

*city of*  
**WINCHESTER**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2011**

*As Adopted May, 10, 2011*



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Greetings:

On behalf of the Winchester Planning Commission and the Winchester Common Council, we are pleased to present this update of the City of Winchester Comprehensive Plan. Virginia Code requires Planning Commissions to prepare and recommend a Comprehensive Plan to the governing body in all Virginia jurisdictions. This update represents a major revision to the Plan. The Commission conducted extensive review of existing conditions as well as exploration of alternative future visions. The attached Plan represents a departure from the status quo in many areas of the City where change is desired.

Comprehensive planning 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 Fairfax to plat out the City.

This Plan offers strategic guidance for future public and private redevelopment decisions which will have impacts on the physical form of land development. Sustainable growth must be pursued in a manner that respects preservation of natural, cultural and historic resources. Environmental, economic, and social factors must all be considered. This update continues to emphasize 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 is indebted to all of the Planning Commissioners past and present who, without compensation, gave generously of their time over the past five year period working on this Plan update. Special thanks is offered to former Chairman Susan Masters and former Vice Chairman Philip Weber, Jr. for their leadership and service on the Commission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate L. Adams, III".

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Nate L. Adams, III  
Chairman, Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth A. Minor".

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Elizabeth A. Minor  
Mayor

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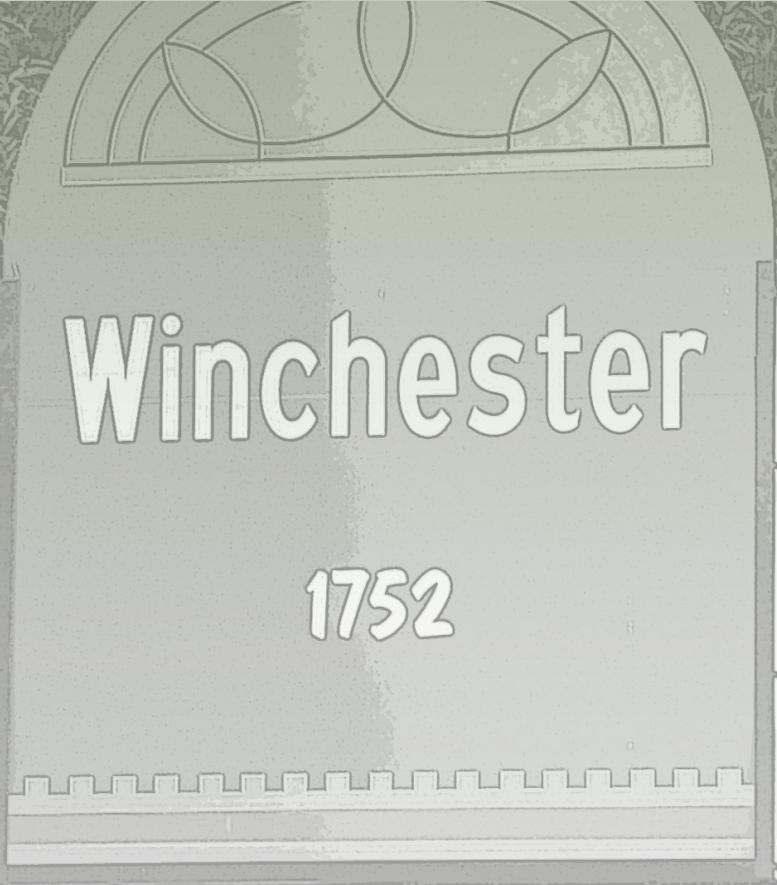
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*chapter 1*

# INTRODUCTION



Winchester

1752

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

## 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

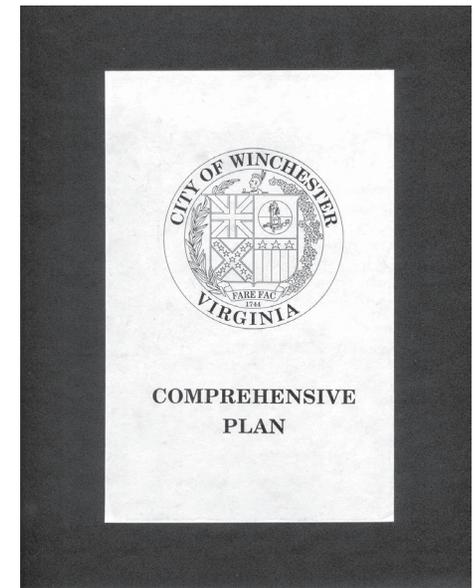
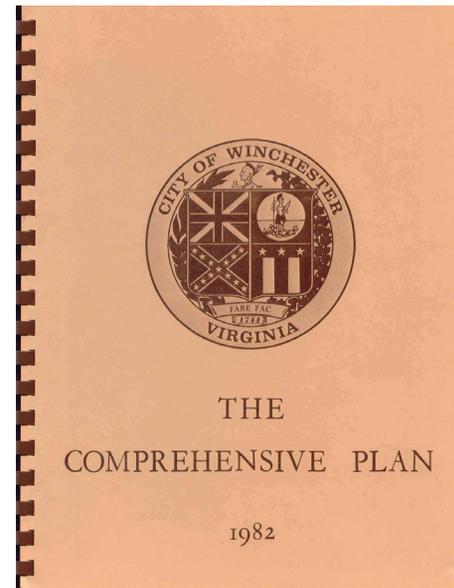
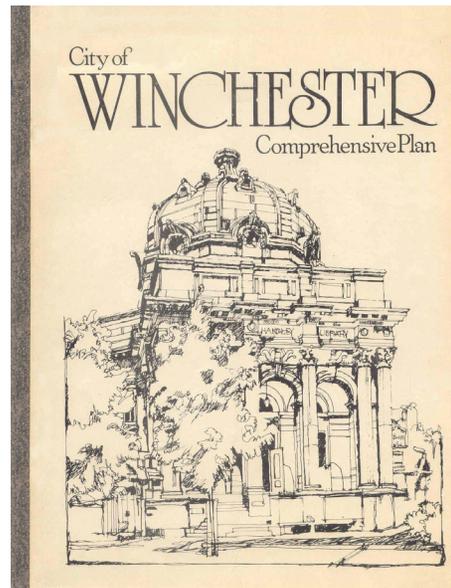
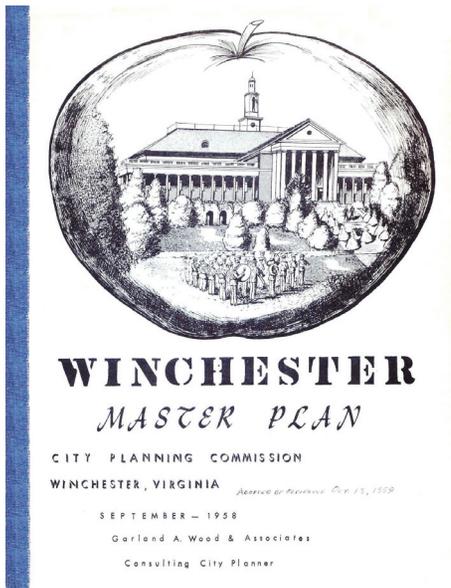
Making this Plan involved a new and highly public approach. Early in the process, elected officials and city staff undertook a careful and comprehensive analysis of community conditions. Citizens helped develop citywide goals and objectives, as well as specific neighborhoods' issues. The focus of this 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.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

## PLANNING HISTORY

This is the fifth major Comprehensive Plan for Winchester. In the mid 1700s Colonel James Wood and Lord Thomas Fairfax drafted the original master plan layout of the city. Winchester grew in a largely organic way until 1958, when the Common Council adopted the first true Comprehensive Plan. At that time, Winchester was much smaller and only partly subject to a zoning ordinance. Interstate 81 was just a set of blueprints.



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

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. 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.

1982 brought a third Comprehensive Plan. It responded to the shift of department stores from Old Town to the Apple Blossom Mall. The 1982 Plan 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.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

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 rezoning but no rapid change in the city, 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, examining 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 reducing 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 Urbanism 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.

Since 1874, Winchester has been an independent city. Frederick County surrounds the city and has its offices downtown, but the city is a separate political unit. There are 39 independent cities in Virginia, the only state where this kind of division is common. This Plan does not assume any outright merging of Winchester and Frederick County. However, it does anticipate partnership, cooperation, and consolidation of certain services where it makes sense to do so. The city and county rely on each other, and planners in both places should not forget each other.

## 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 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.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

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 divides 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 appointed officials worked closely with a wide cross-section of City staff and, for the first time in decades, a consultant team. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the collaborative effort employed for this Plan update.

Coincidentally, the City's Economic Development Authority employed the services of Herd Planning & Design, RPG, and Baker, together with the real estate consulting firm S. Patz & Associates, Inc., to prepare an Economic Development Master Plan. This separate but closely related effort entailed a market analysis for various types of economic development, including commercial retail, hotel, office, assisted living, and multifamily residential development in the Winchester-Frederick County market. The Study examined six potential Catalyst Sites in the City. This effort and its findings are addressed in the Economic Sustainability chapter of this Plan.

## 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 2008 Citizen Survey, a Visioning Exercise, a series of initial public inputs sessions during the summer of 2008, a public feedback session in February of 2010, 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 during June and July of 2008. 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.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

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

## Strengths and Opportunities were:

- location
- public facilities
- major institutions
- historic character
- local government
- people
- balance- small town feel within commuting distance of big city

## Weaknesses and Threats were:

- aging city infrastructure
- lack of affordable housing
- limited transit
- below average educational levels
- relatively low income
- cost of gas and commuting
- concern about the city becoming a magnet for dependent populations
- unclear competitive niche
- historic income split
- a need for diversity on City Council
- sprawl and urbanization of Frederick County which pulls economic development away from the City
- concern about the university and hospital being non-taxable

## 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.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

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 and the consulting team to refine citywide goals and objectives, stated in Chapter 3.

The Planning Commission dedicated its annual retreat in February of 2009 to the Plan update. The Commission worked with City Council to clarify the vision of Winchester's future. Consultants presented an Economic Market Analysis, then helped the Commission, Council, and staff identify potential locations for Alternative Development Scenarios —examples to show what change in Winchester might look like. 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.

## PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT

There was high turnover in City Council and the city administration while this plan was being made. A series of two-on-two meetings helped city councilors understand the new direction being recommended in the updated Plan as compared to the old status quo. Elected officials shared their individual concerns.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Staff posted early drafts of the plan to the City's website for public viewing. In early 2009, the City gained two opportunities to communicate ideas for improving Berryville Avenue Corridor. First, a student in an Urban Planning course at the University of Virginia offered to create a digital model of the Berryville Avenue corridor redevelopment concept using Google-brand Sketch-Up software. His YouTube video was a virtual bird's eye tour of the proposed corridor, complete with new mobility and land use elements. The City also entered social media with a Facebook account. A link to the Berryville Avenue YouTube video was among the early content posted on the City's Facebook wall for fans to review.

To hear from the general public, Planning staff held a mid-course Public Input Session in February of 2010. The public could see how the input from the four initial public input sessions had been added to the draft goals and objectives, the draft Character Map, and the proposed alternative development scenarios. An overview of the 2010 Public Input Session is included in Appendix 3.

Citizens had questions as to the impacts the various redevelopment scenarios on quality of life, where quality of life was being measured by today's standards (i.e. how long it takes to drive one's personal automobile from one's single-family home to other city destinations). The concerns illustrated how the recommendations contained in this Plan anticipate changes to lifestyles and changes to the way people interface between home, work, recreation, and shopping in the future.

Plan adoption included a public hearing by the Planning Commission on April 19, 2011 at which only two citizens spoke. The Commission forwarded a final recommendation to City Council with some changes to the Environmental Chapter (Chapter 5) as recommended by the City's Natural Resources Advisory Board. There were also some minor changes to language in Chapter 9 pertaining to TDRs and the Frederick County Plan which was undergoing an update at the same time as the City's Plan. A public hearing was then held by City Council prior to formal adoption of the Plan by City Council on May 10, 2011.

*chapter 2*

# PLANNING STUDIES



# 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. Six important qualities about the city today are:

- The current population is about 26,500.
- 10.6% of residents are African-American.
- 11.2% are Hispanic.
- Half of residents do not live in a family headed by a married couple.
- Half of Winchester's families earn more than \$58,000 per year.
- Half of Winchester's residents have never taken a college course.

Four important trends into the future include:

- A gradually growing population to 30,000 by 2023.
- A gradually aging population with more retirees and senior workers.
- Fewer households with married couples and children.
- A more diverse city, at least 15% Hispanic by 2030.

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

Mixed use development means integrating land uses which are now segregated. Winchester mixed land uses for most of the first 200 years of its history. Before cars were invented, most people walked to work, school, and shopping. Mixed use development presents opportunities to make getting around Winchester easier. 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.

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

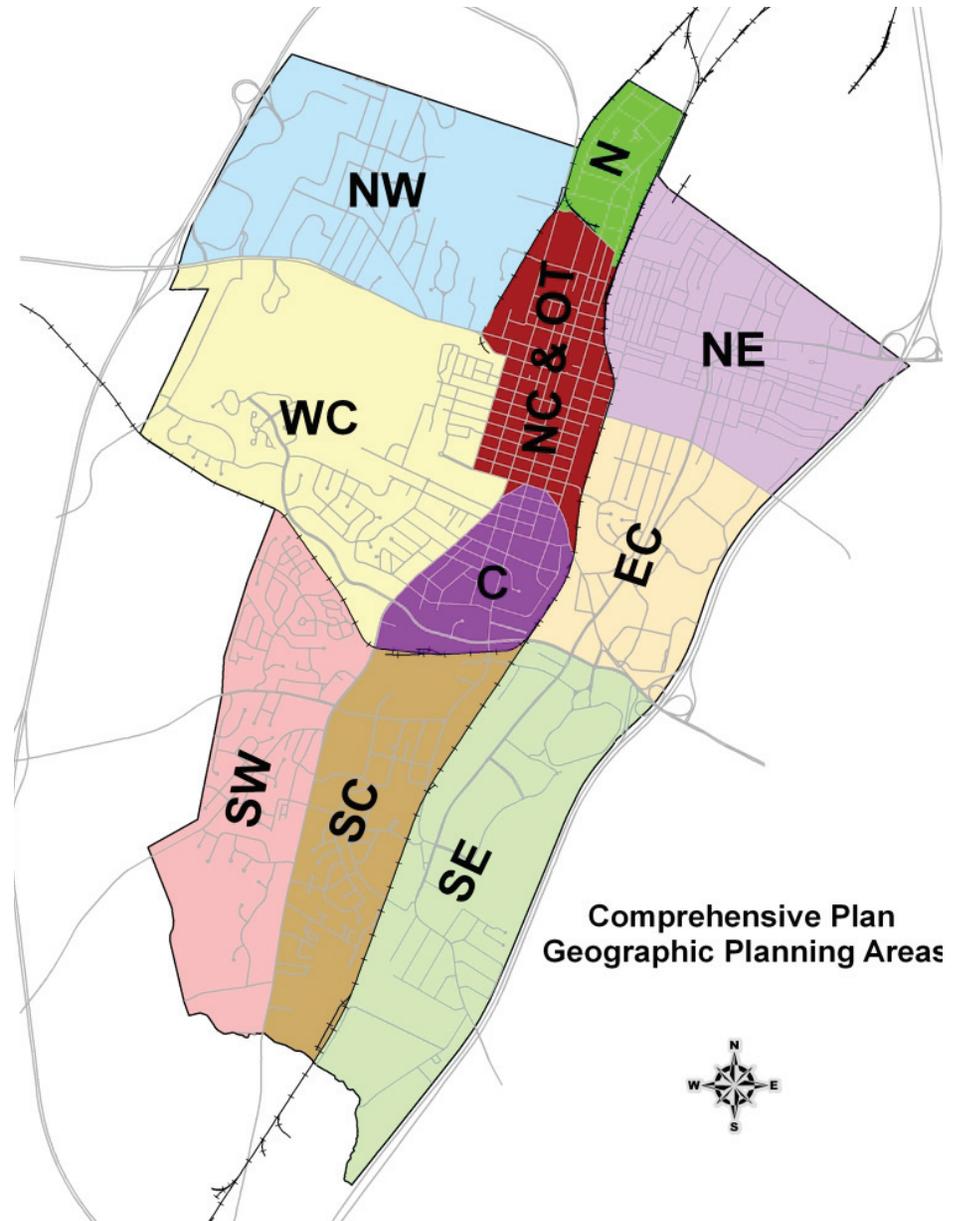
## DATA ANALYSIS

The U.S. Census provides detailed information about our neighborhoods. Data from the 2000 census is the primary source for the neighborhood-level statistics and charts in this chapter. Detailed data from the 2010 Census was not complete in time for this Plan, and detailed information will likely not be available until early in 2012.

