a one percent chance of flooding in the orange area shown in the map below. It includes sections of Old Town, where property owners can seek exemptions to reinvest into historic structures.



Map of Winchester's 100-year floodplain

Redbud Run encompasses a very small area at the extreme north end.

Town Run extends from the hospital through Old Town and merges with Abrams Creek near the university. It includes an unnamed tributary in the vicinity of Opequon Ave and S. Pleasant Valley Rd.

Abrams Creek generally parallels Jubal Early Drive through the center of the city.

Buffalo Lick Run is the only waterway originating in the city. It generally parallels E. Tevis Street.

Hogue Run extends along much of the southern boundary of the city.

Winchester's relatively flat land area reduces flood risks. The highest point, in the west central area, is 940 feet above sea level, and the ground slopes down 300 feet to the Route 50 interchange. Winchester's modified continental climate, with mild winters and warm and humid summers, presents flood risks if spring rains combine with snowmelt or after heavy summer storms. However, the area does not have a rainy season where flooding is common.

The city's Zoning Ordinance discourages new development within the floodplains and mandates actions needed to reduce the risk to buildings there. For example, existing manufactured buildings must be anchored firmly "to prevent collapse, floatation, or

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lateral movement.” The lowest floor of new buildings must be above the level of the 1% annual chance. Within the flood plain, low intensity uses like farming, outdoor recreation, and gravel parking lots are allowed. Exceptions to the building restrictions consider set criteria including risk to the builder, other citizens, the clean water supply, and emergency responders. Retrofits to old buildings, particularly those located in the historic district, in the floodplain require the same review as new construction.

Actions which slow stormwater runoff, include but are not limited to removing channeled flow, “daylighting” streams, preserving, restoring, and creating wetlands, restoring floodplain functions, planting trees, reducing impervious surfaces, and utilizing natural landscaping to reduce the risk of flooding. By better managing stormwater, these actions described later in the chapter may shrink the area of the 1% annual chance flood plain while also reducing pollution and creating opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of nature.

3. Work with the private sector as well as federal and state agencies to remediate brownfield sites, including railroad properties, within the city.

Brownfield sites are abandoned or underused industrial or commercial lots containing toxic waste or contaminants. A brownfield site is often blighted, reducing surrounding property values. Improving brownfield sites thus yields environmental, economic, and social benefits as the city gains a cleaner, more productive, and more attractive new site.

City staff should update an inventory of brownfield land within city limits. The City Code (§6-133) provides for the abatement of commercial or industrial blight. If a brownfield site can be remediated, it may be a prime candidate for commercial infill redevelopment because of a good location and low price. An example of this is the Federal-Mogul site which has extensive frontage along S. Pleasant Valley Rd. Winchester should encourage appropriate redevelopment of its brownfield lands.

Railroads own some brownfield property near the intersection of Wyck St. and Fairmont Ave. and on the west side of N. Kent St., just north of Baker St. Spilled fuels and chemicals along the tracks create blight and safety risks to surrounding homes and businesses. Public works, police, and other city staff should work with railroads to improve the appearance and environmental sustainability of Winchester’s rail corridors and railroad-owned properties. As city staff find evidence of contamination on brownfield properties, the City or the Economic Development Authority should partner with appropriate state and federal authorities, as well as the private sector, to clean the sites and make them safe for the public and for redevelopment.

4. Promote water quality implementation plans and minimum control measures for stormwater management.

Abrams Creek and the downstream section of Opequon Creek are on the state’s impaired waters list for excessive bacteria and an inability to support aquatic life. Since 2003, the

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state Department of Environmental Quality has issued Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations prescribing the reduction in pollutants necessary to meet water quality standards for the Abrams and Opequon Creek watersheds. Sediment is the primary stressor on aquatic resources. The City completed a state required TMDL Implementation Plan to outline measures to meet pollution reduction goals in 2015.

The Opequon TMDL Implementation Plan recognizes inadequate urban stormwater management as a major cause of the listed impairments to water quality. The Plan recommends a suite of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that reduce runoff and pollutant loading of local streams as well as Opequon Creek, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Due to Winchester's population density and water quality impairments, the state has designated it a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community. The MS4 program is an EPA mandate under the Clean Water Act that is administered by the state. MS4s must develop a Stormwater Quality Management Plan (SWQMP). This action plan for the MS4 entails six requirements, or minimum control measures (MCM):

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Involvement and Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations Maintenance.

In response to the Clean Water Act the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a TMDL or "pollution diet" for the Chesapeake Bay. The EPA also required each state adjoining the Bay to submit a Watershed Implementation Plan which identifies measures to reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment entering the Bay from all major sources, including sewage treatment plants, industrial facilities, urban areas, agriculture, forestry, and septic systems. Winchester submitted a TMDL action plan for the Chesapeake Bay in 2015.

5. Work with surrounding jurisdictions as well as federal and state agencies to (a) monitor air and water quality, and (b) address regional environmental issues such as air quality, water quality, and solid waste management.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are Winchester's most important partners for the issues of air and water quality as well as solid waste management. Federal law sets basic standards for defining, measuring, and monitoring pollution, in addition to enforcement. On some issues, state law goes further, and state staff are responsible for monitoring and enforcing many federal standards. DEQ also promotes cooperation between Virginia's cities and counties. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) is one example of such cooperation.

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To enforce the federal Clean Air Act, DEQ monitors air quality in the Shenandoah Valley. In the past, the region failed to meet air quality standards, especially for ozone. Some air pollution comes from homes and businesses here, some comes from heavy truck traffic on the highways, while more still comes from factories and power plants farther west. The Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains trap polluted air and cause it to settle in the valley. Winchester should continue to seek feedback from the EPA, DEQ, and the National Weather Service regarding air quality. State and federal agencies provide Winchester with the latest research, monitoring, and data on other localities. The partnership between Northern Shenandoah Valley jurisdictions (such as through the NSVRC) and environmental scientists at James Madison University on such programs as Shenandoah Air Quality (SHENAIR), and the joint Winchester/Frederick County ValleyAirNow should be continued.

While ozone is of serious concern, so are other pollutants in the air: particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxide compounds (NO_x), and carbon emissions. The EPA has standards on each of these (and some others) that are being (or may be in the future) tightened. Winchester is just below the current standards on some of these. Further EPA reduction will put Winchester, and surrounding areas, in noncompliance. Because the air quality issues are regional in nature, Winchester must act in full coordination with surrounding jurisdictions to address these issues. Failure to do so has the potential to negatively impacting the future economic development and public health of Winchester and surrounding areas.

Several data sources exist on the health of the local streams in Winchester and of the rivers and streams, including Opequon Creek, into which they flow. Among the groups collecting such data are the Virginia DEQ; The Opequon Watershed (TOW), Inc.; Friends of the Shenandoah River (FOSR); Virginia Tech; and Shenandoah University's Environmental Studies Department. No regularly scheduled monitoring occurs at present. Nevertheless, past records and reports allow City staff to address water quality management issues. City staff should continue to seek feedback from the DEQ, citizens groups and universities, and the City should support efforts to monitor and evaluate progress towards cleaning Winchester's waters.

The state establishes water quality standards in addition to standards that regulate the quantity of stormwater runoff. Additional water quality standards are pending adoption at the state level as described above under Objective 4. To help fund mandated improvements, the City has considered the establishment of stormwater management fees, but additional calculation of private impervious acreage would be needed before a fee could be properly established. Numerous voluntary measures to improve water quality such as establishing natural landscaping areas can be taken by the City, businesses, and private landowners.

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6. Reduce the city's carbon footprint and overall impact on air quality by examining the way City business is conducted daily and encouraging residents and businesses to do their part to create a more sustainable and responsible community.

Winchester lacks data on its overall carbon emissions, and the city's influence on regional air quality, national energy imports, or global climate is difficult to determine. However, some practices reduce carbon footprint while reducing energy consumption, improving air quality, and yielding other benefits.

The city's finance office collects energy expenses from each city department and can present energy costs in the city's budget. The budget for fiscal year 2021, which begins on July 1, 2020, should include an energy category showing city spending on electricity, heating, and vehicle fuels. Each city department, as appropriate, has a separate budget line for electricity, heating, and fuel, which are listed in the annual budget. Winchester should reduce energy spending as a proportion of the city budget during every fiscal year.

Each city department should attempt to reduce its energy costs in ways that do not harm, but rather improve, service delivery. These practices preserve the environment and reduce waste of the public's tax dollars. Examples include:

- Increasing walking and bicycle police patrols (pictured)
- Expanding telework options for city staff
- Configuring city computers with power-saving settings
- Gradually replacing windows and light fixtures with more efficient models
- Gradually replacing city vehicles with more efficient models
- Replacing HVAC systems and components with more energy efficient models.
- Using rechargeable batteries in Parking meters



Reducing use of cars is one of the best ways for a family or business to reduce energy costs. Chapter Six of this plan details mobility and how personal cars should become less necessary in Winchester through compact mixed-use development and improved biking, walking, and bus options. Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven of this Plan provide specific objectives for developing Winchester into a more walkable city where cars are not needed for every errand or for every household.

Objective 11 below, on green buildings, notes how the city should use the Zoning Ordinance, permitting process, and tax code to encourage construction with less environmental impact. Currently, Winchester exempts solar energy equipment from property tax, but more could be done to create front-end incentives or assist with financing. Finally, the City, through its resources, should inform households and businesses seeking to reduce their energy consumption that the City has passed new incentives. Recently Winchester has implemented the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) program, which allows businesses to get funding for energy

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efficient upgrades. This program can be utilized both in expanding existing properties and in development of new properties.

7. Explore alternatives for viable recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.

In 2018, the city collected 6,464 tons of refuse. The city operates a weekly curbside refuse collection service and collects up to three 45-gallon containers from each home and business. Winchester sends its garbage to the Frederick County Landfill, a jointly owned regional landfill situated east of the city. The landfill has equipment to generate some electricity by burning the methane gas produce as garbage decomposes.

To encourage recycling, the city also provides a weekly curbside recycling program and provides bins to homes and businesses. In 2018, the city collected 2,908 tons of recycling.

In 2019, the City's recycling partner, Southern Scrap, discontinued their operations as a material reclamation facility (MRF). Because of this, the city has begun to take plastic bottle and can recycling to Republic Services, and paper and cardboard recycling to Maryland Paper. The recycling of glass bottles has, unfortunately, had to cease.

While 30 percent recycling exceeds the state guidelines, reducing waste is even more efficient than recycling. City staff should study means to encourage further recycling and discourage waste. Possible efforts include, but are by no means limited to:

- Public service announcements and public advertising
- Placing more recycling containers in public areas and facilities
- Charging a fee for each container of garbage collected
- including a credit for recycling
- Encouraging a local MRF to develop

8. Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on our local streams and on downstream areas.

The area's geology heightens the importance of water quality. The City of Winchester and the surrounding area is underlain by a band of carbonate bedrock consisting primarily of limestone which is commonly referred to as Karst terrain. Karst terrain is characterized by the presence of sinkholes, surface depressions, springs and a highly irregular pinnacled bedrock soil interface in which groundwater is extremely susceptible to contamination from surface activities. Winchester should reduce the polluting impacts of heavy rains' runoff to both groundwater and surface waters. This includes local streams as well as areas downstream of Abrams Creek and other City drainage sheds that are tributaries to Opequon Creek, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

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Restoring, preserving, and creating wetlands are all aspects of more sustainable handling of stormwater runoff. Winchester should also replace acres of impervious surfaces (i.e., asphalt, concrete, etc.) with pervious surface. When rain falls on pavement, it does not sink into the ground. Instead, it flows downhill into the storm drain system and then quickly to the local creeks, still containing pollutants. Quickly swollen streams also create a flash flood risk.

Low Impact Development (LID) is an alternative to conventional stormwater management. LID is a site design strategy with the goal of maintaining or replicating the predevelopment hydrologic response using certain design techniques to create a functionally equivalent hydrologic landscape. Some of these functions include water storage, infiltration, and groundwater recharge as well as management of the volume and frequency of water discharges. Elements of LID include minimizing land disturbance, limiting impervious surfaces, and utilizing runoff reduction practices such as pervious pavements and naturally landscaped areas.

Several alternative surface improvements are available that are pervious and can aid in stormwater management and runoff reduction, including permeable pavers, grass pavers, and permeable concrete. These materials allow rainwater to drain into the subsoil without sacrificing much strength. City staff should promote pervious surfaces for new construction and in the replacement of current parking lots. The city should use pervious surfaces in public streets, parking lots, and paths where appropriate. And it may use the Zoning Ordinance to cap the maximum size of parking lots for different kinds of businesses. The use of natural landscaping in other locations such as open spaces, channels/ditches, stormwater detention areas and other stormwater management structures will result in a significant reduction of stormwater pollution while reducing maintenance costs. City staff should promote their use and other low impact development methods such as rain gardens as appropriate in new construction and on existing sites.

9. Preserve, restore and create wetlands, wildlife corridors, and other habitats.

Winchester should commit to restoring and preserving the city's historic wetlands. In the previous century, to control flooding and water-borne diseases, many of the city's wetlands were destroyed. Many of the town's creeks now run through concrete channels and pipes. The concrete streams do not slow, cool, or filter stormwater very well, so they pollute our local streams and eventually Opequon Creek, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay. Concrete streams offer little habitat for wildlife, and they have little aesthetic value for residents.

Winchester should protect and restore more natural corridors to connect existing wildlife habitats and create larger, contiguous green areas. Restored stream corridors would enhance the Winchester Green Circle, shown in the map below. This multi-use trail connects natural areas and historic sites with neighborhoods and major employment and shopping areas and is discussed in Chapters Six and Eight.

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The concrete channels which currently contain many of the city's streams may be demolished to connect them with their floodplains. Restored stream banks may be built and seeded with native plants. Restored streams should maintain at least a 35-foot riparian buffer on each bank as per the current City Code. In addition, streams currently covered can be "daylighted" to improve habitat and water quality.

At present, much of Winchester's rainwater runs through concrete pipes and storage tanks. Hot, polluted stormwater pollutes local streams. Winchester needs acres of new ponds, rain gardens, and similar green that is a naturally landscaped drainage space. These spaces have both environmental and aesthetic value, filtering runoff while providing habitat for wildlife and scenery for residents and tourists. Public or private land may be used, as well as land, which is not suitable for building, like the floodplain. The City has a few large-scale stormwater facility projects in the works that will reduce runoff. This includes the N. Cameron/N. Kent project and the Hope Dr/Tevis projects. Both will result in large detention facilities located adjacent to the CSX railroad corridor.

Correctly designed rain gardens and naturally landscaped drainage spaces hold stormwater for less than 24 hours. Mosquitoes need standing water for at least four days to breed. So, wetlands protection, restoration, and creation need not lead to increased mosquito problems. Indeed, new natural habitats should enlarge the bird, bat, and dragonfly populations which eat thousands of mosquitoes daily.

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10. Preserve healthy, mature trees, and promote an increase in the City's urban tree canopy.

Trees play an important role in Winchester's health as a city. A tree-lined block has higher property values by improving public health through preventing ozone pollution and catching particulate matter. They sustain the environment by filtering stormwater and sheltering wildlife and reduce energy consumption by shading buildings and houses. They provide social goods to everyone who walks, plays, or picnics under their branches or enjoys their fall colors. Investing in trees provides decades of benefits to Winchester's residents and visitors for surprisingly little cost.

As city staff work with residents and businesses to add nearly 30,000 new trees to Winchester's streets, yards, and parks, a parallel effort should preserve the city's many stately, mature trees. The city arborist and public works staff recognize the value of great trees, however the presences of overhead electric phone and CATV lines limits our ability to plant large trees. Their broad shade beautifies the city and efficiently protects the public from pollution. Particulate matter and ozone gas pollute the air near the ground and threaten human health, especially in children and the elderly. Trees capture floating dust, and their leaves slow the formation of ozone near the ground during hot summer days.

Maintaining mature trees involves protecting the root zone, pruning, fertilizing, and protecting them from pests and disease. The arborist and staff should partner with state and federal agencies to remain alert to new insects and diseases, acting where possible. The arborist should also help citizens interested in preserving mature trees on private property.

City staff should plant many new native trees on public land, parks, medians, and so on. The Adopt-a-Tree program allows individuals to plant trees on public land. However, newest native trees must be planted on private property. So, the city should publicize tree planting and Arbor Day community engagement. Planting appropriate species on steep slopes prevents soil erosion and uses land which cannot be built upon.

The City should also collaborate with large landowners to create new tracts of forest. Shenandoah University, Winchester Medical Center, the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley could provide many new acres of urban tree canopy. So could several industrial and commercial sites, particularly in the south central and southeast planning areas, where trees are needed most. Winchester has several underdeveloped sites where unsightly, or excessively paved, abandoned business property could be improved by tree planting as part of blight abatement. In those cases, improving the tree canopy not only benefits public health, but it also helps make a blighted neighborhood more attractive to new residents and businesses. The map on the next page shows which parcels in Winchester have the best tree canopies and which parcels need the most improvement.

Overall, approximately 61% of Winchester can absorb storm water well. Green and yellow areas have pervious surfaces which best allow for absorption. Gray areas, making

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up over a quarter of the City's land cover, consists of non-building impervious surfaces, such as sidewalks and pavement, do not absorb storm water, and channel polluted stormwater directly into streams.

Urban Tree Canopy Map

Source: Virginia Tech

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11. Pursue changes to development regulations to encourage the use of environmentally friendly site measures such as pervious paving, ‘Green’ building techniques, natural landscaped areas, and low impact development techniques.

Some city development regulations and practices neglect environmental sustainability. The City should consider the natural, as well as the business, impact of new construction. The City and private civil engineers should encourage the use of pervious pavement and other environmentally sustainable site development practices. Many of these make a business more profitable over time.

The U.S. Green Building Council is a non-profit organization that administers the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. LEED is a formal certification that a building or community was designed and built sustainably for energy savings, water efficiency, air quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. Features of “green buildings” include insulated windows, lights with motion sensors, recycled materials, rain gardens, and solar panels, among many others. For slightly higher initial construction costs, green buildings prevent waste in operating costs over time, particularly as energy prices increase. Several Virginia jurisdictions have policies or laws establishing LEED certification of public building projects. New public building and renovation projects in Winchester should strive for at least the minimum level of LEED certification. Winchester currently promotes LEED developments by allowing a density bonus with LEED certification. This is difficult to take advantage of, however, as LEED certification is only given after the development is completed, complicating any attempt to award the bonus prior to actual construction without LEED certification.

Due to the difficulty of promoting LEED, Winchester should consider promoting alternatives, such as Low Impact Developments (LID), and incentivizing actions such as including detention and/or retention ponds, alternative energy sources, and additional greenspace beyond site requirements.

Good stewardship of the environment is critical to the long-term sustainability of the City. With increased environmental mandates from the state and federal government, Winchester needs to be proactive in taking a leading role in requiring higher levels of environmental stewardship with public projects and in delivering public services. It also needs to encourage the private sector to better realize the true costs of unsustainable practices within regard to long-term economic sustainability and quality of life.

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CHAPTER SIX

MOBILITY

A Walkable Community Vision

Being able to get around Winchester is an important part of the City's quality of life. Having mobility choices means residents, workers, and visitors can drive, ride a bus, bike, or walk around the city. Every option should feel safe, efficient, and right for a certain kind of task.

- Children get to and from school safely and get some exercise at the same time.
- City residents walk to certain work, shopping or entertainment destinations, meeting neighbors and friends along the way.
- Tourists experience the city's rich history and architecture along with the modern sights, sounds, and smells of a vibrant downtown business district.
- Young and old, rich, and poor, with or without disabilities, find equal access to make the most of Winchester's opportunities.
- Upper-story apartments downtown provide convenience to vibrant afternoon and evening businesses in walking distance.
- Some students walk or bike between Shenandoah University and the downtown while others catch a bus from the city to Lord Fairfax Community College.
- Educated workers do not choose commuting as a necessity, and innovative new firms come to them.
- Residents enjoy walking or biking for recreation, errands, or work along the linked open spaces of the Green Circle Trail

For the first 200 years of its history, Winchester did business by foot, horse, and train. Today's sustainable vision recaptures that bustling downtown, without the horses. A balanced blend of mobility choices will help invigorate the city's economy and culture while reducing stress on government services caused by over-reliance on the car.

Citywide Mobility Objectives

As noted in Chapter 3, City Council stated twelve citywide Mobility objectives to address the citywide goal of: *Create and maintain a safe, efficient, and environmentally sustainable mobility and transportation network that is interconnected, multi-modal, and that facilitates walkable urban land use patterns less dependent upon personal vehicle*

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use. This chapter explains what is already happening with each objective and what can be done in the future to improve mobility. The thirteen objectives are:

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.
 - a. Monitor state and federal funding streams and changing city needs to prioritize certain roadway projects from the MPO plan.
 - b. Advocate rail infrastructure projects to reduce freight traffic congestion on Interstate 81, consistent with City Council Resolution 2003-50.
- 2) Employ a hierarchy of functional street categories including thoroughfare streets for major traffic movements through and within the community at higher speeds; collector streets to channel major traffic movements into and out of separate areas of the community at moderate speeds; and local streets to provide access to individual properties at lower speeds.
- 3) Encourage the use of alternate modes of mobility including walking, bicycling, and public transportation by all sectors of the population to reduce the dependency upon private automobile use.
 - a. Implement the recommendations of the MPO's 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and pending 2020 Bikeshare Study.
 - i. Complete the Green Circle Trail.
 - ii. Add miles of bike lane to arterial and collector roads
 - iii. Install bike racks and encourage businesses to do the same.
 - b. Implement the recommendations of the MPO's 2009 Transit Services Plan.
 - i. Increase WinTran route frequency to more than once an hour.
 - ii. Extend WinTran out into Frederick County's most urbanized areas to serve the needs of both city and county residents and visitors.
 - iii. Add bike racks to WinTran buses.
- 4) Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.
 - a. Address identified sidewalk deficiency by filling in gaps in the system.
 - b. Construct new sidewalk.
 - c. Maintain all sidewalks and respond quickly to complaints.
 - d. Identify and widen certain sidewalks to create outdoor social spaces.

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- e. Identify streets where new parallel parking spaces would benefit business and calm traffic.
 - f. Use the MPO plans to link Frederick County trail projects to city infrastructure.
 - g. Increase pedestrian connection points between the Old Town pedestrian mall and the George Washington and Braddock Street parking garages.
- 5) Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.
- a. Prioritize pedestrian-friendly street designs in neighborhood redevelopment projects.
 - b. Rewrite the current Zoning Ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and Engineering Standards to encourage New Urbanism, including elements of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND).
- 6) Employ access management and consider use of roundabouts to provide for traffic calming and improved safety.
- a. Study speed, flow, and accident data to identify streets most in need of calming.
 - b. Pilot different calming techniques including roundabouts, green medians, on-street parking, and pedestrian islands.
 - c. Continue efforts to reduce the number of driveway openings within proximity of each other through use of driveway spacing standards and in conjunction with public street improvement projects.
 - d. Implement the recommendations of the MPO's multimodal corridor studies for Berryville Avenue and S. Pleasant Valley Road.
- 7) Investigate the needs for multimodal transfer facilities.
- a. Construct covered bus shelters, especially at multimodal intersections near parking garages or the Green Circle Trail.
- 8) Work closely with Frederick County and Stephens City to extend public transportation between the City and destinations such as Lord Fairfax Community College, DMV, the Employment Commission/Job Training office, and the regional detention facilities as well as urbanizing areas of the County and Town.
- a. Implement the operational changes and undertake the capital expenses needed to develop a truly regional transit service that allows City residents to access services currently situated beyond the limits of existing transit routes.

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- 9) Promote Telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work.
 - a. Adopt telework incentives for city staff where appropriate.
 - b. Encourage and support telework among private firms.

- 10) Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.
 - a. Study improvements needed to rail crossings such as Featherbed Lane for safely accommodating an immediate alignment of the Green Circle Trail including a safe means for crossing the CSX railroad tracks.

- 11) Expand and improve general aviation, air cargo, and air passenger operations at the Winchester Regional Airport.
 - a. Support MPO efforts to add hanger space, technology, and amenities at the airport.

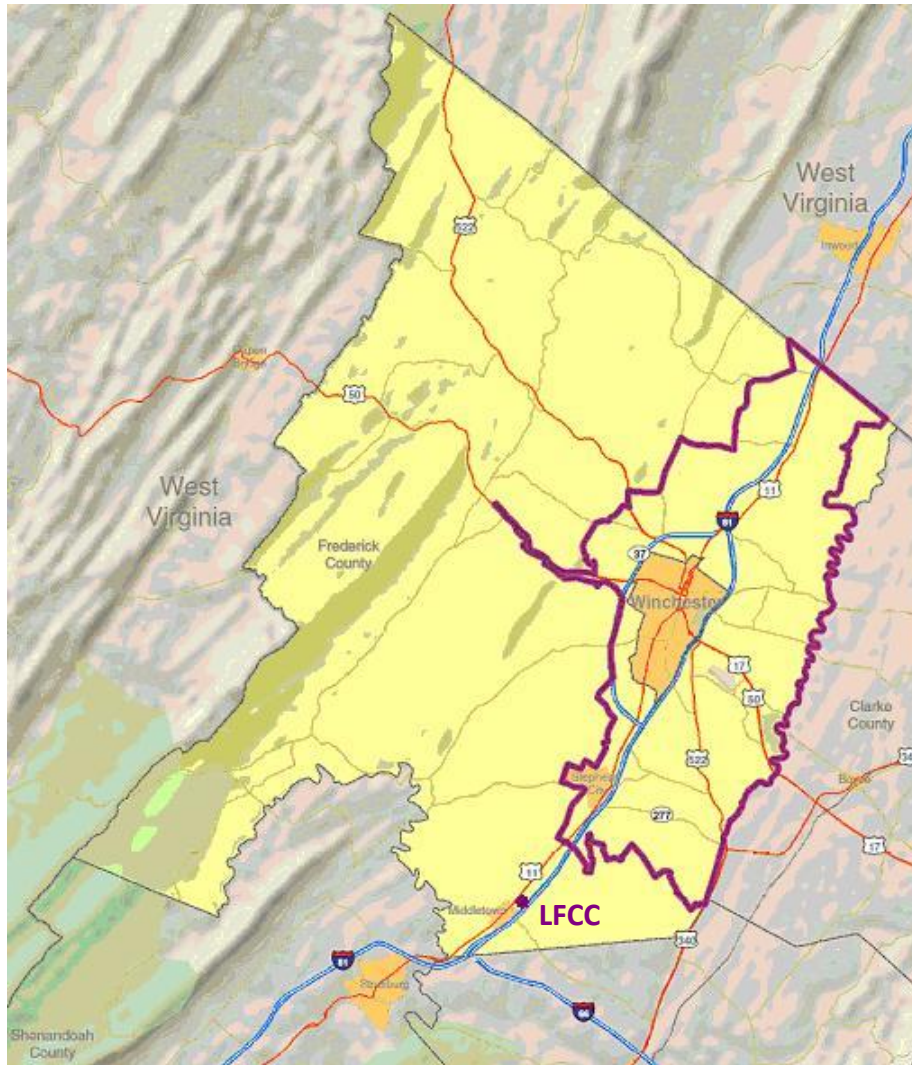
- 12) Pursue development of projects and works that are in line with the Vtrans 2040 Master Plan.

- 13) Pursue development of a bike share program that serves Winchester through stations at Shenandoah University, Old Town, and the Medical Center

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1. Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

In the 20th century, Winchester and Frederick County governments planned and built roads after consulting the state Department of Transportation. The two governments however did not formally consult with each other. That changed when the 2000 Census revealed strong population growth. For the 21st century, federal law mandates consideration of the city and the parts of the county as one urban area, outlined in purple on the map. The urban area also includes Stephens City, but not Middletown.



The Winchester-Fredrick Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) promotes partnership to best develop the metropolitan area. It includes the parts of Frederick County, including the Town of Stephens City, which are most urban or most likely to urbanize within the next 20 years. The MPO cooperates with three major partners in state and federal government: the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.

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The MPO maintained a long-range transportation plan to help the area adapt to new demands on mobility infrastructure. The MPO adopted the 2030 Long Range Plan in 2005.

The MPO Long Range Plan offers detailed choices for programs of road maintenance and construction to address congestion. The most comprehensive option costs at least \$1.8 billion over the next 20 years, mostly because of new road construction. The biggest planned project is the extension of Route 37 around the east of Winchester to form a loop of limited access highway around the city. Other large projects are a western bypass around Stephens City and roads to relieve congestion in suburbs east of Winchester and Stephens City.

Under the current 2030 plan, projects within the City of Winchester include:

- Widen Route 11 to five lanes from the southern city limit to West Tevis Street.
- Widen Amherst Street to six lanes from the western city limit to Keating Drive.
- Relocate Papermill Road to connect with Battaile Drive, remove the Papermill Road bridge over I-81, and build a new interchange with I-81 at Battaile Drive.
- Extend West Jubal Early Drive to Route 37 and build an interchange.
- Extend Meadow Branch Avenue to Route 50.
- Expand the I-81 interchanges at Route 50 and Rte 7.
- Widen I-81 to six with Collector-Distributor (CD) lanes or to eight lanes without CD lanes.
- Extend Pleasant Valley Road from Cedarmeade Avenue up to Battaile Drive.
- Extend Hope Drive to Pleasant Valley Road and realign Tevis Street and Papermill Road to intersect with Hope Drive at a four-way intersection on the west side of a new CSX rail crossing.
- Extend Frontage Road (Mall Blvd) and Legge Boulevard to connect with each other.
- Redesign the street network of the Millwood Ave, Jubal Early Drive, Apple Blossom Drive, University Drive, and Frontage Road (Mall Blvd) area to include grade separation of Jubal Early Drive over a reconnected local street connection of Millwood Ave and Frontage Road (Mall Blvd). The project would include ramps to and from Millwood and Frontage Road (Mall Blvd) for access to and from I-81 via Jubal Early Drive.
- Widen Shawnee Drive and Battaile Drive each to four lanes.

These projects aim to reduce traffic congestion on Interstate 81, on Millwood Pike and the suburban roads east of Winchester, and in Stephens City and the suburban areas east of that town. However, it is not certain that adequate state and federal funding will become available. Even under the MPO Plan, traffic congestion will remain in several areas of Winchester: Berryville Avenue, Pleasant Valley Road, Jubal Early Drive, parts of Amherst Street and Valley Avenue, and some downtown streets. This anticipated

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congestion assumes continued suburban growth. The compact, mixed-use development called for in this Plan may reduce traffic congestion and the need for new roads.

Freight truck traffic contributes to congestion on I-81, causing pollution and accidents. Improvement to the interstate and the Route 37 bypass are the most expensive components of the Long-Range Plan. Freight rail on CSX tracks already provides important support to Winchester's industries. So, expanding rail service is part of one plan to reduce congestion of I-81. Improving the Norfolk Southern tracks between Knoxville and Harrisburg and making increased use of the Inland Port transfer facility near Front Royal could divert hundreds of trucks from the Winchester area each day. In 2003, Winchester and the MPO approved resolutions supporting expanded freight rail service and upgrades to known I-81 bottlenecks. Railroad firms would share costs with local, state, and federal agencies. Since 2003, little progress has occurred. Winchester's elected officials should advocate reasonable rail solutions to freight transport issues in the area.

City staff should monitor state and federal funding and changing city needs to prioritize projects from the MPO plan. But while the MPO's 2030 Transportation Plan may improve safety and convenience of travel on the interstate and other main traffic arteries, it does not present a complete mobility solution for Winchester. This Comprehensive Plan fills in some of the gaps.

The MPO's Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan of 2007 addresses others. State and federal funding formulas favor road construction projects which also have non-motorized features. Local road improvements and new construction are more likely to receive state and federal aid if they include trails, calming features, and other multi-use elements. For example, federal dollars could completely fund a "Safe Route to School" project with improvements to bike lanes, trails, calming, and signage between neighborhoods and the local school.

The 2007 Mobility Plan identifies 14.6 miles of sidewalk and bike lane enhancements to occur along with road repairs and upgrades; these will gradually improve mobility in the city at little additional cost. The plan prioritizes certain sidewalk and bike facility enhancements through 2017. It observes that creating multi-use street and trail networks during a development project saves money compared to retrofitting streets after the fact. Finally, the 2007 Mobility Plan recommends revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, City Code, and proffer requests to enhance bike and pedestrian facilities over time. Winchester should continue to implement and support the 2007 Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan.

2. Employ a hierarchy of functional street categories including thoroughfare streets for major traffic movements through and within the community at higher speeds; collector streets to channel major traffic movements into and out of separate areas of the community at moderate speeds; and local streets to provide access to individual properties at lower speeds.

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Understanding the volume and speed of traffic, and classifying streets by their size, capacity, and use can assist in planning for multimodal mobility. On local streets, with light traffic at low speeds, bicycles can share the road safely and conveniently. But on arterial and major collector roads, bike lanes enhance safety and traffic flow. Pedestrian crossings are another issue. On local streets and minor collectors, stop signs and crosswalks often suffice. With larger streets, pedestrian signals with timers promote safety. However, principal arterials have so many lanes often with heavy traffic that pedestrian signals may remain inefficient and unsafe; in these cases, pedestrian bridges or tunnels may be best.

Improving mobility in Winchester requires detailed traffic data and classifying of streets. City staff should continue to work with the MPO to update traffic pattern surveys.

3. Encourage the use of alternate modes of mobility including walking, bicycling, and public transportation by all sectors of the population to reduce the dependency upon private automobile use.

Too many cars on Winchester's streets create several problems. Traffic congestion wastes time and money. It stresses residents and businesses. It deters firms from locating downtown. It pollutes the air. Hundreds of crashes endanger lives and property. Traffic congestion reduces the quality of life in Winchester.

One solution is to build more and wider roads. This solution, however, is very resource intensive, and requires space that the city has in short supply. An alternative, which this plan will emphasize, is for driving to become less necessary. A mode of transportation is a way of getting around. Multimodal mobility means having choices of how to move in Winchester and using them to save time, use less fuel, and even have more fun. The city should enhance its multimodal options.

At the turn of the twentieth century, bicycles provided a cheap and clean alternative to the horse in Winchester. Today there are twice as many bikes as cars in use worldwide, and the bicycle is increasingly popular for urban recreation, shopping, and commuting. Yet Winchester today is not very safe or convenient for bicyclists. Four improvements are listed below.

- Winchester should complete the Green Circle Trail. This project combines bike lanes, trails, and quiet sections of street to create a loop around the central and downtown neighborhoods. Spurs will extend to the south and west.
- Winchester should also add miles of bike lane to arterial and collector roads so bicycles can move safely, and the city should install bike racks and encourage businesses to do the same. Some cities combine bike racks and public art in creative ways shown below. Winchester could consider sponsorship of local craftsmen for such work.

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Practical sculptures in Louisville; Sacramento; and Palisade, Colorado.

- Winchester should implement and support the recommendations of the MPO's 2007 Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan. It lists upgrades to many city and county streets. Partner studies with Frederick County should identify priority bike lanes or trails to connect neighborhoods, shopping centers, and historic sites in the city with those in the county. Studies should focus on connecting dense suburban developments to downtown Winchester.

Winchester currently operates small buses to serve the Winchester Transit (WinTran) system in the city. There are seven routes, each with circuits running between 20 and 40 minutes in duration. Routes include several neighborhoods as well as major employment and commercial corridors such as Loudoun and Cameron Streets, Valley Avenue, Pleasant Valley Road, Millwood Avenue, Amherst Street and Berryville Avenue. All the routes meet downtown along E. Boscawen Street, near City Hall. WinTran generally runs from 6 am to 8 pm on weekdays and from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturdays. Maps and schedules are available on the City website and at stops.

In 2019, the City began placing Bike Sharrows in the street to encourage shared roads between automobile drivers and cyclists. In the coming years, Winchester's population will demand greater public transit service. The city will be home to more people who do not have cars. Some of them will be impoverished, but others will be students, environmentally conscious citizens, and the elderly. Public transit will be critical to preserving the mobility and quality of life of the city's growing elderly population and others who choose not to drive. WinTran should expand its services, specifically by:

- Using surveys and use patterns to add additional routes where potential exists.
- Increasing route frequency to more than once an hour.
- Partnering with Frederick County to consider more routes beyond the city limits, especially to southeastern subdivisions and Laurel Ridge Community College.
- Constructing more covered bus shelters especially at multimodal intersections near parking garages or the Green Circle Trail.
- Advertising WinTran's services, especially to tourists and other infrequent users.

Winchester does not yet have the kind of congestion and parking stresses which make bus services highly desirable for commuters and younger residents in large cities. Public transit becomes more viable when it links areas of walkable density. As redevelopment progresses, however, WinTran should be ready to grow and provide an effective alternative to the personal automobile.

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Winchester encourages development of multimodal developments bolstered by designation of the city an Urban Development Area (UDA), in accordance with state code. By designating the city as a UDA in 2020, more urban development patterns, such as multimodal transportation, can be encouraged and the City has become competitive for urban grant funding.

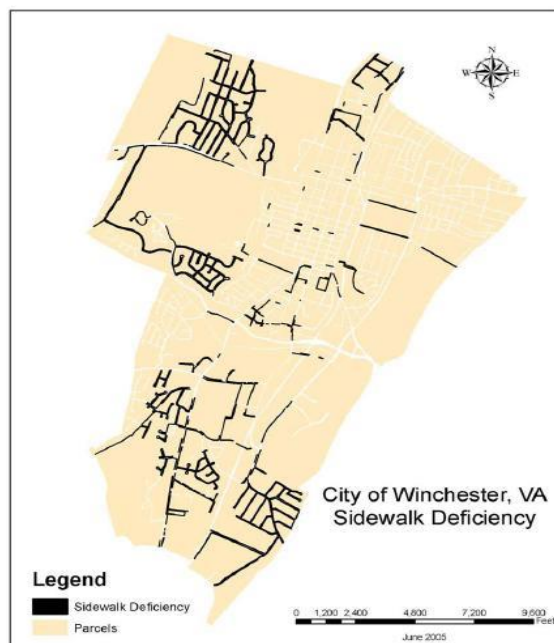
About one quarter of Winchester’s workers commute longer than 30 minutes each way to work, and some of these have long commutes to Washington, D.C., and its suburbs. However, Winchester does not have any formal facilities for park and ride, carpooling, or bus service to the Washington area. City staff should monitor labor statistics, Census data, and surveys. If demand exists, facilitating these services may improve quality of life for Winchester’s commuters.

4. Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.

Sidewalks, paths, and parking facilities shape the pedestrian environment and may promote or discourage daily walking. Closed to cars, the Loudoun Street Mall may be Winchester’s signature pedestrian feature, but many other elements contribute to a walkable downtown. Pedestrian connections from parking to destinations are helpful, and they should be pursued in conjunction with redevelopment of the adjacent private properties. A new north-south alley between Loudoun and Cameron Streets is one possibility.

Four parking garages and several surface parking lots provide convenient public parking for the Old Town area. The City Code exempts property owners from providing off-street parking in the historic core area. Churches own most of the private parking lots downtown, and some lease out parking during the weekdays. Very few private developments include structured parking, but this could change with denser redevelopment. Redevelopment concepts such as those suggested for the Ward Plaza site and the Cameron Square project between E. Piccadilly and Baker Street along the east side of N. Cameron Street rely upon structured parking to serve the compact mixed-use development of the site.

The black lines on the map at right show the areas of Winchester which have missing sidewalks. Most of the deficiencies are in

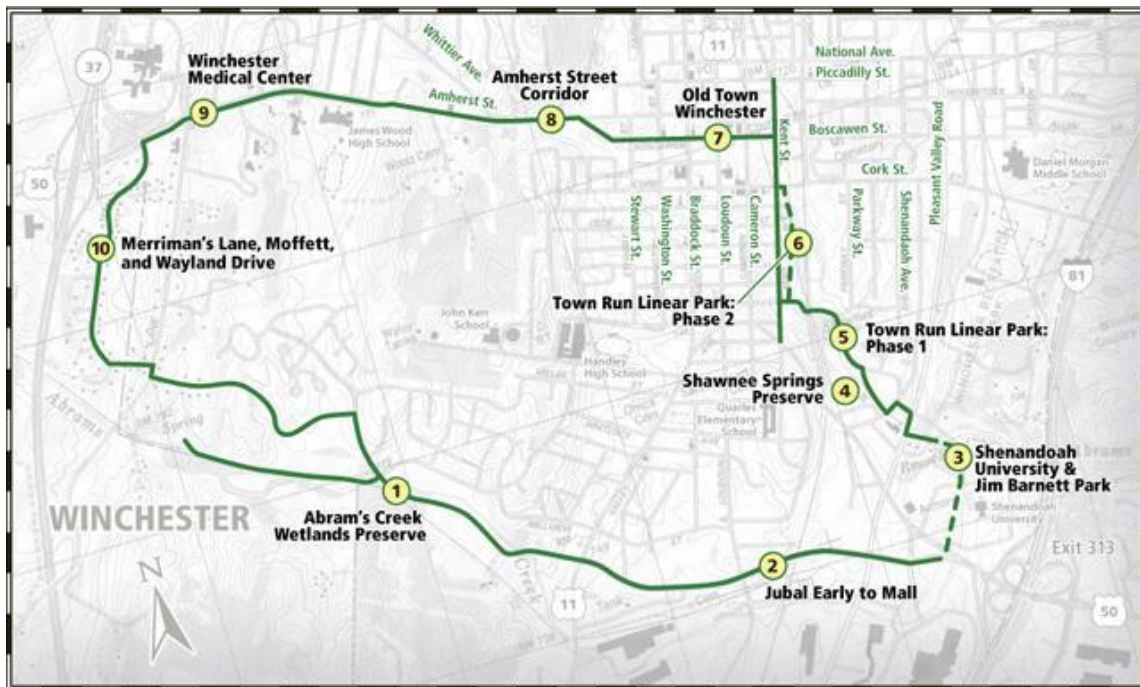


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the southern, western, and extreme northern areas of the city that were annexed in 1970, while others are situated within residential subdivisions developed in the 1970s and 1980s when the City required very wide streets but not sidewalks. Most of the deficient segments in the older areas of the city are due to difficult terrain.

The City continues to undertake sidewalk improvements including 2.1 miles of new sidewalks in the north end of Winchester.

Winchester should build more new sidewalks to address these deficiencies while devoting more resources to maintenance. Finally, sidewalks in some areas should be expanded beyond four feet to create an outdoor space more inviting and useful to businesses and the public. Linking bike and pedestrian improvements with utility replacement and street reconstruction work presents opportunities for considerable savings over time.



The Green Circle Trail, shown above, will also help pedestrians and cyclists. A recreational path for running or walking, it will also provide a scenic and healthy commuting option for some residents who live and work nearby. The Green Circle Trail is Winchester's primary pedestrian and bike path project, but the city should continue to investigate others per the MPO's 2014 Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan. Partnerships with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and railroads may yield new paths which connect neighborhoods, shopping centers, and historic and cultural sites.

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5. Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.

Streets are critical infrastructure for cities. The street space may contain several important elements, including:

- Sidewalk space for pedestrians
- Patio space for businesses
- Soil space for plants, including trees
- Parking space for vehicles
- Narrow lanes for bicycles
- Wider lanes for automobiles
- Under the pavement, pipes, and conduits for sewers, drinking water, stormwater, electrical cables, and data cables.

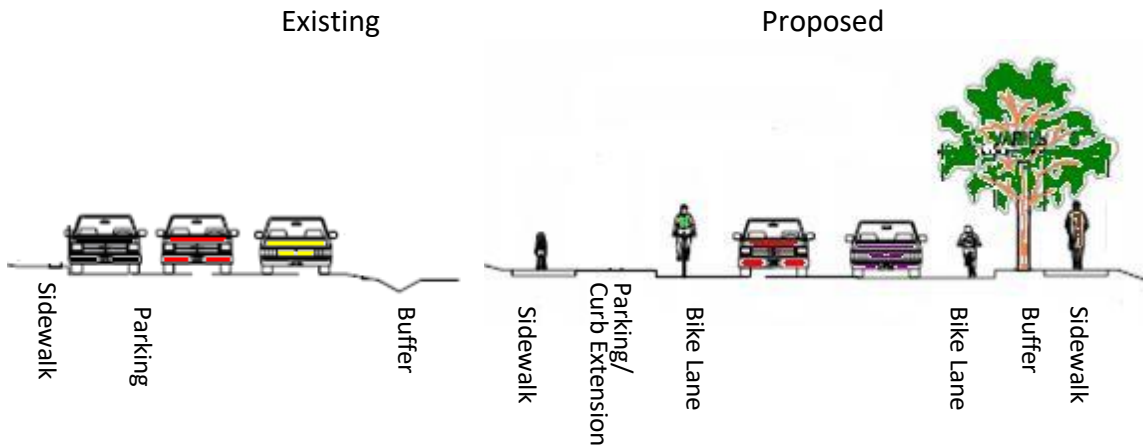
Street design influences life in a city by channeling people, vehicles, and water. Winchester's current street design does not reflect a commitment to sustainability.

As described in Chapter 2, Euclidean Zoning, which has been in place for upwards of 70 years in some areas of the city, segregates land uses in much of Winchester. Some areas support houses, other apartments, others store, and still other factories. Another method, which Winchester used for its first 200 years, is compact mixed-use development. This practice considers the overall character of a neighborhood. A mixed-use neighborhood may feature houses, apartments, parks, offices, stores, and workshops within a few blocks.

In a mixed-use development, residents and visitors can easily walk or bike to meet many everyday needs. This keeps cars off the roads, preventing pollution and crashes, saving on energy costs, and improving public health. Winchester should emphasize mixed use development, especially in blighted neighborhoods and obsolete commercial corridors, to improve mobility, quality of life, and the property rights of landowners.

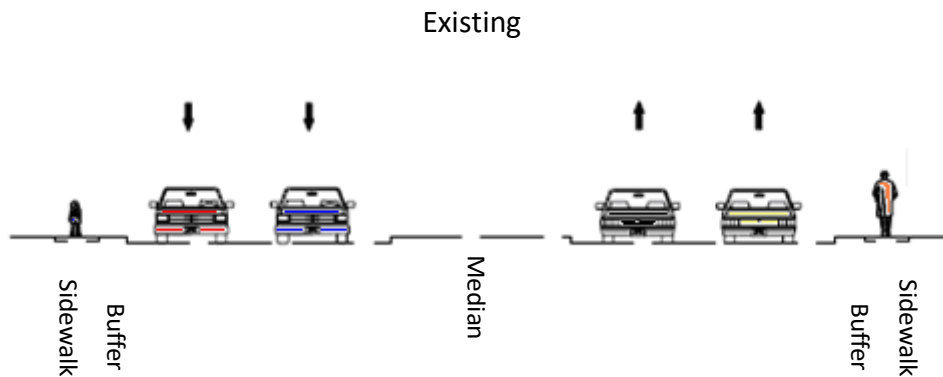
Winchester's streets serve a crucial role in mobility, and the design of streets may promote or restrain choices for how to get around. The drawing at left shows current conditions on many local streets. Only one side of the street has sidewalk, and there are no trees for shade. Bicyclists are forced to share the road, which can be unsafe.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022



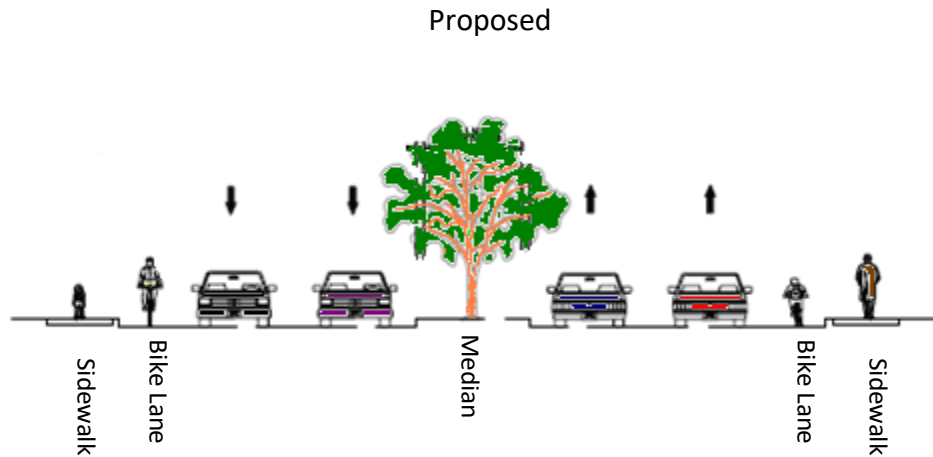
The proposed changes shown above add bike lanes. There are sidewalks in both directions. Total parking is not significantly reduced. New trees make walking more comfortable, reduce air and water pollution, and beautify the city.

On larger streets, the city has ample space to make improvements that calm traffic and add opportunities for walking and bicycling. At present, traffic on most arterial streets moves too quickly for bicyclists to share the road comfortably.



Adding trees to the median tends to calm traffic while sprucing up the street's appearance. Dedicated bike lanes allow for safer movement. This improved street fosters recreation and social activity while reducing the need for personal vehicles.

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Combined with mixed use development, these street designs reduce congestion by making it easier to get around without a car. These street design changes are not appropriate for all neighborhoods, but Winchester should consider alternative street design as one part of redevelopment.

Sections 5-23 through 5-37 of Winchester's Subdivision Ordinance concern streets. Streets should generally run parallel and intersect at right angles to form a grid. The ordinance outlines minimum width requirements for different kinds of streets: the higher the traffic speed and volume, the wider the street must be. Sidewalks must be a minimum of four feet wide and parallel to the streets. The ordinance does not provide for bicycle lanes, and they are rare in Winchester. The City Public Works Department specifies the standards used for street construction, marking, signage, lighting, and decoration. Public Works also maintains all public streets, repainting, clearing snow, filling potholes, and the like. The City Arborist studies and maintains the trees along streets.

Some of Winchester's streets are privately owned and maintained. Planned Unit Developments often have privately owned and maintained streets. The subdivision developer builds the streets, and residents pay homeowners' association fees to maintain them. Private streets must physically link with public streets and follow most of the same standards as to size and maintenance.

City codes for drainage and stormwater management do not always bind private streets. Public streets keep regular gutters, storm drains, and pipes which collect rainwater and discharge it into creeks. Winchester's private streets do not consistently link with the public stormwater system. This inconsistency is not always bad. Indeed, the public system of pipes collecting all rainwater and channeling it into creeks causes pollution. Rain washes polluting chemicals from streets and parking lots into streams, often with no filtering or treatment. The emerging consensus of sustainable design shifts away from immediate drainage through pipes in favor of using ponds, wetlands, and inexpensive filtering of stormwater through soil. Some of Winchester's private streets heed these principles better than the public streets.

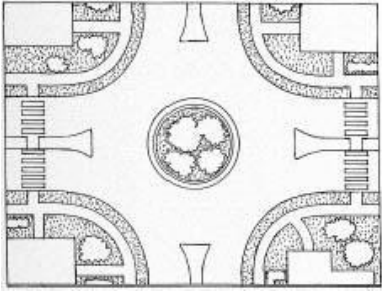
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The owners of different private streets maintain them at different levels of quality. Some attentively repair cracks and clear snow, and others do not. However, the city takes responsibility for ensuring safety and mobility. So, if a private street is not adequately maintained, the city may issue notice and begin to publicly maintain it. The city can then place tax liens on the affected properties to cover the maintenance costs.

Faced with such a situation, private street owners may offer to sell or give the street to the city. The Virginia Department of Transportation provides the city with grants for road maintenance, but the aid formula only counts streets and roads that meet state criteria for size, safety, and quality. Private streets in Winchester do not always meet the state criteria, so the Council reserves the right to refuse acceptance of a private street.

6. Employ access management and consider use of roundabouts to provide for traffic calming and improved safety.

One part of traffic congestion is how many cars fill the roads at peak hours. Another is how those cars drive. In congestion, cars tend to stop and go, with bottlenecks at stop signals and left turns. Traffic calming refers to technologies which smooth the flow of traffic. Traffic calming reduces drivers' fuel and repair costs, prevents crashes, and improves safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Four common calming features include:

- Roundabouts. At intersections, traffic circles replace four-way stop signs or lights. Once drivers become comfortable using them, they improve traffic flow and reduce the risk of collisions since all traffic moves consistently counterclockwise. Cutting the idling typical at signalized intersections also reduces air pollution and fuel costs.
- 
- Narrower streets. Simply narrowing a street reduces a driver's perceived safe speed to reduce stop-and-go driving and improve traffic flow. The narrowing may be done by widening sidewalks, painting a bike lane, or building a green median.
 - Raised crosswalks. Often made from brick or another distinctive material, raised crosswalks define a pedestrian space and slow cars at intersections without the shock of a speed bump. Their distinctive texture also helps the visually impaired.
 - On-street parking. Parallel parking spaces beside traffic lanes tend to moderate the speed of traffic. On-street parking spaces also add convenience for drivers while preserving lot space: downtown land is more productive as homes and businesses than as parking lots.

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After studying speed, flow, and crash data to identify streets most in need of calming, Winchester should employ these and other calming techniques to improve mobility. They may also generate environmental and social benefits.

The MPO commissioned studies to improve access management and traffic flow on Berryville, Millwood Avenue, and S. Pleasant Valley Rd., three of the city's important entry corridors. Barring major changes to development and land use patterns, traffic volume and congestion on these corridors will grow worse in the next 25 years. Mixed-use development and multimodal improvements relieve congestion by reducing trips by car. Winchester should prioritize bus shelters, sidewalk work, bike lanes, and trail projects along these arterial streets while partnering with Frederick County to extend those services farther east. One cost effective street improvement to reduce congestion is timing and synchronizing traffic lights. Others reduce the number of bottlenecks caused by turning traffic: new medians, fewer commercial driveways, and more and longer dedicated turning lanes. The City should move deliberately to improve mobility along these important gateways.

Another study examined the revitalization of the commercial and residential areas between Piccadilly and Commercial Streets north of Old Town. Traffic calming and rerouting of traffic from Route 522 from residential Fairmont Avenue to the commercial arterials form part of a plan to stimulate business growth. In this instance, street design may serve to improve the peace and safety of a stable neighborhood while bringing new business to an area in need.

7. Investigate the needs for multimodal transfer facilities.

A multimodal transfer facility is a structure where people can conveniently change from one mode of moving to another. Some examples are:

- An on-street parallel parking space beside a good quality sidewalk.
- A parking garage with bike racks and a bus stop at the entrance.
- A walking and biking trail with bus stops at intersections with main streets.
- A bike rack on the sidewalk outside a shopping center.

Most of Winchester's bus stops expose waiting passengers to the elements. The city should construct more covered bus shelters, especially at multimodal intersections near parking garages or the Green Circle Trail. Also, adding inexpensive bike racks to WinTran buses creates another multimodal option for travelers. MPO traffic and demand studies should also survey the habits and preferences of residents and visitors to determine the most needed multimodal transfer facilities.

8. Work closely with Frederick County and Stephens City to extend public transportation between the City and destinations such as Laurel Ridge Community

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College, the DMV, the Employment Commission/Job Training office, and the regional detention facilities as well as urbanizing areas of the County and Town.

Some Winchester residents use WinTran buses out of environmental consciousness. The number of affluent, retired, and young professional bus riders may increase in the coming years. However, many current and future WinTran customers use the service because poverty or criminal convictions deny them a car. For these customers, the community college, DMV office, employment office, and jail are important destinations which WinTran does not currently serve.

Extending bus service to destinations needed by the community's least privileged is a matter of justice and fairness. The Civil Rights Act requires the MPO to survey the needs of low-income and minority groups, ensuring that mobility policies do not ignore them. Winchester should remain involved with further MPO studies of transit demand, especially as the Census Bureau publishes data from its 2020 count.

9. Promote Telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work.

In Winchester, as in most cities, the worst traffic congestion occurs during morning and evening rush hours. Roads that easily handle traffic for most of the day become tangled during critical periods. Newly constructed lanes which relieve rush hour congestion are not needed during most of the day and night, so building them is not entirely efficient.

Telework means using computers to work from home rather than going to an office. A Winchester resident who works from home does not contribute to rush hour congestion. Telework also helps if even half a day's work can be done at home, because someone who drives at 10 am and 3pm is not part of the rush. The city should encourage, and support telework among private firms, and it should adopt telework incentives for city staff where appropriate.

10. Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.

Railroad tracks in Winchester are a risk for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians. Passing trains pose an obvious threat, but so do poorly maintained and bumpy crossings. Public Works staff should work with railroad firms to improve safety at track crossings. Improvements may include lighting, signage, paving, or above-grade crossing bridges. Improvements are needed to Featherbed Lane for safely accommodating an immediate alignment of the Green Circle Trail including a safe means for crossing the CSX railroad tracks. The City may also want to consider a bike and pedestrian bridge over the CSX rail yard between North Cameron Street and North Kent Street to improve safety for children who currently traverse the rail yard unsafely at grade.

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11. Expand and improve general aviation, air cargo, and air passenger operations at the Winchester Regional Airport.

The Winchester Regional Airport is located east of Winchester between Route 50 and Route 522. The airport serves general aviation and current cannot handle commercial flights. Some 81 small aircraft are stored in the hangers there, and the airport averages 161 flights per day. The MPO projects steady growth of general aviation traffic at the airport. Winchester should encourage the addition of new hanger facilities, technology, and amenities.

Dulles International is the nearest major airport, about an hour's drive east of Winchester. If Dulles becomes increasingly crowded and the local population grows, there may be potential to develop commercial service from an enlarged airport in Winchester. The city should seek opportunities to develop freight and passenger flights from the airport like that done at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport in Weyers Cave, Virginia.

12. Pursue development of projects and works that are in line with the Vtrans 2040 Master Plan.

Every four years, the Commonwealth Transportation Board of Virginia puts together a multi-modal plan. In 2015, the Commonwealth Transportation Board of Virginia approved the Vtrans 2040 Master Plan. In this plan, it identifies needs for intercity rail and flight infrastructure along the Shenandoah Valley, including the City of Winchester, and corridor reliability with I-81. This plan's projects for Winchester state that the City should pursue development of projects that embody these goals.

13. Pursue development of a bike share program that serves Winchester through stations at Shenandoah University, Old Town, and the Medical Center.

Winchester's small size makes it well suited for bike travel. In addition to developing bike infrastructure and safety, the City should pursue development of a bike share program. The City's population would benefit from the ability to travel around the City using such a program. In a bike share, bikes are stored in docks throughout an area. These bikes can be unlocked and used by citizens, who then utilize the bikes as needed. Once they are finished using the bike, it is returned to any one of the bike docks. These programs have been used to considerable success in localities such as Richmond, Roanoke, and Norfolk. By providing a bike share program, the City would serve to help reduce the amount of car traffic. By placing ports at Shenandoah University, Old Town, and the Medical Center, parking and traffic congestion at these primary destinations would be significantly reduced.

The map on the next page lays out several possible general locations for bike ports, based on frequented destinations and proximity to residences. In 2019, an RFP was released by

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the City for a bike share program. The resulting project from that RFP identified more specific and optimal locations, based on the research and studies that was performed study was completed in September of 2020. City Council requested a second phase of the project to look at ways to improve bike safety throughout the City before implementing a bike share program.



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CHAPTER SEVEN

HOUSING

In the modern economy, households locate in an area based on the quality of life there. Businesses follow the workforce, locating near a strong base of employees and customers. So, cultivating the local economy means creating conditions that the workers and shoppers of the future find attractive. All the elements of this Plan –parks, schools, clean air –help create those attractive conditions, but housing may be the most important.

Winchester must have housing choices that newcomers find appealing, or they will move elsewhere, and jobs will follow them away. This chapter outlines how the city can reposition itself by improving its housing stock while respecting the stable neighborhoods and the historic core.

As the largest urban area in the region, Winchester may always have a varying homeless population. Consequently, the City must ensure there are adequate policies in place to address the need for a wide array of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing to serve the homeless.

Citywide Housing Objectives

As noted in Chapter Three there are nine citywide objectives designed to help the City meet its goal for housing.

Provide opportunities for vibrant, high quality, mixed-income, higher density housing in a diverse range in suitable living environments to facilitate economic and social sustainability.

The nine citywide housing objectives are:

1. Increase the appreciation rate of city home values relative to the region.
2. Provide opportunities for and pursue action items to produce new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density setting that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.
3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing economically viable substandard housing units in suitable living environments while continuing to maintain the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.
4. Actively pursue the acquisition and demolition or redevelopment of economically obsolete residential structures except those contributing architecturally to the historic district, or Corridor Enhancement districts, including but not limited to National Avenue.

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5. Increase homeownership opportunities for prospective first-time home buyers.
6. Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals, college students, and empty nesters.
7. Promote equal opportunity in housing.
8. Pursue means of recovering the costs associated with multi-family rental properties through alternative real estate tax assessments.
9. In coordination with surrounding local government jurisdictions and local non-profit organizations, actively support the homeless population.

PRESENT CONDITIONS

What kinds of housing does Winchester have now?

According to the 2021 Housing Study that the City commissioned RKG Associates to prepare, the following housing characteristics were observed:

- The growth of renter households has outpaced the development of new traditional rental housing units (multifamily developments). Housing conversions have increased in Winchester, creating an imbalance in typical rental housing by housing type. Nearly 40% of rental units in the city are contained in either detached single-family homes or attached townhome/condominiums.
- Housing differs within the City's subareas. Each defined subarea of the city has a different housing makeup, often determined by the period housing was built in that area. Those subareas developed after the 1960s are more traditional single-family subdivisions.
- Housing development in Winchester predominantly has been multifamily since 2010. Recent large multifamily developments have added hundreds of housing units in relatively small land area. The focus on multifamily development is being driven, in large part, due to developers not making enough money on low-density development due to high land costs. Further, redevelopment, which is required in Winchester due to the relatively small amount of greenfields, requires greater density to be profitable.
- In general, Winchester has a large supply of affordable homeownership opportunities for households making between 50% and 80% AMI. However, this finding is slightly misleading. At a base level, there are very few options for households earning at the lower end of this spectrum. Further, appreciation has

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been substantial in Winchester meaning this affordability is waning as prices escalate higher than income levels.

- Price escalation is due, in part, because Winchester does not have enough housing units to meet demand at the highest income levels. The analysis indicates there is a supply gap of nearly 1,400 units for persons earning above 120% of AMI. This imbalance is a lead contributor to price escalations, as competition for the city's limited homeownership supply requires buyers to offer above asking price.
- The most vulnerable households in Winchester are substantially underserved. At a base level, more than 81% of households earning below 30% AMI are cost burdened (paying above 30% of their gross income for housing). Serving households earning below 50% of AMI is a national challenge but is growing in Winchester. Further, those units that are available to these households oftentimes are also in the worst condition, diminishing quality of life.
- New rental housing development is being priced for 100% AMI to 120% AMI income range. While this finding is not surprising given the substantial unmet demand from these higher earners, new development has not been robust enough to mitigate rent escalation being faster than household incomes. Research done for this analysis indicates that unmet demand, particularly for households earning below 80% of AMI, will increase in the future. This issue is particularly challenging for larger renter households as traditional apartment complexes have limited supply of 3+ bedroom units and very few are being developed.
- The lack of larger (3+ bedroom) apartments causing conversion of traditional ownership units to rental. Regulations limiting the development of units with more bedrooms will perpetuate this trend, particularly for townhouse-styled rental units. The city's older, smaller, and comparatively lower cost ownership housing makes it more attractive for investors seeking opportunities to serve this market.
- The city's development pipeline is more robust than past years. The city's building permit database indicates there is more development interest now than had been experienced in the past decade. Approximately 840 rental units and 240 townhome-condominium units are expected to be delivered in next five years. The apartment units are clustered in some larger developments near the downtown corridor (targeting Shenandoah University and young professionals). Further, 200 of rental units expected to be age restricted (55+).
- These known development projects are focused on market-rate development with little price diversity. While it is not certain whether income-controlled units will become part of the program for these projects, there is no indication that any will be added. The current market rate pricing typically targets above 100% AMI (above 120% AMI for ownership housing). While the new housing could ease the

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market pressure on lower-cost units, the lack of any income-controlled units will continue to limit housing access and choice for the city's existing modest-income households.

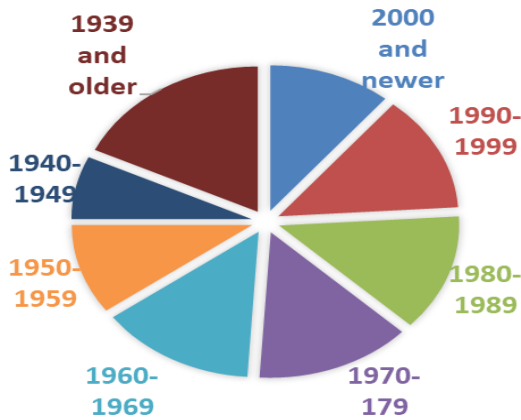
- Impacts of the current economy and COVID-19 will affect the new unit construction. In short, part of the boom in housing demand in Winchester is the push from households to take advantage of new options for telecommuting and from preferences of being outside higher density, urban areas. Much of this increase in demand is from other Northern Virginia areas closer to Washington DC. These buyers and renters tend to have higher incomes, skewing the market's historic ability to pay levels. As a result, price escalation likely will increase without new income-controlled development.
- Growing pressure from these more affluent households will increase price escalation. The projection analysis indicates that demand will outpace supply despite the uptick in building permits. Without new development, prices will continue to rise faster than inflation for both rental and ownership housing. Further, many households are acquiring 'fixer-upper' units, rehabilitating these units (particularly near Downtown). This effort will directly decrease the city's existing affordable supply. While increasing demand from affluent homeowners willing to purchase and rehabilitate housing may reverse conversion trends, it will adversely impact larger, lower income households substantially by decreasing the availability of converted units and drive pricing up for those converted units that remain in the rental pool.
- Ultimately, the supply-demand balance is projected to worsen for lower-income households. Housing costs (both rental and owner) have been escalating substantially faster than incomes in Winchester. As a result, the little supply that is affordable to households earning under 50% of AMI has been decreasing due to market forces. Concurrently, the number of households earning less than 50% of AMI has been remaining steady. Without market intervention, cost burdening and displacement of the most vulnerable Winchester residents will continue.