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 2000 and citywide survey data from 2007 and 2008.

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.

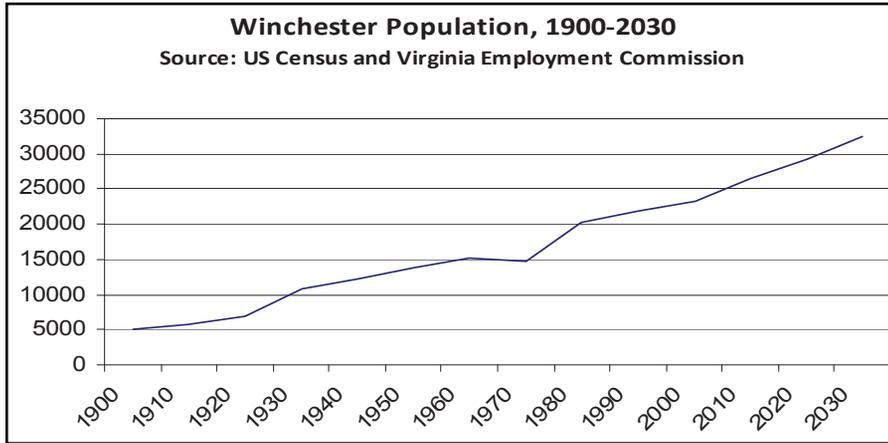
For planning purposes, city staff divided Winchester into ten geographic planning areas. The map on the right shows their borders. The boundaries reflect some of the diversity of Winchester's neighborhoods. For example, the west central area has distinctive low density housing and the Glen Burnie historic 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.



# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## POPULATION CHANGE

In 2000, the city of Winchester had 23,585 residents. The preliminary population count for 2010 was 26,203, an 11.1% 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 on the left shows Winchester’s population growth during the 20th century and the best projection through 2030. 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.

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.

Locality	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	% Change, 1990-2010
Winchester	22,147	23,585	26,203	18
Leesburg	16,202	28,311	42,616	163
Manassas	27,957	35,135	37,821	35
Martinsburg	14,073	14,915	16,450 in 2007	17
Virginia	6,187,358	7,078,515	8,001,024	29

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 28,000 by 2016; 30,000 by 2023; and more than 32,000 by 2030. However, population change depends on local policies like zoning and tax rates as well as national economic trends and immigration policies.

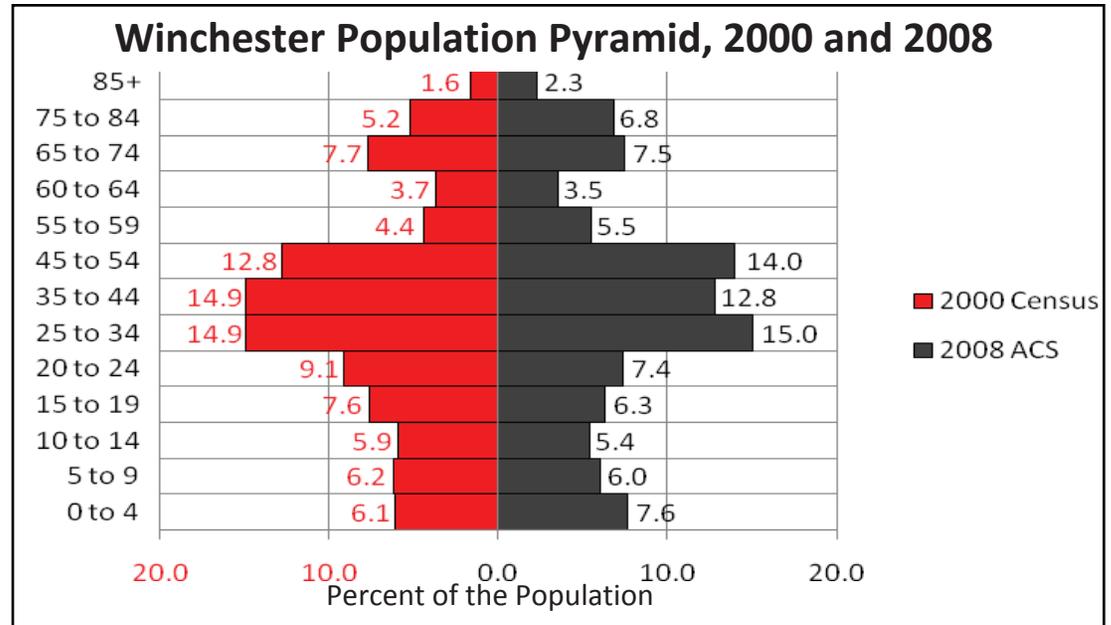
# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

From 2010 to 2030, the VEC projects Winchester’s population to increase by 22 percent. It projects a 47 percent 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 also changed. Following pages discuss racial and ethnic change, but age is also important. The chart on the right shows a slight aging of the city’s population since 2000. From 2000 to 2008, persons older than 65 became a larger part of Winchester’s population. There was also growth in the youngest age bracket of children. These children will soon cause elementary school enrollments to grow.

The table on the bottom right shows age statistics for Winchester and its peers. A median age figure of 37 means that half the residents are younger than 37. 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.

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.



Locality	% Under 18	% 18-64	% 65 and Older	Change in Median Age, 2000 to 2008
Winchester	22.6	60.9	16.5	35.2 to 37.4
Leesburg	29.6	64.9	5.5	33.1 to 31.8
Manassas	29.1	62.7	8.2	31.3 to 34.7
Martinsburg	23.1	60.1	16.4	37.0 to Unavailable
Virginia	23.6	65.6	11.8	35.7 to 37.1

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

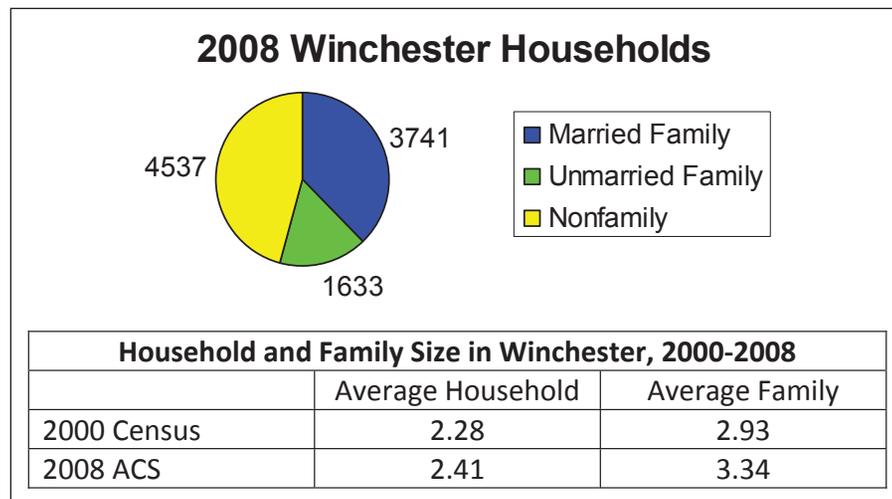
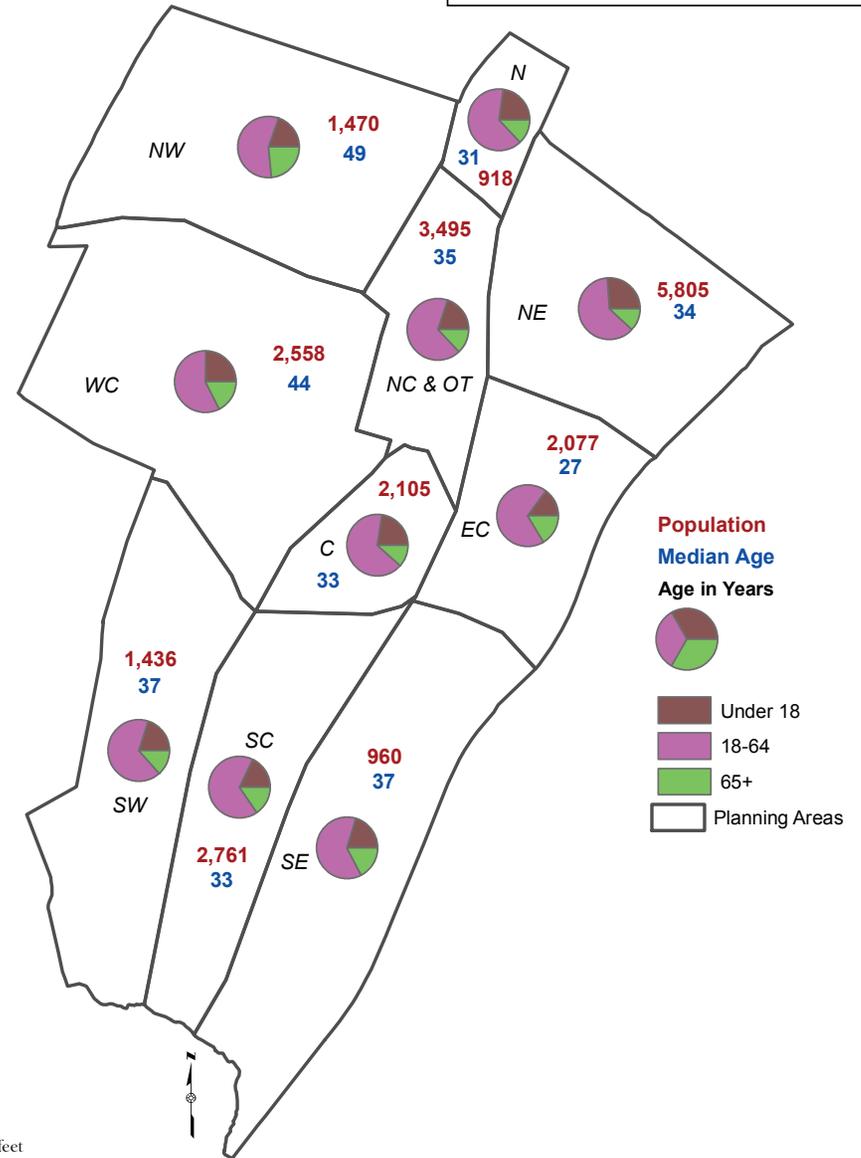
The graph below shows that almost half of Winchester's households are not families. These may be college students, young professionals, widows, or transient residents. The increase in both household and family size is partly due to recession - in 2008, more families included a grandparent or high school graduate. More often, renters shared houses and apartments.

The map on the right shows the population and age distribution for the ten Planning Areas of Winchester as of 2000. These are the most recent data at the neighborhood level. The downtown and eastern neighborhoods are most populous, the western and southern areas are among the least dense.

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 3,000 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. The central neighborhoods are home to many families with children; western areas have larger populations of older families and retirees.



Population and Age Distribution  
City of Winchester



inch = 2,950 feet

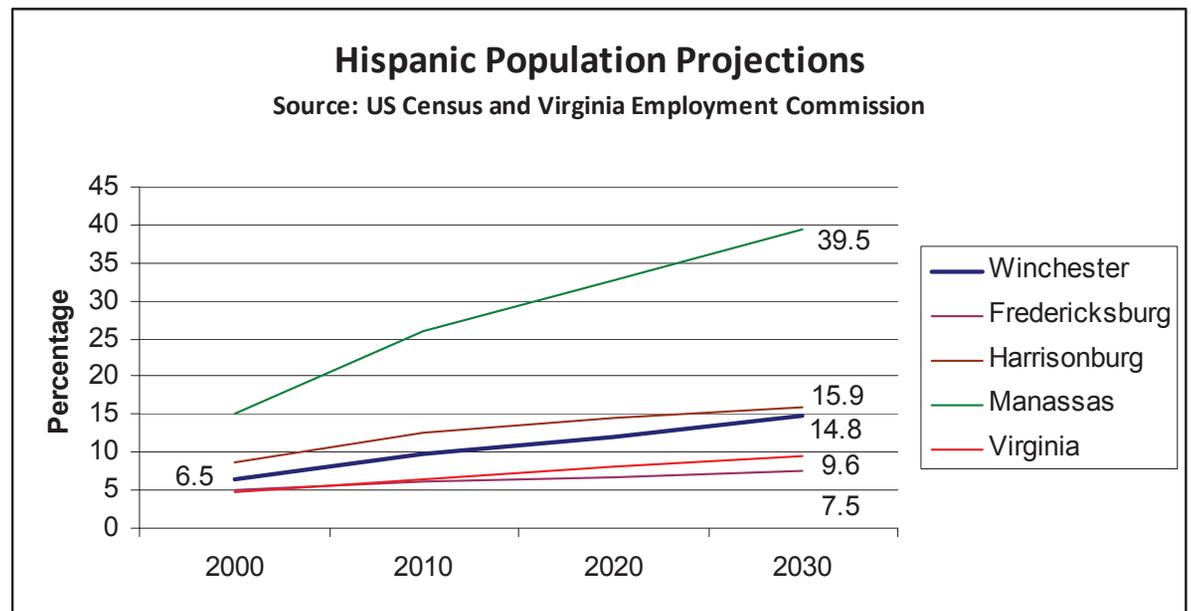
# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## 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. More than half (892 of 1,527 in the 2000 Census) declared Mexican ancestry, but others arrived from the many nations of Central and South America. According to the Census, 51 percent of Latinos speak English very well, and 10 percent do not speak English at all.

The graph on the right shows projected growth of Hispanic communities in Winchester and some peer localities. Winchester will see a larger increase than the state average. According to the Census, the median age of Winchester's Hispanic community is 25, much younger than the overall median of 37. This difference, combined with continued immigration, means that a diverse Hispanic community will become larger in years to come. The Virginia Employment Commission estimates that the number of Latinos in Winchester will increase by 84 percent through 2030. Put another way, 39 percent of Winchester's population growth in the next two decades will be the result of Latinos. The city's future growth entails increased diversity.