In 2020, the City had 12,328 housing units for 28,705 persons; Census surveys estimated 1,167 vacant units (7.5 percent vacancy). Of the rest, owners occupied 44 percent, and the other 56 percent were rented. Home ownership correlates with low density: in the central corridor, nearly three quarters of dwellings are rented, while on the city's more suburban edges owner occupancy reaches 62 percent.

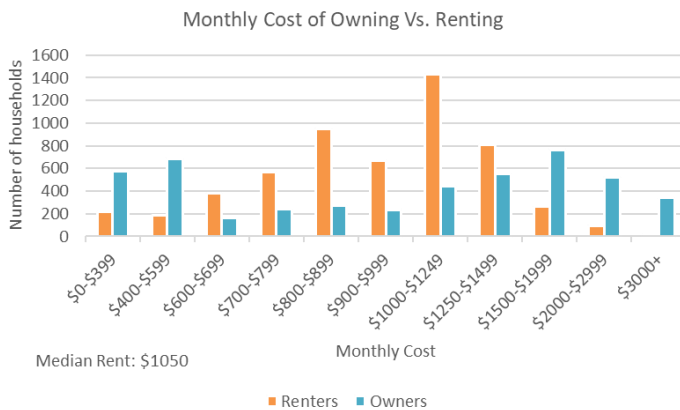
The chart on the next page shows the age of Winchester's housing stock. About 18 percent of the city's houses predate 1940, with many fine examples of nineteenth century styles. Historic housing is mostly downtown, and the city's Historic District helps preserve them. Almost half of the city's housing, is old but not historic. Some of these units are nearing the end of their economic lives. Nearly a quarter of the city's housing stock is new since 1990 and much of that is either high-end single- or multi-family.

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AGE OF HOUSING IN WINCHESTER



The chart below shows the monthly costs paid by owners and renters in Winchester. Many renters pay around \$1050 per month, whereas most of the city’s largest and finest homes are owned. The city has seen some new apartment complexes with club houses and pools but still does not have very many luxury rental units, or condo units.



Today, the city’s most valuable housing is mortgaged by dual-income families. Rented units tend to cost less and include a more diverse and transient population. About 1,550 houses are owned with no mortgage. These are generally older and long held in the same family. A significant number of single-family houses have only one occupant, often a widow or widower. Seniors pay little property tax, and the tax code encourages some rigidity in the market as they choose not to occupy smaller units.

FUTURE TRENDS

What kinds of housing does Winchester need for the future?

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Chapter Two explains the demographic changes coming to the city. To make the most of change, the city must have appropriate housing to meet the needs of newcomers or they, and their jobs, will go elsewhere.

The city’s total population is projected to reach about 31,107 by 2030 and 33,031 by 2040. Group quarter population – college dormitories, nursing homes, group homes – amounted to about 800 persons in 2000, but swelled to as much as 1,870 by 2008, partly due to Shenandoah University taking over two former motel establishments and partly due to an influx of privately operated group homes throughout the City. The rapid expansion of group home facilities earned Winchester the unofficial title of ‘Recovery City’ and conflicts with the vision for a sustainable community of choice. Assuming a Census average 2.5 persons per dwelling and assuming no increase in the percentage of group quarter population, that means that an average of 114 new housing units must come onto the market each year to support the City’s projected growth. Over a 10-year period, that is 1,140 new housing units. Winchester should seek to develop the average number of housing units required by this measurement each year.

Factoring in a normal vacancy rate of 11 percent, that adds another 11 units annually for a total of 123 units needing to be constructed each year. And they must be the kind of units that new residents want.

Vacant land within Winchester’s city limits does not provide very much space for building single-family detached houses: most open space is important for environmental sustainability and recreation. Therefore, suburban-styled development of detached houses on large lots is not a viable long-term option. The new housing must take the form of increased density including apartments, townhouses, and condominiums. Greater density on limited land will tend to increase values. The most natural course for the city’s growth is to replace today’s obsolete housing with denser and more valuable units. That is just what the key growth demographics demand.

Winchester has enough existing housing to meet the needs of large households and couples with children, especially since families continue to get smaller over time. There are three demographic growth groups that newer, denser development projects should focus on for housing. These groups are:

Students	Shenandoah University plans to grow enrollment without matching construction of dormitories. So more undergraduate and graduate students will seek rental housing close to the campus and the social life of downtown.
Young professionals	Educated workers, often without children seek housing near their jobs and the shopping and entertainment options of a small city.
Empty nesters	After their children move out, dual-income couples have many years to continue working and living actively. They may seek a smaller dwelling close to their jobs, medical providers, and social and cultural interests.

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Members of these groups often feel less attached to the suburban lifestyle. The energy, diversity, and convenience of a small city appeals to them. These households should fuel Winchester’s sustainable growth, but the city must have the kind of housing they desire.

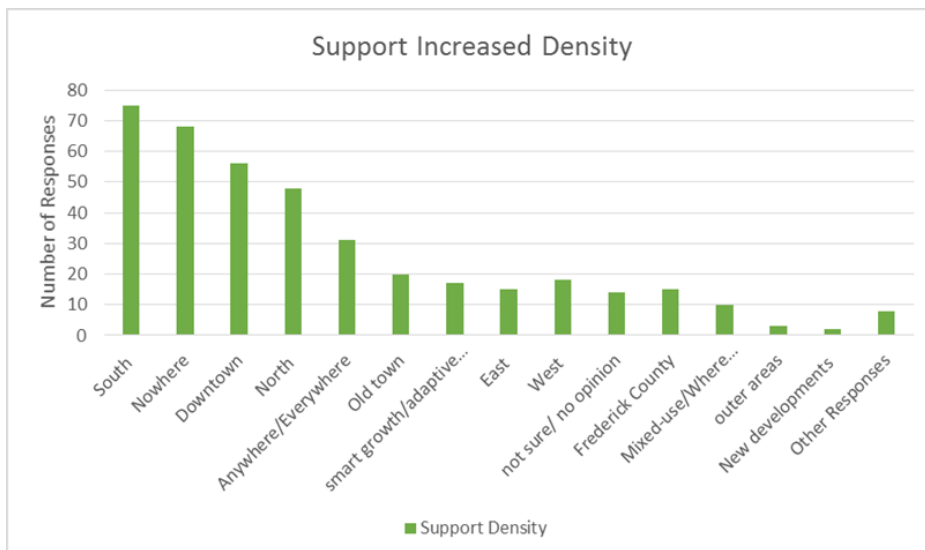
This means:

- More quality apartments and condos downtown and near the university.
- Apartments near, or even above, downtown offices and businesses.
- Luxury apartments with amenities for dual-income couples.
- Condominium units to provide equity investment at similar price and quality to luxury apartments.
- More mixed-use, mixed-income development, especially those providing grocery stores.
- Converting or demolishing obsolete and blighted houses to result in more desirable housing types.
- Senior housing near downtown and Winchester medical center.

Today, Winchester does not have enough of the kind of housing that the future requires. Due to the natural rigidities of the housing market and the current pressures against financing new development, the City must improve market functionality.

It is important that the City does not neglect developing workforce housing. As high-quality housing is produced and the cost of living goes up, residents are forced out as new residents come in. The City should take measures to offset this gentrification, and prevent the existing populations being forced out.

Through Community Input Sessions in the summer of 2019, citizens identified the key area where they wanted more density targeted, and where they wanted taller building heights. For more density, citizens primarily identified the South portion of the City. Other areas that were also identified are Downtown and the north portion of the City.



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Citizens also identified the areas where they wanted higher building density. The primary identified area was downtown, which was differentiated from Old Town by many respondents. Many respondents also indicated that they had no geographic preference to the increase of higher density and simply indicated ‘Nowhere’ or ‘Anywhere’.

While more than 80 respondents said they did not want any taller buildings anywhere, gathered more responses than any other category, it only accounts for roughly 19% of responses. Most other responses express a desire for building heights to be focused in certain areas. These responders make up a distinct majority of the overall responses.

Winchester should consider expanding building heights in the City while taking care to keep the current scale, while updating City ordinances to include wedding-cake style structures. This style has building stories moving back away from the structure’s edge as they get higher, which preserves the historic scale along public streets. (See Chapter 10: Urban Design for more detail)

The City also performed Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (S.W.O.T) Analysis with community members at Community Input sessions. During the exercises, every session included housing Affordability as either a threat or a weakness.

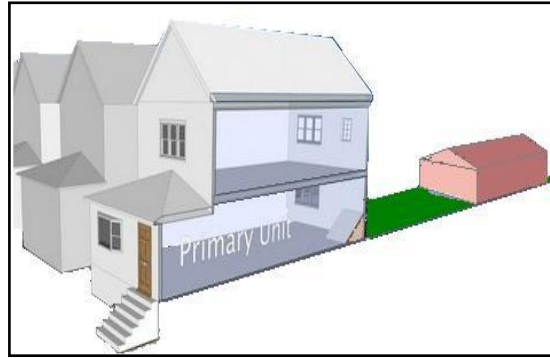
City staff should work with developers to remove obstacles to the creation of a more vibrant housing stock. At the level of individual houses, there are already some incentives for rehabilitation. A homeowner or landlord who improves the value of a house that is at least 25 years old and situated within the Historic District by at least forty percent does not have to pay tax on the added value for ten years. Many older homes could benefit from such renovations. Similar incentives are available within the City’s mapped Enterprise Zones.

Some older houses’ obsolescence amounts to spot blight or dereliction by law. They need to be rehabilitated or demolished. The City already has incentives in place to encourage the rehabilitation or demolition of these structures. Property owners can receive a 10-year tax abatement on the increased value related to rehabilitation or, in the case of demolition, receive up to \$5,000 of demolition value abated for a 10-year period along with reimbursement of building and demolition permit fees.

New, denser, more valuable housing can be built on sites following demolition. Where blighted, vacant structures sap a neighborhood’s vitality, condemnation is appropriate to consider. City planners should help developers consolidate small parcels for redevelopment projects that include the kinds of housing demanding by the changing market.

For key parcels, the city can play a more active role. City finances may underwrite the risks of development, or the city may partner with builders by contributing land and taking a portion of profits. State law permits many other forms of public-private partnership, and staff should remain alert to the possibilities and take the lead in

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educating developers. Such actions are justified when the benefits of the project in catalyzing the growth of a neighborhood –accrue to the public as positive externalities.

The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to channel development into the desired forms. This means incentives for mixed uses, green buildings, mixed dwelling types, and other principles of New Urbanism. Chapter Ten gives more attention to traditional design. Under current law, accessory apartments, and cottages like those shown above are not allowed in most areas. Yet they offer an easy increase in density, especially for students, without changing the façade of a house. If alleys offer safe emergency access, these units should be more generally permitted.

While Winchester does not discourage the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family rentals, nevertheless the Zoning Ordinance should discourage it in areas marked for neighborhood stabilization as depicted on the character map. The city has many stable residential neighborhoods where no great change makes sense. A limited supply of land means that detached, large houses are best used as valuable homes for single families. Denser townhouse and apartment forms are preferable to splitting up the city's largest and oldest houses.

Planning and finance staff should monitor the revenue generated by new housing compared to the services granted by the city. The marginal dwelling and household should yield funding equal to the marginal costs of city services to that household. If the existing regime of taxes and fees does not suffice, then it should be changed.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

What about housing for people with low incomes?

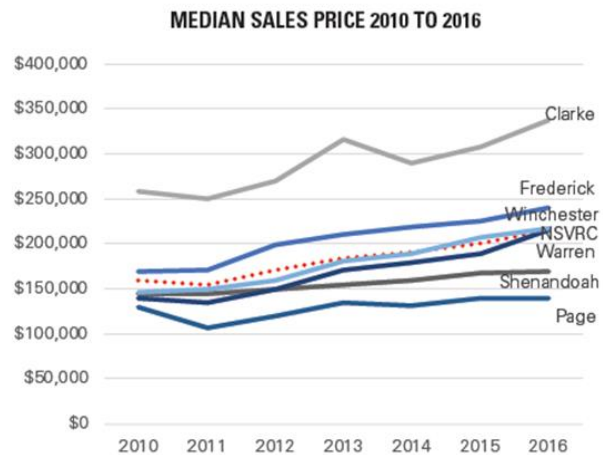
This Plan calls for increased density of housing; that today's blighted and underused property should become denser, higher value stock for new demographic groups to use. The danger of this strategy is that it risks displacing low-income residents. Changing demographics and rising property values that destroy a neighborhood's old character is called gentrification. It is not desirable. Redevelopment efforts should add capacity for desired growth while preserving options for the poor and improving the quality of low-

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income housing. Management and maintenance of low-income housing developments should be scrutinized by the City to ensure that they do not become tomorrow's slums.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, 26% of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (A.L.I.C.E), residents who are not below the poverty line, but do not have a large disposable income, reside in Winchester.

In 2018, VCU's Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CARE) conducted a study on the Northern Shenandoah Valley Region, analyzing the housing market and characteristics of the area. In that report, they found that housing values spiked in 2010, and have averaged around \$300,000 since 2015. For Winchester, the average sales price is just under \$250,000. The report further made several recommendations to increase housing affordability for Winchester:



- Expand housing rehabilitation efforts, particularly targeted to senior homeowners.
- To address the severe shortage in affordable homeownership, encourage higher density and smaller footprint homeownership developments.
- Reposition Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support local housing nonprofits and housing initiatives.
- Consider a voluntary inclusionary zoning ordinance to create a variety of housing types and price points.
- Encourage mixed use development of historic areas to include rental housing.

The report did take note that, of the surrounding localities, Winchester held the vast majority in affordable housing units, and recommended that the counties work to increase their share of affordable housing in the region. These localities, namely Frederick County should work to create affordable housing units in proportion to their population.

The federal definition of affordable housing is costing less than 30 percent of a household's income. If housing costs more than that, there may not be enough left for food, transportation, and the other needs of life. The table on the next page shows local wages for key community jobs and the housing cost that is 30 percent of that income. Such workers might have to share housing or have difficulty supporting dependents.

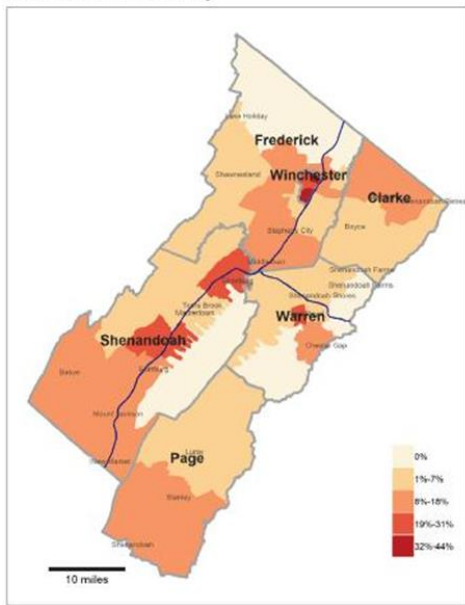
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Wages and Affordable Housing in Winchester		
Profession	Hourly Wage	Affordable Monthly Rent
First-year teacher	\$16.82	\$807
Licensed nurse	\$14.47	\$695
Fast food manager	\$12.50	\$600

Many local households maintain steady occupancy of owned or rented dwellings despite low incomes. Nonprofits like Blue Ridge Habitat for Humanity, Blue Ridge Housing Network and The Salvation Army provide counseling and support. Through a contract with the Virginia Housing (VH), the city’s Office of Housing and Neighborhood Development (OHND) provides housing assistance through the Housing Choice

Vouchers program. Many of the applicants to this program reside outside of Winchester, as seen by, in October 2019, how only 490 of 1254 applicants stated to have lived and or worked in Winchester’s area code 22601.

Percent of units multifamily

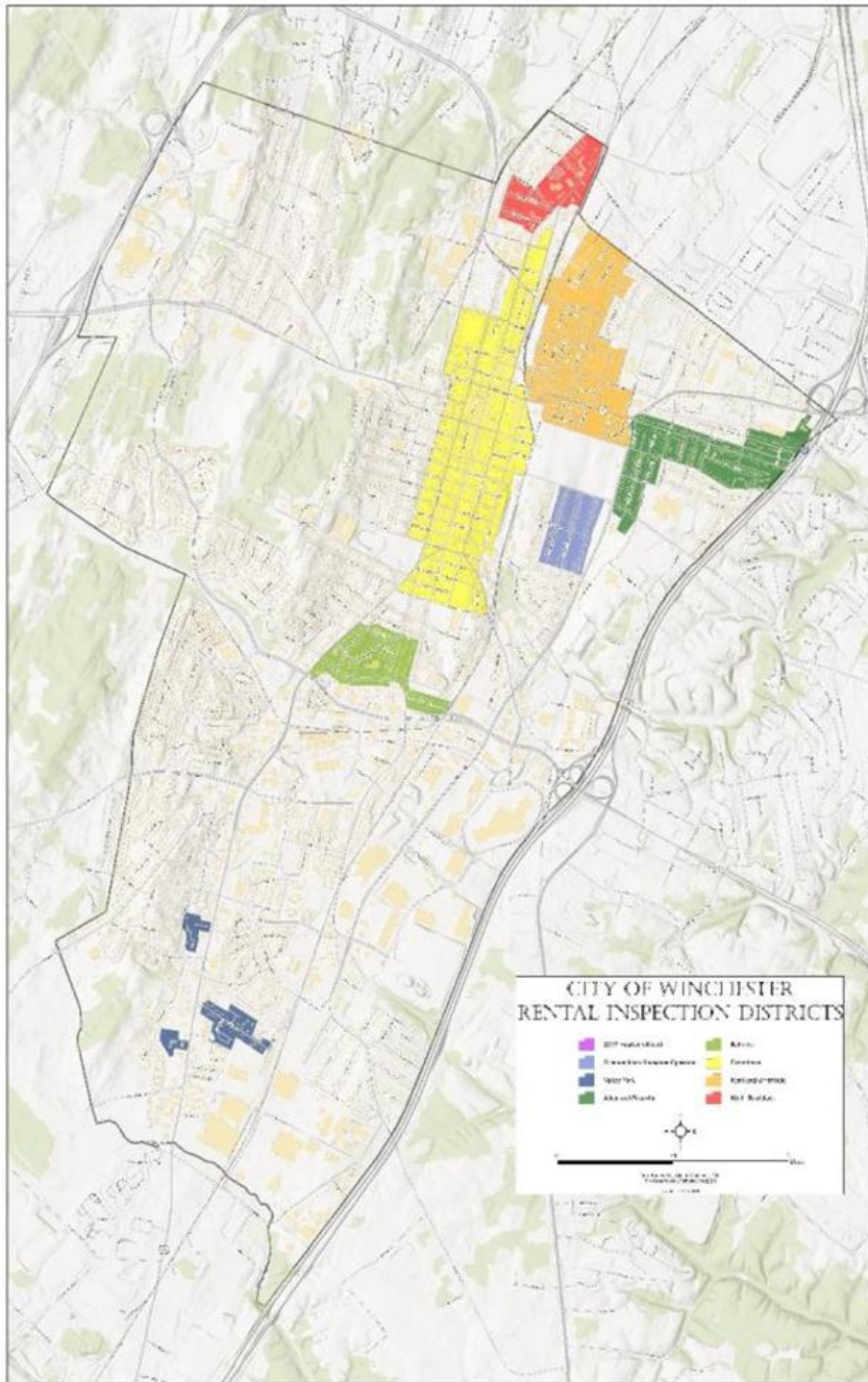


Winchester does not have any public housing projects. Instead, VHDA provides vouchers to households earning less than half of the local median income about \$36,750 for a family of four. With their vouchers, families can rent any property on the private market. The landlord then receives compensation from the state. The waiting list was exhausted before it was reopened in October of 2019. Preference is given to persons who already live or work inside the city limits. There is no shortage of landlords willing to partner with the City. The voucher program promotes mixed income neighborhoods, prevents

homelessness, and preserves free market choices, rather than steering very low-income families to designated housing projects. The tenant pays the landlord a portion of the monthly rent and the VHDA voucher covers the rest. Applicants who already live, work, or have been hired to work are ranked highest. This program allows for up to 70% of rent guaranteed towards the landlord.

City Council established a Rental Inspection Program in 2003 for certain areas of the City where there is a concentration of rental housing in need of code compliance. The picture on the following page outlines the zone for the Rental Inspection Program. City inspectors work to ensure the quality of rental housing and address unhealthy conditions. This work should continue, in partnership with other city staff: police, fire and rescue, and social services staff all have an interest in stable housing for the poor.

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The City should develop an Affordable Housing unit program, in adherence with the state code (15.2-2304), and keep track of the Affordable Dwelling Units (ADU) that are put into the city.

Redevelopment efforts catering to growth demographics should focus on vacant and blighted structures in areas designated for redevelopment or revitalization/infill as depicted on the Character Map in Chapter 9 of this Plan. They should increase density in appropriate neighborhoods and include adding apartments above downtown businesses. Redevelopment should not be a blunt instrument that damages any stable neighborhood.

The City Code includes provisions to provide incentives for revitalizing derelict structures and for recovering blighted properties. It is important to note that blight and derelict structures are distinct from each other. Blighted buildings are properties or dwellings that predominate, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitary facilities, or any combination of these factors; and are detrimental to safety and health. This is contrast to a derelict, which is simply a building or structure, either completed or incomplete, that might endanger the public's health, safety, or welfare; and for a period more than six months has been vacant, boarded up, and unconnected to utilities.

Finally, while this Plan continues advocating for rental housing, there nonetheless needs to be attention to recovering the costs of impacts associated with multi-family rental properties. Impacts include additional public safety, education, and demand for recreational facilities. One of the housing objectives of this Plan is to mitigate the impacts of multifamily rental development through measures such as alternative tax assessments. This could include assessing multifamily structures on an income-generating basis rather than on a square footage basis as is currently done. Another approach is to charge for services or require privately contracted services such as was done with refuse collection at multifamily complexes several years ago.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

City governments are trusted with providing facilities and services for the public's safety, health, and welfare. Residents and visitors need police and fire protection, schools, parks, and sewers. The quality of these programs affects quality of life, and careful planning for future demands on them helps make the best of future growth. A more sustainable urban vision requires attention to these services.

This chapter surveys the facilities and programs relating to five areas of government services: education, parks and recreation, public safety, health and human services, and utilities. It also conveys an overview of the many facilities that are operated and services that are provided on a non-profit basis or jointly with local government. Lastly, it identifies trends affecting service demand in the coming years and briefly states what additional projects have already been identified. After consulting with the public, City Council stated goals for these five areas to inform planning. However, much more detailed planning, qualified by the changing state of city finances, will be needed to determine the best ways to improve city services.

For brevity, links embedded into the electronic version of this chapter's text allow quick access to websites where detailed information about facilities and services can be found. Hardcopy readers of this chapter may access an electronic version of it to learn more about Winchester's community facilities and services.

EDUCATION

Public K-12 Schools



John Handley High School epitomizes Winchester residents' pride in education and community.

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Winchester's four elementary, one middle, and one high school educated 4,160 pupils during the 2019-2020 school year. Through the past decade enrollment has remained around 15 percent of the city's population. The demographic trends noted in Chapter 2 suggest that in the next 20 years that proportion is likely to decrease slightly: enrollment will grow, but not as quickly as the city's general population. Winchester will also educate greater proportions of minority students and students from nontraditional families. Greater demands for specialized services, including special needs, limited English, and gifted education, will tend to increase real costs per pupil. Through much of the 20th Century, the state and federal governments assumed an increasing share of the costs of education. In the 21st Century, State and federal funding has been declining. If this trend continues, per pupil costs borne by the City will increase.

The school system has reserve capacity in the Douglass Learning Center site on North Kent Street. Currently in use as a community center and Head Start preschool, a renovation could bring this school up to date relatively quickly while preserving the National Register historic building and accommodating several hundred students.

Detailed information on each school may be found at the Winchester Public School's websites. The state Board of Education's School Report Cards contain information regarding the performance of the students at each of the six schools.

The School Board administers Winchester Public Schools. The City Council appoints the board's nine members, and they set education policy and budget. However, state, and federal authorities influence local education policy –the length of the school year, much of the curriculum, and some 43 percent of the funding in 2020. The education priorities of Richmond and Washington will influence the future of Winchester's schools.

It is important that Winchester's public schools perform beyond the minimum state and federal requirements. Good schools attract new young families to the city, and employers follow them. Education is part of economic development –in the short term by attracting skilled and energetic new residents, and in the long term by developing a capable local workforce. Winchester should aim to improve its below-average rate of high school graduation and better prepare its students for adult life.

Private K-12 Schools

Several private schools offer educational choices in the city. They include:

- Grafton School: Special education and group home for children and adults with autism spectrum and behavioral conditions.
- Sacred Heart Academy: Catholic education in preschool through 8th grade.
- Winchester Academy: nondenominational Christian education preschool to 12th.

Several other private schools lie within easy commuting distance of Winchester.

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Higher Education

The area's two higher education assets are a major resource for Winchester because students and graduates stimulate the local economy and culture. Cities with well educated populations tend to attract jobs. Government efforts to support their students range from improving transit links to campuses (noted in Chapter Six) to encouraging affordable off-campus housing development (see Chapter Seven).

Shenandoah University (SU) is the most visible higher education resource in the Winchester area. The Methodist-affiliated university had 3,791 students in the fall of 2019, roughly half as undergraduates. About half of the undergraduates live on campus; nearly all of these are freshman and sophomores. Shenandoah specializes in liberal arts education, music and theater conservatory, business, and health professions. Its graduate programs provide residents with opportunities for adult learning and career advancement.

SU's current strategic plan echoes this comprehensive plan. The university aims to enhance the diversity of its student body, improve recreation and sustainable campus life, and grow key programs to meet demand. City government should foster strong physical and administrative connections between the city and campus facilities where the relationship is mutually beneficial. SU should be a partner in efforts to enhance the downtown and East Central Planning Area. The City has accommodated growth of the main SU campus over the past 60 years and will continue to balance requests for campus expansion with preservation of Jim Barnett Park and commercial development in the vicinity of Exit 313 of Interstate 81.

Laurel Ridge Community College (LRCC) in Middletown, Virginia – 15 miles south of Winchester – promotes life-long learning to four distinct populations of students. Some Handley students study advanced courses through dual enrollment or the Mountain Vista Governor's School. As university tuitions rise, many recent high school graduates prefer community college: they complete several semesters at LRCC and then transfer to earn a bachelor's degree for a lower sum cost. Older students without college educations can earn a two-year degree to compete in highly demanded fields like healthcare and information technology. Finally, the college offers non-degree professional training and partnerships with local employers.

LRCC serves more Winchester residents than Shenandoah University does, and it is likely to become even more important to the city's students. Establishing a bus service from downtown to the Middletown campus would help day students and their families. A satellite campus downtown would be even more beneficial. Winchester Public Schools might also explore expanded links to the community college to help students transition successfully into higher education and professional training.

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Job Training

As noted above, LRCC provides important job training to help adults develop careers. Winchester Public Schools also provides career and technical education through high school electives and partnerships with LRCC.

Northern Shenandoah Valley Adult Education provides classes online and at the Dowel J. Howard site east of the city in Frederick County. Offerings include GED, English, job readiness, and family literacy to help parents.

The Virginia Employment Commission's office, east of the city, provides counseling, referrals, and job search training. It is not accessible by public transit.

As the national economy recovers, high demand for job training services may remain. As three of these facilities lie outside the city, transit partnerships with Frederick County should be explored.

Shihadeh Innovation Center is a vocational school that the City constructed at the site of the old John Kerr Elementary School. This provides training in a variety of trades and professions which would otherwise be inaccessible.

Education Goals and Objectives

City Council identified the following goal for citywide education: to *constantly improve the level of educational attainment for all citizens, regardless of age and socioeconomic background, so that they can realize their full potential*. This Plan also states four more specific objectives which are supportive of this goal:

1. Ensure support of a rigorous and relevant education for all City public school students demonstrated by readiness for post secondary education or career entry.
2. Maintain a world-class public-school division which exceeds all State and Federal benchmarks relating to student achievement.
3. Increase the percentage of citizens with a post-high school graduation education and participation in track-based education.
4. Promote life-long learning as a means for improving the quality of life for all citizens by developing career opportunities to increase income potential.

Meeting these goals entails continued cooperation between the agencies and programs noted in this section.

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RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND CULTURE

Recreational facilities and open space make a city more sustainable. They improve physical and mental health, and they support a healthy urban ecosystem. In addition, Tourist revenue stimulates the local economy. Chapters Four and Five provide additional detail on economic development and the environment. Numerous cultural events and clubs add to the quality of life in Winchester but are beyond the scope of this plan.

City Parks and Recreation Facilities

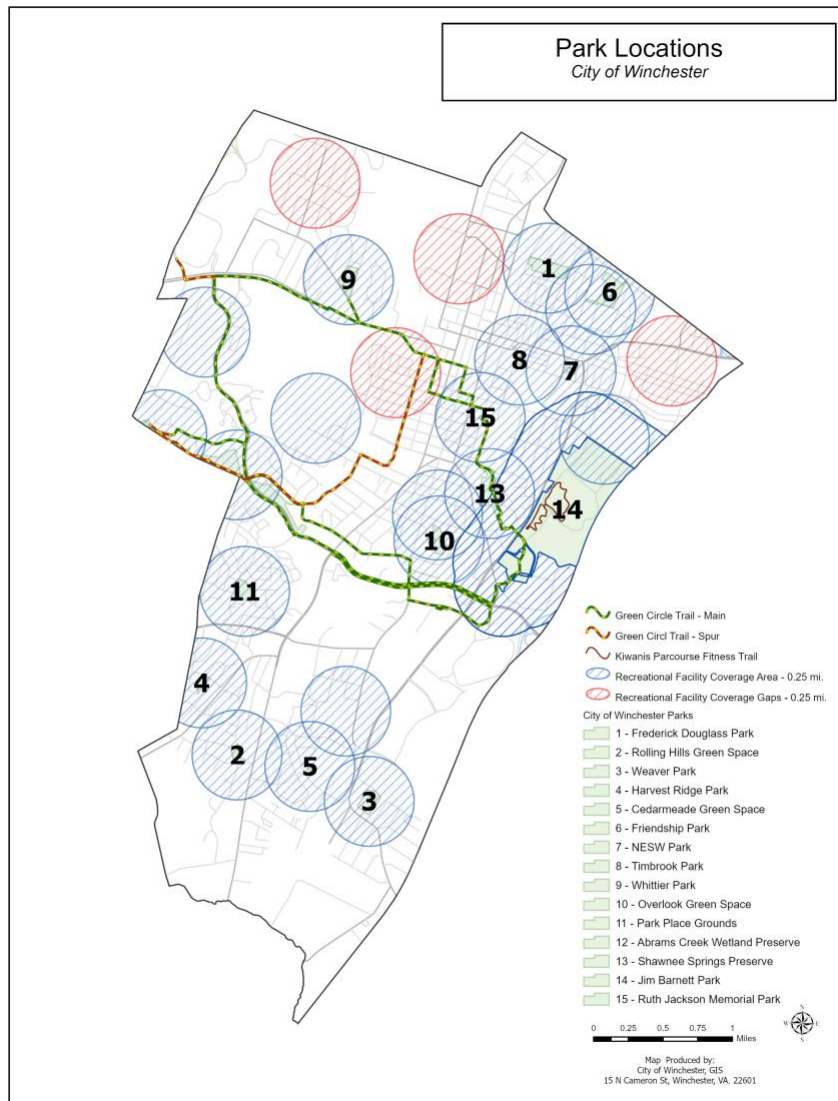
Outdoor recreation involves a wide variety of activities and experiences. Just being outdoors is often a welcome recreational change. These experiences offer improved physical and emotional health to a diverse community. Even those who do not often use parks benefit from attractive open spaces and increased property values. Altogether, the recreation system at the neighborhood, community, and regional levels offers a variety of opportunities to the people of Winchester.

In 2021, the City of Winchester and Shenandoah University formalized an agreement in which Shenandoah University took over maintenance of the City's two baseball fields, Bridgforth & Rotary fields, and provide funding for four other athletic fields. In this agreement, the University will renovate the fields so that they are able to host regional and national baseball events for Handley High School and Shenandoah University. A second public/private partnership will be Patsy Cline Park on E. Pall Mall Street. This facility will be established by a private benefactor and will be converted to a public park upon completion. Other private and public partnerships such as these should be pursued.