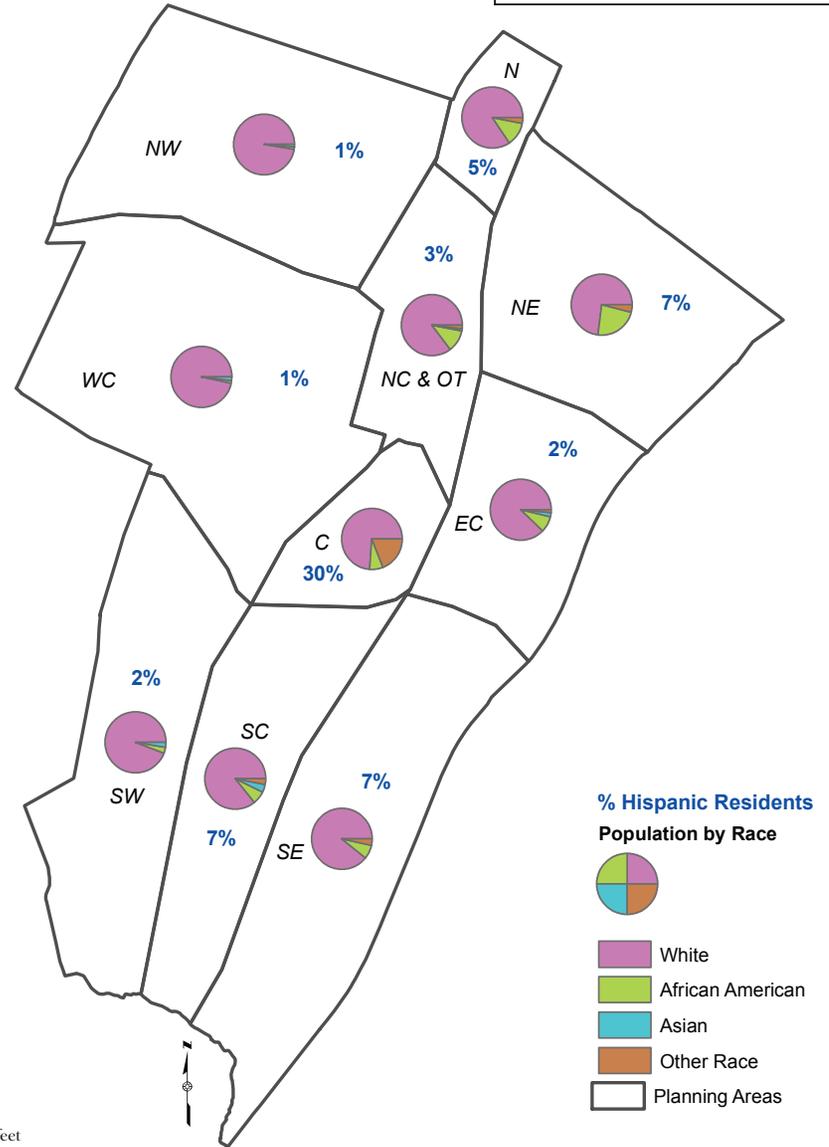


# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

The map on the right shows the distribution of different racial and ethnic groups in Winchester. More minority families live in the central and eastern neighborhoods, especially the northeast. More than 90 percent of residents in the western areas are white. In 2000, the central neighborhoods had the largest Hispanic populations, and the concentrations shown in the map remain fairly accurate. The 2010 Census will likely reveal larger Hispanic communities in every part of Winchester.



Racial and Ethnic Diversity  
City of Winchester



1 inch = 2,950 feet

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## 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. One fifth of the city's adults aged 25 years of age or older have no high school diploma, and in a given year, 12 percent of residents live in poverty. In part because city services attract dependent populations, Winchester has more poverty than Frederick County.

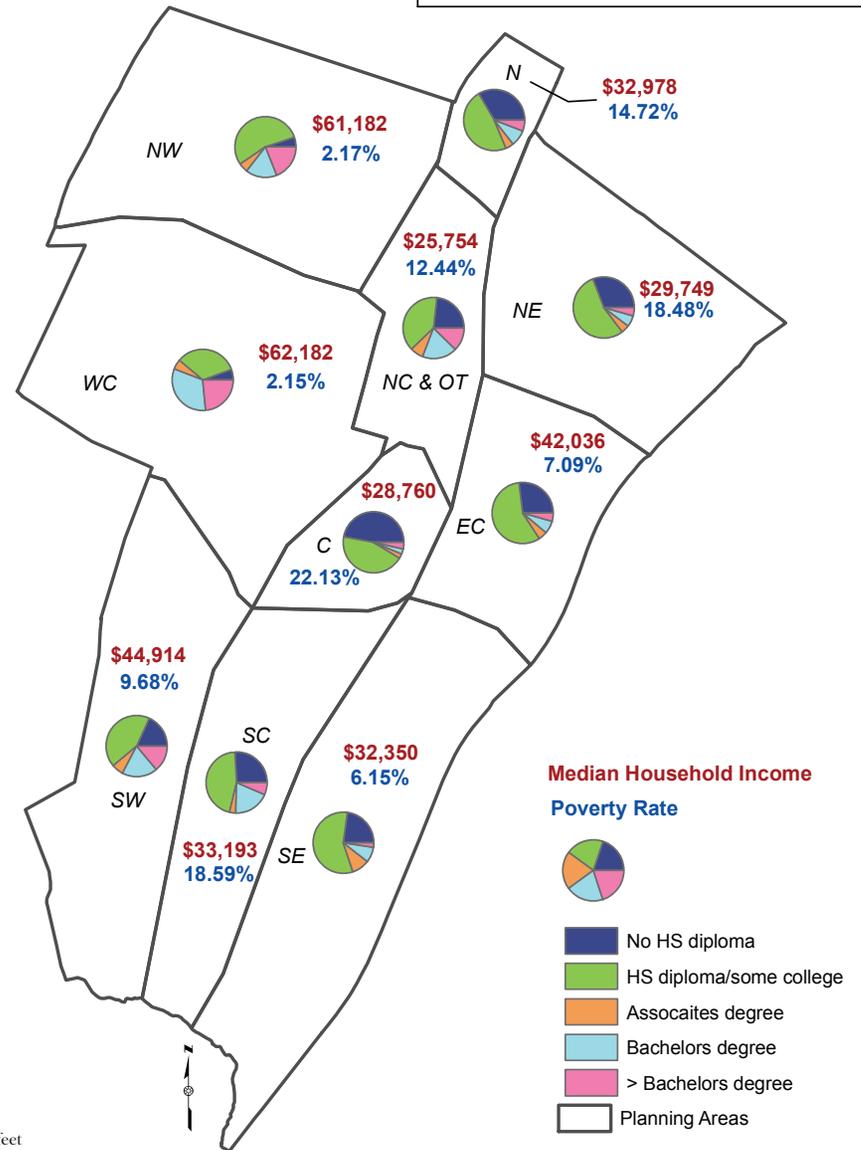


2008 Income Statistics for Winchester and Peer Localities				
Source: ACS and 2000 Census and BLS for Martinsburg	Median Family Income	Median Nonfamily Income	Persons Living in Poverty, Past Year	Persons Unemployed
Winchester	\$58,641	\$34,193	12.2%	6.6%
Leesburg	\$113,617	\$54,961	6.4%	3.9%
Manassas	\$84,104	\$43,367	14.0%	6.3%
Martinsburg	\$36,954	\$29,495	20.0%	9.4%
Virginia	\$72,733	\$38,444	9.9%	4.8%

The table above shows the most recent income statistics for Winchester and peer localities. The city's residents have incomes around the group average. This table shows that half of the city's families (related persons living together) earn less than \$58,641 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.

The map on the right 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

Education and Household Income  
City of Winchester



## CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

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.

City-wide, half of adults have no college education. Ten percent of Winchester's adults have graduate degrees. The city's neighborhoods reflect this gap: the median household income of the wealthiest area, the West Central, is more than double that of three other areas. City-wide, the median household income for 2006-2008 was \$46,564, but the average household income was much greater, \$62,306. This means that half of Winchester's families make less than \$46,500 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.

### HOUSING

Winchester currently lacks enough high-quality rental housing. The 2005-2009 ACS reported 13.3 percent of rental units vacant; some of these vacant properties are blighted and unsafe to use. The median rent payment is \$854. 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 greater than 25,000, 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.

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## 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 1995 and 2000, 57.4 percent of the Winchester population moved to a different house; the other 42.6 percent lived in the same house through that entire period. The 2008 American Community Survey reported that during that year, about 36 percent of the population moved during the year, and the remaining 64 percent lived in the same place the whole year. The depressed real estate market probably reduced transience.

In 2000, 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.

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## WORKFORCE AND COMMUTING

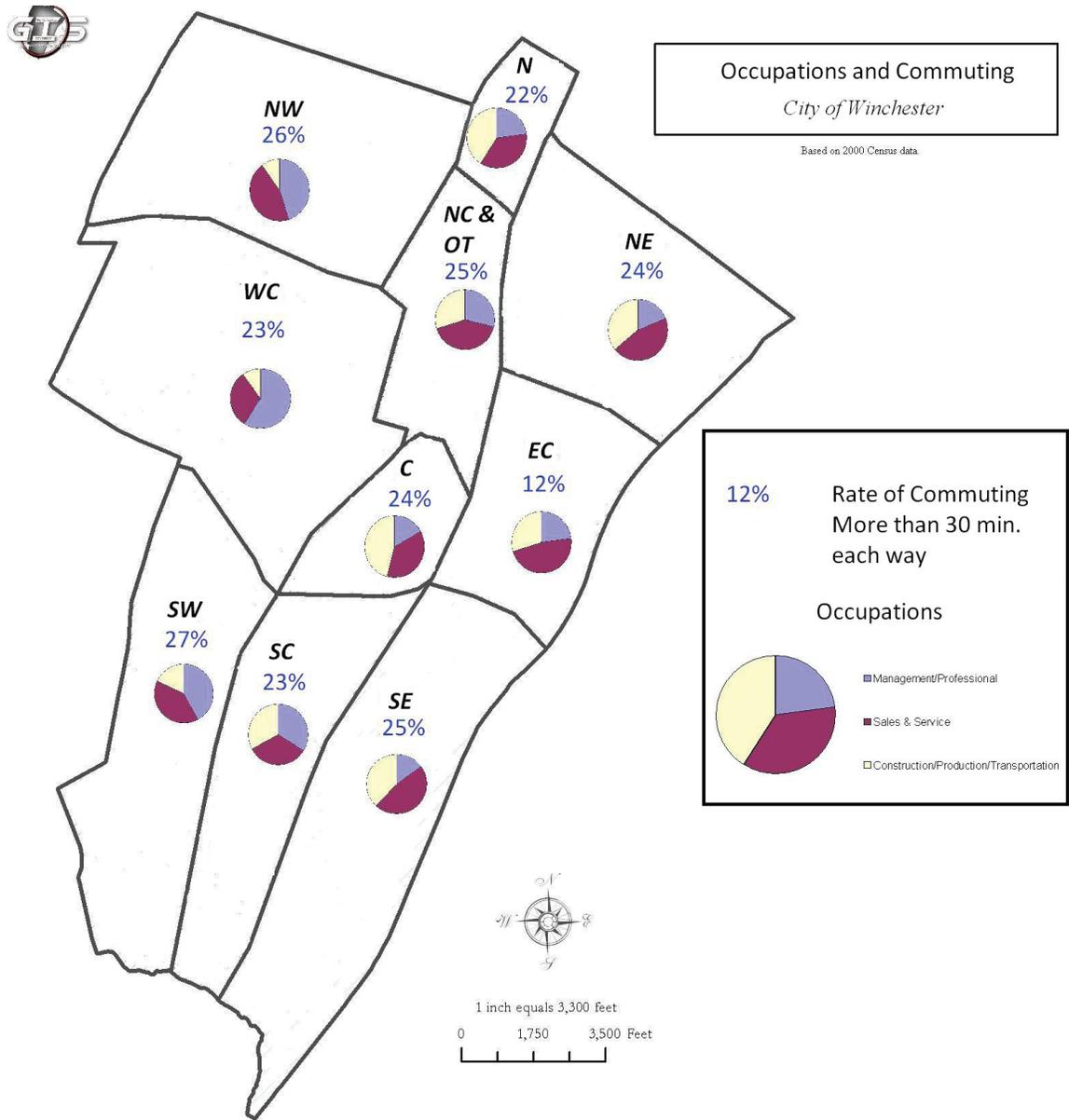
The table on the right shows Winchester’s workforce by industry according to the ACS. The table illustrates the city’s role as a regional hub for education, healthcare, and retail. The city also has a balanced base of manufacturing, management, and information services. Chapter Four addresses specific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

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	Education, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	Retail trade	Agriculture, Forestry, and Mining	Construction	Arts, Hospitality, and Food Services
<b>13,706</b>	2,695	1,773	1,427	1,061	1,488
	19.7%	12.9%	10.4%	7.7%	10.9%
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
836	1,305	1,146	825	601	549
6.1%	9.5%	8.4%	6.0%	4.4%	4.0%

# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

The map on the right 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 have long commutes. Residents near Shenandoah University, often students or staff there, are least likely to have long commutes. Most other neighborhoods send about 25 percent of their workers on commutes longer than 30 minutes. From 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.



# CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

## EXISTING LAND USE IN WINCHESTER

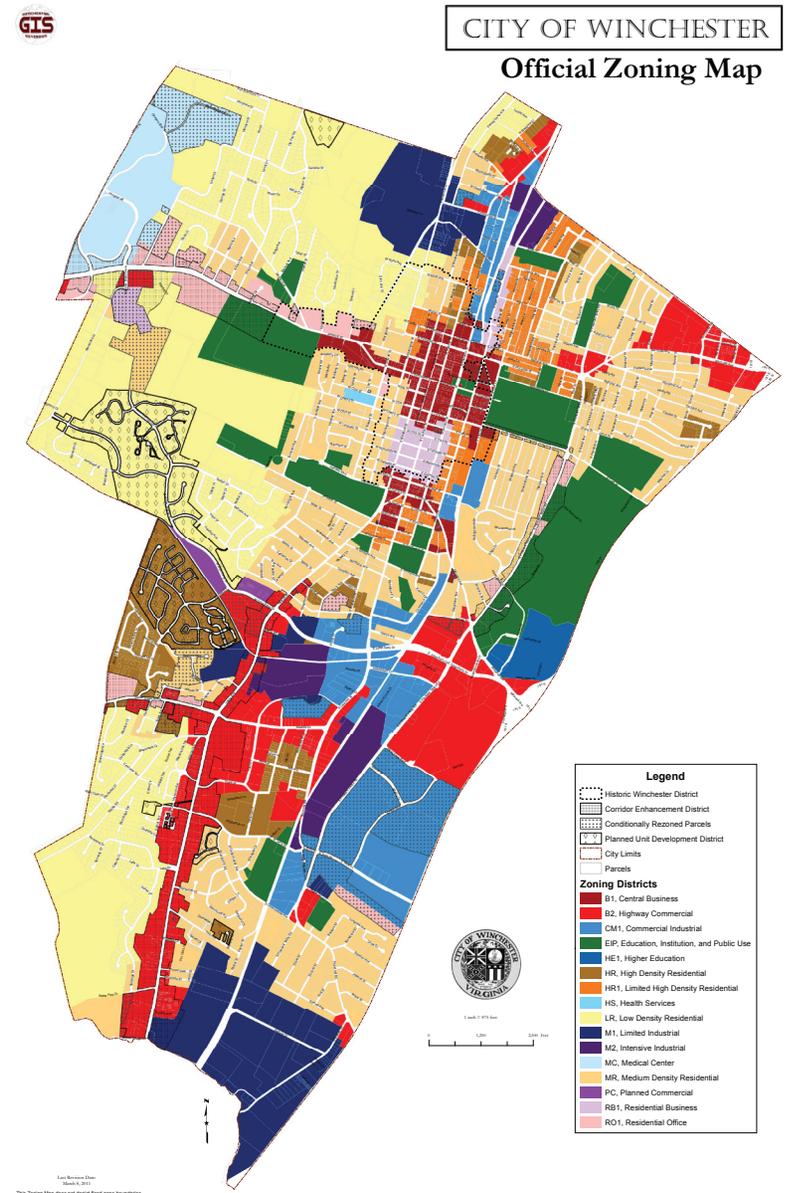
Euclidean Zoning ordinances segregate many sections of the city for certain uses. Winchester created such zoning between 1940 and 1960. This long history of segregated land use result in the following characteristics today:

- 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.



## CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

- 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.

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 do 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.

### EUCLIDEAN ZONING

Like most towns and cities, Winchester uses 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 has 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.

## CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

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 aims to improve its shortcomings while maintaining its strengths. The plan preserves quiet, stable neighborhoods while revitalizing unproductive and blighted areas. Revising Euclidean zoning promises to make Winchester more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

### MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed Use development offers a solution to the shortcomings of Euclidean Zoning. Mixed Use means integrating some of the land uses which Euclidean Zoning segregates.

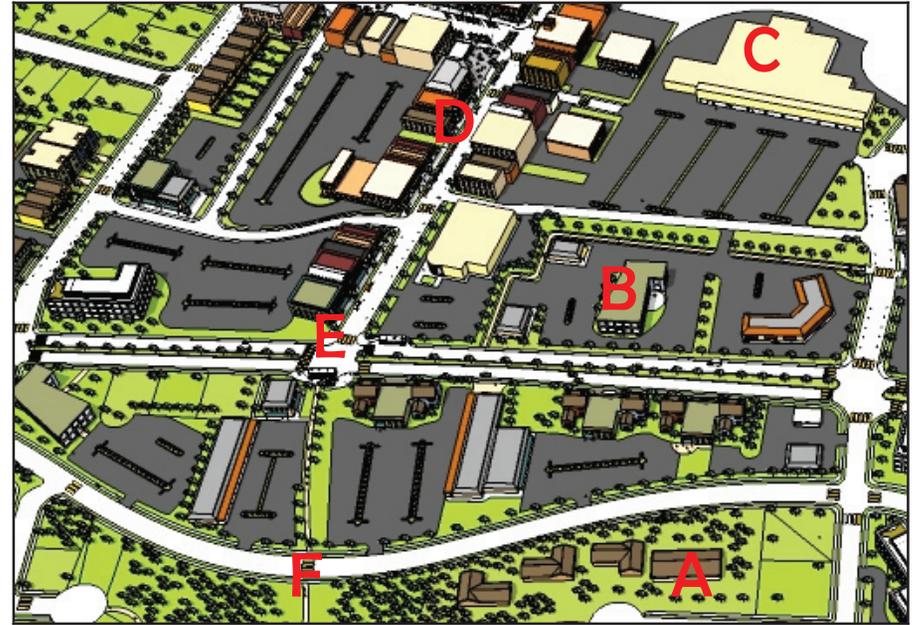
In some ways, Mixed Use development resembles the Winchester's growth during its first 200 years. Today's Mixed Use development recognizes that some land uses complement each other. It zones areas of land so a variety of buildings can exist together.

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 on the following page is an example of Mixed Use Development. The main street running left to right across the middle of the image might be a future Berryville Avenue.

## CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

Many of a family's needs are met in this small area, which includes:

- Single-family homes (A) with small parks and open or wooded spaces.
- Large office buildings (B), perhaps with labs or workshops on some levels.
- A major grocery store convenient to the neighborhood (C).
- Apartment buildings for diverse incomes (D) with convenient small businesses on the ground levels: cafes, barbershops, art galleries, or specialty shopping.
- This covered bus stop (E) stands at the intersection of a main street and a walking and biking trail to enable "intermodal" transit all across the city without a car.
- A trail (F) to help people walk or bike for their commutes, errands, or exercise. It forms part of a trail network connecting downtown to other neighborhoods, large parks, and shopping centers.



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. If mixed uses dominate an entire city, residents may find no peace and quiet. 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.

### 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. Many of the buildings there 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.

## CHAPTER TWO - PLANNING STUDIES

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. 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. Since the 1950s Winchester's growth has 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 30,000 by 2023. 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. So the only way for more people and businesses to come to Winchester is for denser housing and shopping to replace the current less dense construction. Planners call this "infill redevelopment."

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

## *chapter 3*

# VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES



# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, 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 vision 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.

## 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 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:

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## Quality of Life Values:

- EDUCATION- Highly educated citizenry
- PROSPERITY- Economic opportunities and prosperity
- 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
- SAFETY- Safety
- EFFICIENCY- Convenience, mobility
- ORDER- Diverse land use
- CIVIC INVOLVEMENT- Engaged public

## CITYWIDE GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION

From the values above, Winchester's citywide goals were formulated. The goals take into account the extensive research of existing conditions and careful analysis of emerging trends shown in Chapter Two. Goal formulation also took into account 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 provided in Appendix 3 of this Plan. This comprehensive synthesis of inputs is critical to formulating relevant goals, objectives and alternatives for Winchester.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

While some of the eleven Quality of Life values translated directly into goals, a number of them were recharacterized under Goal Headings as follows:

QUALITY OF LIFE VALUES	GOAL HEADING
Education	Education
Prosperity	Economic Development
Diversity	Health and Human Services
Stewardship	Environment, Public Utilities
Pursuit of Happiness	Parks and Recreation
Heritage/Context	Design
Shelter	Housing
Safety	Public Safety
Efficiency	Mobility
Order	Land Use

Civic Involvement- This Value was not translated into an outcome-based Goal Heading, but instead is emphasized in the Implementation Chapter as an important and necessary means toward attainment of all of the other goals. Significant actions by city government involve citizens, and there are major roles to be played by local businesses, nonprofit and civic organizations, and neighbors. Work by City employees is only a part of the overall effort, and many objectives in this plan require cooperation across civil society.

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

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

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES

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

### DESIGN

*GOAL: Promote architecturally appealing and walkable urban form while also respecting significant historic identity, image, and integrity to constantly improve the quality of life for those visiting, working, and living in the City.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Employ New Urbanism Principles in new development and redevelopment including:
  - a. Pedestrian-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. 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 tourists 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 also do so.
- 6) Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*GOAL: 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.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase sales tax revenue accruing to the City.
- 2) Increase Median Household Income of City residents.
- 3) Raise the average salary of jobs 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) 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 options available.
- 9) Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.
- 10) Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.
- 11) Increase income levels of all employable citizens in order to facilitate improved prosperity and quality of life.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## 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.
- 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 impacts on the natural environment.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Reduce the City's carbon footprint and overall environmental impact on air quality by looking at the way City business is conducted on a daily basis and also encouraging residents and the business community to do their part in order to create a more sustainable and responsible community.
- 2) Develop a more environmentally sustainable approach to handling urban stormwater runoff resulting in less detrimental impacts on downstream areas.
- 3) Preserve healthy, mature trees and preserve and restore sensitive wetland areas.
- 4) Undertake riparian measures to address the causes of pollution contributing to the State designation of certain City waterways as "impaired waters."

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- 5) Pursue changes to development regulations to encourage the use of environmentally friendly site improvements such as pervious paving and 'Green' building techniques.
- 6) Discourage new development within identified floodplain fringe areas and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.
- 7) Increase the rate of recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.
- 8) Work with the private sector as well as federal and state agencies to remediate brownfield sites, including railroad properties, within the City.
- 9) Promote an increase in the City's urban tree canopy.
- 10) 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.
- 11) Reduce the exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

*GOAL: 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.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Assist persons and families overcome poverty, abuse and neglect.
- 2) Stem the growing rate of teen pregnancy 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 in the interest of social sustainability.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## HOUSING

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

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase the appreciation rate of City home values.
- 2) 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.
- 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 code enforcement to eliminate blight and undue overcrowding in residential areas to improve the quality of housing stock.
- 5) Increase homeownership opportunities.
- 6) Promote decent affordable housing, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals and retirees.
- 7) Ensure equal opportunity in housing.
- 8) Pursue means of recovering the costs of impacts associated with multi-family rental properties through alternative tax assessment approaches.
- 9) Discourage the conversion of single family detached units to multi-family rental units.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## LAND USE

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

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Incentivize the construction of compact, new mixed use projects as a viable reuse of obsolete strip commercial and industrial properties.
- 2) Provide the citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.
- 3) Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units in order to attract higher income residents 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.
- 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.
- 5) Develop a diversified, sustainable industrial base at appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce, and in harmony with other community development and which attract higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Reduce the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## MOBILITY

*GOAL: 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 use.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Alter conventional street standards especially in mixed use and planned residential developments by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.
- 3) Employ access management and consider use of roundabouts to provide for traffic calming and improved safety.
- 4) Expand and improve general aviation, air cargo, and air passenger operations at the Winchester Regional Airport.
- 5) Support the resumption of rail passenger service to Winchester.
- 6) Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider grade-separated crossings.
- 7) Pursue limited construction of new thoroughfares and widening of existing thoroughfares as shown in the Win-Fred MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 8) 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.
- 9) 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.
- 10) Investigate the needs for multimodal transfer facilities.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- 11) 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.
- 12) Promote Telecommuting as an alternative to commuting to work.

## PARKS & RECREATION

*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 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.

# CHAPTER THREE - VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## 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 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.
- 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.

## 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 in order 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.

## *chapter 4*

# ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY



# 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. The city's recent economic trends are not sustainable and jeopardize its historic role as commercial hub. 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 2008.

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, and balance of small town feel within commuting distance of the big city. Among the listed Weaknesses and Threats were: aging city infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, lower than average educational levels, concern about the city becoming a magnet for dependent populations, relatively low income, cost of commuting, county development pulling business away from the city, unclear competitive niche, income inequality among residents, and concern about the university and medical center being non-taxable.

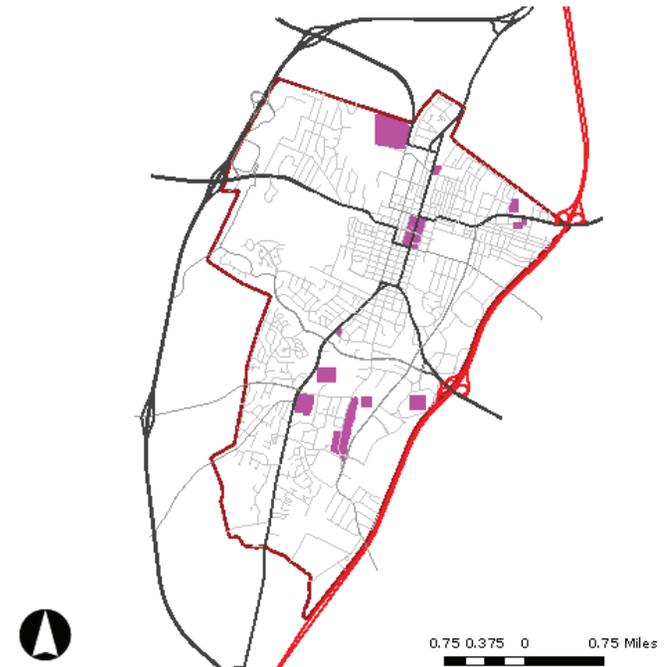
Participants agreed on many economic issues, including the need for revitalization and redevelopment of older, underused commercial and industrial sites like Ward Plaza and Zero Pack. Citizens found consensus on the need for continued historic preservation and rehabilitation work, especially in the downtown 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 educational levels in the local labor force, and the need to find a competitive niche for commercial and industrial growth.

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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 to preserve and others to change, add or improve. Among the key sites called out to change, improve or add were the following, shown in this map:

- Ward Plaza
- National Fruit
- Apple Valley Square (Former Martin’s Store) site
- Papermill Road corridor
- Old Town
- Coca-cola plant
- O’Sullivan’s
- Apple Blossom Mall
- Eastgate Plaza (former Nichols)
- Federal Mogul (Abex)
- Zero Pak (including the railroad land)



## CITIZEN SURVEY FINDINGS

In 2008, the City of Winchester undertook a [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 those services. Appendix 3 explains the survey in more detail, and the table on the right summarizes key results.

While the city’s current living and working conditions and overall quality of life received a strong endorsement, citizens felt less confident about the future. Only a slim majority of those surveyed believed to city to be moving in the right direction. This finding supports the need for long range, comprehensive planning and changes in the city’s trajectory.

<b>Winchester Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results</b>			
<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Excellent or Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Fair or Poor</b>
Place to work	69	19	12
Place to live	81	13	7
Quality of life	79	15	6
Moving in the right direction	52	28	20

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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

- Use of Land
- Character & Condition of Existing Development
- Trends of Growth or Change
- Employment & Economic Factors and Needs

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 2009, the Census estimated Winchester’s population at 25,977. Of these, 21,019 were over age 16. However, the city labor force was 14,592: over 6,000 chose not to work due to retirement, disability, continuing education, or some other reason. 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 on the right show how Winchester is transitioning away from its historically notable industrial past into a twenty-first century service economy. The table shows the sectors in which Winchester’s residents work, not the sources of employment within the city. Almost all of the agricultural and mining workers, for instance, go outside the city limits to work. Construction has fallen from over 10 percent of the workforce in early 2008 to less than 8 percent today; it is not clear how many of those jobs will return. The city maintains a reduced core of manufacturing jobs, but healthcare, finance, IT, and professional services employ more people, though not necessarily at higher wages. This Plan seeks to facilitate the natural economic change and bring jobs to the city while relieving the hardship of families hurt by flux.

<b>Employment of Winchester’s Workers</b>			
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>Percentage</b> (and trend since 2005)
Education, healthcare, social assistance	Public schoolteacher	2,695	19.7 ↗
Retail Trade	Clerk at Wal-Mart	1,773	12.9 ↗
Arts, food service, hospitality	Cook at Snow White	1,488	10.9 ↗
Agriculture, forestry, mining	County quarry workers	1,427	10.4 ↘
Management, administrative, professional	Lawyer	1,305	9.5 ↗
Manufacturing	O’Sullivan Films	1,146	8.4 ↘
Public Administration	City planner	549	4.0 ↘
Other: construction, finance, IT, wholesale and shipping	BB&T banker	3,323	24.2 ↗
Unemployed (5-year average)		886	6.0 ↗

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

Winchester's population increases during the workday. According to the 2000 Census, Winchester had more people commuting into the city to work than residents commuting out. Slightly more than 6,000 persons both lived and worked in the city. The number of City residents commuting to jobs outside of the city was a little less than 5,900 persons. However, over 16,000 workers commuted into the city, nearly two-thirds of them from surrounding Frederick County. The net incommuting was over 10,200 workers.

According to the more recent 2005-9 American Community Survey, the average commute for workers residing in Winchester is 20.4 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 16 percent 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 8-9 percent of the workers residing in the Northwest, North Central, and East Central areas of the city.

## WAGE AND INCOME ANALYSIS

According to the Virginia Employment Commission's 1st Quarter 2010 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 \$1,682 for Federal workers down to \$268 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 (\$710), Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$961) Retail Sector (\$421), and Construction (\$714). Figures were suppressed for Agriculture, Forestry & Mining. Among the highest paying sectors, below Federal government, the next three highest sectors were: Management (\$1,296), Manufacturing (\$1,153), and Finance and Insurance (\$1,075).

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

## 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 \$22,162 is impoverished. For a single parent with one child, the threshold is \$15,063. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates prepared in December of 2010, Winchester had an overall poverty rate of 16.3 percent in 2009. It was 12 percent in 2007. By comparison, surrounding Frederick County had an overall poverty rate of 9.2 percent in 2009, up from 6.6 percent in 2007. 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.

## 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 educational rate estimates as included in the 2005-2009 American Community Survey indicate that about 80 percent of the adult population are high school graduates, but only 28% 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 2009 on-time graduation rate for all students was 82.9%. Adding in the 15 students who received a GED or other certificate of completion, the rate increase to 87.5%. This compares with a Virginia rate of 83.2% which increase to 87.2% when GED or other certificate of completion figures are added in. On-time graduation rates for Winchester students of Hispanic origin was 53.7% as compared to a statewide figure of 72.3% for that cohort. Also notably lower than the overall average was the on-time graduation rate for students with limited English proficiency which was 48.6% for Winchester and 68.8% statewide.