The Winchester Parks & Recreation Departments Master Plan, adopted in 2009, includes a comparison of Winchester's recreational facilities to national guidelines and documents the surpluses and deficiencies at length. This Plan expired in 2014. Since that time, the City performed a needs assessment of the parks in 2015, seeking citizen feedback regarding parks and recreation. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Plan is anticipated to be done in 2022. Parks and Rec also plans to begin planning and construction of a new natatorium as identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The six city schools plus the county's one remaining middle schools inside the city limits, all provide play areas. Schools form a hub for neighborhood recreation and social activities. Combining school and park sites allows for more efficient use and maintenance of space. However, dispersing park facilities more widely provides recreational choices within walking distance of residents. The map on the next page shows existing parks and recreations facilities. Areas in blue have a park within walking distance of a healthy adult. Red circles show prime locations for new neighborhood parks. To date, Winchester has not taken much advantage of local parks smaller than one acre. Ruth Jackson Memorial Park is a recent exception to this.

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Jim Barnett Park encompasses about 170 acres in the East Central area. The park serves diverse groups, and with a variety of uses. Recreational facilities and programs include youth sports leagues, indoor arts and craft classrooms, physical fitness rooms, indoor and outdoor swimming, ballfields, tennis, disc golf, and fishing. The city’s offerings of classes, leagues, and other recreational programs reflect Winchester’s diversity.

The Youth Development Center is a 12,000 square foot community center located at 3 Battaile Drive. A partnership of nonprofits operates the YDC and keeps it open year-round. It hosts a wide range of classes, teams, and activities.

Regional parks within an hour's drive include about 830,000 acres of federal reservations and parks, including the Appalachian Trail. Over 100,000 acres of the Shenandoah National Park, and over 700,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests administered by the U.S. Forest Service, are nearby. The public can tour

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preserved Civil War battlefields in Middletown, Kernstown, and Stephenson. In addition, there are over 60,000 acres of state managed land including wildlife management areas, public fishing lakes, state forest and natural areas. Neighboring Clarke County hosts the state arboretum at Blandy Farm.

Future Parks and Recreation Needs

According to national guidelines and internal studies, Winchester could benefit from several additions or conversions to its park and recreation facilities. The city lacks lighted rectangular fields (for soccer and football) for evening free and league play but has a surplus of lighted diamond fields (for baseball and softball). The city has a deficit of paved and unpaved trails. A new neighborhood park was completed in 2020 at the intersection of South Kent Street and East Cecil Street and named for African American businesswoman Ruth Jackson, who operated a restaurant on the site for many decades.

The Green Circle Trail, and other trails noted in the Mobility chapter, will create important linear parks for exercise. According to the guidelines, there is also a deficit of golf, skate park, and fitness facilities. Jim Barnett Park, developed according to a master plan, will serve the needs of the City for major urban parks for several decades into the future. It could host improvements to address many of the stated deficiencies. There are two private golf courses just outside the city limits in Frederick County. Unlike Staunton, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and other peer cities, Winchester has no public golf course. Creating a six- or nine-hole course could preserve an important tract of green space while generating revenue and improving public access to the sport.

Residents in Winchester and Frederick County use the park and recreation facilities of both localities. Planning for parks and recreation should consider the impact of the county's greater population growth and the role of Winchester as hub for a population of over 100,000. City planners and their county partners should work together to ensure adequate park and recreation facilities for the region. It may even be possible to consolidate some programs or leagues.

State and federal parklands will serve regional needs for the foreseeable future. Not all neighborhoods however have equal access to playground and rest areas. The city needs at least four more playgrounds to bring exercise closer to children and reduce child obesity. The red areas on the previous page's map show neighborhoods lacking convenient parks. New parks may help catalyze walkable mixed-use redevelopment, in part by signaling to the private sector a public commitment to change. Adding public recreation space to the downtown and underdeveloped areas should be a high priority: even an eighth-acre pocket park may be very helpful. The concept shown on the next page transforms a vacant and blighted corner lot into a social hub.

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This compact park provides rest and relaxation for pedestrians with shade trees, benches, and play area. There could also be some play equipment, fountains, sculpture, or public bulletin boards. Small parks could host exercise areas, rest and social gatherings, and art. The Washington Square park in the Joint Judicial Center's parking lot has this kind of potential. Green areas will also be needed as part of redevelopment in the more sprawling peripheral areas of the City. Chapter 11 details the recreational needs of individual neighborhoods and how creating new parks may be part of revitalizing those areas.

Because subdivision developments can bring large new populations to a neighborhood, the city subdivision ordinance addresses new recreational facilities. The wetlands trail along Abrams Creek, developed with the Meadow Branch subdivision, may be the most successful example.

Revisions to the subdivision ordinance may help ensure that future subdivisions and larger mixed-use projects increase the park and recreation options for residents, especially when the project increases residential density. Land set aside for parks and playgrounds should be suitable for those purposes and not merely "leftover land" not suitable for any urban purpose.

Bike Routes

Bicycles serve both recreational and practical uses. The Green Circle Trail combines parks and public streets to form a bike route blending the needs for recreation as well as some commuting trips. Chapters Five and Six address the trail and other bike facilities in more detail. Improving bike lanes on the city's larger streets serves recreational as well as mobility uses.

Cultural Facilities

The Handley Regional Library serves Winchester, Frederick County and Clarke County. The main branch downtown is a Virginia Historic Landmark in the Beaux-Arts style, dating to 1913 and renovated in 2001. The library provides services to a broad spectrum

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of city residents. The regional archives also serve tourists interested in history and genealogy. The library is increasingly important as a computer lab for low-income residents; future library improvements may consider adding both workstations and improved bandwidth.



Shenandoah University's Alson H. Smith, Jr. Library primarily serves students, but is open to the public. The library has a notable collection of musical recordings and scores. There is also a medical branch located near the hospital.

The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley is a regional center of historic interpretation. The private museum includes high and folk-art galleries and a timeline from native settlement to the present, with interpretation for adults and children. The museum, shown below, is located to the rear of Glen Burnie, the ancestral home of Winchester's founder, Col. James Wood. The main house also operates as a museum and the property is improved with extensive gardens. The Glen Burnie site also functions as a farm.



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The city owns three museum properties, which the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society operates. The historical society has offices and ground-floor exhibits in a historic warehouse building adjacent to the Abrams Delight Museum. The three main museums include:

- George Washington's Office, which he used during the French and Indian War.
- Abrams Delight, a mill property of one of Winchester's earliest settlers.
- Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters, where he wintered before the 1862 Valley Campaign.

City and county governments jointly appoint a Tourism Board. It runs the Visitor and Convention Bureau and operates the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center in a new building off Pleasant Valley Road near Abrams Delight. Shenandoah University constructed the building, which also houses its history department, on land leased by the City.

Recreational Goals and Objectives

City Council identified the following goal for citywide parks, recreation, and culture: *Develop, provide, and maintain quality recreation opportunities at multiple park and open space facilities to meet the growing active and passive recreation and fitness needs of our diverse community.* The Council also stated four more specific objectives:

- 1) Develop quality active recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and those identified as critical needs in the Needs Assessment included in the City Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- 2) Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.
- 3) Provide quality recreational programs that meet the growing needs of our diverse community through a commitment to dedication, community focus, teamwork, diversity, and integrity.
- 4) Ensure that existing and new residential development has reasonable proximity to neighborhood parks as well as convenient bike and pedestrian access to trails in open space areas.
- 5) Preserve the existing parks and pursue opportunities to create new neighborhood and linear parks.

PUBLIC SAFETY

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Police, Fire, and Rescue

The City's police, fire, and rescue departments maintain administrative headquarters in the Timbrook Public Safety Building at 231 East Piccadilly Street. They share dispatch facilities. The building includes a community room which is available for organizations to reserve for meetings. The building is designed so that it can be expanded.

The Fire and Rescue services in the City consist of both paid and volunteer staff. Friendship, South End, Shawnee, and Rouss companies together maintain 17 modern vehicles: two ladder trucks, eight pumper trucks, five ambulances, and two utility trucks. Winchester's public safety equipment is generally adequate for the needs of the near future with the notable exception of the radio system. Changes in federal standards will require upgrades of communications gear so that all departments' radios can connect to each other, and to Frederick County and State Police. City staff cooperate closely with their county peer to ensure rapid responses to all emergencies.

However, the four fire companies are not perfectly sited to quickly respond throughout the city. Relocating Rouss westward towards the hospital would improve response times. South End is only a few blocks to the south of the current Rouss fire station on South Braddock Street. Shawnee is in the southern portion of the City, and Friendship is in the northeast area. Relocating the Rouss company would likely entail the preservation and reuse of its historic fire hall building, shown at left.



The City Fire & Rescue Department owns and operates a regional Fire Training Center on Woodstock Lane, just east of the city limits. The training center, a former sewage treatment plant, needs considerable upgrades remain usable into the future.

Gang activity and drug and weapons trafficking are growing regional problems. Winchester police should continue to cooperate with local, state, and federal partners in the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug/Gang Task Force to prevent threats to public safety and perceptions using the best technology and techniques. The police support Neighborhood Watches in several areas and maintain the Volunteers in Policing program –city residents responding to citizens' needs, providing more eyes on the street, and doing community service work.

Preparing for Emergency

The greatest natural or manmade disasters overwhelm one city's capacity to cope, so preparing for emergencies involves cooperating and training with neighboring localities

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and with state and national agencies. The Department of Homeland Security has a framework and guidelines to help cities and counties work together.

Winchester's public safety officers train and prepare with their partners. The city and county jointly operate a SWAT team for high-risk police work. The two fire departments are ready to respond together to a hazardous materials spill. And city staff are currently upgrading radio equipment to ensure that emergency responders can talk to each other. Homeland Security's doctrines and guidelines guide preparation for a wide range of emergencies. In February of 2010, city staff cooperated with state and national authorities to cope with a blizzard. They will continue to refine plans, prepare resources, and train personnel.

Courts and Detention

The Winchester-Frederick County Joint Judicial Center at 5 North Kent Street houses most of the judicial functions for the City and the County. It has adequate capacity to meet the needs of the foreseeable future, particularly with the relocation of the county dispatchers and sheriff's office to a new facility east of Winchester.

Winchester partners with Frederick, Fauquier, and Clarke counties to operate the Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center north of the city. Current trends suggest increased overcrowding in all Virginia jails, including this one. The real cost per inmate is also trending up. Bail bond counseling, work release, and electronic house arrest programs alleviate some crowding, and the jail may expand these programs to reduce costs within the limits of state law.

The old city and county jail, built in 1845, is located at 317 South Cameron Street. The three-level Georgian style building is on a half-acre site enclosed by a 15-foot brick wall. The building has been reused more compatibly with the surrounding historic district and Residential-Business District zoning as apartments.

Public Safety Goals and Objectives

City Council identified the following goal for citywide public safety: *Achieve a community where people feel safe and are comfortable engaging in a full range of community life.* The Council also stated three more specific objectives:

- 1) Provide the highest quality of police, emergency preparedness, communications, and fire and rescue services available, with properly trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in an effective and coordinated manner.
- 2) Improve the quality of life for all people by preventing crime through enforcement of the law, creation of partnerships through communication and education, and problem-solving using innovative policing strategies.

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- 3) Continually improve emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts to ensure restoration of City services and normal enjoyment of life following a natural or manmade disaster.
- 4) Encourage CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) practices.
- 5) Mitigate and improve blighted properties.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Healthcare represents a large and growing segment of the local and national economy. Winchester's demographic trends suggest much greater numbers of both high- and low-income consumers of health and human services. Meeting the needs of both groups presents important challenges to the public and private sectors.

Healthcare

Winchester Medical Center (WMC) includes a general hospital and an array of regional health services operated Valley Health, Incorporated. The nucleus of the WMC is a 411-bed, acute care regional hospital on Amherst Street at the western edge of the city. Medical Center District zoning accommodates development of the comprehensive medical and support complex. The medical campus includes Shenandoah University's pharmacy school. High school and community college students also train there.

Already a major employer in the city, WMC will continue to grow to meet rising demand, filling in the MC district and likely expanding further into Frederick County on the west side of Route 37 where a Medical Support District has already been created under county zoning. Retail and hospitality businesses will locate to the hospital's periphery to serve patients and their families. To meet this demand, Winchester should consider permitting denser mixed-use development in areas currently restricted to light residential use. The 20-acre former Frederick County Middle School property just east of the MC district on Linden Drive also presents an opportunity.

The old hospital site at 333 West Cork Street near the downtown now houses a rehabilitation center, hospice, and medical offices. Use of this facility is likely to increase with demographic changes in the city. While presently surrounded by medium density residential areas, the has been approved for a denser mixed-use development, which would incorporate the existing uses and add on a senior living center out to the front.

The Free Medical Clinic of the Northern Shenandoah Valley is located at 301 North Cameron Street. It provides non-emergency medical treatment for those who cannot afford medical insurance or medical care costs. The most common services are for

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managing heart disease, diabetes, depression, and dental problems. Local health professionals and citizens donate service and money to operate the clinic.

Human Services

Winchester is part of the state's Lord Fairfax Health District. The Health Department has offices and 10 Baker Street and 107 North Kent Street near the City and County Social Services departments. The City owns a former Health Department property on Commercial Street in the north end of the City; Chapter Eleven notes its potential for sale and reuse.

The city's rate of teen pregnancy significantly exceeds the state average. Teen mothers are more likely to live in poverty, as are their children. They are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to receive public assistance. Reducing teen pregnancy will yield benefits to the city's quality of life, economic outlook, and finances. Health Department staff work with school-based partners to improve education and the career prospects of teens. The Baker St. office provides health screening, counseling, and contraceptives. The nonprofit Abba facility also offers pregnancy services, including an abstinence curriculum and counseling, pregnancy testing, and community referrals – though not for abortions. City departments should improve cooperation and outreach using the latest technology. The schools may be able to enhance their family life classes and counseling. There should also be a dedicated teen health clinic offering workforce, mentorship, and health services to prevent teen births and maintain the life prospects of young women.

Winchester's Department of Social Services is located at 24 Baker Street. The department provides a broad range of economic assistance and social service programs in accordance with State and Federal laws, including child protective services, housing and nutrition assistance, foster care, family planning, temporary assistance, and mental health. Currently, the city and county administer parallel services independently. Several recent studies have suggested that these two social services agencies be consolidated to create efficiencies and better serve transient populations.

Childcare

The demographic trends noted in Chapter Two suggest an increasing demand for childcare services. Winchester will have more single-parent families and more households where both adults work full time. Public and private employers will feel pressure to provide childcare services, either on site or at locations convenient to the commutes of their workers.

Most childcare in and around Winchester is on a private for-profit basis. Churches operate several daycare centers. Home-based childcare businesses are allowed by right in the city's residential areas, and demand for such services is likely to increase as compact mixed use and mixed income redevelopment occurs. Some families will want to walk

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their children to daycare and then walk to work. Two facilities in the city's receive city subsidies to serve low-income households.

Elder Care

Elder care will become increasingly complex as the population grows and becomes more diverse. Winchester offers a full continuum of services for seniors to participate in the community. This range includes:

- Affordable housing. Some healthcare providers will make house calls.
- Age-restricted apartments.
- Assisted living in a modified single-family house. If there are fewer than eight residents, the use is allowed by right under the current Zoning Ordinance in most residential areas. This versatile use should continue.
- Assisted living and nursing home care in a larger planned community.

These options range in size and price level. Age-specific housing options will likely continue to outpace the regular housing market for some time. As noted in Chapters Two and Ten, many senior households may locate to Winchester in coming years to take advantage of more compact urban forms, mobility options, and proximity to the medical center. As the grey population grows, more businesses may come to Winchester to cater to its distinctive tastes. The traditional neighborhood forms described in Chapter Ten appeal to many retirees. High-income retirees will be important pioneers of mixed use and mixed income redevelopment.

The nonprofit Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging (SAAA) promotes the general health and quality of life of older people and their families. The SAAA provides congregate meals at senior centers in addition to home-delivered meals, as well as counseling and shuttle services. The agency is headquartered in Front Royal and serves Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties in addition to Winchester.

Other Facilities

There are numerous other facilities which address the diverse needs of the area population. Many of these facilities depend on donations from the community.

The Salvation Army provides emergency assistance to persons for shelter, financial assistance, counseling, food, and clothing. All operations are currently located at 300 Fort Collier Road, just north of the city limits.

The Winchester Rescue Mission is located at 435 North Cameron Street and provides shelter for transient men. It also offers recovery programs and operates a woodworking shop.

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Access Independence maintains offices at 324 Hope Drive. It provides services to disabled persons in Winchester, in the form of awareness, advocacy, transportation, housing, domestic training, and therapy.

Edge Hill Recovery Retreat Center provides inpatient treatment for adults with substance abuse and chemical dependency problems. Oxford House, New Lifestyles, and other organizations operate group homes and offer similar therapy for addiction. Like assisted living, group homes with fewer than eight residents are allowed by right in most residential areas. The perceived appeal of Winchester's quality services and environment attracts clients for these services from well beyond the local area.

The Henry and William Evans Children's Home at 330 East Leicester Street, just south of Edge Hill. The Evans Home provides a residence for abused children and those for whom foster home care is not available. The organization's Lloyd House is for high school graduates to transition into adult life.

Health and Human services Goals and Objectives

City Council identified the following goal for citywide health and human services: *Ensure a higher level of social sustainability by providing basic health and human service resources that promote greater economic independence and healthy lives for a diverse and changing population.* The Council also stated five more specific objectives:

- 1) Assist persons and families overcome poverty, abuse, and neglect.
- 2) Stem the rate of teen pregnancy and substance abuse in Winchester.
- 3) Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served.
- 4) Facilitate aging in place among older populations while providing opportunities and places for civic engagement and social life.
- 5) Promote a regional fair-share approach to meeting human service needs, including affordable housing.
- 6) Increase childcare opportunities for younger populations.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

The infrastructure of water, sewer, stormwater, utilities, and communication facilities play an important role in how a community develops and the resulting quality of life experienced by its residents. New technologies will greatly affect the way these facilities

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and services are provided. In 2019, Winchester began remodeling the City's Public Works site. The site was nearing completion in early 2022.

Water System

Winchester owns, operates, and maintains a municipal water system that serves the city and portions of Frederick County. Located some 17 miles south of Winchester in Warren County, on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, the Percy D. Miller Water Treatment Plant handles both intake and treatment. The facility is undergoing significant upgrade and has adequate equipment to meet city demand for the foreseeable future.

The plant also provides water to Middletown, Stephens City, and much of the county Urban Development Area. Continued development in this area will strain the capacity of the plant and the river, especially during drought. Frederick County will likely have to develop additional sources of water in coming years. Providing water is critical to the growth and well-being of the City and County. An adequate water supply and the ability to deliver will have a powerful influence on growth patterns and land usage within the region.

Sewer System

The City of Winchester owns, operates, and maintains the collection system within the city limits and in a small portion of Frederick County. The destination of the wastewater for treatment and reclamation is the Opequon Water Reclamation Facility off Route 7. Both the regional interceptor and the water reclamation facility are owned by the Frederick-Winchester Service Authority, a regional authority providing wastewater treatment for the City and County.

The Opequon Water Reclamation Facility utilizes an activated sludge treatment process to reclaim the wastewater before discharging into the Opequon Creek which connects to the Potomac River to the north. In the short term, Winchester and Frederick County should have adequate capacity to meet the needs of development. However, there is room to improve the quality of sewage treatment to reduce pollution in the creek.

Stormwater Management

Chapters Five and Ten also discuss stormwater management. The storm drainage system collects and carries rainwater to creeks to prevent flooding or the accumulation of stagnant surface water which could endanger the public health. The city's storm drainage system supplements or replaces the natural drainage system using pipes, open channels, or ditches in developed areas and using protected natural drainage channels in others.

Streets with curbs and gutters form essential elements of the storm drainage system. Manmade features often aggravate flooding and pollution from heavy rains. Construction of paved streets, paved parking areas, and roofed structures increases the quantity and

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rate of runoff. Cities may face an unhappy choice between very expensive concrete drainage systems and the risk of even more expensive or lethal flooding.

Using natural elements to ameliorate runoff often costs less and works better. Low impact development uses green roofs, ponds, and vegetation to slow and absorb runoff, reducing the load on the concrete infrastructure. The city should maintain the existing drainage system. But future development should use low impact development techniques to reduce additional pollution and flooding.

Public Utilities Goals and Objectives

City Council identified the following goal for citywide public utilities: *Provide capacity for safe drinking water and wastewater treatment sufficient to serve current and future needs of the City.* The Council also stated three more specific objectives:

- 1) Ensure that the environmental quality of the drinking water produced, and wastewater treated is in full accordance with the rigorous standards established by the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to assure safety to the consumer and the environment.
- 2) Identify and fund necessary infrastructure improvements that increase water capacity and reduce water system loss on a system wide basis to support current and future needs associated with economic expansion and increased residential density.
- 3) Work with Frederick County to address water capacity and supply issues.

OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Landfill

Chapter Five discusses garbage and recycling in more detail. Winchester partners with Frederick County to operate a landfill in the eastern part of the county near Route 50. The landfill has enough equipment and acreage to meet needs for the near future. In 1986, the city and county expanded the landfill through the purchase of 157 acres from local landowners. Development near Route 50 tends to increase land prices, so another such expansion will be more expensive. Recycling efforts reduce the volume of waste destined for the landfill, extending its useful life. Residents, businesses, and government could do more to reduce total waste and increase recycling.

Decomposing garbage naturally produces methane gas. Equipment at the landfill burns this gas to produce a small amount of renewable electricity. It may become economical to

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invest in more machinery to harness this “biogas,” or to partner with an electric cooperative or a private firm.

Animal Shelter

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals operates a shelter and adoption center at 115 Featherbed Lane. Public safety officers bring stray and vicious animals to the shelter, as well as some wildlife. The SPCA relies heavily on volunteer labor and donated materials. The SPCA adopted a ‘No Kill’ approach beginning in 2012.

Electricity

The Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative took over provision of power from the Allegheny Power System, Incorporated in 2010. A full range of domestic and industrial power is available through a network relying overwhelmingly upon coal-fired generation plants. Large transmission lines across Frederick County will provide adequate electricity for the foreseeable future.

Winchester’s geology and climate do not support wind power generation; however, the Federal Energy Department suggests that several sites along Great North Mountain at the western boundary of Frederick county do have useful sustained winds.

Winchester’s latitude and climate could support photovoltaic cells that use sunlight to provide power for individual homes and businesses. At present, such systems are not cost-effective without large government subsidies. Winchester offers some tax credits for household solar arrays, but the technology must improve before rooftop and backyard photovoltaic cells become a common sight in the city.

Gas

Natural Gas service is provided by Shenandoah Gas, a subsidiary of Washington Gas Light of Washington, D.C. Company offices are located south of the city near the intersection of I-81 and Route 37.

Telephone

Verizon provides local landline telephone service. All the major cellular providers have good reception and wireless data service in Winchester.

Internet

Comcast, Verizon, Glo Fiber (Shentel) and Visual Link provide internet service. Winchester Wireless provides point-to-point wireless service. Efforts are underway to roll out 5G service to replace Cellular broadband or 4G LTE mobile internet service.

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National and Local Television

Comcast provides cable television service. DirecTV and DISH Network provide satellite television service.

Local programming, including news, weather and the largest livestreaming of monthly City Council meetings is provided over the local access station of cable television.

Radio

Numerous radio stations serve the Winchester area and at least three stations broadcast from the area providing a wide range of programming. WUSQ and WTRM operate locally on the FM frequency. Public radio reaches the area from West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Newsprint

Two daily (except Sunday) newspapers cover news in the Winchester area. The Winchester Star with offices 100 North Loudoun Street has circulation in the City and contains the legal ads for City matters. The *Washington Post* and *Richmond Times-Dispatch* are among other larger newspapers available locally everyday.

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CHAPTER NINE

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In previous comprehensive plans for Winchester, a future land use chapter outlined recommended changes to designated use of land which could be implemented by amendments to the official zoning map. The traditional approach relied heavily upon use designation to move the City's growth in a desired direction. This plan takes a different approach focused on New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Design.

Rather than view the zoning ordinance as the primary solution to citywide problems, this plan focuses on the vitality of interconnected neighborhoods. It holds in mind the vision of sustainable communities and identifies the narrowly tailored needs of each neighborhood. It supports the City Council's stated goal for land use: *Guide the physical development of the City in a sustainable manner that preserves vibrant, livable neighborhoods and also encourages compact mixed-use, mixed-income development to meet the needs of a changing population.*

Citywide Land Use Objectives

As noted in Chapter Three, there are nine objectives in support of the land use goal:

1. Facilitate development, zoning changes, and growth of the City in accordance with the City Character Map.
2. Incentivize the construction of new mixed-use, mixed-income projects as a viable reuse of obsolete commercial and industrial properties.
3. Provide citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.
4. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units to attract new residents and so that Winchester residents are provided with a decent home in a suitable living environment while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential areas designated in this plan.
5. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service, and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offering selection of consumer goods (especially grocery stores offering healthy foods), and viable growth potential.
6. Retain and expand upon a diversified, sustainable light industrial base at appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce, and in harmony with other community development, and which attracts higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.

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7. Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.
8. Minimize the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses or ensure that payments in lieu of taxes are provided to cover the expense of city services such as public safety.
9. Work with Frederick County to create complementary development strategies and maintain a strong working relationship.

To show how these objectives will be met, this chapter presents and discusses a Character Map of Winchester's neighborhoods. It shows the desired changes in different neighborhoods, which must be achieved by a mix of methods. This map replaces the future land use map as the chief tool for planning. Zoning rules are only one of many tools for New Urbanism, so this map gives them less emphasis. Chapter Eleven presents detailed treatments for illustrative sites within each of the ten geographic planning areas.

This chapter also examines planning decisions in Frederick County, particularly with respect to Frederick County's Urban Development Area (UDA) and policies for future development as spelled out in the recent update of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The next section of this chapter focuses in on each of the nine citywide objectives in greater detail including an explanation of the eight designations called out on the Character Map.

1. Facilitate development, zoning changes, and growth of the city in accordance with the City Character Map

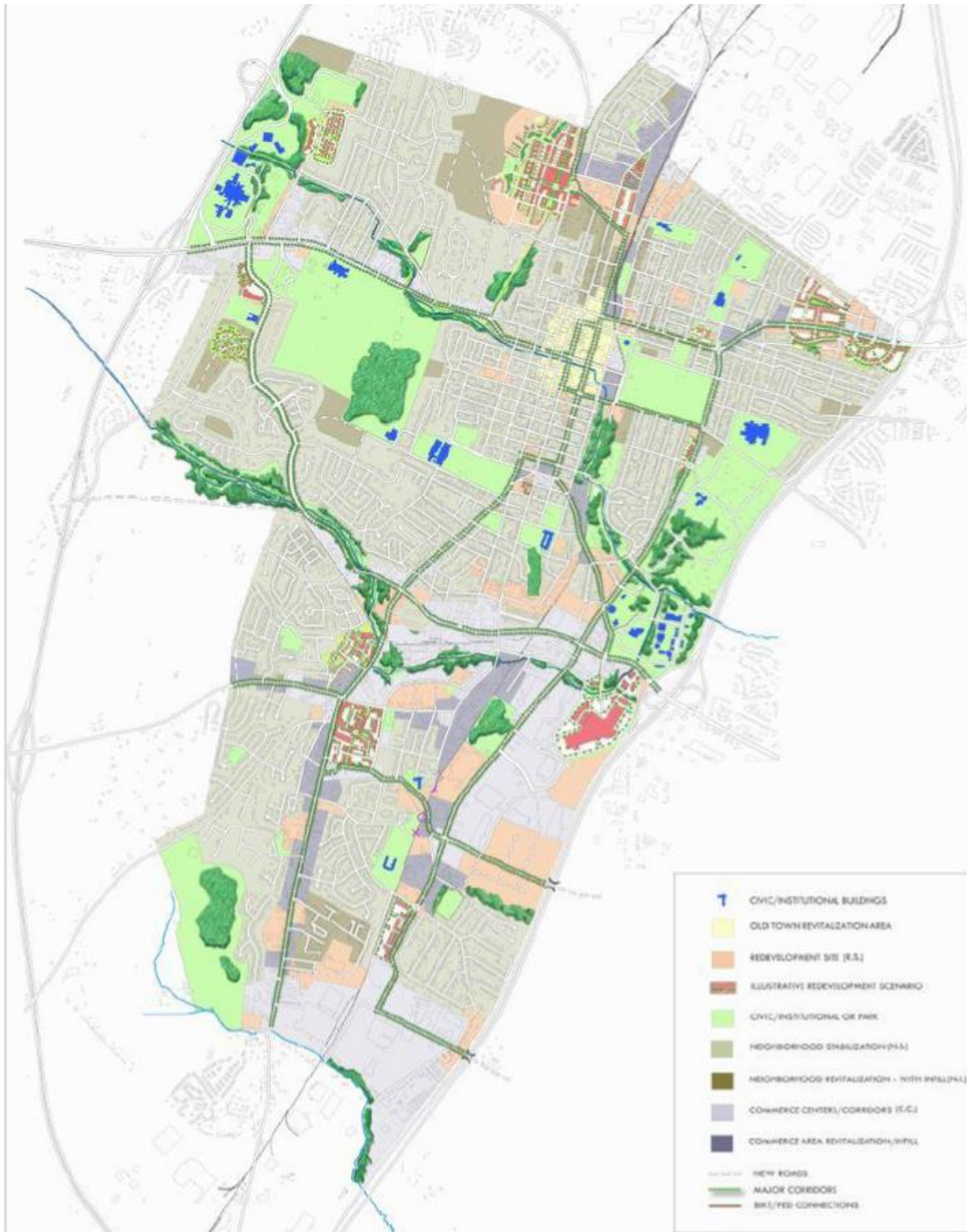
The Character Map

To facilitate proper and effective growth of the City, the following Character Map was developed to chart the overall design of the community fabric in the City. It has eight elements in addition to showing transportation corridors and civic and institutional buildings.

The next page shows a small version of the the Character Map which will guide Winchester's growth. A larger fold out version of the Character Map can be found at the end of this Plan in the Appendix. A detailed electronic version of the Character Map can also be found on the City's website at www.winchesterva.gov under the Planning & Zoning area of the City website.

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2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHARACTER MAP



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Elements of the Character Map

A. Neighborhood Stabilization Areas

Stable, healthy neighborhoods are the essence of a city. This area covers the largest part of the character map. It represents places where households live, socialize, and raise families in relative quiet. Here, city planning aims to keep things the same, not bring dramatic change. But that is not the same as doing nothing. Sound city policy can actively protect these stable communities from improper development and help preserve what makes them special.

B. Neighborhood Revitalization/Infill Areas

In these areas, residents said quality of life was not what it should be. Problems of vacancy, blight, crime, and isolation hurt a neighborhood's prospects and pride. So, the vision for Winchester in these areas focuses on the opportunities created by vacant buildings and low property values. Redeveloping parcels and infilling with higher residential densities and mixed uses costs less in these areas. A new park or other community hub is important. Revitalization means making neighborhoods more attractive both to new residents and to those who have called them home for many years. It means bringing those areas back to life.

C. Commerce Centers/Corridors

Today, most of the Winchester's business occurs in these areas. That should continue. As ~~the~~ stable neighborhoods provide housing, these stable areas provide jobs and income. City plans strive to sustain a friendly business environment where it already exists. This designation also recognizes that New Urbanism does not mean burdening successful firms with rules. No radical change should come to the City's major retail and industrial areas, except where they have been identified as redevelopment or revitalization areas.

D. Commerce Area Revitalization/Infill

The Character Map calls for change in these areas. While zoned for commercial use, there are vacant or blighted properties, which contribute little to the community. Creative partnerships between the City and investors should target these areas. Bringing new kinds of business to the City, building new infrastructure, or offering new or better public services may create new jobs and attract new customers from far afield. Revitalization and infill mean attracting new and stronger companies, increasing property values, and promoting businesses that contribute to the sustainability of the community.

E. Civic, Institutional, and Park Areas

These places knit a community together and help make it unique. Public areas form hubs where people can meet, socialize, play, or rest. They serve public needs and host interesting activities. Sometimes they are cultural or artistic centers. While the benefits of these diverse places may not be easy to quantify, unhealthy neighborhoods with no civic or social hub tend

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to suffer from social isolation and alienation, greater crime, lower property values, and weaker public health. The vision of Winchester includes a network of civic areas within walking distance of most residents. The Green Circle Trail is the signature effort in this regard as it connects the park hubs of several neighborhoods.

F. Redevelopment Sites

These areas consist of properties that are the keys to reinvigorating a neighborhood. In early input meetings, groups of citizens agreed with professional analysts that these sites, in their current underused or blighted forms, hold neighborhoods back. They may be underutilized, ugly, unsafe, or just wrong for the community. There is great potential for these places however because of their size, location, or infrastructure. These sites may be among the first to realize New Urbanist principles. Given new investment, they can become neighborhood hubs and build a new sense of community while attracting jobs and new residents. The vision of Winchester uses a range of city policy tools to nudge investment into these critical points.

G. Redevelopment Scenarios

City Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development staff, working together with consultant planners and engineers, designed some concepts for selected redevelopment sites in each of the ten Planning Areas. The drawings show New Urbanist principles and Traditional Neighborhood Design in action: compact mixed uses, traditional neighborhood architecture, greenery, and pedestrian features. Actual partnerships and construction on the parcels will look different, but these concepts signal the kind of project which will be favored for redevelopment sites.

H. Old Town Revitalization Area

The oldest part of Winchester has unique character, assets, and needs of its own. This special designation recognizes Old Town's place as the City's center and its potential for mixed use growth. Key growth demographics may be attracted downtown, but special city policies will be needed for parking, flood control, architecture, and many other issues. However, too much regulation may prove a barrier to new investment. Government must strike a careful balance to foster growth here.

2. Incentivize the construction of new mixed-use, mixed-income projects as a viable reuse of obsolete commercial and industrial properties.

There are a number of properties in the City which have been constructed in strip malls, and several industrial sites. These properties were designed during a time where these developments were quite popular and successful. Since that time however, as areas become less car-centric, these properties have been rendered obsolete. Additionally, several industrial sites have become obsolete. Unlike the viable industries in the Winchester Industrial Park or O'Sullivan, several industries are not viable and would be better suited being reused for other projects. Some of these locations, most notably the Federal Mogul site, have significant environmental clean-up

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required, which hampers the City's ability to reuse the site. Other locations include Virginia Apple Storage and Winchester Cold Storage. Additional sites are highlighted in Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan.

These properties can be reused for other developments and projects, promoting mixed-use, mixed-income and the compact design that this plan promotes. The City should take measures to incentivize the construction of these properties, turning them into mixed-use, mixed-income projects (see Chapter 11).

3. Provide citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.

Connecting the citizens of the City with a healthy environment relies heavily on the ability to access the different portions of that environment. This makes multi-modal transportation crucial in this objective. Chapter 6 looks at accessibility and transportation in-depth, focusing heavily on the current characteristics and needs of transportation in the City. A few objectives in Chapter 6 overlap specifically with this Objective and Objective 5. These are Objectives 4, 6, and 9, (see Mobility Chapter 6 for more information). The City should continue to pursue these goals to ensure accessibility within the urban environment.

4. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units to attract new residents, and so that Winchester residents are provided with a decent home in a suitable living environment while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential areas designated in this plan.

Redesigning housing units in the City is necessary to accommodate the future growth of the City. In Chapter 7, objectives are outlined which promote this design. Objectives 6, 5, 4, 2 and 3 outline rehabilitating existing housing stock that is substandard, developing affordable housing, increasing home ownership, and creating higher quality and more affordable housing stock. Like Objective 3, the City should pursue all aspects of Chapter 7's objectives to achieve this. The Character map identifies infill and revitalization locations.

5. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporates a mix of retail, service, and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offering selection of consumer goods (especially grocery stores offering healthy foods), and viable growth potential.

Currently in the City there is demand for commercial facilities, especially grocery stores, to be better accessible. There is also a significant limit on land in the City that is available for development. Accounting for these factors, the solution to providing more diverse commercial facilities is to create more mixed-use, mixed-income developments. Several sites for these developments were identified in the Character Map. By following along the outline of the Character Map, the City can work towards this objective.

6. Retain and expand upon a diversified, sustainable light industrial base at appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce, in

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harmony with other community development, and which attracts higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the City.

Industrial jobs have had a long-standing position in the City, providing well-paying jobs to those who have not attained a college degree. In recent years, those jobs have been declining. This results in significant unemployment in workforces that are trained for other careers. Over-industrialization, however, can create numerous environmental and health problems. The City should avoid expanding intensive industrial uses and seek to preserve and grow light industrial uses in the city. Winchester should seek to not convert existing M1 (Limited Industrial District) into other zoning types. The City should also make efforts to increase the industrial base at appropriate locations, namely the industrial park in the southern end of the City. Public land uses within the City should be developed to enhance the livability of the City, particularly in areas that are underserved.

7. Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.

An example of this is the lack of parks in the northern end of the city, especially in the northern part, compared to the rest of the city. Locating public land uses in locations that support the community, and evenly spread services throughout the City will serve to enhance livability for residents. Appropriately placing institutional uses for the community in areas that are easily accessible from multi-modal transport additionally increases the livability of the City.

8. Minimize the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses or ensure that payments in lieu of taxes are provided to cover the expense of city services such as public safety.

The size limitations of the City of Winchester are not just limitations of land and growth, but also of finance. The City has a limited amount of taxable land available, which serves to fund the services and facilities the City provides. When institutions such as schools or churches convert land from other uses, it becomes non-taxable. The City should encourage any development of institutions to be focused on land that is already designated as non-taxable, rather than converting taxable property, such as Shihadeh Innovation Center located on land already designated for education.

9. Work with Frederick County to create complementary development strategies and maintain a strong working relationship.

The City of Winchester and Frederick County share more than just borders. Infrastructure has long been shared between the two, commuters from one frequently work in the other, and they share a long, connected historical and social heritage. Any changes in the County's comprehensive plan should be noted and integrated into the City's whenever possible. Direct cooperation on subjects such as zoning and macroeconomic planning are important to the flourishing of both municipalities.

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Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

Winchester's Zoning Ordinance guides what kind of structures can be built in different parts of the City and how they can be used. It is an important tool for shaping the character of the City's neighborhoods, though not the only one. The current zoning ordinance does not align with the Character Map, so changes are needed.

The fundamental philosophy of the current Zoning Ordinance is exclusivity uses and occupancies which are not defined or provided for within the Ordinance are excluded from the City. Each zone has a separate list of tolerated uses. This strategy hinders societal and technological change, requiring a reactive effort in bringing the Ordinance up to date through text amendment proposals. Form-based codes and New Urbanistic principles often place a much lower ~~priority~~ emphasis on the types of usage and instead employ strategies to create a more sustainable and harmonious building development within a particular area. The progressive result of such strategies generally amounts to less reliance on the automobile as the sole means of transportation, promotes mixed-use, mixed-income opportunities, and creates an environment more suitable for public transportation and walking.

As previously cited, the current Zoning Ordinance segregates uses and occupancies, often requiring dependency upon the personal automobile as a means of transportation between live, work, and play destinations. The character map shows an attempt to create a sense of community within various geographic regions of the City. The historic downtown core retains its character. Opportunities for other core areas are also identified, the benefits ~~to~~ of which include ease of transportation; sustainability; neighborhood identity, autonomy, and self-preservation; and direct community input for the future development and desired character of the area. But this concept conflicts with the rules in today's Zoning Ordinance.

One way to address these discrepancies is to establish an alternative means for future development through a comprehensive revision of the Zoning Ordinance. Form based codes are codes that are based in the design and structure of developments, rather than specific land uses. Using these codes will encourage mixed-use, mixed-income developments that share a cohesive design, while also encouraging the development of the City in line with the Character Map. Form-based codes do not completely eliminate land uses, but rather just define broad categories, instead of specific uses. It may not be necessary to re-write the entire Ordinance; however, it is essential that certain guidelines be included to provide a mechanism for form-based codes and New Urbanism consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. By implementing form-based codes that emphasize design, rather than traditional land-use codes, the City would be able to promote the ability of the design to be more in tune with the character map. The result may resemble a hybrid document which will serve to protect certain areas of the City from inappropriate infill development while generating opportunities for careful and considerate redevelopment and place-making.

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The Frederick County Land Use Plan

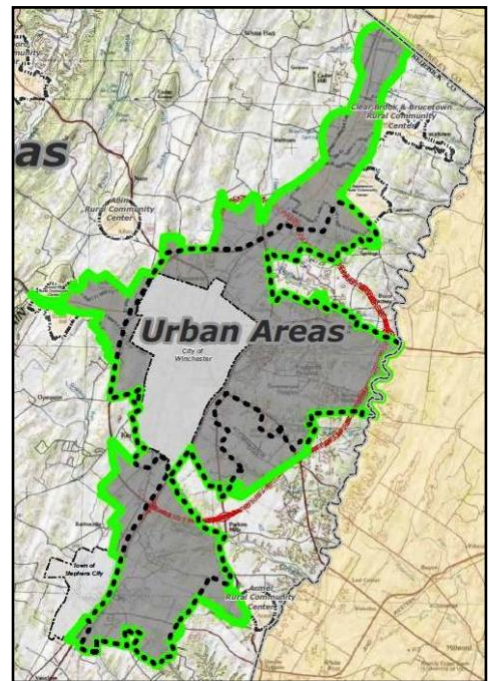
Many sections of the City's Comprehensive Plan document the close relationship between Winchester and Frederick County. Despite two separate governments, their histories are intertwined, and their economic, environmental, and social connections only increase over time. Planning the future of Winchester's neighborhoods requires attention to the County's direction.

The Frederick County Comprehensive Plan contains a detailed chapter on land use. The County's land use vision entails continued economic growth and development while preserving natural and agricultural areas. It seeks a compromise between traditional character and dynamic new prosperity. Three trends of the County's land use plan include:

1. Increase density in the Urban Development Area (UDA).

The Virginia Employment Commission projects Frederick County's population to increase from about 86,000 in 2017 to over 114,000 by 2030. County planning aims to concentrate new housing in the existing Urban Development Area, shown outlined in purple in the following graphic. Farms and forests in the west should not turn into suburbs. The contrast between the more urban eastern area and the more rural western part of the County should become sharper.

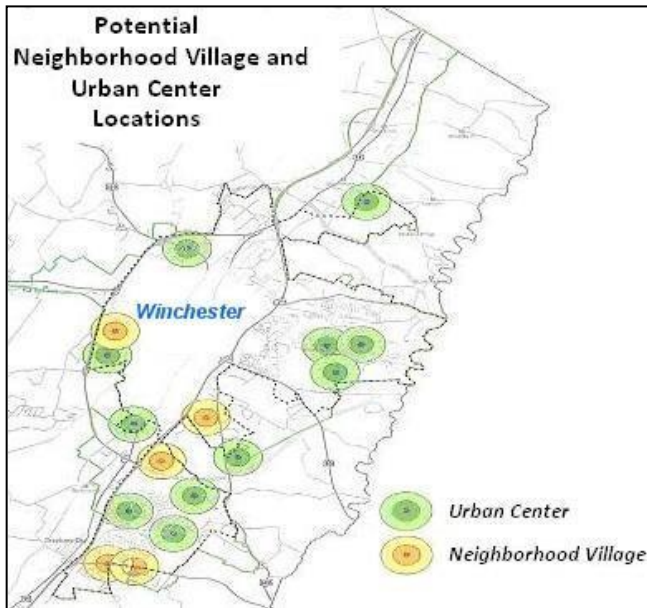
Current land use plans easily allow for 7,500 new dwellings in the UDA at a suburban density level of three units per acre. Density outside the UDA is slated to remain in the range of one unit per five to ten gross acres. In the urbanizing areas, townhouses and multistory apartments will become more common. Preservation of agricultural and forest resources is called for outside of the UDA. As has occurred in Fauquier and Loudoun counties, wealthy immigrants may still be inclined to build new homes on large parcels in the rural area.



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2. Promote New Urbanist hubs and villages.

County plans intend to promote New Urbanist concepts to maintain a distinctive sense of place and avoid generic suburban sprawl. In the County's early history, villages like Gore, Brucetown, and Marlboro served as business and social hubs for rural residents far from Winchester. The densest commercial and residential growth should occur in and near these historic crossroads and hamlets as concentric walkable communities rather than auto-oriented strips.



Accordingly, the County's plans frame development in the context of Neighborhood Villages and Urban Centers which cluster dense housing within half a mile of life's needs: work, shopping, and entertainment. The villages also incorporate social and recreational hubs like parks, schools, and historic sites. Thousands of new residents will live in the 16 communities, which display the compact mixed-use principles of New Urbanism.

A quick review of the two graphics above depicts how the future center of the population base is shifting and will continue to shift south and east of the City. Although the County UDA includes all of the area in the northeast portion of the County, there are developmentally sensitive areas –civil war battlefield sites and wetlands –that limit opportunities for new urban centers in those areas. Other than Sunnyside immediately to the northwest of the City and the Snowden Bridge urban center depicted to the northeast of the City, all of the other potential urban villages are concentrated to the south and east.

3. Use rules and partnerships to preserve nature, farming, and history.

Outside the UDA, the County plans seek to maintain green space and agriculture or other low-impact development. Zoning standards will limit the density of residential growth and

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concentrate it in existing communities. Historic rural villages like Gore and Gainesboro may accommodate denser development, and planned subdivisions like Lake Holiday may be accommodated with greater densities and mixed uses.

Transferable development rights will be a critical tool. Under this system, a rural landowner places a parcel –of say, 50 acres –under conservation easement so it may never be built upon. A builder buys the development rights to the five or ten houses which could have been built there and builds to extra density in the UDA, perhaps a compact mixed-use facility with 20 townhouses and apartments on a smaller parcel. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) uses no public funds even as it preserves green spaces. Rural landowners get a lump sum of money, and builders get a more valuable project.

County policies will aim to preserve rural character in a number of ways. Form regulations will locate residential concentrations out of sight from main roads by using hills or forests as buffers. Construction will consider soil types. Zoning, tax, and educational incentives will support innovative agriculture. In general, County planners recognize that rural character is a public good which must be carefully tended, as it cannot be replaced once lost.

Frederick County’s plan to adopt some New Urbanist elements and concentrate residential growth in more compact and walkable communities will benefit Winchester in important ways. City residents may enjoy better air quality, less traffic congestion, and less strain on social services. However, the mixed-use communities of the City and County may compete for residents and businesses. It remains to be seen whether such competition will be mutually beneficial. However, it is preferable to current trends of unsustainable auto-oriented suburban sprawl in the County.

Partnerships with Frederick County

The trends and policy changes noted in this, and previous chapters lend themselves to partnership with Frederick County. Cooperation will help both governments get better results at lower cost to taxpayers. Four possible partnerships include:

1. Transferable development rights (TDR).

The TDR program described as part of Frederick County’s land use plan could be used to benefit the City of Winchester through partnerships. For example, a large condominium and apartment complex which might normally violate the Zoning Ordinance’s density limits could be allowed if the developer agreed to preserve a hundred acres of prime farmland in the County. Such an agreement would revitalize a neighborhood in Winchester, attract new residents to the City, and prevent suburban sprawl in the county. TDR may work better in the City where public transportation and public services are concentrated.

2. Consolidated social services.

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While multiple studies have rejected the unification of City and County governments, they have also recommended consolidation of certain agencies or services. The social services departments, which function much like a state agency, seem prime for partnerships or consolidation. Users of social services are often transient and move between the City and County frequently. Consolidating the two departments would improve the quality of service and cut costs. Chapters Seven and Eight have more detail on social services in Winchester.

3. Coordinating parks and trails.

Many County residents come into Winchester to play or swim at Jim Barnett Park, and many City residents go into the County to play soccer, tour a battlefield, or ride a bike. The City and County parks and recreation departments may benefit from consolidation. They should cooperate closely when planning new facilities and programs at parks.

Both the City and County plan to build more multi-use trails. Often paralleling roads, paved trails offer safe paths to walk, run, or ride a bike for recreation or commuting purposes. City and County trails should connect together, and planners should cooperate when building them. Chapter Six discusses trails in more detail.

4. Gateway corridor overlay zoning

Winchester uses Corridor Enhancement zoning districts to promote a more welcoming urban form where main roads enter the City and lead to the core historic area. The overlay districts, detailed in Chapter Ten, create additional rules and guidelines for structures along Valley Avenue, East Cork Street, Cedar Creek Grade, and other roads of entry.

On the main corridors, development continues beyond the City limits. As visitors come to Winchester for business or pleasure, they first pass-through urbanized areas of the County. As such, County construction affects first impressions of the City. At the same time, the County benefits from corridor enhancements just as much as the City. Cooperating on corridor enhancement standards would help both localities.

The next chapter takes a closer look at urban design and, where advocated, historic preservation. It begins to focus on New Urbanism as the preferred approach to future development. As the City becomes less focused on the array of land uses and more focused on design, the importance of newer methods of development review, including form-based code, are addressed.

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CHAPTER TEN

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN

Winchester's history and architecture help make the city a unique place to live, work, and visit. Planning for economic, environmental, and social sustainability should embrace modern technology, but it should not forget Winchester's rich legacy of buildings and their stories. In moving towards a more vibrant urban form, Winchester's history is an asset: public and private efforts should recall the traditional design of its neighborhoods.

Citywide Historic and Design Goals

Chapter Three noted six citywide Historic Preservation and Urban Design objectives identified to address the citywide goal of: *Promote architecturally appealing and walkable urban form while also respecting significant historic identity, image, and integrity* This chapter provides an overview of what the City is already doing, and should do in the future, for each of the following objectives:

- 1) Employ New Urbanism principles in new development and redevelopment, including:
 - a. Pedestrian-friendly street design,
 - b. Interconnectivity of new local streets with existing local streets,
 - c. Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks,
 - d. Preservation of natural areas,
 - e. Satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management,
 - f. Mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types,
 - g. Reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and
 - h. Reduction of street widths and turning radii at intersections.
- 2) Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City.
- 3) Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading in to the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.
- 4) Ensure that all new development in the City is of a high quality regardless of use.
- 5) Pursue green building techniques (i.e. LEED certifiable) on major public construction projects and provide incentives for private development to do so as well.
- 6) Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.

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1. Employ New Urbanism principles in new development and redevelopment.

New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) are terms which planners use for practices that promote more compact, efficient, and sustainable cities. New Urbanism refers to a broader set of changes to infrastructure and land use, while TND refers to using the historical appearance and function of neighborhoods. The concepts combine the latest technology with commonsense, and sometimes ancient lessons for designing cities. This section briefly describes eight elements of good urban planning, notes where those elements already exist in Winchester, and explains the benefits if the city uses them more widely.

a. Pedestrian-friendly street design.

Chapter Six, on mobility, also addresses street design. The features of a street shape how residents and visitors use the urban space. Winchester's streets should enable safe and convenient movement by foot, bike, and bus, as well as by car. The upgrades to Braddock and Cameron Streets make them friendlier to pedestrians. Sidewalks, bump outs, crosswalks, shade trees, benches, bike racks, and bus shelters on the street make it easier for those without cars to get around, and they provide new choices for those who find using cars to be a hassle. The images below show how well-designed streets offer better choices to residents and visitors. The [design guide](#) for the city's historic district presents more detail on streetscape features and regulations.



Benches and public seating create a social space where pedestrians can rest and socialize. Benches should be shaded by a building or tree and be at least 6 feet long so two or three friends can have back and arm rests. A center arm rest discourages sleeping. To create a cohesive urban environment, seating can be integrated with other urban design elements, such as planters or low walls.

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Bus shelters are more effective than open stops. They should be integrated with sidewalks and not obstruct walking. Shelters should provide protection from the elements, and seating for at least two people. Ideal shelters integrate with other furnishings: in this image, a sturdy bike rack and a waste bin.



Trees provide shade and designate a pedestrian space. A vertical clear zone of a least 8 feet between the tree canopy and the sidewalk ensures clear visibility and security for pedestrians and motorists. Tree species with tap roots should be selected to prevent sidewalk breakage.



Parking structures save space for other uses. They should match the scale and character of nearby buildings. There are several redevelopment concepts in Chapter 11 that use structured parking to increase density. Parking structures on the interior of a block preserve pedestrian options and improve property values, for example in the North Cameron and North Loudoun Corridor concept.

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Wide sidewalks and textured crosswalks invite and protect pedestrians. Crosswalks like this one define a pedestrian space for safer crossing. Textured curb ramps directed towards crosswalks assist the visually impaired.

Street designs that promote walking have several benefits. Many kinds of businesses benefit from greater foot traffic and window shopping. Regular walking and reduced car exhaust improves public health. Walkable neighborhoods attract key growth demographics noted in Chapter Two, including active seniors and young professionals; these residents gravitate to walkable neighborhoods and provide strong tax revenue to fund community services.

Efforts to continue relocating overhead utilities to underground should be coordinated with Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) as the City and large-scale private developers undertake projects impacting the public rights of way. The City has included provisions for SVEC to work with the City as part of an updated franchise agreement.

b. Interconnectivity of new local streets with existing local streets.

New subdivisions should easily link to existing local streets. If well connected streets and trails are created then new residents can move around the city without a car and feel like a part of the community. Traditional layouts of streets in compact blocks promote strong connections and walking. A compact grid offers easy paths to walk without getting lost or tired. Rather than making islands of change, new projects should maintain or increase mobility to nearby neighborhoods. Strengthening and enforcing inter-parcel connectivity provisions in the subdivision and zoning ordinance can ensure good connections.

c. Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks.

Not only should streets connect well with each other, they should provide for easy transitions between modes of transportation. Chapter Six also discusses intermodal transit. The Green Circle Trail enables safe and scenic walking and biking around Winchester, and in several places the trail intersects bus stops or parking lots.

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As Winchester expands its pedestrian-friendly features, care should be taken that they align with existing streets in useful ways to create a network that offers more choices.

d. Preservation of natural areas.

Natural areas include the privately owned fields and forests around Kernstown Battlefield and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley as well as city-owned parks and stormwater management areas. They are part of Winchester's unique character. Even small natural areas such as landscaped medians and parking lot buffer strips improve the pedestrian experience by providing visual variety and scenery. Development should remain sensitive to the city's habitats and strive to preserve them for future generations of residents and visitors. Sensitivity to existing natural areas should be one factor in judging redevelopment and new construction projects. The Natural Resources Advisory Board provides official input to City Council when natural areas may be affected.

e. Satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management.

Chapter Five addresses stormwater runoff in greater detail. New Urbanism seeks to protect streams by limiting impact at the source point on individual property, reducing the need for complex and costly conveyance systems and treatment downstream. Low impact developments tend to:

- Maintain ample green space on a parcel, including many trees
- Include a rain garden or retention pond to catch and filter stormwater
- Build a "green roof" with soil and plants to slow runoff
- Use smaller parking lots made of permeable materials

Low impact designs create appealing scenery even as they reduce pollution and public costs of water treatment. New standards in the Zoning Ordinance could require better stormwater management on newly developed or redeveloped parcels.

f. Mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types.

Old Town never lost the traditional compact mixed-use development. Within a few blocks, there are single-family homes, townhouses, and upper-story apartments. Businesses range from convenience stores to boutique shopping and professional offices, with a wide array of dining. The downtown also includes core civic buildings. For 200 years, families lived, worked, and played in this small area mostly by walking. New Urbanism recalls those patterns. Chapter Two includes another discussion of mixed-use development. By planning the character of a neighborhood and permitting a wide range of uses, city officials can enhance quality of life, prosperity, and property rights.

Meeting daily needs close to home in a mixed-use neighborhood means less traffic congestion and air pollution for the whole community. The traditional urban lifestyle

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attracts key growth demographics to the city. Winchester's Zoning Ordinance should permit mixed use development in more areas, and it should provide incentives for mixed use projects in priority areas. Chapter Nine outlines zoning ordinance reform, and Chapter 11 identifies important parcels or corridors for redevelopment in each planning area.

g. Reduction of front and side yard building setbacks.

The arrangement of buildings on a street affects how friendly it is to pedestrians. In traditional neighborhoods, buildings close to the sidewalk invite pedestrians in and create a more comfortably scaled space for walking. Such buildings may be served with parking, but it is to the back or side of a lot rather than out front. Porches and shop windows near the sidewalk invite visiting and can knit a community more closely. The three homes below show how a larger setback changes the pedestrian perspective and reliance on personal cars.



Winchester's Zoning Ordinance should promote more pedestrian-friendly setbacks. While the existing Corridor Enhancement districts include maximum setback provisions, tighter provisions would better align with New Urbanism. Currently, underlying zones do not have maximum setback provisions, but almost all other than the Central Business and Residential Business (B-1 and RB-1) Districts have minimum setback requirements. Appropriate ordinances should consider the character of the city's different neighborhoods.

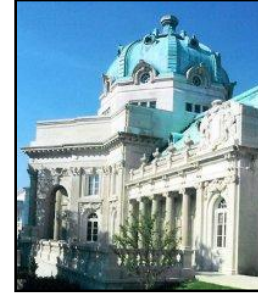
h. Reduction of street widths and turning radii at intersections.

Reduced street widths and tighter intersection radii are examples of traffic calming, which Chapter Six treats in more detail. Narrowing the part of the street used for car traffic tends to slow cars down, increasing safety for pedestrians. The space gained by narrowing traffic lanes may be used to expand sidewalks, plant trees, or serve as bike lanes, all of which improve mobility options. Curb extensions, or bump outs, at street intersections tend to slow cars as they make turns. Like other calming features, this improves safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

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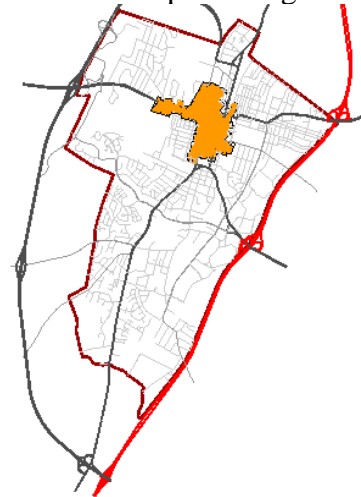
2. Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City.

Winchester has a wealth of historic buildings. The City partners with the local historical society to interpret Abram's Delight, George Washington's Office, and Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters to the public. Historic structures such as Glen Burnie and the Pritchard House, are privately owned museums. Others, such as the iconic Handley Library and Handley High School, still function as public facilities according to their original purpose. Many other privately owned structures not open to the public have long histories adding to the architectural and cultural richness of the City.



Historic resources attract new residents, bring visitors, and create job opportunities. As neighborhoods redevelop and grow, the city's unique architectural heritage should be preserved. The most important tool for preserving privately owned historic structures is the local Historic Winchester overlay district. The overlay ordinance provides special standards and guidelines within the district's boundaries, shown on the map in orange.

The boundaries include buildings of historical significance, traditional styling, and downtown character. The Board of Architectural Review considers exterior alterations including new construction, demolition, and renovation projects in the historic district. The review board ensures that changes are consistent with U.S. Department of Interior standards and that structures remain in character with the surrounding area. However, the local historic district only restricts the appearance of property, not its use. There is no barrier to mixed-use redevelopment.



The City should continue to maintain the historic character of the downtown area while guiding redevelopment efforts. Regular review of the historic district's boundaries should consider neighborhood needs and a specified Period of Significance. Some changes to the boundaries of the local or national historic districts may be justified following completion of an updated inventory of more than 1,200 structures currently situated within the historic district. A Historic District Design Guidelines Committee was established this past year to examine the review the manner in which certificates of appropriateness are processed and what, if any, changes should be considered to the boundaries of the local and national historic districts.

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[Preservation of Historic Winchester](#) is a grass-roots organization which, since 1964, has purchased, restored, and resold houses of historic value. The houses have easements or covenants preserving their traditional design. Preservation of Historic Winchester has protected some 75 houses, mostly on Kent, Loudoun, and Cameron Streets. Free market efforts like this complement the work of government and should be encouraged.

Greater promotion and utilization of state and federal historic tax credits for contributing structures within the Winchester National Historic District should occur as noted in the Housing chapter. The tax credits are available for nonresidential structures as well. Together, the credits amount to a forty-five percent income tax credit. The state and federal credits can also be used in conjunction with the City's ten-year abatement of local real estate taxes for substantial rehabilitation.

3. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

First impressions matter, so the streets along which visitors enter Winchester should feel welcoming. To create inviting gateways, the Zoning Ordinance includes [Corridor Enhancement \(CE\) overlay districts](#) along parts of nine important tourist entryways that were defined by City Council in 2005. Like the Historic District, the CE regulations have two parts: Zoning Ordinance text to define rules for the district, and Zoning Map overlay district boundary lines to apply those rules in specific areas of the city. The blue sections of the map below show current CE Districts. The green section shows an area where the district is authorized, but where the precise overlay boundaries have not yet been fixed and thus, no provisions yet apply to properties. Further implementation of the CE overlay zoning was deferred until after adoption of this Plan update. If found to be consistent with this plan, the City should finish mapping this final CE District and proceed with the overlay rezoning action.

The districts contain different rules that are context sensitive and appropriate to each of Winchester's distinct gateways. In addition to guiding the form and location of new or altered structures, the CE overlay provisions guide the appearance and placement of signage.

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Some CE provisions are firm standards, while others are in the form of guidelines offering suggestions as to what should or should not be done. The Planning Commission serves as the review board and reviews major construction in the districts requiring site plan approval. Most reviews not requiring site plan approval are delegated to the Planning Director. The Zoning Administrator enforces the standards. In certain cases where builders meet the guidelines, however, the Commission may reward the project by allowing extra housing units or by requiring less parking thus making a project more profitable.

Corridor Enhancement district rules should continue to guide development along the city's gateways. New construction in the tourist entry corridors should create a distinctive welcome. Combining traditional and modern features can create a strong first impression.

However, all of Winchester's entry arterials continue into the county, so there should be smooth transitions from rural and suburban areas (or transect zones) to the city. Corridor enhancements require partnership with Frederick County planners. The Metropolitan Planning Organization has undertaken a number of corridor studies and offers an ideal multijurisdictional forum to encourage cooperation on corridor enhancements.

4. Ensure that all new development in the City is of a high quality regardless of use.

Low quality development poses at least three risks to Winchester's sustainability. There may be safety hazards which endanger the public's health. Low quality buildings may depress surrounding property values. Low quality development may also harm the character and vitality of a neighborhood.

Quality and price are not the same thing. For example, it is possible to build high quality, compact housing for low-income tenants. By reviewing development plans carefully and enforcing property maintenance codes, city staff should continue to identify blighted and dangerous properties. Improving low quality buildings protects both public health and property value. Ensuring good construction in the first place works better for everyone and reduces the chances of accelerated economic obsolescence.

Corridor
Enhancement
Districts
— Current
— Potential

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5. Pursue green building techniques (i.e. LEED certifiable) on major public construction projects and provide incentives for private development to do so as well.

Chapter Five describes green buildings in more detail. In addition to reducing local and global pollution, environmentally sustainable construction reduces building owners' operating costs. A commitment to green building principles may also help attract key growth demographics and green collar employment. Winchester currently exempts solar energy systems from property tax, but other options include:

- Advising developers as to the long-term cost savings of sustainable construction.
- Assisting with financing and securing tax credits or other incentives.
- Exempting property tax for other sustainable improvements.
- Expediting the permitting and approval process.
- Using local contractors and local materials for sustainable public-sector construction.
- Publicizing green projects and commending their developers.

Using sustainable techniques for highly visible public projects like school renovations may help generate enthusiasm in the community for greener private-sector construction. A density bonus was recently offered to allow benefits for multifamily projects that implement features that are environmentally sustainable, energy efficient, and/or use alternative energy.

6. Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents, especially the elderly.

Some mobility enhancement noted in this chapter –bike lanes, running trails, and long stretches of sidewalk –disproportionately benefit the physically fit. Winchester's streets and buildings should welcome everyone. Universal Design refers to some common sense techniques to make buildings and streets more accessible to all segments of the population. Such features should be easy to understand and be usable with little physical effort. They include:

- Ramps with flat rest areas in addition to or in place of steps.
- Lever handles in the place of doorknobs, or motion-activated doors.
- Electric lights with motion sensors or panel switches rather than small toggles.
- Meaningful icons in addition to text labels.
- Bright lighting and high contrast images.
- Audible output at pedestrian crosswalks.
- Ramps that slope towards crosswalks (shown).

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not



Respecting diverse needs and capacities is an important matter of justice and dignity, which directly relate to social sustainability. Universal Design techniques will be in greater demand in the years to come as the average age increases and a higher percentage of the retired population ages in place rather than retiring to warmer climates. Winchester's public facilities should be made more accessible, using federal or foundation grant funds where possible, and private sector developers should be encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Implementation

Taken together, these design objectives preserve Winchester's heritage and character where it is strong while opening weaker areas to quality redevelopment. Looking to designs from local history invites a more context-sensitive, sustainable urban form which increases density, promotes prosperity, looks attractive, and enhances safety. Attention to urban design is suggested by way of incorporation of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) and helps Winchester become a 'Community of Choice.'

A variety of tools exist to implement these principles of New Urbanism. Zoning and Subdivision ordinances have long been the most important tools for shaping land use and urban form, but others should not be ignored. Form-based codes should be considered as an alternative to conventional Euclidean Zoning provisions, at least within designated Redevelopment Areas, particularly as it applies to focusing more on quality of design and less on segregating land uses.

The City is using a state grant for consultant services to help craft a new Zoning Ordinance. Winchester recently had its entire jurisdiction re-designated as an Urban Development Area (UDA) which has made the City eligible for state Smart Scale grants. Increasing density fosters walkable communities, increases the viability of public transit use, and causes property values to rise. Incentives to building in the UDA could be matched by mild barriers to building in other areas to ensure that disruptive change does not come to today's stable neighborhoods or environmentally sensitive areas. The UDA might use a zoning overlay to apply different standards, or it might replace some existing underlying zoning districts.