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

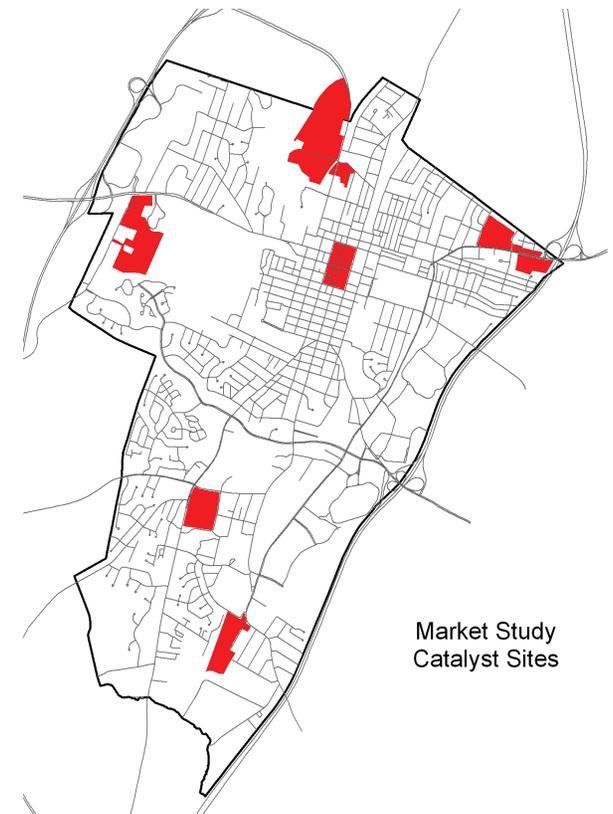
While Shenandoah University reports that 237 of 408 admitted freshmen are from Virginia high schools, there is not a documented count of how many are from Winchester and to what extent SU is really a local education resource. Likewise there is not good data on how many SU graduates settle and work in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

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

The Winchester Economic Development Authority engaged the Comprehensive Plan consultant together with S. Patz & Associates, Inc., a real estate consulting firm, to prepare an Economic Development Master Plan. This closely related effort entailed the undertaking of a market analysis for various types of economic development including commercial retail, hotel, office, assisted living, and multifamily residential development in the Winchester-Frederick County market. The Study examined six potential Catalyst Sites in the City. Shown in red on the map on the right, the catalyst sites largely overlap those identified by citizens during the initial outreach efforts. The sites are examined more closely from a Comprehensive Plan perspective in Chapter 11 which focuses in on key redevelopment sites within each of the ten geographic planning areas. The six key redevelopment sites that were identified as catalyst sites in the Market Study were:

- 1) The Downtown Area
- 2) Meadow Branch Avenue
- 3) National Fruit Area
- 4) Berryville Avenue Area
- 5) Ward Plaza Area
- 6) S. Pleasant Valley Road Extended Area



## REVITALIZATION PRINCIPLES

The Economic Market Study and Master Plan noted 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. Through working directly with property owners, construction of public improvements, and an array of regulatory incentives, private property owners need to 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 flexibility in a changing market outlook, mixed-use development proposals should be encouraged over developments that consist of only residential or only nonresidential use.

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Incentives beyond investments in public infrastructure make sense when a project yields clear and direct positive cash on cash return 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 the actions that the City can to transform the character of the areas around each site. Directing resources to support the maintenance and upgrade of existing facilities helps to maintain the value of investments made by the private sector and to better position the City 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 and private implementation approach
- Develop a marketing and branding strategy for City revitalization and integrate catalyst site redevelopment with the overall marketing strategy;
- Revise the zoning ordinance (see specific recommendations below) to align with the City's revitalization objectives and the concepts for the catalyst sites

## Medium Term (2-5 years):

- Develop selected pedestrian improvements along portions of Valley Avenue and Pleasant Valley Road near the catalyst sites (crosswalks, planters, sidewalk improvements);

## CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Potential condemnation of Ward Plaza site to connect Taft Avenue to Middle Road (Potential to solicit private developers through a RFP for a public private partnership that would use CDA financing and tax increment financing for most of the infrastructure including the parking along with a partial rebate of up to 20% of the business taxes including 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;
- Develop 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;
- Look for opportunities to create a Community Events Center in or near one of the catalyst sites
- Develop more 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. Directly funding public improvements is necessary for those large-scale projects that cannot be accomplished otherwise. Thirdly, 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.

(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.

## CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

(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 LEED certifications. 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 shops, 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 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:

# CHAPTER FOUR - ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

*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.
- 2) Increase Median Household Income of City residents.
- 3) Raise the average salary of jobs 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 options available.
- 9) Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum sustainable potential.
- 10) Preserve the vitality of the downtown as a major economic center.
- 11) Increase income levels of all employable citizens in order to facilitate improved prosperity and quality of life.

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.

*chapter 5*

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



# 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 local 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 improve environmental sustainability and reduce impacts 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 the exposure of the public to hazardous environmental conditions.
- 2) 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 looking at the way City business is conducted on a daily basis and also encouraging residents and the business community to do their part in order to create a more sustainable and responsible community.
- 7) Increase the rate of 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. .

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- 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 the 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 several recent years, Winchester has failed or nearly failed to meet EPA standards for ground-level ozone. While ozone gas high in the atmosphere reflects radiation, at ground level it harms the lungs. 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.

# CHAPTER FIVE - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

*2. Discourage new development within identified floodplain fringe areas and mitigate the impacts of existing development within mapped floodways.*

## 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.*

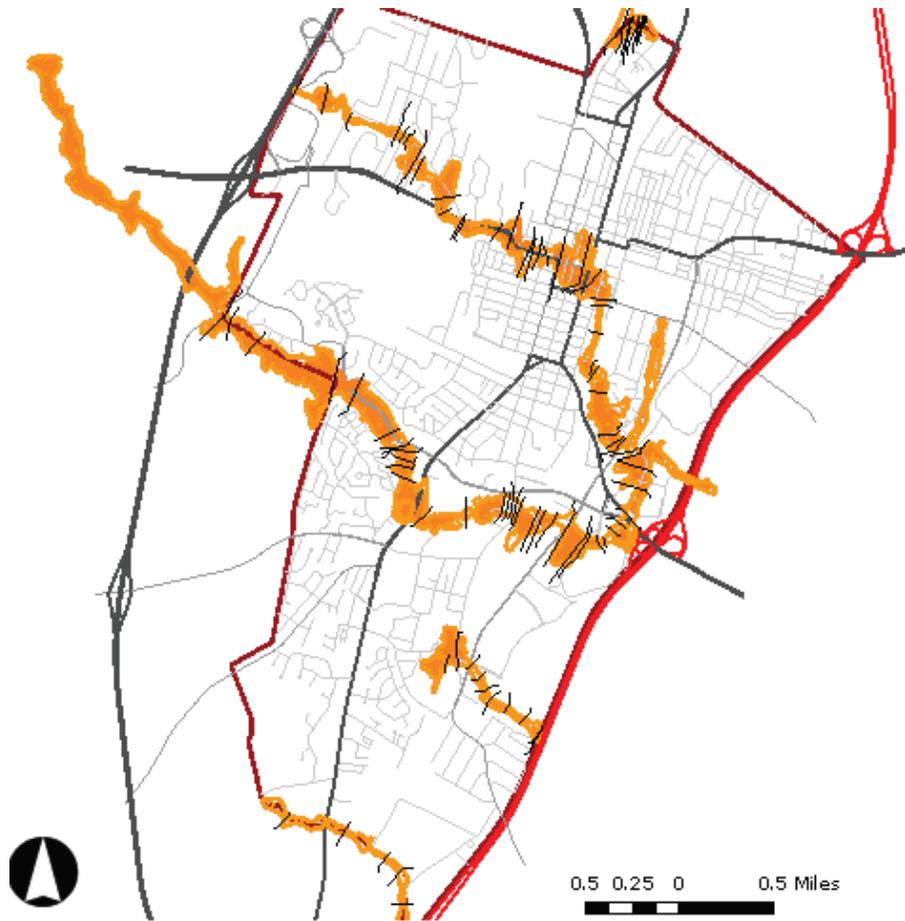
*Abrams Creek generally parallels Jubal Early Drive through the center of the city.*

*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.*

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 coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the floodplain maps when and where needed.

Building on a floodplain presents dangers 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 a 100-year flood event. That also means that in any given year, there is a one percent chance of flooding in the orange area shown in the map on the left. It includes sections of Old Town.



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.

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The city's Zoning Ordinance discourages new development within the floodplains and mandates actions to reduce the risk to buildings there. For example, existing manufactured buildings must be anchored firmly "to prevent collapse, floatation, or lateral movement." The lowest floor of new buildings must be above the level of the 100-year floodwaters. 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 in the floodplain require the same review as new construction.

Actions which slow stormwater runoff, including but 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 also reduce the risk of flooding. By better managing stormwater, these actions described later in the chapter may actually shrink the area of the 100-year flood plain while also reducing pollution and creating opportunities for recreation and enjoying 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 the 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. The city should encourage appropriate redevelopment of formerly brownfield land.

Railroads own some brownfield property, and 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.

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## 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 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 2005; the state and EPA approved it in 2006.

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. The EPA approved Virginia's plan in late 2010.

## 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,

# CHAPTER FIVE - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

measuring, and monitoring pollution, and for 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.

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, and some 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<sub>x</sub>), and carbon emissions. 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 non compliance. 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 a major potential for 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 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 environmental impact on air quality by looking at the way City business is conducted on a daily basis and also encouraging residents and the business community to do their part in order 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 definitely reduce carbon footprint while reducing energy consumption, improving air quality, and also yielding other benefits.

The city's finance office has begun collecting energy expenses from each city department and can present energy costs in the city's budget. The budget for fiscal year 2013, which begins on July 1, 2012, should include an energy category showing city spending on electricity, heating, and vehicle fuels. To the extent possible using accepted accounting practices, City finance department staff should note the energy costs of each city department. 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

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.

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## 7. Increase the rate of recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.

In 2009, Winchester's staff collected 6,588 tons of garbage, about 18 tons per day, or an average of 1.4 pounds of trash for each resident, each day. That was a decrease from 2008, when 6,938 tons were thrown away. 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 2009, the city recycled 1,375 tons of paper products and 634 tons of metal and glass. The city recycled 30.8 percent of the total refuse in 2009. The city also operates a curbside yard waste collection service during much of the year and collects and composts yard waste which totaled 923 tons in 2009.

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
- Providing a credit, coupon, or other incentive for each container of recycling

## 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 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.

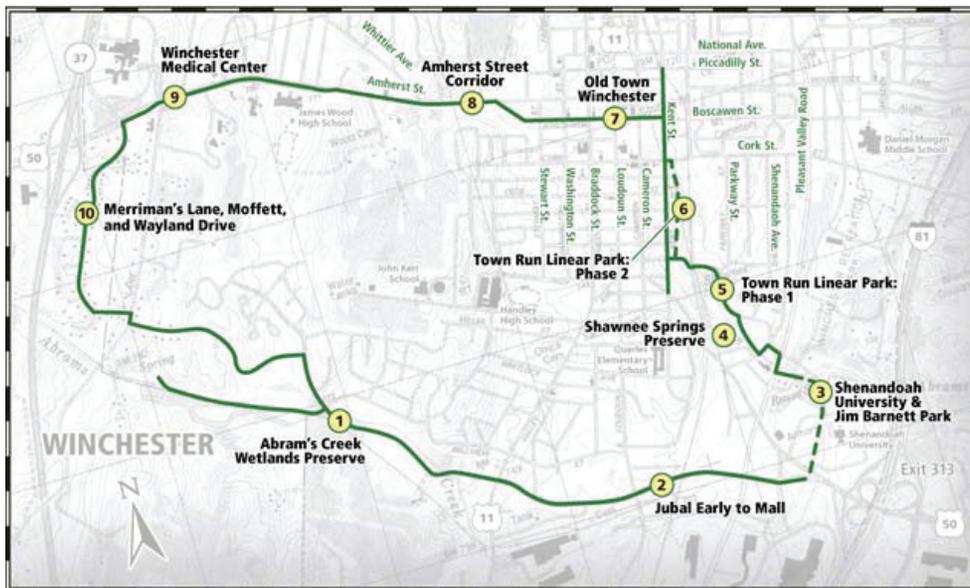
Restoring, preserving, and creating wetlands are aspects of more sustainable handling of stormwater runoff. Winchester should also replace acres of impervious surfaces (i.e., asphalt, concrete, etc.) with pervious surface. In 2007, 27 percent of Winchester's area was impervious pavement. When rain falls 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.

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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 through the use of design techniques to create a functionally equivalent hydrologic landscape. Some of the 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 natural landscaped areas.

A number of 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 very 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 town'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 on the left. 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.

# CHAPTER FIVE - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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 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. There are only 20 acres of earthen ditches and ponds to naturally slow, cool, and clean stormwater. Winchester needs acres of new ponds, rain gardens, and similar green -that is, 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.

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.

## 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. Trees improve public health by preventing ozone pollution and by catching particulate matter. They sustain the environment by filtering stormwater and sheltering wildlife. Trees reduce energy consumption by shading buildings and houses. And trees 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.

In 2007, aerial surveys by Virginia Tech showed that trees covered 27 percent of Winchester's area. In June 2009, City Council adopted a plan to increase that urban tree canopy to 35 percent by 2019. That means 475 new acres of canopy, or approximately 30,000 new trees.

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. Their broad shade beautifies the city and also 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, taking action where possible. The

# CHAPTER FIVE - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

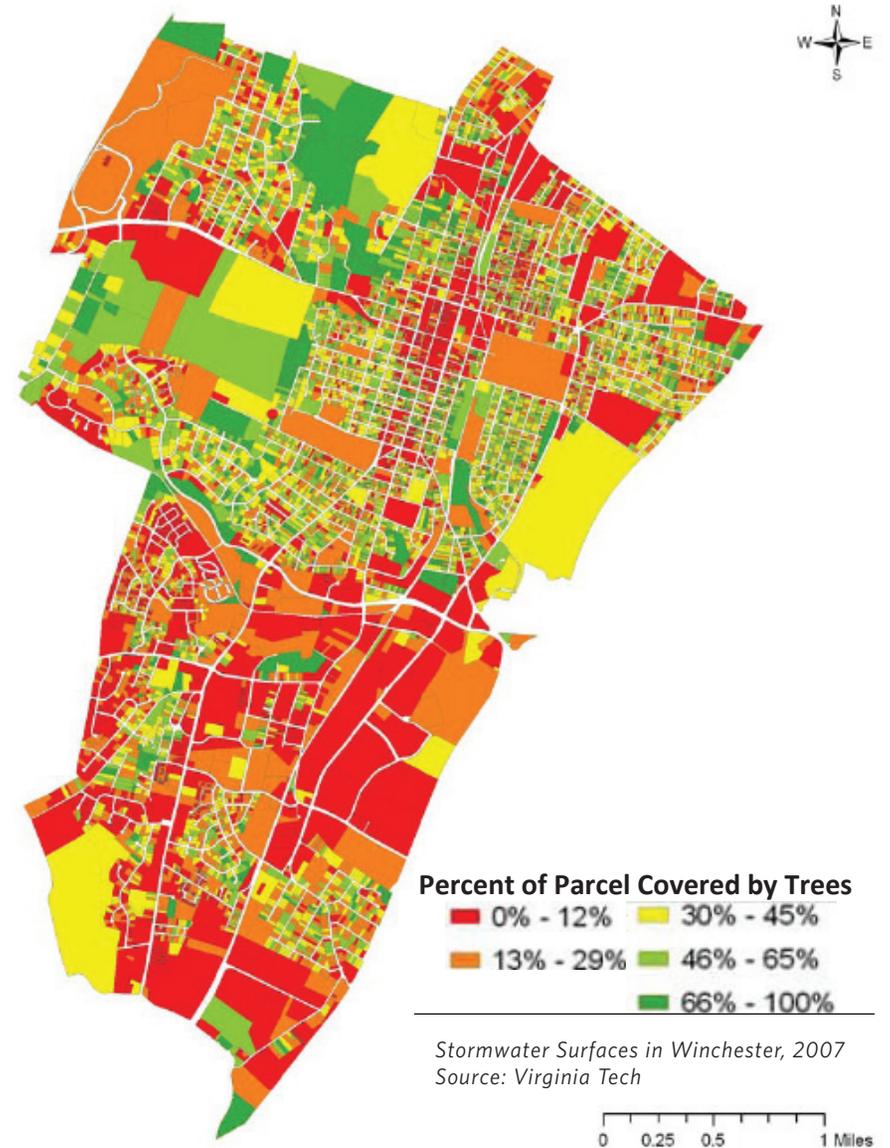
arborist should also help citizens interested in preserving mature trees on private property.