More work should be done to analyze future growth patterns. The trends in Chapters Two and Four, based primarily on trends represented from the 2010 Census and 2018 ACS do not provide enough relevant trend data about future population and business growth. This is particularly true in urban settings which stand to grow in lieu of perpetuated suburban

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sprawl. The at-present ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has greatly slowed economic development throughout the world, Winchester included. Consequently, the City's financial forecast for the coming years has been negatively affected, with many of the City's planned redevelopments having to be put on hold. City planners should expand their capacity to project different growth scenarios and develop revised responses to changed economic circumstances.

The City of Winchester's efforts to implement New Urbanist principles have born much of their intended fruit, though there are still more opportunities worth pursuing. In April of 2020, the City Council amended sections 13-1-5 and 13-1-13 of Winchester's zoning ordinance. The changes implemented have reduced the maximum dwelling units per gross acre from 18 to 16, while simultaneously implementing a new "density bonus" system that encourages and allows developers to exceed said limit if given criteria are met. These incentives include achieving LEED certification for green design, the provision of above and below ground parking structures, and the construction of affordable housing, to name a few. The length and complexity of today's ordinance, and the number of deviations from traditional neighborhood design, suggests that a complete rewrite may work better than mere amendments.

The Land Subdivision Ordinance also needs special attention. While subdivisions utilizing Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning permit flexible use of land, the current approach does not do enough to encourage traditional neighborhood design in all subdivisions. It is possible to build in a way that is profitable for the developer while enhancing the safety and sustainability of the community. Sections of the new zoning and subdivision ordinances should encourage sustainable development.

Beyond zoning, many other city actions and policies impact neighborhoods. From sidewalk repair and garbage collection to tree trimming and building code inspection, implementing change and sustainability is a team effort. Chapter Twelve, on implementation, describes the City's comprehensive commitment.

But City Hall is not the only source of good ideas: government should do more to involve citizens in the planning and the implementation of New Urbanism. The new zoning ordinance should reflect public input on whether certain areas should stay the same or change, and if change is desired, what ways that changes should occur. The changes in this plan will be more legitimate and more effective if they include Winchester's more diverse, more educated, and engaged public at every step of the way.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

CHAPTER 11

THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

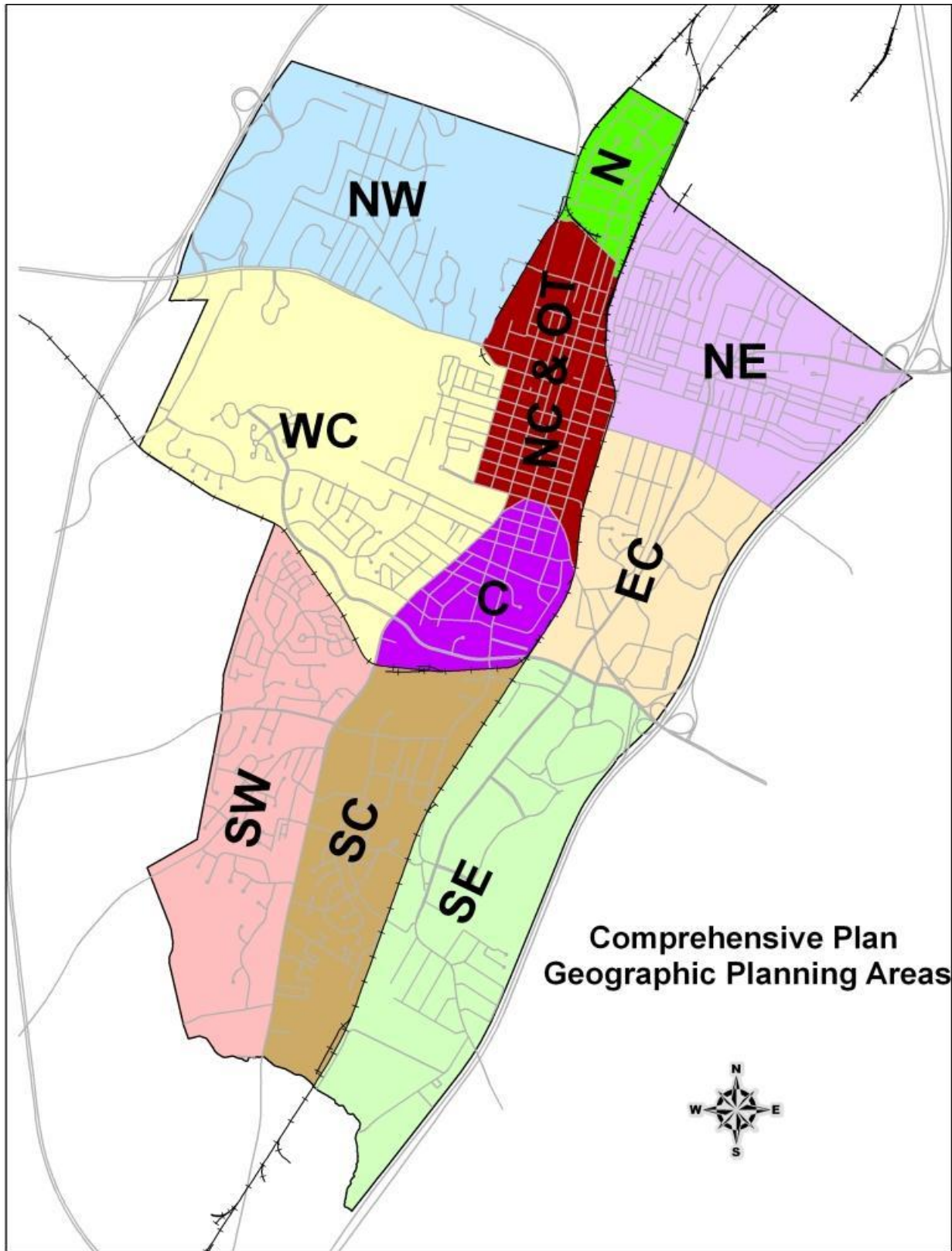
In moving towards a more sustainable vision informed by New Urbanism and traditional neighborhood design, this plan observes the distinct needs of ten different geographic planning areas. City staff, consultants, and elected officials considered the diversity of Winchester's neighborhoods, remembering that well-intentioned public policies sometimes create harmful unintended consequences when applied too broadly and where they are not needed. Efforts that help one part of the city might be wrong for another.

Some of the goals and objectives discussed in previous chapters must be implemented across the whole city to be effective. Chapter 12 addresses them in more detail. This chapter considers the special conditions and needs of each planning area. It focuses on the objectives most relevant to each area, their numbers corresponding with the lists presented in Chapter 3. It then states specific actions that the City should take to advance those objectives.

The map on the next page shows the ten planning areas. Their boundaries, often aligning with railroads, consider the character of neighborhoods, zoning, and use. They also generally align with Census tracts to improve the collection and comparison of data. The ten areas are:

- **North-** North of Wyck St., East of Fairmont Ave., and west of the CSX tracks.
- **Northeast-** East of the CSX tracks and north of Cork St.
- **East Central-** East of CSX tracks, south of Cork St., and north of Jubal Early Dr.
- **Southeast-** East of CSX tracks and south of Millwood Ave and Jubal Early Dr.
- **South Central-** West of CSX tracks, south of Winchester & Western (WW) tracks, and east of Valley Ave.
- **Southwest-** West of Valley Ave. and south of WW tracks.
- **West Central-** North of WW tracks, west of Valley Ave. and Stewart St., and south of Amherst St.
- **Northwest-** North of Amherst St., west of abandoned RR tracks & Fairmont Ave.
- **Old Town/North Central-** West of CSX tracks, south of Wyck St., east of abandoned tracks and Stewart St., and north of Gerrard St., Handley Blvd., and Millwood Ave.
- **Central-** West of CSX tracks, south of Gerrard St., east of Valley Ave., and north of the WW tracks.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

The remainder of this chapter examines each of the ten Planning Areas separately. **The format consists of a brief listing of Key Features along with a map of the area. It then lists the major objectives from Chapter 3 which apply to that Planning Area, along with specific actions to fulfill the objectives. The numbering is not consecutive because only some objectives apply to each area.** Finally, Alternative Development Concepts for one or more key (re)development opportunities illustrate a future vision of the City that is consistent with the concepts of New Urbanism, especially higher densities and a walkable community. The Plan advocates for either infill or redevelopment, embracing a mixed-use approach to land use and zoning. This Traditional Neighborhood Design is consistent with Winchester’s heritage and may also bring new vigor and prosperity to its communities.

NORTH (N)

North of Wyck St., East of Fairmont Ave, and West of the CSX tracks.

Key Features

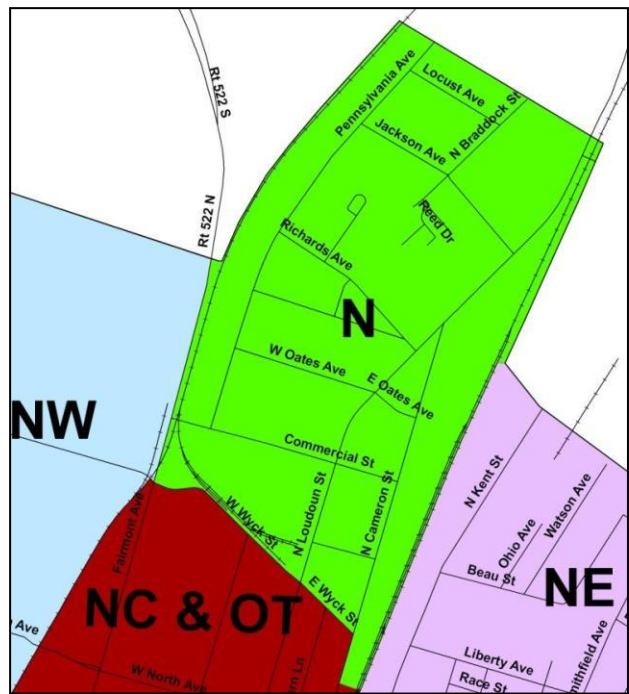
- Obsolete industrial and blighted highway commercial buildings. No grocery stores
- Older (60-90 yr old) but stable single-family and duplex housing areas
- Newer (30-60 yr old), high-density apartments and townhouses
- No neighborhood parks or schools
- No clear community hubs

The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Mobility

1. Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

Action: Work with Frederick County to determine alignment of a Brooke Rd. western extension along the northern corporate limits of the City.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

3. Encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation including walking, bicycling and public transportation by all segments of the population to reduce the dependency upon private automobile use.

Action: *Construct sidewalks along existing streets, especially connecting higher density residential areas to N. Loudoun Street transit corridor.*

4. Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.

Action: *Develop a Green Circle spur connecting North Area residential neighborhoods to future mixed use redevelopment area called out in the MUMI Study along Wyck Street as well as improved connection to the Old Town area.*

5. Alter conventional street standards, especially in mixed use and planned residential developments, by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.

Action: *Create an interconnected street linking N. Braddock St. to N. Loudoun St. near the city-county line.*

6. Employ access management and consider use of roundabouts to provide for traffic calming and improved safety.

Action: *Construct a roundabout or traffic circle at the intersection of Wyck St. and Fairmont Avenue and at the intersection of N. Loudoun St and N. Cameron St*

10. Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.

Action: *Build crossings over the railroad along the western edge of the area to allow safe connections to proposed mixed use redevelopment of the National Fruit and Migrant Camp properties.*

Economic Development

4. Inventory properties and areas of the City with underutilized potential.

Action: *Analyze properties in the vicinity of the former ZeroPak site as well as north of Commercial St., especially commercial sites along N. Loudoun St and N. Cameron St.*

5. Identify and facilitate new infrastructure development to enhance and stimulate commercial development.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Build the water and sewer improvements called for in the CIP and address the drainage concerns along the CSX Railroad corridor at the area's east boundary as well as in the vicinity of W. Wyck St and Fairmont Ave.*

6. Work with owners and investors interested in developing properties in the city.

Action: *Compile a list of property owners for the numerous small parcels in the area bound by N. Loudoun St, N. Cameron St, and Wyck St. that should be consolidated to create major redevelopment opportunities.*

Land Use

2. Incentivize the construction of new mixed-use projects as a viable reuse of obsolete strip commercial and industrial properties.

Action: *Use density bonuses and parking reductions to encourage mixed use redevelopment of the vehicle-oriented commercial strip along N. Loudoun St.*

Action: *Provide targeted incentives such as tax abatements and design assistance to motivate owners of large, obsolete commercial and industrial structures to pursue redevelopment and reinvestment, especially mixed-use and mixed-income types.*

4. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units in order to attract new residents and ensure that Winchester residents are provided with a decent home in a suitable living environment while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential areas designated in this plan.

Action: *Continue code enforcement efforts, including Rental Inspection Program, to stabilize viable residential neighborhoods around Pennsylvania Ave. and N. Braddock St.*

Action: *Encourage mixed use and mixed income redevelopments along N. Loudoun St., N. Cameron St., and Wyck St.*

5. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer selection of consumer goods (especially grocery stores offering healthy foods) and viable growth potential.

Action: *Determine adequate locations for a potential grocery store in the northern areas that could expand on the products offered at multiple convenience stores presently available.*

6. Retain and expand upon a diversified, sustainable light industrial base at compatible and appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce, in harmony with other community development, and which attracts higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Identify adaptive reuses of the obsolete apple industry structures along the southern edge of the area.*

7. Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.

Action: *Evaluate the need for a community center, park, or other public facility to serve as a social hub for current and future residents.*

Design

1. Employ New Urbanism Principles in new development and redevelopment.

Action: *Develop overlay design guidelines for the New Urbanism-type of development called for along the north side of Wyck St. and along east side of Fairmount Ave (US Rte 522). Tools may include a corridor enhancement district or a regulating form code.*

2. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

Action: *Improve the visual and functional aspects of the Route 11 North entry corridor.*

Recreation & Culture

2. Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.

Action: *Identify a major North-South route for a Green Circle Trail spur connecting the North Area to Old Town.*

3. Ensure that existing and new residential development has reasonable proximity to neighborhood parks as well as convenient bike and pedestrian access to trails in open space areas.

Action: *Establish a new neighborhood park with green area and recreational facilities serving the wide array of age groups residing in the North Area, possibly by condemning and redeveloping key blighted parcels.*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

North Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept: North Cameron/North Loudoun Corridor



Some areas north of Old Town include old industrial sites that are currently ripe for redevelopment. One such area is bound by Wyck Street to the south, including properties part of the Zero Pak complex, North Cameron Street to the east, and North Loudoun Street to the west. Both North Cameron and North Loudoun are important corridors in the City, with North Loudoun designated as a CE overlay district. As the area redevelops, both streets should be equally prioritized for frontage improvements and pedestrian access.

The area where North Cameron and North Loudoun intersect to the north is an awkward intersection that may be improved with a traffic circle, especially as North Cameron transitions into a two-way roadway. A spur of the Green Circle trail runs adjacent to the railroad tracks and could be drawn into the site where a public plaza surrounded by mixed use buildings could offer a destination site along the trail. Office or industrial buildings between Gibbens Street and E. Commercial Street reflect the scale of adjacent buildings along E. Wyck Street. These buildings transition into smaller scaled mixed use with distance away from Wyck Street. A parking garage occupies the interior of the block just north of E. Commercial Street to provide parking for the surrounding area, while maintaining an urban form of development.

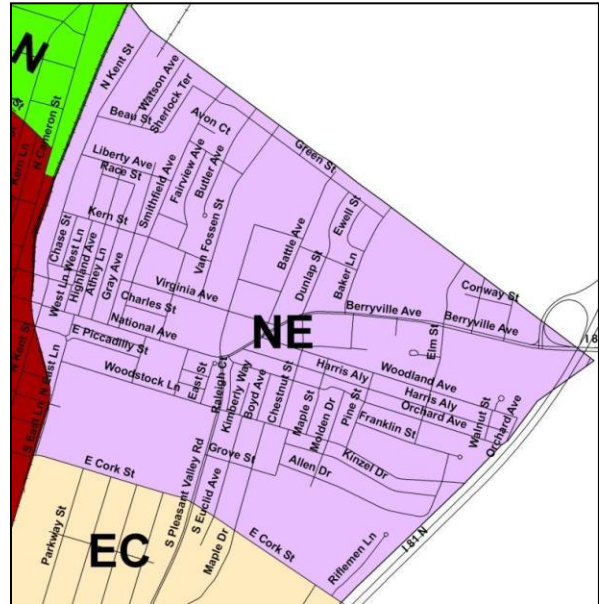
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

NORTHEAST (NE)

East of the CSX tracks and north of Cork St.

Key Features

- Commercial including 2 grocery stores along Rte 7 served by I-81 interchange
- Large area population density compared to other areas
- Some areas of residential blight
- Some stable residential neighborhoods
- Significant low-income housing
- Good public resources: 2 schools, 2 parks, firehall, public safety ctr, and future school admin office



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

4. Inventory properties and areas of the city with underutilized potential.

Action: *Inventory blighted and/or obsolete commercial properties along Route 7 including Berryville Ave, Conway St, Ft Collier Rd and National Ave.*

5. Identify and facilitate new infrastructure development to enhance and stimulate commercial development.

Action: *Promote the upgrade to the major waterline serving the Route 7 corridor to further expand on the Interstate market.*

Action: *Consider public initiatives to improve access management along Route 7 by expanding inter-parcel connections and shifting Maple St. and Spruce St. to align with existing signalized intersections at Baker Ln and at Apple Valley Square.*

7. Work with owners and investors interested in developing properties in the city.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Coordinate property consolidation of the separately owned residential lots along the south side of Berryville Ave. between Elm St and Woodland Ave and conversion to commercial or mixed use*

Action: *Continue improving on the appearance of Berryville and National Avenue through adherence to the CE standards.*

10. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: *Encourage reinvestment in obsolete and underdeveloped properties for New Urbanism-type mixed use development that creates a neighborhood hub. Targeted sites include the Eastgate Shopping Center property along the south side of Route 7, large retail center properties along the north side of Route 7, and smaller parcels along both sides of N. Kent St, the east side of N. Cameron St, and the east side of Baker Lane.*

Housing

1. Provide opportunities for and pursue effective action items to produce new mixed income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.

Action: *Work with developers of residential and mixed-use projects to create new mixed income developments, particularly in areas targeted for spot blight and along underdeveloped transit routes, including the Smalts property on National Ave.*

Action: *Study expanded use of accessory dwellings to increase affordable housing and residential density.*

2. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.

Action: *Promote the use of the expanded Substantial Rehabilitation tax abatement program offered in the Enterprise Zone for residences at least 25 years old, particularly in stable residential neighborhoods not otherwise slated for conversion to mixed-use redevelopment.*

Land Use

5. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer selection of consumer goods, especially grocery stores offering healthy foods, and viable growth potential.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Spur redevelopment opportunities including mixed use and major commercial use and ensure the retention of the grocery stores serving the northeast residential area. Also consider introducing a higher-end grocer along Rte 7 to serve the larger Winchester community and new higher-income residents of the redevelopment area.*

Design

1. Employ New Urbanism principles in new development and redevelopment.

Action: *Improve walking and biking facilities between residential neighborhoods, public hubs like schools, daycare centers, parks, and the post office, and adjacent commercial corridors.*

Action: *Promote redevelopment of obsolete commercial centers in a manner that is more pedestrian oriented and environmentally friendly.*

Action: *Introduce Transit-oriented design features such as bus shelters, benches, and improved crosswalks along the Route 7 corridor*

3. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

Action: *Consider implementing a roundabout at the intersection of Berryville, N Pleasant Valley Rd and National Ave.*

Public Safety

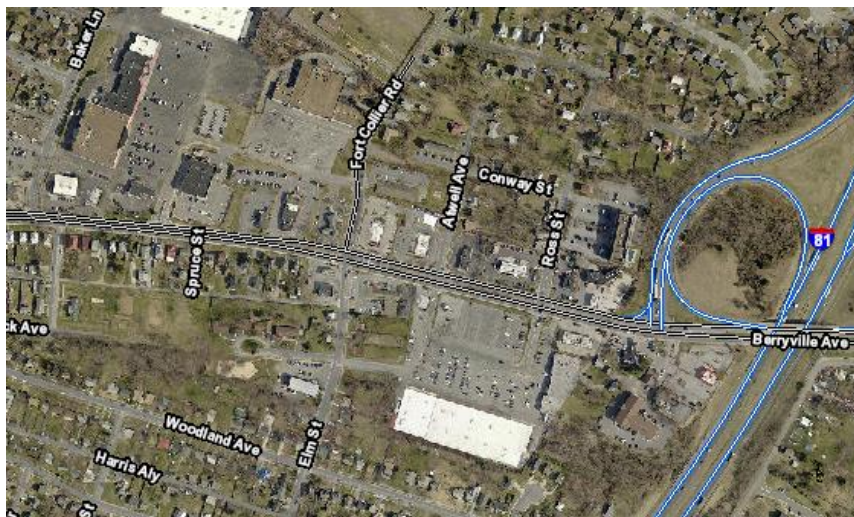
2. Improve the quality of life for all people by preventing crime through enforcement of the law, creation of partnerships through communication and education, and problem-solving using innovative policing strategies.

Action: *Improve public safety efforts to reduce crime through neighborhood-based initiatives, including efforts coordinated with the North End Citizen's Association.*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Northeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 1: Berryville Avenue Corridor

The image below offers a redevelopment scenario for the Route 7 (Berryville Avenue) corridor extending from Interstate 81 on the east (right) westward toward the downtown area. The scenario includes mixed use, a neighborhood park with a multi-use trail linking the existing single-family neighborhood along Woodland Ave to commercial services and the Route 7 transit route, and a reverse frontage road serving redevelopment along the south side of Route 7. It provides for orderly and convenient access to new or refurbished development near route 7, including interstate-oriented development such as lodging, restaurants, and gas stations by funneling traffic coming off the highway away from Berryville Avenue.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Northeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: National Ave. Redevelopment Plan

This plan represents strategic revitalization through a neighborhood-based approach which creates an opportunity to consider the specific needs of a residential community on a smaller scale. Located in an enterprise zone, this 4.25-acre site along National Avenue fronts the Corridor Enhancement District and is within walking distance of the local post office. This lends the space well to age-restricted dwellings. Zoned B-2 and MR, the area has a variety of potential uses, including an assisted living facility, mixed-use, townhouses or apartments.



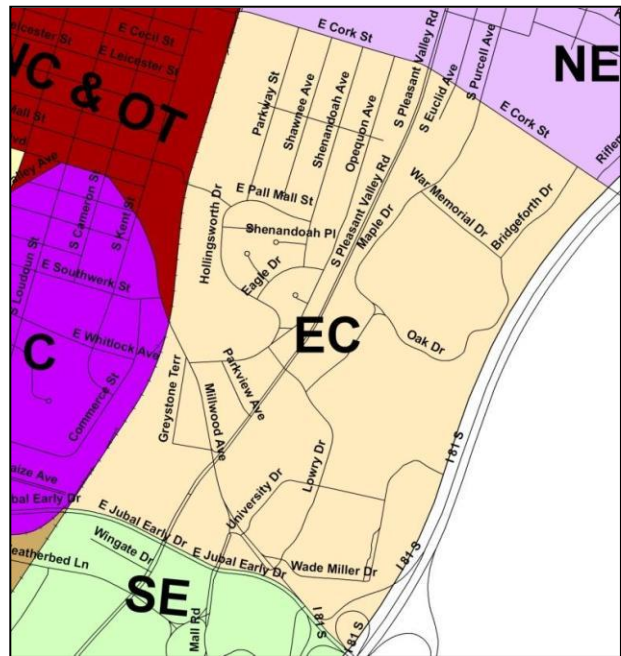
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

EAST CENTRAL (EC)

East of CSX tracks, south of Cork St, and north of Jubal Early Dr.

Key Features

- Shenandoah University hub
- High concentration of student population
- Stable middle-income single-family neighborhoods
- Jim Barnett Park (regional park)
- Commercial development along N. side of E Jubal Early Dr and Millwood Ave served by I-81 interchange
- Visitor center, museum, and public works yards



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: Work with the owners of the vacant property on the west side of S. Pleasant Valley Rd across from Jones Funeral Home for mixed use development.

Housing

1. Provide opportunities for and pursue effective action items to produce new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.

Action: Work with the major owner of property along Parkview Ave to redevelop the area of single-family homes into a higher density housing area oriented to students and possibly including some mixed uses.

Action: Study expanded use of accessory dwellings to increase affordable housing and residential density.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

3 Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.

Action: Preserve the quality and character of housing along the tree-lined streets along the south side of E. Cork St including Parkway St, Shawnee Ave, Shenandoah Ave, and Opequon Ave, as well as the Forest Hills Subdivision and Greystone Terrace Subdivision.

Land Use

7. Minimize the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses or ensure that Payment in lieu of Taxes (PILOT) are provided to cover the expense of city services such as public safety.

Action: Work with Shenandoah University to preserve tax-generating commercial activity near Exit 313.

Recreation & Culture

1. Develop quality active recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and those identified as critical needs in the Needs Assessment included in the City Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Action: Implement the recommendations in the City's Capital Improvement Plan for Jim Barnett Park.

Action: Partner with Shenandoah University to upgrade the baseball fields at the north end of the park and reintroduce the McCormac Amphitheater for seasonal entertainment and cultural offerings.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

East Central Planning Area Site Development Concept 1: West Side of S Pleasant Valley Rd

This irregular-shaped site consists of nearly 4½ acres of vacant land opposite Jones Funeral Home and Jim Barnett Park. The site is within an adopted CE District overlay and offers the opportunity for quality infill office or mixed-use development.

This illustrative development scenario shows multiple buildings linked by interconnected private drives and parking areas. The buildings could range 1½ to 3 stories and take advantage of the sloped site to have at-grade access from both the front (toward S. Pleasant Valley Road) and the rear. A connection to S. Pleasant Valley Rd is shown at a location aligning with E. Leicester St, although the connection to the neighboring residential area would be for only bike/pedestrian and emergency access.

The plan calls for a right-in/right-out access with a landscaped median instead of the insertion of a roundabout where the development meets S. Pleasant Valley as has been proposed by VDOT as part of a STARS Study

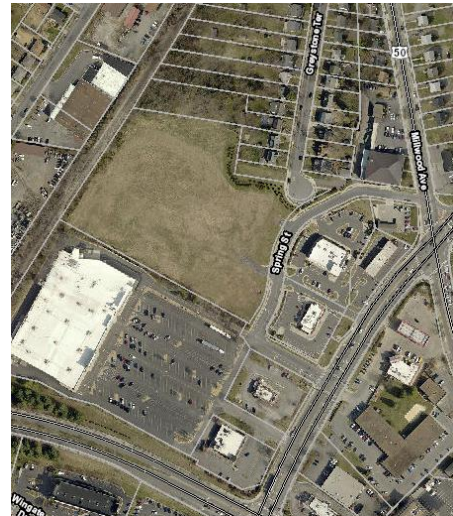
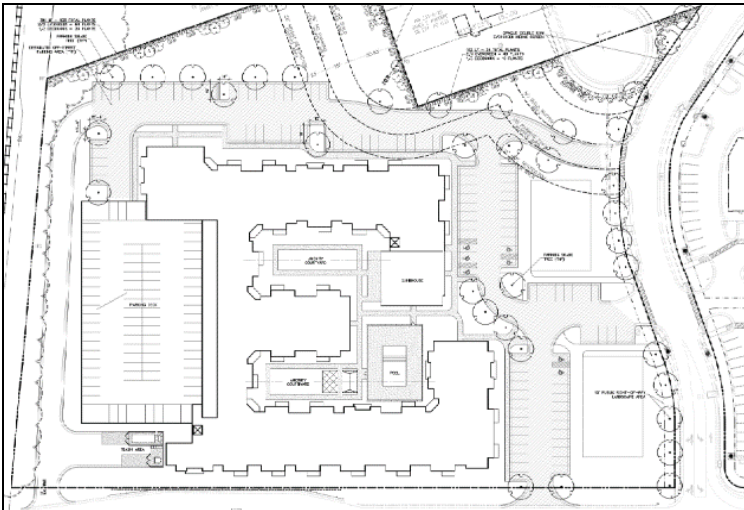


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

East Central Planning Area Site Development Concept 2: 222 Spring St.



This site consists of 6.23 acres of deeded land fronting Spring St, adjacent to the Planet Fitness and Dick's Sporting Goods to the south and Greystone Terrace residential properties to the north. The concept proposes a multifamily planned unit development (PUD), composed of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units, oriented primarily to the housing needs of Shenandoah University students. The site plans call for mixed-use, with two some commercial structures out from along Spring St and a dense residential apartment complex behind. A buffer between this development and Greystone Terrace Would be provided by trees and an opaque fence separating the areas.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

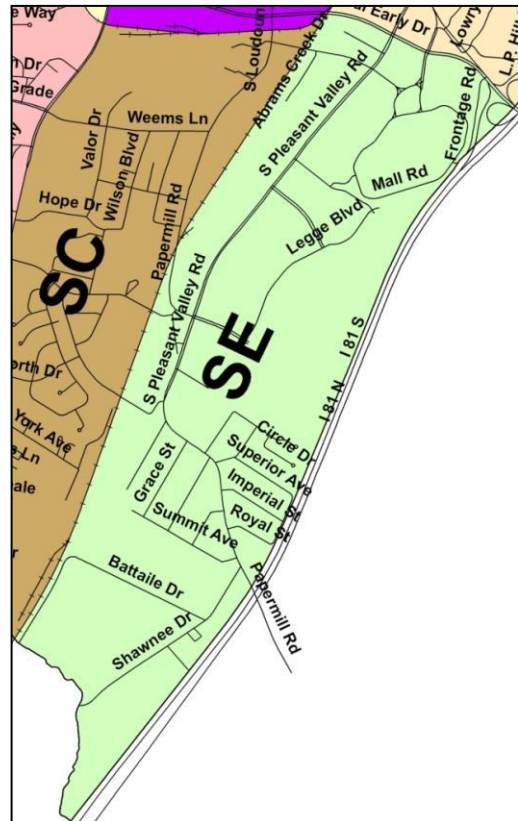
SOUTHEAST (SE)

East of CSX tracks and south of Jubal Early Dr.

Key Features

- No clear neighborhood hubs
- Sprawling “big box” and national brand commercial
- Three grocery stores
- Aging regional enclosed Mall
- One neighborhood park
- Obsolete Heavy industrial site in NW and extensive sustainable industry in SW corner
- Some stable residences in a range of densities, housing types and incomes

The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:



Economic Development

1. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: *Promote redevelopment of the regional mall to better serve the area’s evolving markets, including consideration of residential use, improved access, and green space.*

Action: *Work with Henkel-Harris and other affected property owners to fund extension of S. Pleasant Valley Rd as called for in the adopted MPO Plan, and encourage an alternative development concept incorporating mixed use.*

Action: *Work with NW Works, Henkel-Harris, and other industrial property owners to developed vacant industrial sites with appropriate light industrial uses .*

Action: *Work with private property developers and environmental agencies to redevelop the Federal-Mogul (Abex) industrial site for environmentally safe reuses.*

Mobility

1. Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: Continue coordinating with the MPO, VDOT and Frederick County to advance the creation of a realigned bridge over I-81 to connect at Battaile Dr as a replacement to the existing Papermill Rd bridge.

Action: Work with the developer of the vacant Kassabian Tract and underdeveloped Apple Blossom Mall site to ensure an orderly connection of Legge Blvd to Mall Blvd.

Action: Work with Shenandoah University, the owners of the former Clarion/Lee-Jackson site, and Apple Blossom Mall to implement a grade-separated bike and pedestrian connection between the university and properties along the south side of Millwood Ave

Environment

3. Work with the private sector as well as federal and state agencies to remediate brownfield sites, including railroad properties, within the City.

Action: Investigate the use of brownfields or other funding sources to mitigate documented asbestos hazards at the Federal-Mogul (Abex) site along the west side of S. Pleasant Valley Rd.

8. Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on our streams and downstream areas.

Action: Work with Apple Blossom Mall, Ollie's and other owners of properties adjoining Abrams Creek to establish sustainable riparian buffers along Abrams Creek between the CSX railroad and Millwood Ave.

Recreation & Culture

2. Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.

Action: Work with private landowners to provide easements for, and construction of, the Green Circle Trail along the south side of Featherbed Ln. and along Abrams Creek through the Apple Blossom Mall property, including consideration of a grade-separated crossing of Millwood Ave.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Southeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 1: Apple Blossom Mall

The regional mall, built in 1981, has remained largely unaltered, save for a renovation undertaken in 2012, and is due for repositioning from an economic sustainability standpoint. The expansive over-parked site offers the opportunity for quality infill mixed-use development, including residential use along the wooded west side of the tract just south of Abrams Creek. This redevelopment plan also integrates properties north of the mall along Millwood Ave , including the former Clarion building.

It assumes the construction of multiple new buildings in line with the New Urbanism philosophy, including housing along the west side and a pedestrian bridge connecting to Shenandoah University to the north. Excess parking space will be infilled. To compensate for lost parking, a parking structure could be included in the area in between the multifamily complex and the remaining regional mall structure (approximately in the area adjacent to the current Penney's anchor store). The Green Circle Trail would be constructed along Abrams Creek providing a strong bike and pedestrian link between the mall site and Shenandoah University to the north of Millwood Ave.



Southeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: S Pleasant Valley Rd. / Battaile Dr.

This illustrative development scenario below shows an extension of S. Pleasant Valley Rd to Battaile Dr., through undeveloped land to the north and east of the Henkel-Harris facility in the Winchester Industrial Park, near the southeast corner of the City. The scenario below depicts the introduction of multiple mixed-use buildings linked by interconnected drives and parking areas adjacent to the CSX railroad, although the new construction could instead consist of a single office site without a residential component. Connecting Pleasant Valley Rd with Battaile Drive at the south end of the site would remove

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

commercial traffic from the medium density single-family residential area along both sides of Papermill Road to the east.



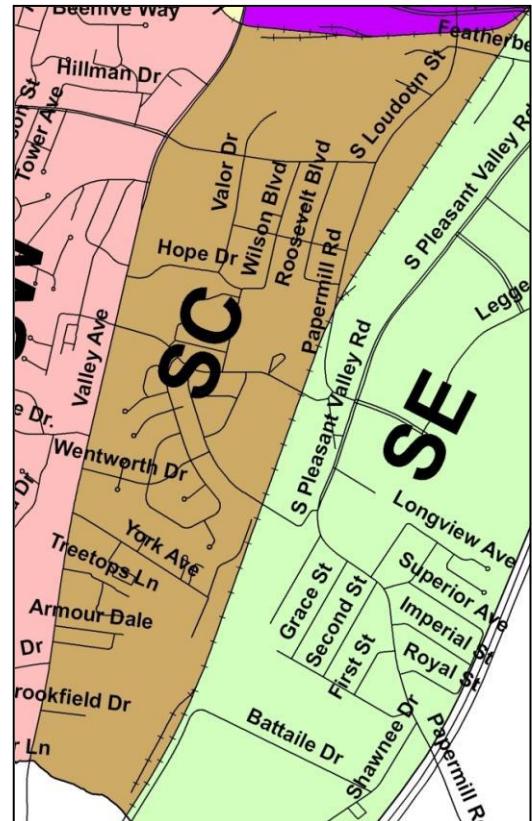
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

SOUTH CENTRAL (SC)

West of CSX tracks, south of Winchester & Western (WW) tracks, and east of Valley Ave.

Key Features

- No clear neighborhood hub
- Sprawling, aging highway commercial. None of 3 former grocery stores still present
- Underserving Ward Plaza site
- No parks and little green space
- Important industrial sites at north and south ends
- Stable residences in a range of densities, housing types, and incomes
- One school, one fire hall.



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Mobility

5. Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.

Action: Work with a redeveloper of the Ward Plaza site to create a street grid including a N-S street connecting Weems Ln to Hope Dr and an E-W street extending Taft Ave over to Valley Ave at Middle Rd.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Economic Development

10. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: Partner with a developer of the Ward Plaza site and adjoining properties to pursue mixed use in a New Urbanism-styled development.

Action: Work with the owner of the Royal Inn and adjoining billboard parcel to pursue more appropriate urban uses along the east side of Valley Ave.

Action: Coordinate with the EDA to provide incentives for appropriate redevelopment of the parcels along the north of Weems Lane between Valor Dr and S. Loudoun St as well as the former Robinson School site in a way that is compatible with adjacent uses.

Environment

1. Reduce the exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.

Action: Work with O'Sullivan (Continental) and appropriate State and Federal agencies to address unresolved landfill sites on the property.

8. Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on our streams and downstream areas.

Action: Work with the State Dept of Conservation and Recreation, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, and with local partners including O'Sullivan (Continental) and the Environmental Studies Department of Shenandoah University to develop strategies to improve the quality of the Abrams Creek waterway.

Housing

2. Provide opportunities for and pursue effective actions items to produce new mixed income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.

Action: Work with developers of residential and mixed-use projects to create new mixed income developments, particularly in areas targeted for spot blight and along underdeveloped transit routes such as Valley Ave and Papermill Rd.

3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.

Action: Preserve the character of housing in the Stonecrest and Cedarmeade subdivisions and rehabilitate housing in the York Ave and Pineville areas.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

South Central Planning Area Site

Redevelopment Concept: Ward Plaza

Walkability, mixed-use, and improved connections play key roles in this conceptual redevelopment of Ward Plaza. New north-south and east-west streets provide improved vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access into and through the site. Buildings front the street edge closely with parking removed to the rear or interior of blocks. This type of building orientation encourages walking with easy access from the sidewalk. Mixed-use residential, retail, and office buildings support a diverse range of activity and allow the site to be used at all hours of the day. A grocery store located at this site would be able to serve residents within and outside of the immediate area. Additionally, a park or plaza provides a destination venue or community focal point for residents and visitors.



Shown on this page are an illustrative site plan of the concept and a section perspective from a street level view at a location indicated in black on the site plan. Citizens responding to the Comprehensive Plan update survey indicated their support for taller buildings, particularly in the south areas of the City.



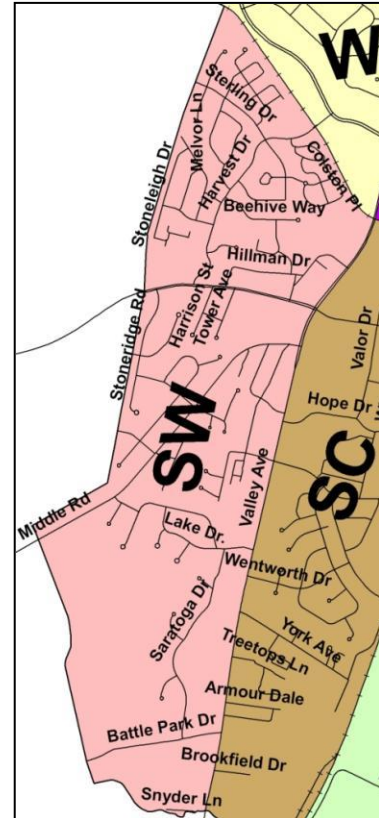
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

SOUTHWEST (SW)

West of Valley Ave. and south of WW tracks

Key Features

- No clear neighborhood hubs
- Newer subdivision housing: low-density to south and higher-density to north
- Some aging highway commercial along Valley Ave. No grocery stores
- Multiple Extended Stay Lodging facilities in older motels
- Underused warehouse facility
- Two neighborhood parks, large battlefield park



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

10. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: Redevelop obsolete and blighted commercial properties along Rte 11 such as the three older motel sites and the nonconforming Simbeck Truck Terminal site.

Action: Redevelop the Virginia Apple Storage and former Elms Motel sites as a New Urbanism-type mixed-use village including the use of historic tax credits for conversion of the multi-story brick warehouse as upper-level dwelling units.

Land Use

2. Incentivize the construction of compact mixed-use projects as a viable reuse of obsolete strip commercial and industrial properties.

Action: Introduce higher density residential use in close proximity to transit along Valley Ave while protecting single-family residential areas further to the west.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

5. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer selection of consumer goods, and viable growth potential.

Action: Expand commercial use along the Cedar Creek Grade corridor that is compatible with adjoining residential use.

Recreation & Culture

2. Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.

Action: Work with the Kernstown Battlefield Association to provide improved bike and pedestrian access on the preserved battlefield site.

Action: Establish a north-south alignment of a spur of the Green Circle Trail through existing residential neighborhoods from the south side of Jubal Early Drive down to Middle Rd and connecting with the Kernstown Battlefield.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Southwest Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept: Virginia Apple Storage

The Virginia Apple Storage industrial site along the west side of Valley Ave (Route 11) lends itself to redevelopment. Adaptive reuse of the old multi-story brick structure near Abrams Creek could include industrial loft condos or apartments on the upper levels with commercial use on the ground floor. Other existing structures on the Virginia Apple Storage site and the former Elms Extended Stay Lodging site would be removed to make way for a well-planned mixed-use development that includes the creation of a grid street system. Hillman Drive could be extended back as a landscaped boulevard providing access to the commercial and office use up along Valley Ave and the variety of housing opportunities toward the rear. In addition to residential units in the tall historic warehouse structure, nearby row houses, duplexes, and single-family detached units could be added, backing up to and connecting with the Park Place single-family development to the west. A trail spur along Abrams Creek could connect the development to the mainline Green Circle Trail just to the north along Jubal Early Drive.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

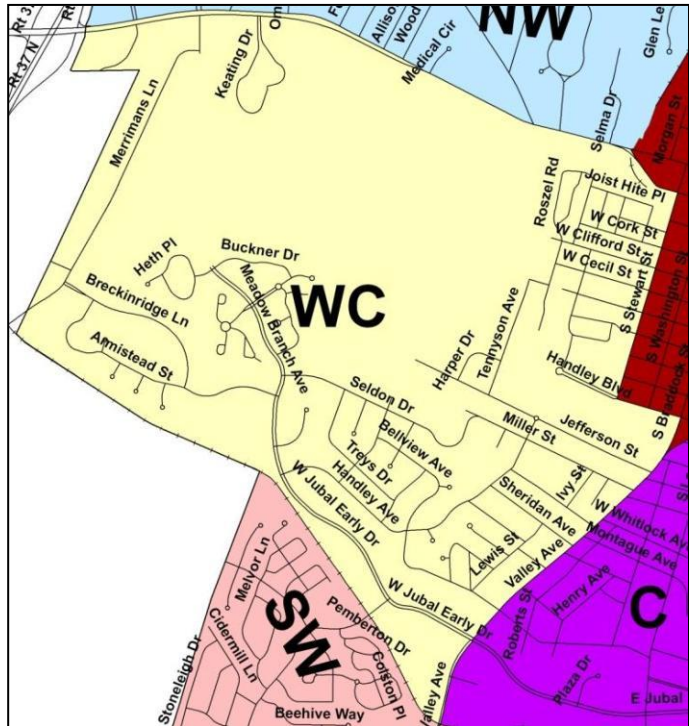
WEST CENTRAL (WC)

North of WW tracks, west of Valley Ave. and Stewart St, and south of Amherst St.

Key Features

- Potential hubs at the old hospital and the regional museum
- Stable, high-income, low-density residences.
- Wetlands Preserve and Green Circle Trail spur
- Glen-Burnie open space, 4 schools

The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:



Economic Development

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: Facilitate mixed use development and planned unit development in conjunction with construction of Meadow Branch Avenue near Amherst Street.

Action: Encourage redevelopment of older commercial sites on Amherst Street.

Mobility

1. Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

Action: Extend W. Jubal Early Dr west to County line for future connection to Rte 37

Recreation & Culture

2. Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Work with private landowners to provide easements for and construction of the Green Circle Trail along the south side of Jubal Early Drive and the east side of Meadow Branch Ave.*

Action: *Utilize federal Safe-Routes-to-School (SRTS) grants or other funding sources to construct a bike and walking trail to connect the Williamsburg Heights Subdivision to the Shihadeh Innovation Center and John Handley High School along Jefferson Street.*

Design

1. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading in to the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

Action: *Improve the visual and functional aspects of the Route 11 entry corridor.*

Action: *Consider establishment of National Historic District designation for the area containing Craftsman-styled homes along the west side of Valley Ave between Bellview Ave and Jefferson St.*

Land Use

2. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer selection of consumer goods, and viable growth potential.

Action: *Explore the feasibility of attracting a specialty or high-end grocery store to serve the households in this area as well as the Old Town and Northwest Planning Areas.*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

West Central Planning Area Site Development Concept: Meadow Branch Avenue Development

The extension of Meadow Branch Avenue through the Smith and Moffett properties between Amherst St on the north and Buckner Drive within the Meadow Branch North subdivision to the south was completed in 2016, and opened up many opportunities for mixed-use, New Urbanism-type development.

Meadow Branch Apartments has completed its first phase of construction, planning to eventually to extend down to Meadow Branch North, across from the recently relocated John Kerr Elementary School. This concept plan proposes the construction of commercial/retail development along the segment of road north of the school. Estate residences could be constructed to the south, with a through road connecting the area to Breckinridge Ln.



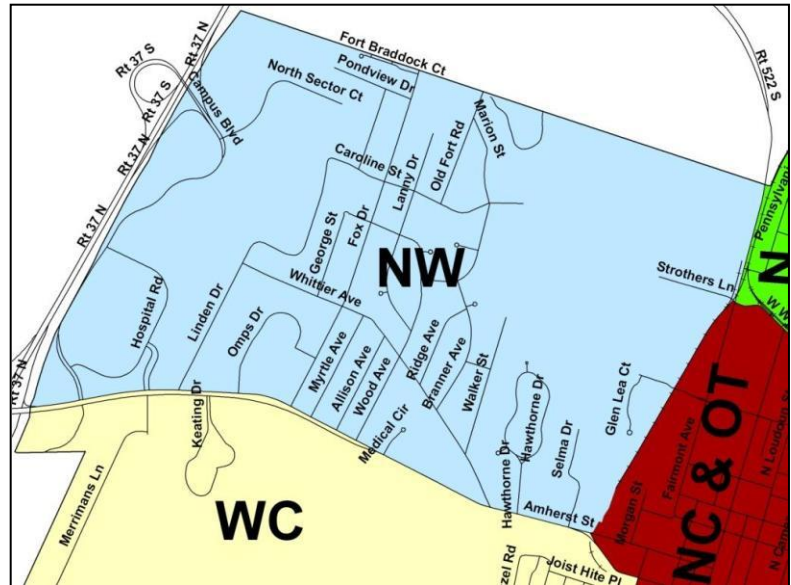
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

NORTHWEST (NW)

North of Amherst St., west of abandoned tracks & Fairmont Ave.

Key Features

- Medical center hub
- Stable single-family houses
- Offices along Amherst Street
- One school, one park, ample green space
- Aging industrial sites in the northeast section



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential

Action: Pursue major redevelopment of the National Fruit and adjacent Migrant Worker Camp informed by New Urbanist principles.

Mobility

5. Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.

Action: Extend Caroline St. east and Walker St. north to ultimately connect with Fairmont Avenue and/or W. North Avenue.

4. Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.

Action: Install sidewalks or multi-use paths along collector streets such as Whittier Avenue and Fox Drive (particularly those serving as spurs to the Green Circle Trail).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Land Use

4. Provide a range of commercial facilities which incorporate a mix of retail, service and office facilities, properly served by access through the transportation system, and offer selection of consumer goods, and viable growth potential.

Action: *Continue commercial development along Linden Drive and facilitate redevelopment for the former Middle School site that includes a neighborhood park. Work with the Medical Center to explore options for access to the Medical Center interchange on Route 37.*

Environment

6. Discourage development within identified floodplain fringe areas and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.

Action: *Address the impacts of floodplain designation on nonconforming residential structures along Whittier Avenue.*

Northwest Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 1: Former Middle School Site

The 23-acre site formerly housing the Frederick County Middle School on a plateau along the west side of Linden Drive is a potentially prime redevelopment site. Linking the site to Rte 37 via a connection to the Winchester Medical Center's private roadway network (Campus Blvd) is key to making the site viable. Proximity to the regional medical center and Shenandoah University's Pharmacy School makes this site very marketable. A development partnership with Valley Health System may be needed to ensure access to the site. The exhibit below calls for an active adult living center to be located here, with space for 160 units. Townhouses priced for the center's workforce would stand adjacent, pressed against Linden Dr. and connected to the existing residential neighborhood via Caroline St.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Northwest Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: National Fruit on Fairmont Avenue

The National Fruit redevelopment site is scaled back from the previous Comprehensive Plan update to call for mixed use on vacant former headquarters land along east side of Fairmont Avenue and perhaps some land on west side situated between Fairmont Ave and former railroad right-of-way south of the newly aligned Wyck St intersection.

The future roundabout would help redirect Rte 522 inbound traffic entering Old Town over to Rte 11 at Wyck and N. Cameron St to reduce impact on existing residential part of Fairmount Ave south of Wyck St intersection.



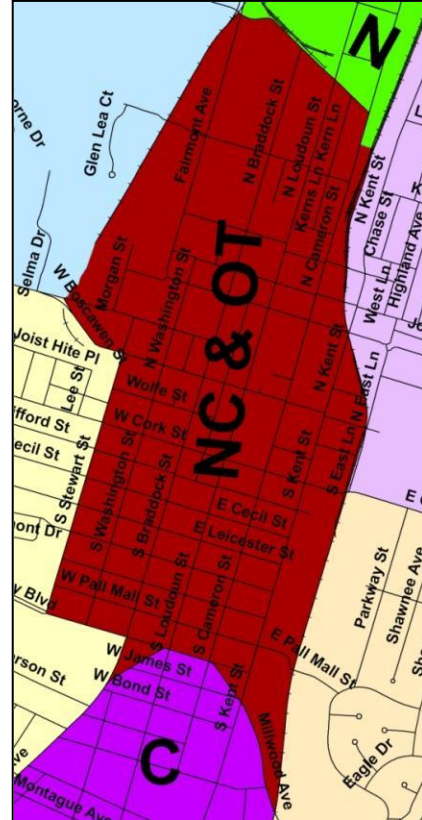
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

OLD TOWN/NORTH CENTRAL (NC & OT)

West of CSX tracks, south of Wyck St., east of abandoned tracks and Stewart St., and north of Gerrard St, Handley Blvd., and Millwood Ave.

Key Features

- Clear hub at historic downtown
- Attractive traditional architecture
- Many civic buildings
- No parks and little green space
- Mixed uses, but many vacant buildings
- Obsolete and blighted industrial and commercial buildings on N. Cameron St.
- Higher density residences with vacancy and blight issues



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

8. Make property owners, developers and prospective new businesses aware of financing options available.

Action: Work with the Department of Historic Resources and grassroots organizations such as Preservation of Historic Winchester to assist private redevelopers by providing grants to cover the upfront expenses until tax credits are realized.

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum potential.

Action: Facilitate redevelopment of the Glaze/Winchester Towers site downtown and the National Fruit Corp. office site in the northwest corner of the area.

Action: Per the 2009 downtown residential study, enter public-private partnerships to develop residences or mixed-use structures on the city-owned parking lots at 103 S. Loudoun St. and 30 N. Braddock St.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Action: *Per the 2009 downtown residential study, facilitate redevelopment of residences or mixed-use structures on the church parking lots at 109 S. Cameron St. and 29 Wolfe St.*

10. Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.

Action: *Aggressively solicit a high-end grocery chain to locate downtown, either as a stand-alone facility or as part of a larger mixed-use project.*

Mobility

10. Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.

Action: *Investigate connecting N. Cameron St and N. Kent St over the CSX rail yard.*

2. Employ a hierarchy of functional street categories including thoroughfare streets for major traffic movements through and within the community at higher speeds; collector streets to channel major traffic movements into and out of separate areas of the community at moderate speeds; and, local streets to provide access to individual properties at lower speeds.

Action: *Retain and expand upon the traditional grid of streets in the Old Town area.*

Action: *Improve public alleys to provide improved rear access to properties.*

Action: *Improve Wyck St. between Fairmont Ave. and N. Cameron St. to serve as a major entry corridor into the downtown from U.S. Route 522.*

Design

2. Protect significant public and private architectural and historic resources in the City

Action: *Continue updating the 1976 Historic Structures Survey by completing the effort undertaken with Preservation of Historic Winchester and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.*

- 3 Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

Action: *Enhance the Route 11 (N. Loudoun St & N. Cameron St) corridor identity. Determine contributing/noncontributing status of structures in the Historic District.*

Action: *Attempt to relocate overhead utilities underground on a block-by-block basis.*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Housing

1. Provide opportunities for new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density settings that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.

Action: Promote the City's 10-year tax abatement program and the use of State and Federal tax credits to incentivize maximum use of existing multi-story structures for residential use on the upper levels.

Action: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate, where safe, the infill of underutilized rear yard areas next to existing and proposed public alleys with accessory dwelling units.

- Actively pursue code enforcement to eliminate blight and undue overcrowding in residential areas to improve the quality of housing stock.

Action: Pursue code enforcement and blight abatement measures to ensure that properties which do not contribute to the vibrancy of Old Town and the key corridors adjoining it are not allowed to continue having a detrimental impact on the long-term sustainability of the City.

6. Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals and retirees.

Action: Seek public-private partnerships to redevelop underutilized surface parking lot sites in Old Town to a mix of business and dense housing for targeted populations.

Land Use

7. Locate public land uses in locations that enhance the livability of the City and facilitate the placement of institutional uses in locations that support the social, spiritual, and health needs of the community.

Action: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to limit uses serving dependent populations where the uses might have a negative impact on residences or businesses in the area, while preserving a city-wide network of social services.

8. Minimize the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses or ensure that payments in lieu of taxes are provided to cover the expense of city services such as public safety.

Action: Discontinue the practice, where legally allowable, of granting real estate tax exemption or other public financial incentives/waivers to non-profit organizations which relocate to or expand operations in the Old Town area to the detriment of established City goals and objectives.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Environment

2. Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on downstream areas.

Action: Secure funding to 'green up' the portions of Town Run where existing concrete channelization can be removed.

Action: Provide incentives such as bonus densities to developers who employ green roofs and other LEED-type green building techniques.

Recreation & Culture

1. Develop quality recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and those identified as critical needs in the Needs Assessment included in the City Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Action: Implement the Washington Square Park proposal for the surface parking lot adjacent to the Joint Judicial Center and the Kurtz Building.

Action: Work with private developers to incorporate green spaces at key access points to the Old Town pedestrian mall.

Public Safety

1. Provide the highest quality of police, emergency preparedness, communications, and fire and rescue services available, with properly trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in an effective and coordinated manner.

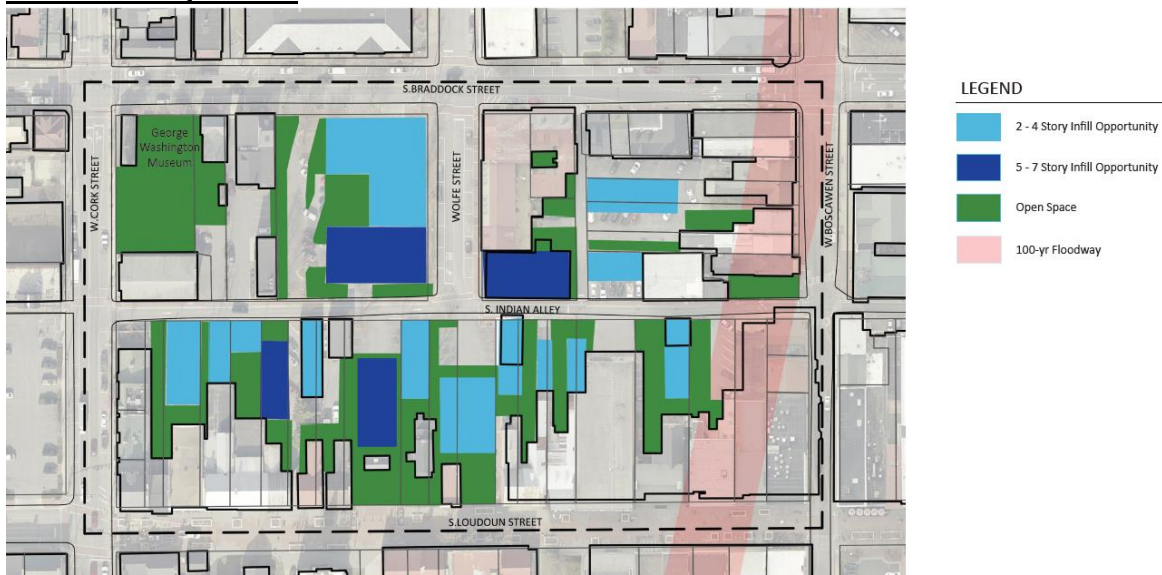
Action: Relocate the Rouss Fire Company or the South End Fire Company to a new facility farther west to improve response times. Preserve the historic Rouss Fire Hall for public or private use compatible with the downtown character.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Old Town / North Central Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept:

Old Town, centered on the Loudon St. walking mall, is Winchester’s cultural heart. Most of the City’s oldest and most historic buildings are located here, including Rouss City Hall and the old Frederick County Courthouse. The area is centered on the Loudoun St. walking mall, which runs north and south, and is bisected horizontally by Boscawen St, dividing it into four geographic quadrants. Space here comes at a premium, where future expansion to need to be limited infill and vertical expansion. The graphics below show infill and vertical expansion opportunities, with 2-4 story infill opportunities in light blue, 5-7 story opportunities in dark blue, and open spaces in green. No infill is called out within the Town Run 100-year floodway which generally extends just south of Boscawen St in the SW and SE quadrants.

South-West Quadrant

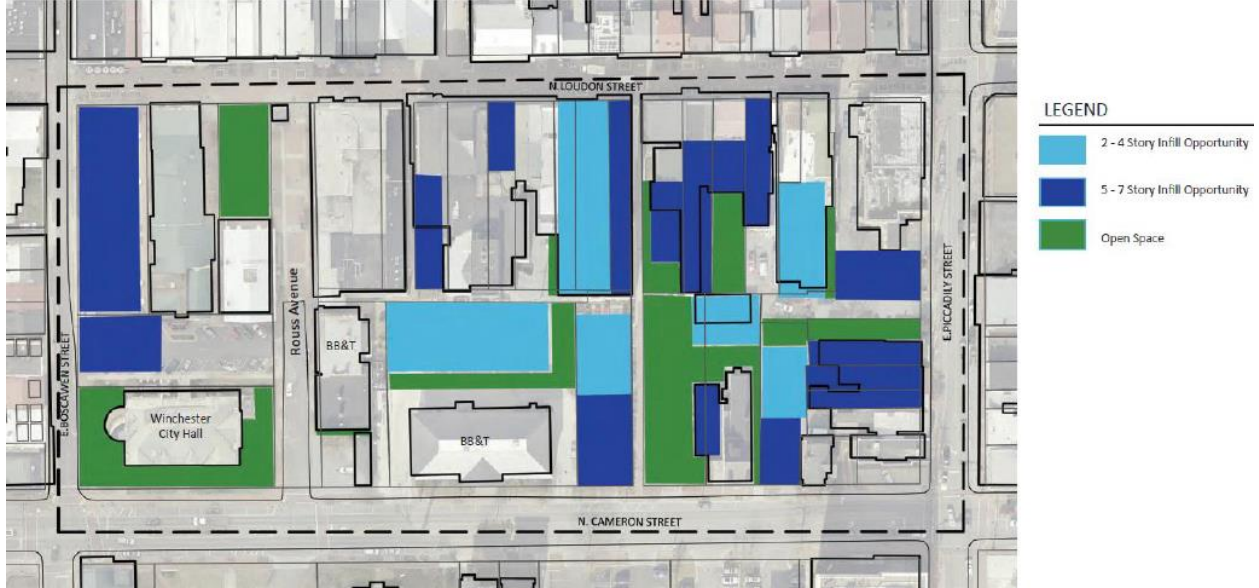


North-West Quadrant



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

North-East Quadrant



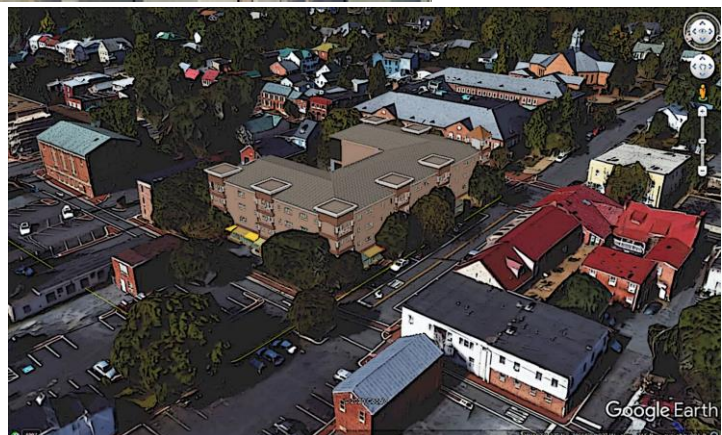
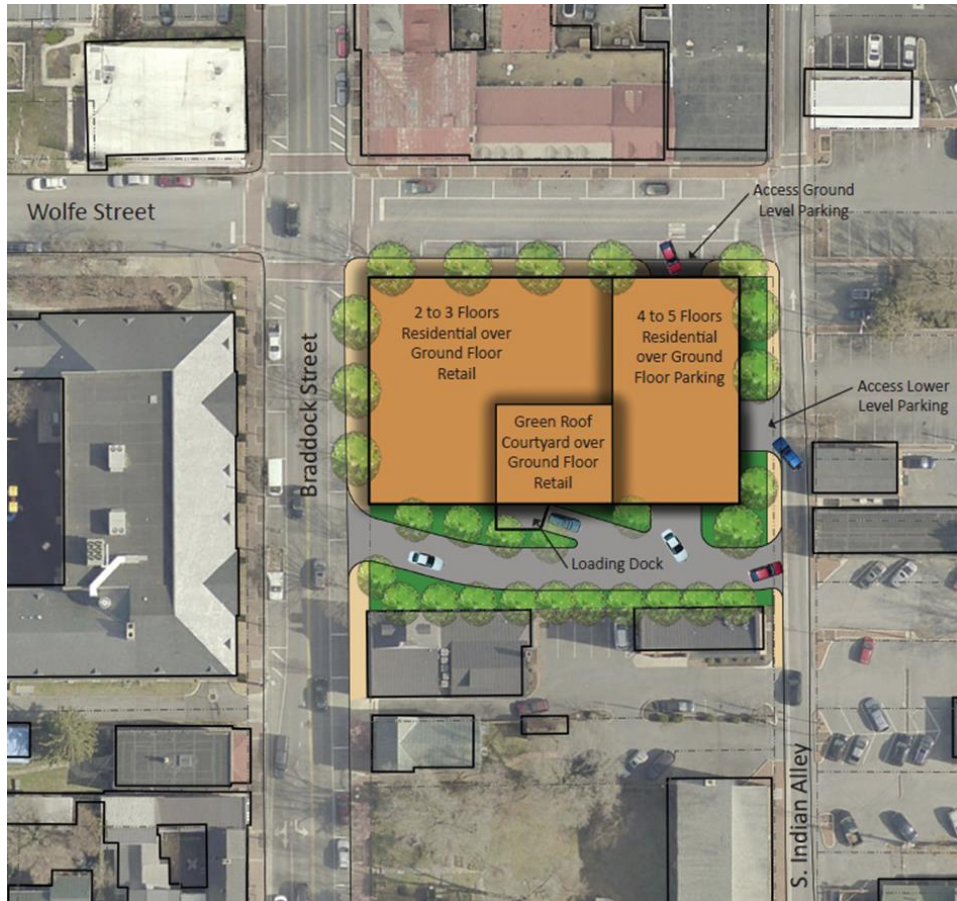
South-East Quadrant



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

S. Braddock Street Redevelopment Concept: SE Corner of S. Braddock & Wolfe St

This concept proposes to replace a surface parking area in Downtown Winchester, currently owned by the United Methodist Church on the opposite side of S. Braddock St, with new mixed-use redevelopment. The surface lot would be replaced with a structure containing commercial space for a grocery store on the ground floor, and apartments located on the upper floors, complete with a green rooftop courtyard. Partial basement parking would be available for tenants, and a loading dock & drive along south of the site would be constructed for the grocery. Some ground-level covered parking would also be provided.



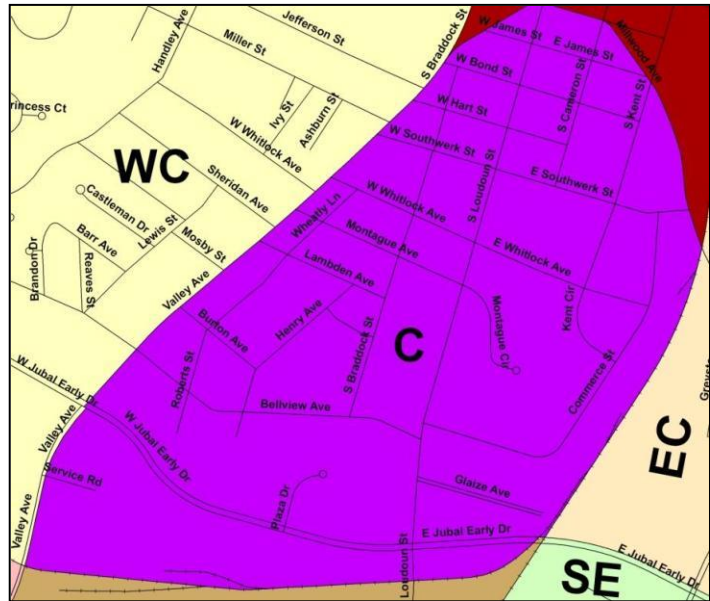
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

CENTRAL (C)

West of CSX tracks, south of Gerrard St., east of Valley Ave., and north of the WW tracks.

Key Features

- Medium- and high-density housing
- Diverse population
- Aging low-density commercial uses
- One park and little green space
- Community hub at Quarles school



The major objectives and related actions for this Planning Area are:

Economic Development

7. Solicit interest in the community by prospective new businesses.

Action: Encourage the introduction of a grocery store and additional restaurants along the commercial corridors to serve the needs of the area population.

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.