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, the majority of new 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.

UTC Classes	Acres	% Total Land
<b>Tree Canopy</b>	1578.2	27%
<b>Non-Tree Vegetation</b>	2053.0	35%
<b>Non-Building Impervious</b>	1582.6	27%
<b>Buildings Impervious</b>	669.9	11%
<b>Water</b>	16.9	0%

The City should also collaborate with large land owners 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 a number of underdeveloped sites where unsightly 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, it helps make a blighted neighborhood more attractive to new residents and businesses. The map on the right shows which parcels in Winchester have the best tree canopies and which parcels need the most improvement.

This map shows which parts of Winchester have the most trees. Overall, 62 percent of Winchester’s area is covered by trees, which absorb stormwater well, or non-tree vegetation. The red areas contain few trees and channel polluted stormwater directly into streams. Broad red areas like the southeast parking lots do the most harm. Plan objectives seek to replace some of the grassy area with forest, to plant trees all around the city, and to replace some impervious surfaces with pervious surfaces. A 2020 update of this map should show less red and orange with more yellow and green.



# CHAPTER FIVE - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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. Planners should consider the natural, as well as the business, impact of new construction. They should encourage the use of pervious pavement and other environmentally sustainable site development practices. Many of these actually 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. A number of 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 should also promote LEED certification and more sustainable construction and land development in the private sector. One simple means is partnership between builders and nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity. Habitat can recycle many building materials to reduce waste and provide housing for Winchester's poor. Another is incentives for renovations rather than new construction. Renovation has less environmental impact and also preserves a neighborhood's architecture. Finally, the city may give bonuses to green projects. Revisions to the tax code may also provide discounts for certain building materials and exemptions or credits for LEED-certified buildings. Permitting could be expedited. In certain cases, the City Zoning Ordinance already provides density bonuses to green projects, but more should be done.

Winchester should also use the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and building codes to promote Low Impact Development (LID). Like LEED, LID is a set of construction and land development principles. Because trees, slopes, and soils can slow runoff and filter pollution at little cost, Low Impact Development attempts to preserve the original features of a parcel of land by reducing disturbance and protecting the way that land naturally processes pollutants, rather than relying heavily upon offsite, downstream water treatment. City policy should encourage LID features like ponds, rain gardens, natural landscaping and the use of soil rather than concrete.

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, the City 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 with regard to long-term economic sustainability and quality of life.

## *chapter 6*

# MOBILITY



# CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

## A WALKABLE COMMUNITY VISION

Being able to get around Winchester is a key part of quality of life. Having mobility choices means residents, workers, and visitors can drive, ride a bus, bike, or walk around the city. Every option feels 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 don't 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 use.*

# CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

This chapter explains what is already happening with each objective and what can be done in the future to improve mobility. The twelve 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.
  - a. Working with the MPO, complete an updated survey of traffic patterns to classify city streets according to their intended function.
  
- 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 [2007 Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan](#).
    - 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.

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

- c. Maintain all sidewalks and respond quickly to complaints.
  - d. Identify and widen certain sidewalks to create outdoor social spaces.
  - 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 so as 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 close 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 and Millwood Avenues.
- 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.
- 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.

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

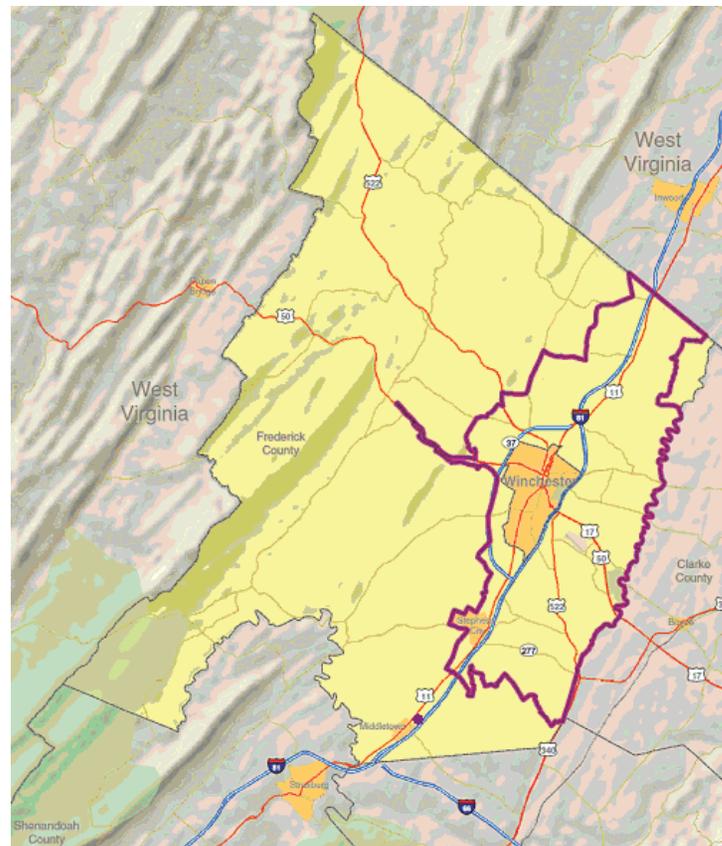
- 10) Support the resumption of rail passenger service to Winchester.
  - a. Partner with Amtrak and the Maryland Area Rail Commuter system to study a spur service to Martinsburg, WV.
- 11) Increase safety on thoroughfare streets and bike and pedestrian trails where they cross railroad tracks and consider 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.
- 12) 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.

### 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 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-Frederick 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.

The MPO maintains 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. It uses Census and survey data to map current population and levels of traffic, then incorporated projections of population, housing, and employment growth to forecast greater congestion in 2030. An update looking out to 2035 is slated for approval in 2011.



## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

The MPO Long Range Plan offers detailed choices for programs of road maintenance and construction to address the 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 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.
- Widen Featherbed Lane to four lanes.
- 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.
- Widen Weems Lane to five 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.
- Widen the northernmost section of Fairmont Ave (Rte 522).
- Extend Frontage Road and Legge Boulevard to connect with each other.
- Redesign the street network in the area of Millwood Ave, Jubal Early Drive, Apple Blossom Drive, University Drive, and Frontage Road to include grade separation of Jubal Early Drive over a reconnected local street connection of Millwood Ave and Frontage Road. The project would include ramps to and from Millwood and Frontage Road 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 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 Norfolk Southern tracks

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

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 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.**

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.

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### 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 a number of 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. Another solution, 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 so as 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 on the right. Winchester could consider sponsorship of local craftsmen for such work.
- 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 four small buses to serve the Winchester Transit (WinTran) system in the city. There are six routes, with stops every hour. Routes run north and south along Loudoun and Cameron Streets, Valley Avenue, and Pleasant Valley Road. Other routes run east and west along Amherst Street and Berryville Avenue. All the routes meet downtown, near City Hall. Fares in 2010 were \$1.00, with discounts for students, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. WinTran runs from 6 am to 8 pm on weekdays and from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturdays.



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

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

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 Lord Fairfax 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.

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.

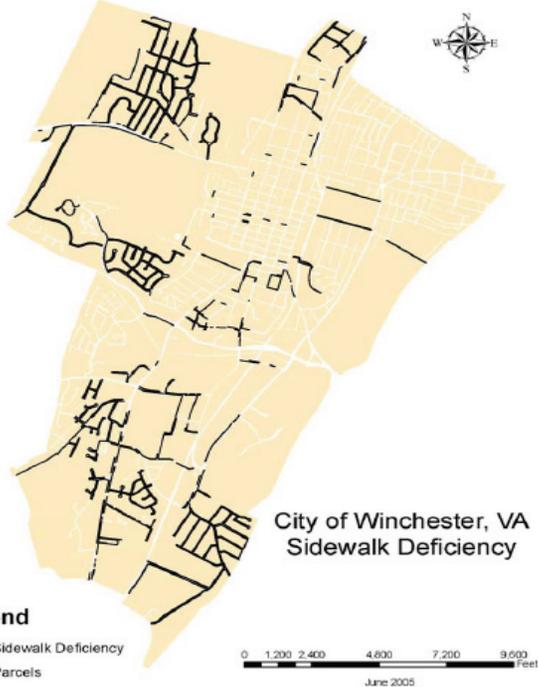
#### **4. Encourage the growth and sustainability of the urbanized area of the City by providing adequate and convenient parking and a comprehensive system of sidewalks and walking paths.**

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 block east of Handley High School rely upon structured parking to serve the compact mixed use development of the site.

# CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

The black lines on the map at right show the areas of Winchester which have missing sidewalks. Most of the deficiencies are located in 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. 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 on the left, 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 2007 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.

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

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

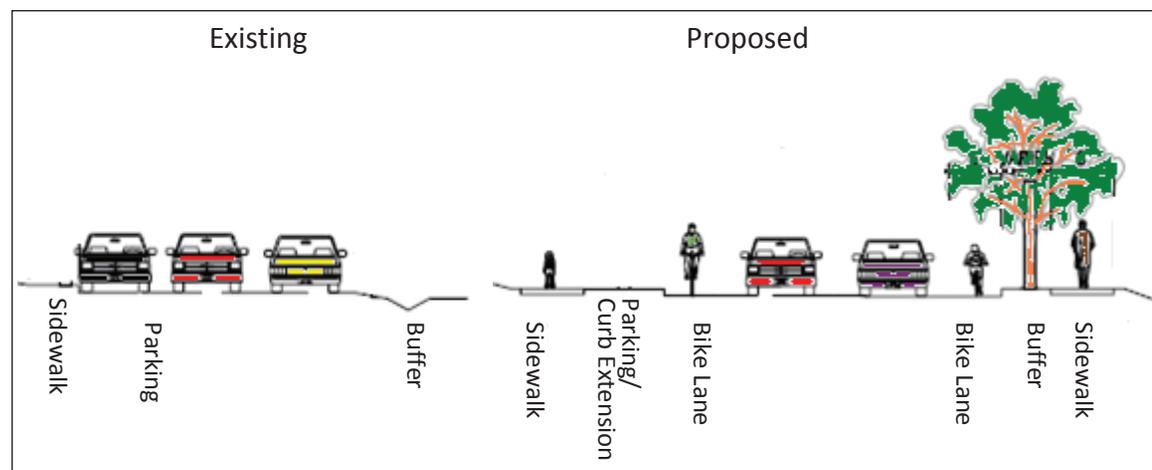
Streets are critical infrastructure for cities. The street space may contain a number of important elements, including:

- 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, others apartments, others stores, and still others 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, as a way 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 have to share the road, which can be unsafe.

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The proposed changes shown at right 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.

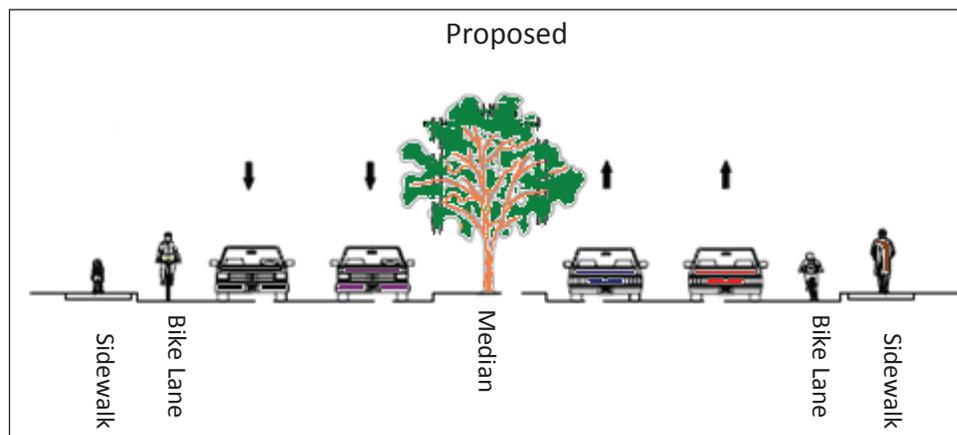
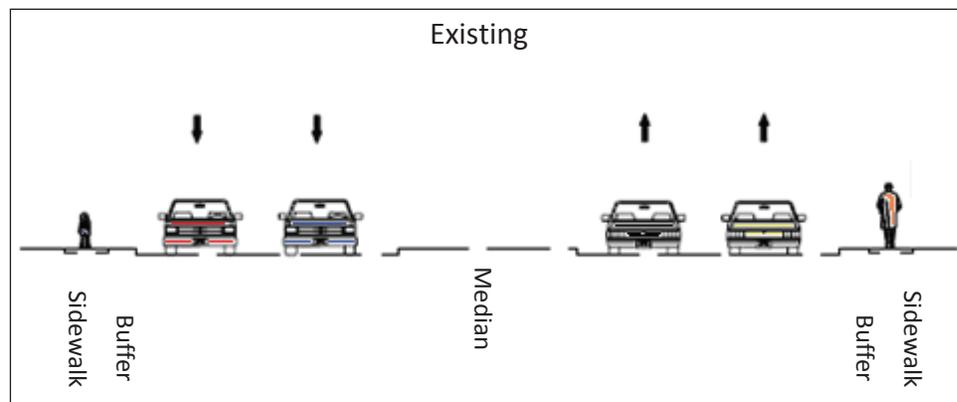
Adding trees to the median tends to calm traffic while sprucing up the street's appearance. Dedicated bike lanes allow for safer movement. This improved street fosters recreation and social activity while reducing the need for personal vehicles.

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 Tree Commission and City Arborist study and maintain 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.



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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.

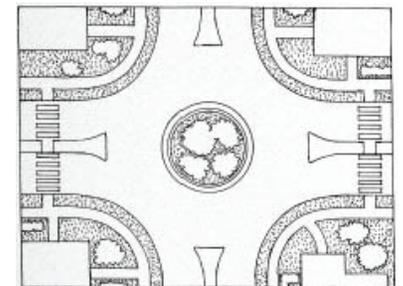
The owners of different private streets maintain them at different levels of quality. Some attentively repair cracks and clear snow, and others do not. However, the city takes responsibility for ensuring safety and mobility. So if a private street is not adequately maintained, the city may issue notice 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.



## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

- 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.

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 and Millwood Avenues, two of the city's important entry corridors. Barring major changes to development and land use patterns, traffic volume and congestion on these two 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 two 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. Or the best answer to Millwood congestion might be to close the street altogether -make the difficult intersection a two-acre park and simplify the street grid. The City should move deliberately to improve mobility along these two 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.

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

**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.**

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 conviction denies 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 2010 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. If 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. Support the resumption of rail passenger service to Winchester.**

In the 19th century, trains brought important passenger and freight traffic to Winchester. As energy prices continue to increase, rail transportation may become a more common alternative to driving and flying for both passengers and freight. The city should study and encourage expanded rail service.

There is currently no passenger rail service to Winchester. The Virginia Railway Express commuter service extends only far as Broad Run in Prince William County. Its expansion to Front Royal or Winchester would be badly constrained by mountains. Martinsburg, West Virginia, a half hour's drive north of Winchester, is the closest destination for passenger rail service. Amtrak and Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) trains serve Martinsburg. The MARC train runs rush hour service to Washington by way of Montgomery County. The

## CHAPTER SIX - MOBILITY

Amtrak train runs several times daily between Washington and Chicago. City staff should partner with Amtrak and MARC to investigate expansion of passenger rail service to Winchester through a spur from Martinsburg. Another possibility is public or private bus shuttle from Winchester to Martinsburg.

### **11. 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. In particular, 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.

### **12. 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 hangars 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 hangar 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.

*chapter 7*

HOUSING



# 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 area.

## CITYWIDE HOUSING OBJECTIVES

As noted in Chapter Three there are nine citywide housing objectives to address the citywide goal for housing is:

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

The nine citywide housing objectives are:

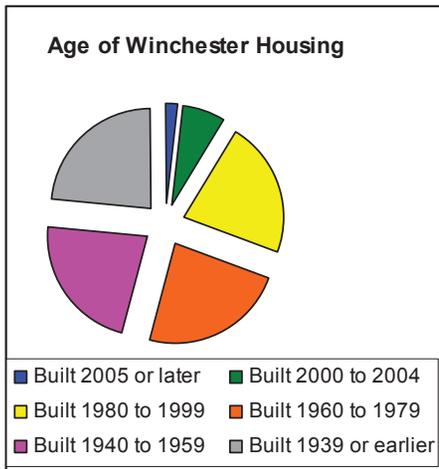
1. Increase the appreciation rate of city home values relative to the region.
2. Provide opportunities for new mixed-income and mixed dwelling-type residential use in higher density setting that incorporate the quality design principles of New Urbanism.
3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing economically viable substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.
4. Continue to pursue code enforcement to eliminate blight and undue overcrowding in residential areas to improve the quality of the housing stock.
5. Actively pursue the acquisition and demolition or redevelopment of economically obsolete residential structures except those contributing architecturally to the historic district.
6. Promote appropriate housing development, particularly to serve targeted populations such as young professionals and empty nesters.
7. Promote the development of appropriate low- and moderate-income housing that is well maintained and managed.

# CHAPTER SEVEN - HOUSING

8. Pursue means of recovering the costs of impacts associated with multi-family rental properties through alternative tax assessments.
9. Discourage the conversion of single family detached units to multi-family rental units in traditionally single-family areas.

## PRESENT CONDITIONS

### What kinds of housing does Winchester have now?

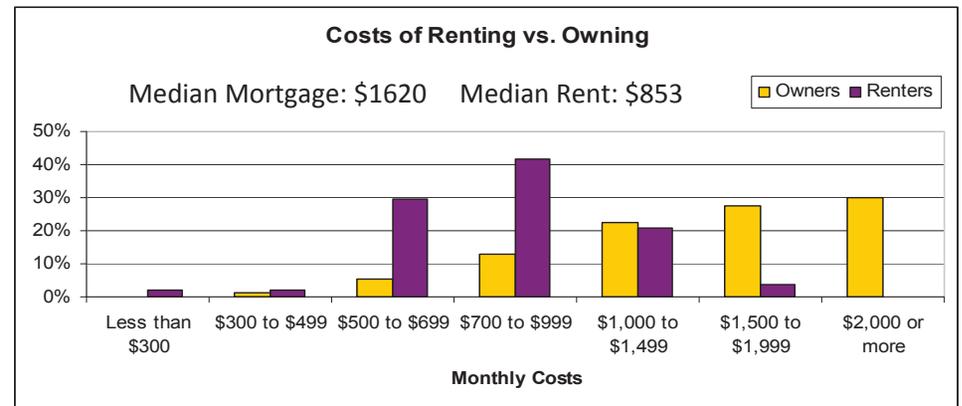


In 2010, the City had 11,872 housing units for 26,203 persons. In 2008, the last year for which detailed data is available, Winchester had 11,588 housing units for 25,773 persons. Census surveys estimated 1,677 vacant units (14 percent vacancy). Of the rest, owners occupied 51 percent, and the other 49 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 85 percent.

The chart at left shows the age of Winchester's housing stock. About 24 percent of the city's houses predate 1939, 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, shown in orange and pink, is old but not historic. Some of these units are nearing the end of their economic lives.

The chart on the right shows the monthly costs paid by owners and renters in Winchester. Most renters pay less than \$853 per month, whereas most of the city's largest and finest homes are owned. The city does not have very many luxury rental 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 2,000 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.



# CHAPTER SEVEN - HOUSING

## FUTURE TRENDS

### What kinds of housing does Winchester need for the future?

Chapter Two explains the demographic changes coming to the city. In order 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 29,300 by 2020 and 32,500 by 2030. 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 an unofficial title of 'Recovery City' and is in conflict with the vision for a sustainable community of choice.

Of the estimated 25,773 residents of the City in 2008, a total of 23,899 were identified as residing in households (i.e. not group quarter population). In 2008, there were an estimated 11,588 dwelling units, of which 9,911 were occupied. Assuming a Census average 2.41 persons per dwelling and assuming no increase in the percentage of group quarter population, , that means that an average of 112 new housing units must come onto the market each year to support the projected growth noted in the previous paragraph.

Factoring in a normal vacancy rate of 10 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 houses: most open space is important for environmental sustainability and recreation. Therefore, suburban-styled development of detached houses on large lots is not a long term option. The new housing must take the form of increased density including apartments 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 housing to meet the needs of large households and couples with children. Family needs can be met while aligning growth to three demographic growth groups:

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 without children often seek housing near their jobs and the shopping and entertainment options of a 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 and social and cultural interests.

## CHAPTER SEVEN - HOUSING

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.



*Mixed-Use redevelopment underway downtown.*

This means:

- More quality apartments 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 development.
- Converting or demolishing obsolete and blighted houses to result in more desirable housing types.

Today, Winchester does not have enough of the kind of housing that the future requires. Considering the natural rigidities of the housing market and the current pressures against financing new development, there is a role for the City to improve market functionality.

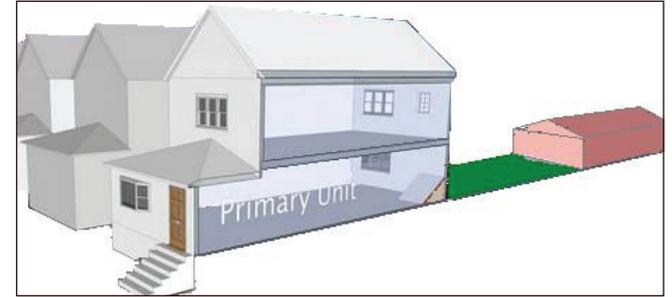
City staff should work with developers to remove obstacles to the creation of a more vibrant housing stock. At the level of individual houses, there are already some incentives for rehabilitation. A homeowner or landlord who improves the value of a house that is at least 25 years old and situated within 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.

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.

## CHAPTER SEVEN - HOUSING

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 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 on the right are not allowed in most areas. Yet they offer an easy increase in density, especially for students, without changing the façade of a house. As long as alleys offer safe emergency access, these units should be more generally permitted.

Conversely, the Zoning Ordinance should contain restrictions on undesirable housing types. The city has many stable residential neighborhoods where no great change makes sense. In these neighborhoods, the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family rental use should be discouraged. 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-income housing. Management and maintenance of low-income housing developments should be carefully scrutinized by the City to ensure that they do not become tomorrow's slums.

## CHAPTER SEVEN - HOUSING

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 following 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.

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 Help with Housing, Habitat for Humanity, and The Salvation Army provide counseling and support. The city's Office of Housing and Neighborhood Development (OHND) provides assisting through housing vouchers.

Winchester does not have any public housing projects. Instead, OHND provides vouchers to households earning less than half of the local median income –about \$29,000 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. As of July 2010, OHND subsidized housing for 253 households. Some 94 others remained on a waiting list, and there is no way to know how many families have given up applying or do not understand the program. There is no shortage of landlords willing to partner with OHND. The voucher program promotes mixed income neighborhoods, prevents homelessness, and preserves free market choices.

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.

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.

Finally, while this Plan distances itself from prior Plans that discouraged 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 a number of years ago.

*chapter 8*

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & 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

Winchester's four elementary, one middle, and one high school educated 3,740 pupils during the 2009-2010 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.



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

## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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 41 percent of the funding in 2010. 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:

- [Apple Valley Montessori School](#): Self-directed education for ages 3 to 6.
- [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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## 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 Winchester. The Methodist-affiliated university had 3,393 students in the fall of 2007, 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 50 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.

[Lord Fairfax Community College](#) (LFCC) 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 LFCC and then transfer to earn a bachelor's degree. 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.

LFCC 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## JOB TRAINING

As noted above, LFCC 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 LFCC.

[Northern Shenandoah Valley Adult Education](#) provides classes online, at the Dowell J. Howard site east of the city in Frederick County, and at the Douglass Learning Center on North Kent Street. 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.

## EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

City Council identified the following goal for citywide education: 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 supporting 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.
- 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND CULTURE

Recreation facilities and open space make a city more sustainable. They improve physical and mental health, and they support a healthy urban ecosystem. 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 the parks benefit from attractive open space and increased property values. Altogether, the recreation system at neighborhood, community, and regional levels offers a variety of opportunities to the people of Winchester.

The seven city schools (including Douglas Learning Center), plus the county's two middle schools inside the city limits, all provide play area. Schools form hubs for neighborhood recreation and social activities. Combining school and park sites allows more efficient use and maintenance of space. However, dispersing park facilities more widely provides recreation 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. Areas in red show prime locations for new neighborhood parks. To date, Winchester has not taken advantage of local parks smaller than one acre.

The [Winchester Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#), adopted in 2009, includes a comparison of Winchester's recreational facilities to national guidelines and documents the surpluses and deficiencies at length. An updated plan is commencing in 2011.

Jim Barnett Park encompasses about 170 acres in the East Central area. This park serves diverse groups and uses. Recreation 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](#)

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

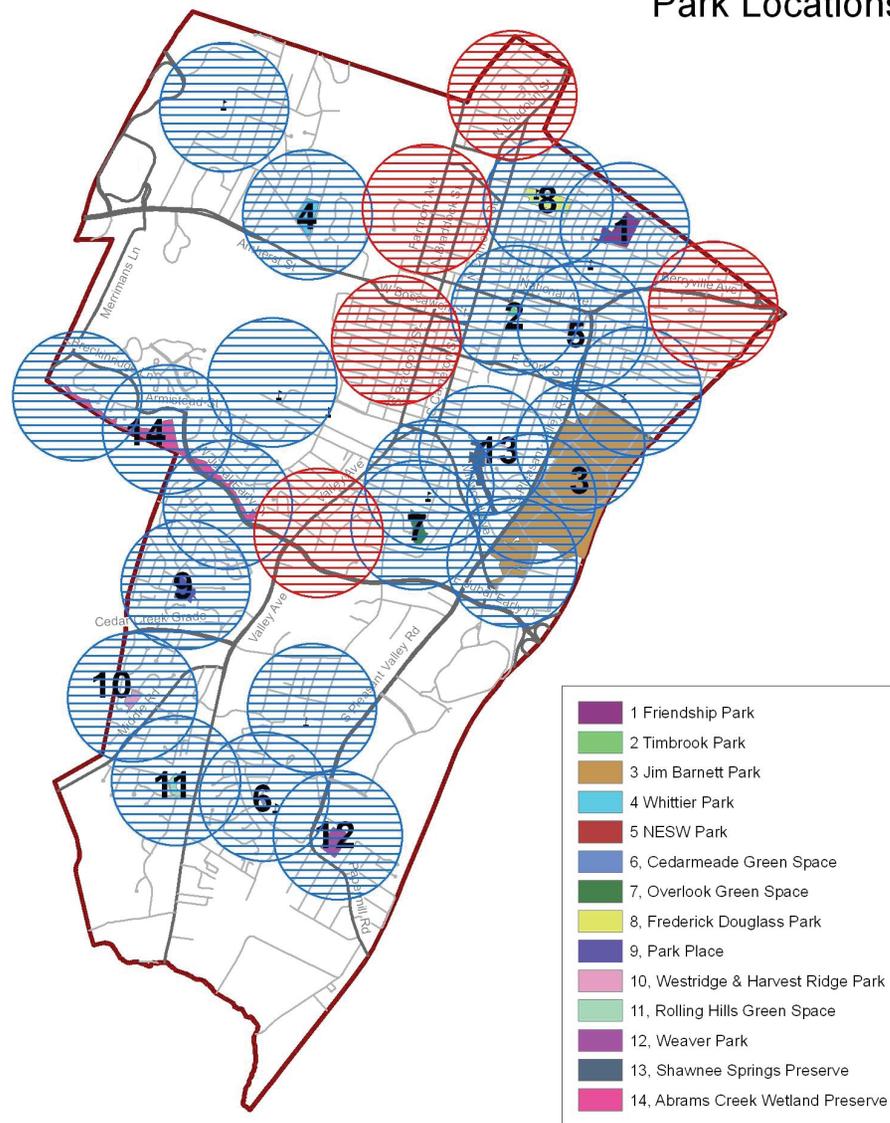
administered by the U.S. Forest Service, are nearby. The public can tour preserved Civil War battlefields in Middletown, Kernstown, and Stephenson. In addition, there are over 60,000 acres of state managed land including wildlife management areas, public fishing lakes, state forest and natural areas. Neighboring Clarke County hosts the state arboretum at [Blandy Farm](#).

## FUTURE PARK 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. 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.

Park Locations



## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

The state and federal parklands will serve regional needs for the foreseeable future. But all neighborhoods do not 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 below transforms a vacant and blighted corner lot into a social hub.

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, rest and social gathering, 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 recreation 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.



# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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

Shenandoah University's [Alson H. Smith, Jr. Library](#) primarily serves students, but it is open to the public. The Smith library has a notable collection of musical recordings and scores. There is also a medical library 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 at left, 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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 of 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. Council also stated four more specific objectives:

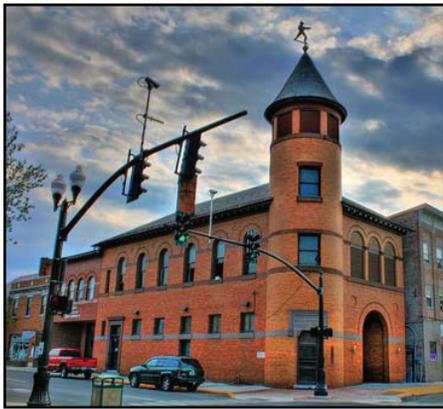
- 1) Develop quality active recreational facilities that meet the growing recreational and fitness needs of all age groups, particularly those helping to address the growing national health concerns related to obesity and those identified as critical needs in the Needs Assessment included in the City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

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### POLICE, FIRE, AND RESCUE

The city 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 located in the southern portion of the City, and Friendship is located 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 also maintain the Volunteers in Policing program -city residents responding to citizens' needs, providing more eyes on the street, and doing community service work.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCY

The greatest natural or manmade disasters overwhelm one city's capacity to cope. So preparing for emergency involves cooperating and training with neighboring localities 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. It currently serves as the detoxification center and [court services center](#). Depending upon future needs, the building may be adapted and reused more compatibly with the surrounding historic district and Residential-Business District zoning.

## 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. Council also stated three more specific objectives:

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

- 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.
- 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.