Action: Work with the property owners to develop interconnected commercial development which uses Valley Avenue for primary access and also makes use of Right-In/Right-Out access along the north and south sides of Jubal Early Drive.

Action: Help consolidate the properties on the block bound by Valley Ave, James St, S. Loudoun, and Bond St. to allow for development of a multi-story mixed use complex with ground level retail and office use and upper-level offices and/or dwellings taking advantage of the views across the high school grounds.

Action: Encourage the adaptive reuse of obsolete light industrial buildings along Commerce Street and S. Loudoun Street to be more compatible with adjacent residential areas concentrated around the Quarles Elementary School hub.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Housing

3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.

Action: Investigate the use of federal CDBG grants to modernize the Holliday Apartments at the corner of Henry Ave, Lambden Ave, and S. Braddock St. to serve the needs of low- and moderate-income residents in the area.

Action: Explore a Redevelopment Authority or other means to undertake redevelopment of older housing units along Bellview Ave, S. Braddock St, Henry Ave, and Roberts St.

4. Actively pursue code enforcement to eliminate blight and undue overcrowding in residential areas to improve the quality of housing stock.

Action: Continue code enforcement efforts to ensure that properties are maintained and that blighting influences do not creep the medium density single-family residential areas along Valley, Whitlock, Montague, Lambden, Kent Cir, Commerce, and Bellview.

Design

3. Guide the physical form of development along key tourist entry corridors leading into the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

Action: Preserve the visual attractiveness of the Valley Ave entry corridor by establishing the final stretch of Corridor Enhancement overlay zoning north of Bellview Ave.

Public Safety

1. Improve the quality of life for all people by preventing crime through enforcement of the law, creation of partnerships through communication and education, and problem-solving using innovative policing strategies.

Action: Address the above-average levels of crime present in the Central Area by working with the South End Citizens Association and other neighborhood groups.

Recreation & Culture

2. Establish a linked system of passive recreational and natural open space that provides safe opportunities for walking, jogging, running, and biking while also preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas.

Action: Work with private landowners to provide easements for and construction of the Green Circle Trail along the south side of Jubal Early Drive.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

Central Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept: Block opposite John Handley High School

This block encompasses several parcels on the east side of Valley Avenue (US Rte 11), opposite John Handley High School and bound by James, Loudoun, and Bond Streets. It sits along a main route to Old Town Winchester. The close proximity of and easy access to downtown gives this site substantial development potential.

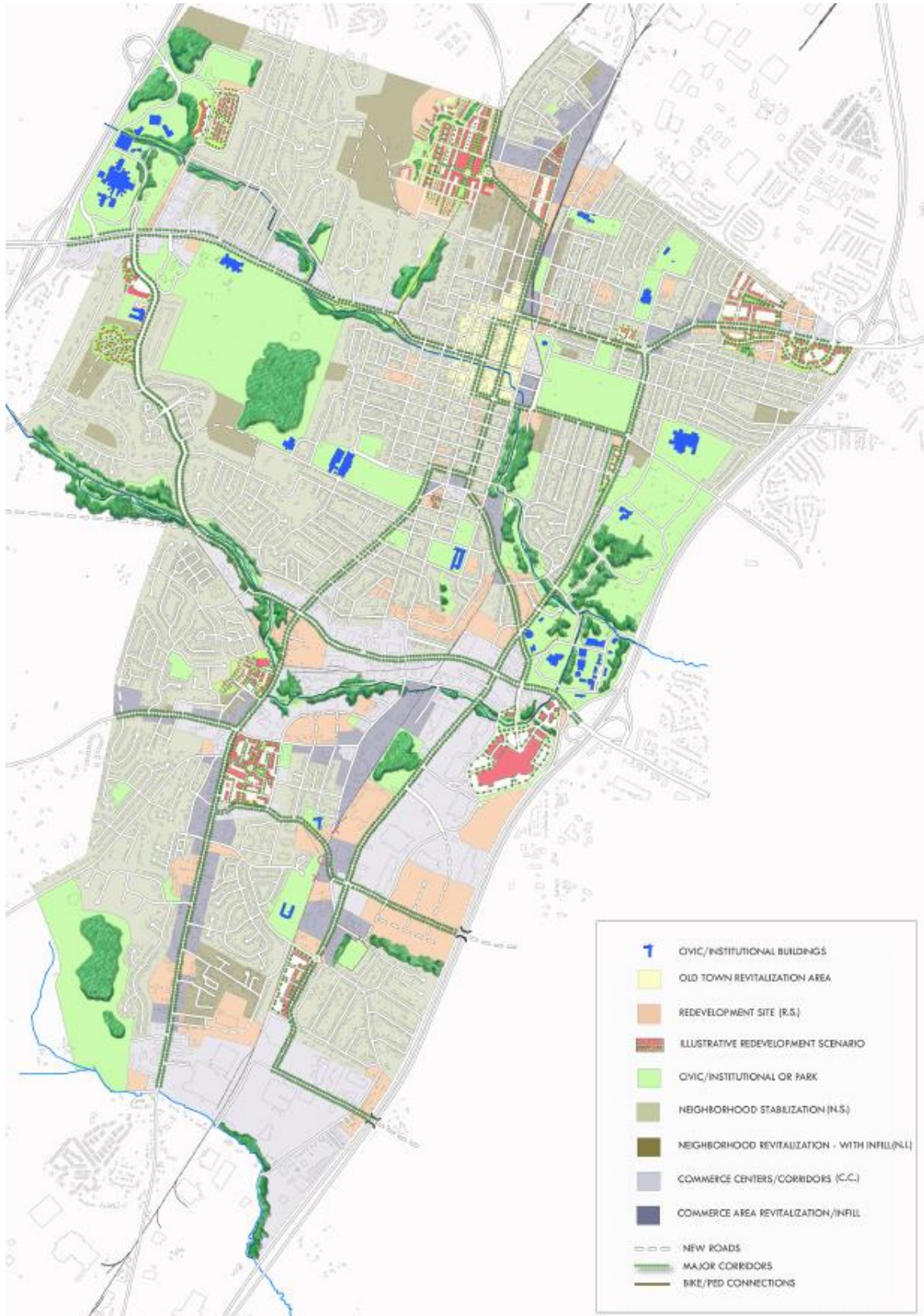
This illustrative development scheme is located just half a block off valley Avenue, along S. Loudon St. between James and Bond St. Existing B-1 zoning at the site would permit taller buildings and potentially very high density, well within walking distance of downtown. Note that the proposed redevelopment consists only of the eastern half of the block.



On the next page is the updated Winchester 2021 Character Map, containing the revised and newly added redevelopment sites mentioned on previous pages. The changes reflect recommended future development designations. A larger version of the Character Map is in the appendix.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- PLANNING AREA OBJECTIVES

CHARACTER MAP



WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

CHAPTER TWELVE

IMPLEMENTATION

Winchester does not want a Comprehensive Plan which only gathers dust on a shelf. This chapter outlines how Winchester will make a reality of its positive vision of the future. It also describes the process for revising the plan to meet the changes of the future. By carefully setting priorities and monitoring progress towards them, city government will be accountable to citizens and responsible for improving the quality of life in Winchester.

The mission of Winchester's city government is, *"To provide a safe, vibrant, sustainable community while striving to constantly improve the quality of life for our citizens and business climate for our economic partners."* To that end, this Comprehensive Plan states twelve goals in Chapter 3 related to education, housing, land use, mobility, and other important fields. Some 75 specific objectives support the eleven goals. About 100 particular projects, programs, or policies advance the objectives.

Some projects meet the needs of particular neighborhoods, so Chapter Eleven matches many of these programs to specific areas or parcels in the city. But other efforts require broader efforts. This chapter only addresses those specific objectives not assigned to a geographic planning area in Chapter Eleven.

Understanding Time and Cost

The projects in this Plan vary in scale. Some can be completed by today's city employees quickly and with little cost, while others require new hiring or debt financing. This chapter's objectives can be sorted as:

Policy: These actions require a change to City codes or regulations, often by City Council. After this change, the action can be completed by existing staff and partners in the community. There are minimal new burdens to city finances. Policy changes involve prior study and public input, yet they can often be completed within a year.

Program: These actions may require a policy-type change, but they also involve starting a new set of routines, techniques, or practices. Hiring staff with new expertise, or training existing staff, incurs greater costs, and there may also be new equipment needs. Program-scale actions are medium term, often requiring a year to create and about five years to show conclusive results.

Capital: Building new infrastructure entails meticulous advance planning, cooperation with other governments and agencies, and the work of dozens of individuals. Where the city's annual budget can accommodate policy and program changes, capital-scale projects require a debt issuance. Planning and building such works often takes five to ten years, and the bonds financing them are repaid over twenty or thirty years.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

Understanding Labels for Actions in this Chapter

Scale	Timeframe	Cost	Examples
<i>Policy</i>	< 1 year	Minimal	Revise Zoning Ordinance; Telework training for city staff.
<i>Program</i>	1-5 years	Significant	Open a teen health clinic; Plant thousands of new trees.
<i>Capital</i>	5-10 years	Millions (debt)	Build new I-81 interchange; Realign city streets.

Implementation Tools

Moving a city in a new direction takes teamwork. This section describes some of the groups and tools in Winchester that can help implement this plan.

Civic Participation

Winchester’s citizens have an important role in improving the city. By living, working, or shopping in the city, they comprise the economy and community. They volunteer and provide important services, often better than government can. Volunteerism and community spirit creates an environment which cannot be replicated through regulation. Volunteers also inform policy by sharing ideas at public meetings and serving on boards and commissions. Focus groups and local meetings, where citizens shares ideas and provide feedback, help city staff monitor the implementation of plans. Without vigorous community engagement, this plan will not become a reality. City staff should work to inform and involve residents every step of the way.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Many of the changes in this plan cannot be accomplished solely within Winchester. Regional planning occurs through the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission. Representatives from Winchester and the counties of Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, and Shenandoah work together on issues of air and water quality, land use and transit planning, and disaster response. Since 2003, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, detailed in Chapter Six, has provided a formal construct for transportation planning in the city and the county’s more urban areas, including the Town of Stephens City. Formal cooperation between city and county also occurs on issues of public health, social services, judicial services, and public safety. Cooperative agreements or policies may be binding or nonbinding. Intergovernmental agreements have proved beneficial to Winchester and neighboring counties. The agreements encourage regional cooperation and it is likely that state legislation will continue to provide incentives for using such mechanisms. In solving certain problems, Winchester and Frederick County are best conceived as a single economic entity, sharing resources, risks, and rewards.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

City Code

The Code of the City of Winchester Virginia sets forth the active laws of the City and serves as a reference for the day-to-day administration of City affairs. It includes provisions pertaining to the development of the City, including Chapter 16 dealing with Planning. The Code specifically establishes the Planning Commission and calls for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Some changes to city policy occur directly through the City Code. It includes sections on revenue, housing and building regulations (including property maintenance), parks and trees, erosion and sediment control, use of streets and sidewalks, and utilities. Many of the Plan's provisions may be quickly implemented by revising the City Code and changing the behaviors of city staff, residents, and business owners.

Engineering Standards and Specifications

As an independent city, Winchester maintains its own streets and utilities. The Public Services Department, through its City Engineering and Public Works divisions sets standards for the construction and maintenance of streets. Standards generally follow those established by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. Street and utility projects can be very expensive, but Winchester has the authority to implement the street designs of New Urbanism.

Zoning Ordinance & Zoning Map

As a Dillion's Rule commonwealth, Virginia enables cities, towns, and counties to establish certain zoning powers in Chapter 22 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia. The preparation and adoption of a Zoning Ordinance and a Zoning Map are specifically enabled in Section 15.2-2285 of State Code. Chapter 9 of this Plan describes the Winchester Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map in more detail. These documents guide land use by listing acceptable uses in certain areas. The Zoning Ordinance establishes categories of uses which do not interfere with each other. The map then applies those zones to the city's 9.3 square mile area. Changes to the ordinance and map affect patterns of life by changing what kinds of new housing and businesses can appear in a neighborhood –whether an area contains only single-family homes or a bustling mix of homes and businesses at different densities. City planning staff works with the appointed Planning Commission to study changes to the ordinance and map, on which the City Council then votes.

Land Subdivision Ordinance

Another tool for governing land use, the Land Subdivision Ordinance regulates how larger parcels of land are split for multiple owners. Authority to adopt a Subdivision Ordinance is specifically enabled in Section 15.2-2240 of State Code. In the past, some of the fastest and most dramatic changes to the City's urban geography and demography have occurred through large subdivision projects. Today, there are many fewer large

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tracts of vacant land within the City that lend themselves to large single-family detached subdivisions, so it is important that redevelopment occur to the benefit of the city as a whole. The ordinance ensures flood control, mobility and access, and a proper mix of uses. New subdivision projects have great potential to advance the goals of this plan. Revisions to the ordinance, drafted by planners and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council, will be important.

Historic District Design Guidelines

Special land use and design rules apply in the city's local historic district. Winchester's historic core contains many fine old buildings; it is a unique place to live and/or do business. Design guidelines for the district seek to preserve the area's best qualities without stifling improvements. There are additional regulations for the streetscape and for how to renovate or convert a home or business. The appointed Old Town Advancement Commission and Board of Architectural Review apply and interpret the design guidelines, with City Council ruling on appeals. Changes to the guidelines will play an important role in advancing the goals for downtown, with ripples affecting the entire city.

Corridor Enhancement District Design Guidelines

Leading into the local historic district are a number of routes designated as corridors of significant tourist access where State Code allows a locality to establish overlay zoning to address the appearance of development above and beyond what the underlying zoning otherwise regulates. In Winchester, the gateway overlay zones are called Corridor Enhancement (CE) districts. City Council has adopted CE overlay zoning on nine entry corridors, mostly U.S. and State routes including U.S. Rtes 11, 17, 50, 522 and Va Rte 7.

Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) links the adopted Comprehensive Plan—a long-range visionary document, and the adopted Annual Budget—a short-term revenue and expenditure document. The CIP plans for the creation of public infrastructure projects. Major improvements to roads, pipes, and buildings take years to complete, provides decades of benefits, and can appropriately be financed by bond issues.

The CIP is a schedule by years of the amounts to be spent on improvements to the City's public facilities. This ensures that long-range plans will be compatible with the City's financial resources. Section 15.2-2239 of Virginia planning enabling legislation permits a local Planning Commission to prepare and revise annually a CIP based on the Comprehensive Plan and to do so either on its own initiative or at the direction of the governing body.

While preparation of the CIP and budget is usually the responsibility of the City Manager and the City Council, the Planning Commission is the agency charged with looking ahead and anticipating the needs of the City in the coming years and decades. In order to carry out the function of assisting the CIP, the Planning Commission must become acquainted

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with the plans and prospects of the City's finances. In Winchester, the Public Services Director is tasked with presenting the proposed CIP to the Planning Commission for a recommendation in advance of City Council adopting the CIP.

Forecasts more than five years in advance are generally not sufficiently reliable for planning. The City has formally included a CIP element in the approved budget document since 1989. A list of needed improvements is drawn up, and those which should be made during the next five years are arranged in order of urgency, and costs are estimated according to the best information available. As each year of the program is completed an additional year is added so that the program always looks five years to the future.

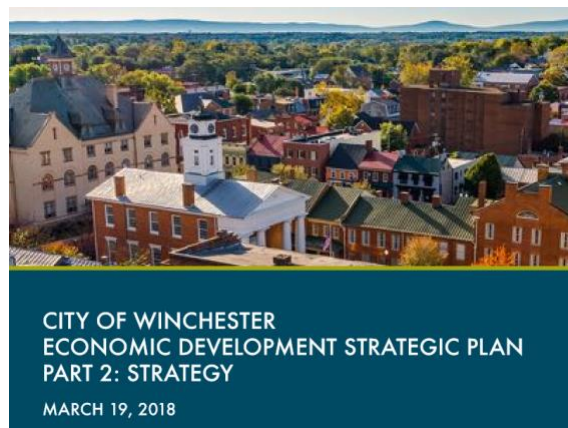
In addition to the official Comprehensive Plan, the City of Winchester has a number of other master plans that help guide future actions pertaining to development. This includes the following:

Citywide Strategic Plan

The Citywide Strategic Plan outlines priorities, objectives, strategies, actions and target to accomplish over the next five years. The strategic plan help the City reach its vision to be a beautiful, vibrant city with a historic downtown, growing economy, great neighborhoods with a range of housing options and easy movement. City Council adopted the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan in December of 2015 and will adopt an updated plan in the fall of 2021 following extensive input from Council, City staff, and stakeholders earlier in 2021. The citizen engagement effort included a community survey that received over 460 responses that were summarized prior to a Council retreat with senior management staff in May of 2021. Major areas of focus for this Strategic Plan will be: encouraging economic opportunity through business support and workforce development; stimulating development of affordable housing and building smart infrastructure; fostering a safe healthy and diverse community; and, facilitating mobility via multiple modes including sidewalks, trails, and transit.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

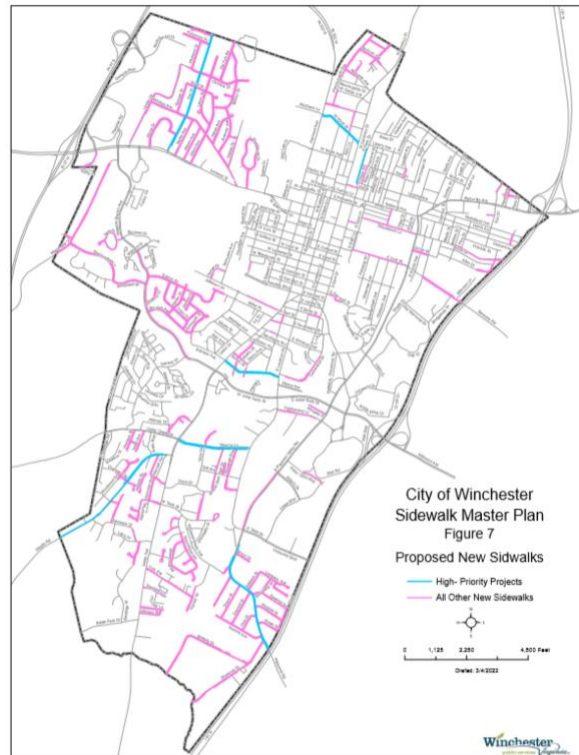
The [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) was adopted in 2018. The objective was to establish a unified vision and direction for the city that results in greater economic vitality and prosperity for its residents. Crafting the strategy involved a disciplined process of analysis, stakeholder input, and community feedback to establish a shared foundation of information to develop a vision, targets, redevelopment priorities, and a tactical plan of action.



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Sidewalk Master Plan

The [Sidewalk Master Plan](#) was first adopted by Council in August 2013 and was updated in 2017 and then again in early 2022. It prioritizes sidewalk replacements in areas with high pedestrian traffic and adds new sidewalks where needed. While the plan contains proposed projects over a five-year period, the projects require budgetary approval from City Council each fiscal year.



Street Maintenance Master Plan

In many citizen satisfaction surveys including the most recent survey of City residents completed in 2017, the maintenance of City streets was selected by residents as the single City service that should receive the most emphasis within the next two years. City Council has responded to this strong desire for improved street maintenance by appropriating significant funding the past few years for street paving. In 2013, Council approved the City's [Street Maintenance Master Plan](#). An update was being prepared for adoption by Council in late 2021.

Parks Master Plan and Needs Assessment

The Parks Master Plan guides improvements in the City parks and was last adopted in 2009. It is in the process of being revised. A consultant-led needs assessment was conducted in 2015 including a random survey distributed to 3,000 City households. The survey results from the needs assessment will help develop the new Park Master Plan.

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Citywide Objectives

Listed below are the twelve objectives spelled out in Chapter Three of this Plan which were not assigned to at least one specific geographic planning area in Chapter Eleven.

Communication

- 1) Provide an extensive array of communication services providing outreach to the community in an effective, timely and coordinated manner.
- 2) Ensure that underrepresented populations are provided with means to participate in local government.
- 3) Strengthen communications with local businesses to ensure that local, state and federal policies and regulations are understandable and do not unreasonably impact sustainable growth.

Design

4. Ensure that all new development in the City is of a high quality regardless of use.

Policy Action: The ongoing activities of the Planning Department and the Planning Commission should emphasize the quality of development.

5. Pursue green building techniques (e.g. LEED certifiable) on major public construction projects and provide incentives for private development to do so as well.

Policy Action: Commit to build future Capital Plan projects to LEED or other recognized green building program standards.

Policy Action: Study the LEED or other recognized green building program bonuses in the Zoning Ordinance, and expand them if necessary.

6. Encourage the use of Universal Design (UD) building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.

Policy Action: Commit to include UD features in public projects beyond ADA standards.

Policy Action: Present information on the benefits of UD features to local developers.

Economic Development

1. Increase sales tax revenue accruing to the City and taxable land uses.

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Policy Action: This objective does not suggest an increase in the sales tax rate. Instead, urban development should increase the volume of local sales. City staff should involve the business community to solicit ideas for improving the business environment.

Policy Action: If City Council finds the structure of state code article 58.1, which concerns sales taxation, inefficient or unfair, Council should advocate reform in the General Assembly.

2. Increase Median Household Income of City residents and increase income levels of all employable citizens.

Policy Action: This statistic rises when households earning less than \$44,000 enjoy increased earnings. Economic development efforts should focus on creating new jobs, especially full-time and with wages above \$15/hour. Adult education efforts also tend to increase earnings.

3. Raise the average income of employees in Winchester.

Policy Action: Determine the average and median salary of jobs in Winchester.

Policy Action: Focus economic development efforts on attracting businesses paying above the average.

Education

1. Ensure support of a rigorous and relevant education for all City public school students demonstrated by readiness for post secondary education or career entry.

Program Action: School Board and staff should study the curriculum and revise it to improve graduates' career prospects.

Program Action: Augment capacity in guidance, college preparation, and career and technical departments.

2. Maintain a world-class public school division which exceeds all State and Federal benchmarks relating to student achievement.

Program Action: Improve monitoring and evaluation of students and teachers.

Capital Action: Improve compensation and professional development of teachers.

3. Increase the percentage of citizens with a post-high school graduation education and participation in track-based education.

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Program Action: Bolster capacity to identify students at risk of dropping out and intervene.

Policy Action: Emphasize the place of community college for students who would not otherwise attend college.

Environment

5. Work with surrounding jurisdictions as well as federal and state agencies to (a) monitor air and water quality, and (b) address regional environmental issues such as air quality, water quality, and solid waste management.

Policy Action: Maintain open communications with state and local environmental officers.

Policy Action: Involve faculty and students from SU, JMU, and LRCC in city environmental actions.

6. Reduce the City's carbon footprint and overall impact on air quality by examining how City business is conducted on a daily basis and also encouraging residents and the business community to do their part.

Policy Action: In the city budget, maintain an energy category apportioning spending on electricity, heating, and vehicle fuels for each department.

Program Action: Reduce real energy costs from year to year in each city department, leaving managers discretion to choose from an array of simple reforms.

7. Explore alternatives to continue viable recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.

Program Action: Study new markets for recycled resources and review best practices, including fee structures, to reduce overall waste and increase the proportion recycled.

9. Preserve, restore, and create wetlands, wildlife corridors, and other habitats.

Policy Action: Work with developers to preserve and otherwise limit impacts on mature trees.

Policy Action: Revise City Code Chapter 9 to promote Low Impact Design features including ponds, rain gardens, ditches, and pervious surfaces.

Program Action: Conduct a city-wide inventory of existing and restorable open space, environmentally sensitive areas and ecologically significant areas. Identify the potential environmental, recreational and economic values of each.

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Policy Action: Based on a city-wide inventory, identify priorities for environmental protection among sites with significant ecological value.

10. Preserve healthy, mature trees and promote an increase in the City's urban tree canopy.

Policy Action: Emphasize significant tree plantings, especially on parcels where canopy is less than 20% of area.

11. Pursue changes to development regulations to encourage the use of environmentally friendly site improvements such as pervious paving and 'Green' building techniques.

Policy Action: Expand use of LEED bonuses in the Zoning Ordinance.

Program Action: Support opportunities for City employees to attend LEED workshops and other training opportunities pertinent to sustainable development. Provide incentives for private developers who do business with the City to attend.

Policy Action: Require that LEED measures, and other techniques that reflect sustainable development, are evaluated for every major public construction and renovation project. Utilize criteria that adequately account for long-term benefits of sustainable development techniques as well as the immediate costs.

Health and Human Services

1. Assist persons and families in overcoming poverty, abuse, and neglect.

Program Action: Improve capacity to identify families in need, inform them of available government and community services, and monitor progress.

2. Stem the growing rate of teen pregnancy in Winchester

Program Action: Open dedicated teen health clinic in convenient location and provided targeted mentoring, workforce, and health services to teens.

3. Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served.

Policy Action: Maintain adequate funding of healthy family programs in local social services agencies.

Policy Action: Continue exploring the benefits of consolidated and/or co-located Winchester and Frederick County Social Services agencies.

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4. Facilitate aging in place among older populations while providing opportunities and places for civic engagement and social life.

Policy Action: Foster cooperation between the public, nonprofit, and private actors concerned with aging to plan for needed facilities and programs.

Program Action: Ensure that Parks & Recreation programs serve the diverse interests and capacities of seniors.

5. Promote a regional fair-share approach to meeting human service needs, including affordable housing.

Policy Action: Work with Frederick County, Clarke County and local non-profit organizations to expand opportunities to include affordable dwelling units in all new subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

Housing

1. Increase the appreciation rate of City home values.

Policy Action: Collect economic data at the neighborhood level and attempt to distinguish the impact of City efforts from broader market changes.

Policy Action: Continue efforts to encourage owners of older housing stock in the City's historic areas to reinvest in their homes to extend the economic life of the structures. Expanded use of state and federal tax credits should be undertaken.

5. Increase homeownership opportunities for prospective first-time buyers.

Policy Action: Redevelopment activities should shift rental housing from detached single-family structures into denser forms, freeing existing homes for ownership. Discourage expansion of Short-Term Rentals in low- and medium-density residential areas which deprive first-time homebuyers from being able to compete on home purchasing.

Policy Action: Avoid residential property tax exemptions where clear positive externalities do not exist. Avoid exemptions that distort prices and create rigidity in the housing market. Study the city property tax's preferences to determine the effect on homeownership opportunities.

6. Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals, college students, and empty nesters.

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Policy Action: Work with Frederick County, Clarke County and local non-profit organizations to expand opportunities to include affordable dwelling units in all new subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

7. Ensure equal opportunity in housing.

Policy Action: Emphasize prompt investigation and response to claims of housing discrimination by tenants and homeowners.

8. Pursue means of recovering the costs of impacts associated with multi-family rental properties through alternative real estate tax assessments.

Policy Action: Study other revenue tools and real estate assessment methods such as income-based assessments that better align costs and benefits fairly.

Land Use

3. Provide the citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.

Program Action: Expand citizen outreach and engagement to include surveys and focus groups testing the impact of City efforts on quality of life. This would include conducting a 2022 update of the 2017 Citizen Satisfaction Survey to benchmark changes in perception regarding the importance of various city services and the satisfaction levels associated with them.

Mobility

7. Investigate the needs for multimodal transfer facilities.

Program Action: Construct covered bus shelters and bike racks, especially at multimodal intersections near parking garages or the Green Circle Trail.

8. Work closely with Frederick County and Stephens City to extend public transportation between the City and destinations such as Laurel Ridge Community College, DMV, the Employment Commission/Job Training office, and the regional detention facilities as well as urbanizing areas of the County and Town.

Capital Action: Implement the operational changes and undertake the capital expenses identified in the MPO Transit Study needed to develop a truly regional

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transit service that allows City residents to access services currently situated beyond the limits of existing transit routes.

9. Promote Telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work.

Program Action: Encourage private-sector and government employers to provide post-Pandemic incentives to workers commuting from Winchester to northern Virginia to instead telework from home or via a telecommunications center in Winchester for one or more days a week.

11. Expand and improve general aviation, air cargo, and air passenger operations at the Winchester Regional Airport;

Policy Action: Support MPO efforts to add hanger space, technology, and amenities.

Recreation & Culture

4. Ensure that existing and new residential development has reasonable proximity to neighborhood parks as well as convenient bike and pedestrian access to trails in open space areas.

Program Action: Using national standards for outdoor recreation identify portions of the City that lack adequate resources for active recreation and passive recreation. Identify ways in which these needs can be addressed.

Policy Action: Identify and prioritize park and recreation facility needs in areas adjacent to identified redevelopment areas of the City and identify impacts on deficient facilities as proffers are evaluated in conjunction with rezoning requests for residential development.

Public Safety

1. Provide the highest quality of police, emergency preparedness, communications, and fire and rescue services available, with properly trained personnel who are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies, and who serve the community in an effective and coordinated manner.

Program Action: Upgrade Fire & Rescue equipment to fully comply with NFIP standards and encourage further integration of paid City staff into the four private volunteer fire stations.

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3. Continually improve emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation efforts to ensure restoration of City services and normal enjoyment of life following a natural or manmade disaster.

Policy Action: Continue planning, training, and coordination per Homeland Security doctrines.

Public Utilities

1. Ensure that the environmental quality of the drinking water produced and wastewater treated is in full accordance with the rigorous standards established by the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to assure safety to the consumer and the environment.

Program Action: Improve water quality monitoring through technology investment and staff training.

Policy Action: Emphasize Low Impact Design in new construction and renovations to reduce load on the wastewater infrastructure.

2. Identify and fund necessary infrastructure improvements that increase water capacity and reduce water system loss on a system wide basis in order to support current and future needs associated with economic expansion and increased residential density.

Capital Action: Continue replacing water pipe infrastructure in conjunction with street improvements around the city.

3. Work with Frederick County to address water capacity and supply issues.

Policy Action: Improve contingency planning and cooperative frameworks for drought response.

Monitoring the Comprehensive Plan

Chapter Eleven and the previous pages of this chapter assign specific actions to each of the Plan's goals and objectives, and they describe the rough scale of each action. Making the plan a reality requires careful monitoring of progress to build on success, identify problems a find solution, and keep citizens both informed and involved. Monitoring efforts should involve city planning staff, the Planning Commission, and citizens.

City Council should receive an annual report from the Planning Commission detailing the status of Comprehensive Plan implementation. This report should sort the plan's many specific actions, identifying those city personnel, businesses, and community groups

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responsible for each. It should also set priorities in consideration of the local economy and contingent workflow –which actions must occur before others can begin.

In creating this plan, city staff involved a diverse group of citizens. Such involvement should continue. As Winchester continues to implement New Urbanism and restores the traditional designs of its neighborhoods, there should be opportunities for citizen engagement and feedback. Many of the actions in this chapter and Chapter Eleven include public hearings, but there should also be special forums. Extra meetings at neighborhood hubs would be advisable before major redevelopment projects or zoning changes. Focus groups of citizens might inform design plans for the public space. Citywide surveys or polls could also inform the setting to priorities.

The Planning Commission’s annual report should convey considerable detail to the City Council. There should also be status updates for the public in a more accessible form. Highlights and summaries of this Plan should be readily available as pamphlets and interactive digital content. Citizens should be able to quickly understand the changes in store for specific neighborhoods. They should have simple means to provide feedback. The results of each annual report should be readily available in a similarly accessible form. The Comprehensive Plan will be easier to implement if a broad array of citizens understand and support it.

Updating the Comprehensive Plan

Changes in the local economy, demographics, technology, or other unforeseen factors may force Winchester to alter course. Detailed data from the 2020 Census became available in late 2021 and early 2022, too late for analyzing before the adoption of this plan update. Even if all goes smoothly, state law requires that city comprehensive plans be reviewed at least every five years. So in either 2025 or 2026 the planning department will assemble new focus groups of citizens and committees of city staff to update this Plan. Results from the four annual reports then published will provide an evaluation of policy changes, new programs, and major projects. Changes will be apparent in the city’s annual budget, capital improvement plan, zoning ordinance, and other major documents.

This Plan update does not represent a significant shift in the direction of Winchester’s development. New Urbanism will not be finished in 2027. The process of updating the comprehensive plan will involve important decisions about what projects to continue, what to accelerate, and what to cancel. There are bold ideas and real risks in this plan, and not all of them will produce the desired result. The process of monitoring and updating the plan should be fluid enough to focus on what works.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SUMMARY MAP: May 2, 2022





2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WINCHESTER COMMON COUNCIL

John David Smith, Jr. Mayor & President

First Ward

Richard Bell
Les Veach

Third Ward

Kim Herbstritt, Vice President
Corey Sullivan

Second Ward

Evan Clark
John Hill, Vice Mayor

Fourth Ward

Madelyn Rodriguez
Philip Milstead

WINCHESTER PLANNING COMMISSION

Mark Loring, Chair
Lacey Burnett, Vice Chair
John Tagnesi
Brandon Pifer
Leesa Mayfield
David Ray
Paul Richardson

CITY MANAGER

Dan Hoffman

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

Shawn Hershberger

PLANNING STAFF

Timothy Youmans, Planning Director
David Stewart, Planner II
Carolyn Barrett, Administrative Assistant & Commission Secretary