## 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 Frederick County Middle School property just east of the MC district on Linden Drive may also present an opportunity.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

The old hospital site at 333 West Cork Street near the downtown now houses a [rehabilitation center](#), [hospice](#), medical offices, and Shenandoah University uses. Use of this facility is likely to increase with demographic changes in the city. While presently surrounded by medium density residential areas, this facility also has potential as a hub for denser mixed-use redevelopment.

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 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](#) at 10 Baker Street and 107 North Kent Street in close proximity to 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## 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 their children to daycare and then walk to work. Two facilities in the city receive 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 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## 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.

[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 Kirby 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. Council also stated five more specific objectives:

- 1) Assist persons and families overcome poverty, abuse and neglect.
- 2) Stem the growing rate of teen pregnancy in Winchester.
- 3) Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

- 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 in the interest of social sustainability.

### UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

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

#### 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 final 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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 rain water to creeks so as 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 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. 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 in order 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## 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 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 invest in more machinery to harness this "biogas," or to partner with the 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. Crowding often forces the euthanasia of animals, but there are no firm plans to relocate or expand the facility.

### 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.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## 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, and Visual Link provide internet service. Winchester Wireless provides point-to-point wireless service. Cellular broadband or 3G mobile internet use is also increasing.

## NATIONAL AND LOCAL TELEVISION

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

Local programming, including news, weather and live broadcast of monthly City Council meetings is provided over the local access station of cable television. An ABC affiliate, [TV3 Winchester](#) broadcasts from the Vickers Communications Building on the Shenandoah University Campus.

## RADIO

Numerous radio stations serve the Winchester area and at least three stations broadcast from the area providing a wide range of programming. Within the City, WINC operates on both an AM and FM frequency with transmitting facilities situated adjacent to the studios at 520 North Pleasant Valley Road. WUSQ and WTRM also operate locally on the FM frequency. Public radio reaches the area from West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## NEWSPRINT

Two daily (except Sunday) newspapers cover news in the Winchester area. The [Winchester Star](#) with offices and printing facilities at 2 North Kent Street has the largest circulation in the City and contains the legal ads for City matters. The [Northern Virginia Daily](#) main office is in Strasburg, but it maintains a branch office at 14 West Boscawen Street. The Washington Post and Richmond Times-Dispatch are among other larger newspapers available locally everyday.

*chapter 9*

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



# 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. That 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 development to meet the needs of a changing population.

## CITYWIDE LAND USE OBJECTIVES

As noted in Chapter Three, City Council also stated seven objectives in support of the land use goal:

- 1) Incentivize the construction of compact, new mixed use projects as a viable reuse of obsolete strip commercial and industrial properties.
- 2) Provide the citizens of the community with a healthy, attractive and safe physical environment which includes convenient access for all modes of transportation.
- 3) Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units in order to attract higher income residents 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.
- 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.
- 5) 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, and in harmony with other community development and which attract higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Reduce the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses.

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Planning for future development begins with a vision of the future and maintains that vision in mind. After that, a key question is what to change and what to preserve. A good plan uses the right tools to make change occur where it is needed. But those tools should be used carefully to avoid spillover where no change is desired. Other tools are used for preservation, but they, too, must be carefully used to avoid obstructing change where needed or desired. In the past, the land use regulations contained in the zoning ordinance were the planner's primary tools for guiding change or preservation. This plan notes the limitations of Euclidean zoning and embraces a broader set of options with a character map.

The City Council's stated objectives guide future land use needs. Winchester's land should be used to improve residents' quality of life by developing a more livable, sustainable, welcoming, and prosperous city. Previous chapters have discussed specific goals and objectives related to mobility, housing, business, and other topics. Land use has an effect on those topics, but so many other kinds of policy change.

## THE CHARACTER MAP

The next page shows the character map which will guide Winchester's growth. It has eight elements.

### Elements of the Character Map

#### 1. 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.

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

## 2. 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 back to life.

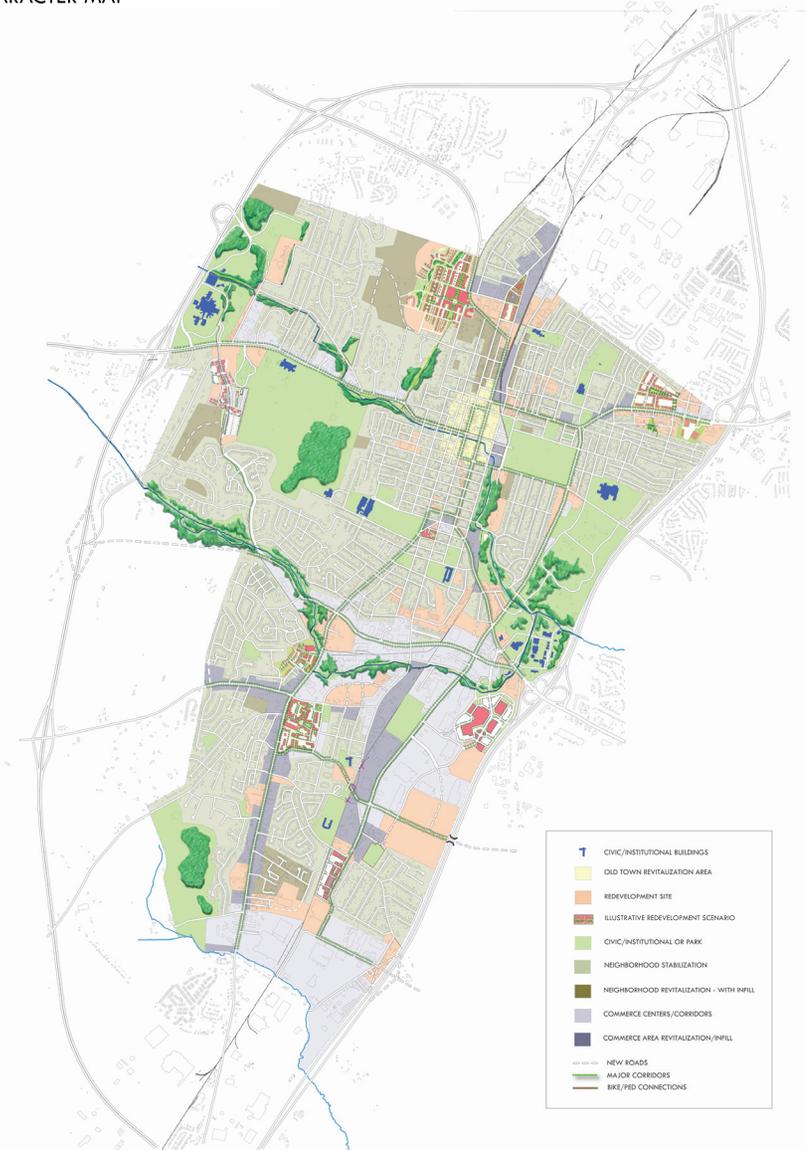
## 3. Commerce Centers/Corridors

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.

## 4. Commerce Area Revitalization/Infill

The Character Map calls for change in these areas. While zoned for commercial use, there are vacant or blighted properties, and many others are contributing 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 means attracting new and stronger companies, increasing property values, and promoting businesses that contribute to the sustainability of the community.

WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
CHARACTER MAP



See appendix for large-scale version of the Character Map

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

## 5. 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 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.

## 6. 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. But because of their size, location, or infrastructure, they have great potential. 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.

## 7. 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.

## 8. 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.

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

## 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 lags behind 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 on the types of uses 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 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 and opportunities for other core areas are identified, the benefits to 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. It may not be necessary to re-write the entire Ordinance; however, it is essential that certain guidelines be included so as to provide a mechanism for form-based codes and New Urbanism consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The end 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.

## 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.

An update to Frederick County's Comprehensive Policy Plan was underway at the same time that this update to the City's plan was underway. The most recently adopted version of the County plan (updated in 2007) contains a detailed [chapter on land use](#).

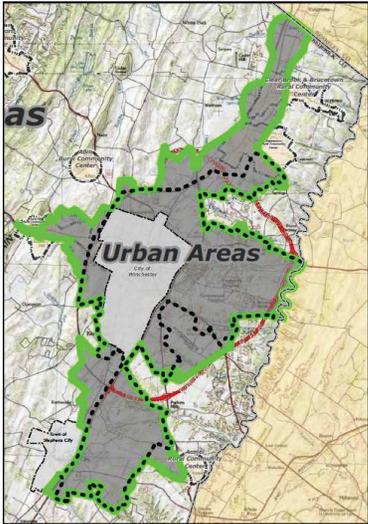
# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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 77,000 in 2010 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.

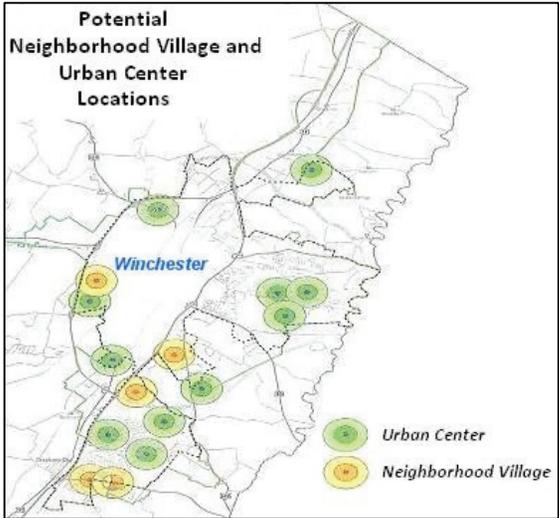
Current land use plans easily allow for 7,500 new dwellings in the UDA at a suburban density level of three units per acre. Density outside the UDA is slated to remain in the range of one unit per five to ten gross acres. In the urbanizing areas, townhouses and multistory apartments will become more common. Preservation of agricultural and forestal 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.



## 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.



# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

A quick review of the two graphics on the previous page depict 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 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.

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

## 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.**

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.

# CHAPTER NINE - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

## 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.

*chapter 10*

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION



# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & 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 to constantly improve the quality of life for those visiting, working, and living in the City.*

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 also do so.
- 6) Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

## 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 above 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.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN



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. Several redevelopment concepts in Chapter 11 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/North Loudoun Corridor concept.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN



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 interparcel 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.

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.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

## 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.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

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 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)

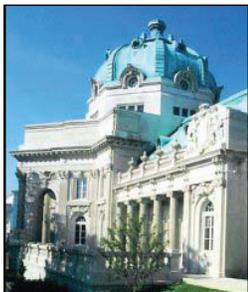
Districts have minimum setback requirements. Appropriate ordinances should consider the character of the city's different neighborhoods.

## 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.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

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



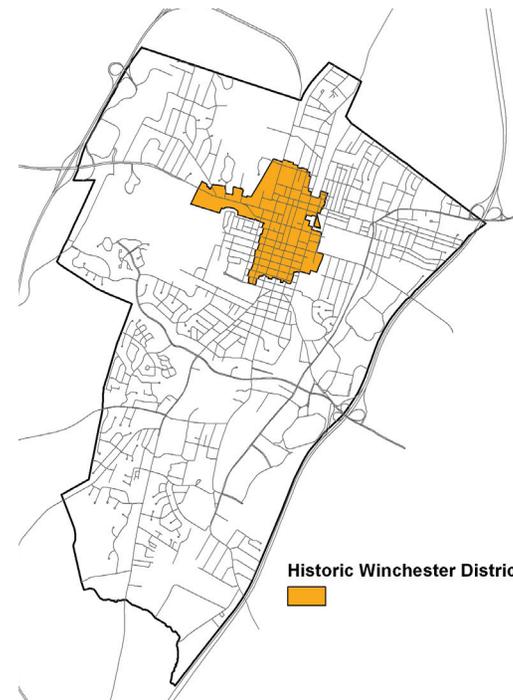
Winchester has a wealth of historic buildings. The City partners with the local historical society to interpret Abram's Delight, George Washington's Office, and Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters to the public. Historic structures such as Glen Burnie and the Pritchard House, are privately owned museums. 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 opened to the public have long histories adding to the architectural and cultural richness of the City.

Historic resources attract new residents and 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 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 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.

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.



# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN 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.

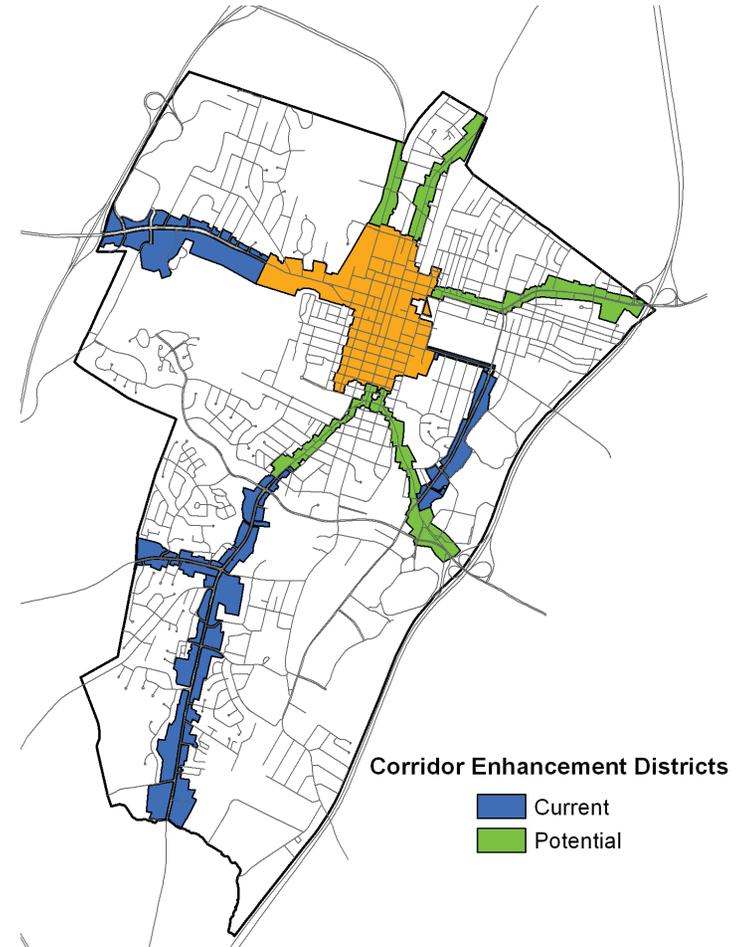
First impressions matter, so the streets along which visitors enter Winchester should feel welcoming. To create inviting gateways, the Zoning Ordinance includes **Corridor Enhancement (CE) overlay districts** along parts of nine important tourist entryways that were defined by City Council in 2005. Like 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 on the right show current CE Districts. The green sections show areas where districts are 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 CE Districts around its other gateways and proceed with the overlay rezonings.

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.

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.



# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

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.

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

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.

## **6. Encourage the use of Universal Design building techniques to meet the needs of all residents.**

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:

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

- 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).



*Preferred*



*Not Preferred*

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 should have a designated Urban Development Area (UDA) that concentrates residential and commercial growth. 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.

# CHAPTER TEN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN DESIGN

More work should be done to analyze future growth patterns. The trends in Chapters Two and Four, based primarily on trends represented from the 2000 Census and estimates prior to the national economic downturn 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 sprawl. City planners should expand their capacity to project different growth scenarios and the ideal government responses to them. Increased planning capacity at City Hall will also make it possible to gauge the benefits of the other changes. It should be possible, for instance, to compare resulting traffic congestion after New Urbanism reforms are implemented to what was projected by the MPO and noted in Chapter Six.

An updated zoning ordinance should allow New Urbanism tools and techniques of traditional neighborhood design noted in this chapter. Current law has barriers to traditional setbacks, mixed use, accessory dwellings, and other traditional elements that have defined Winchester's urban core and these barriers should be removed. 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.

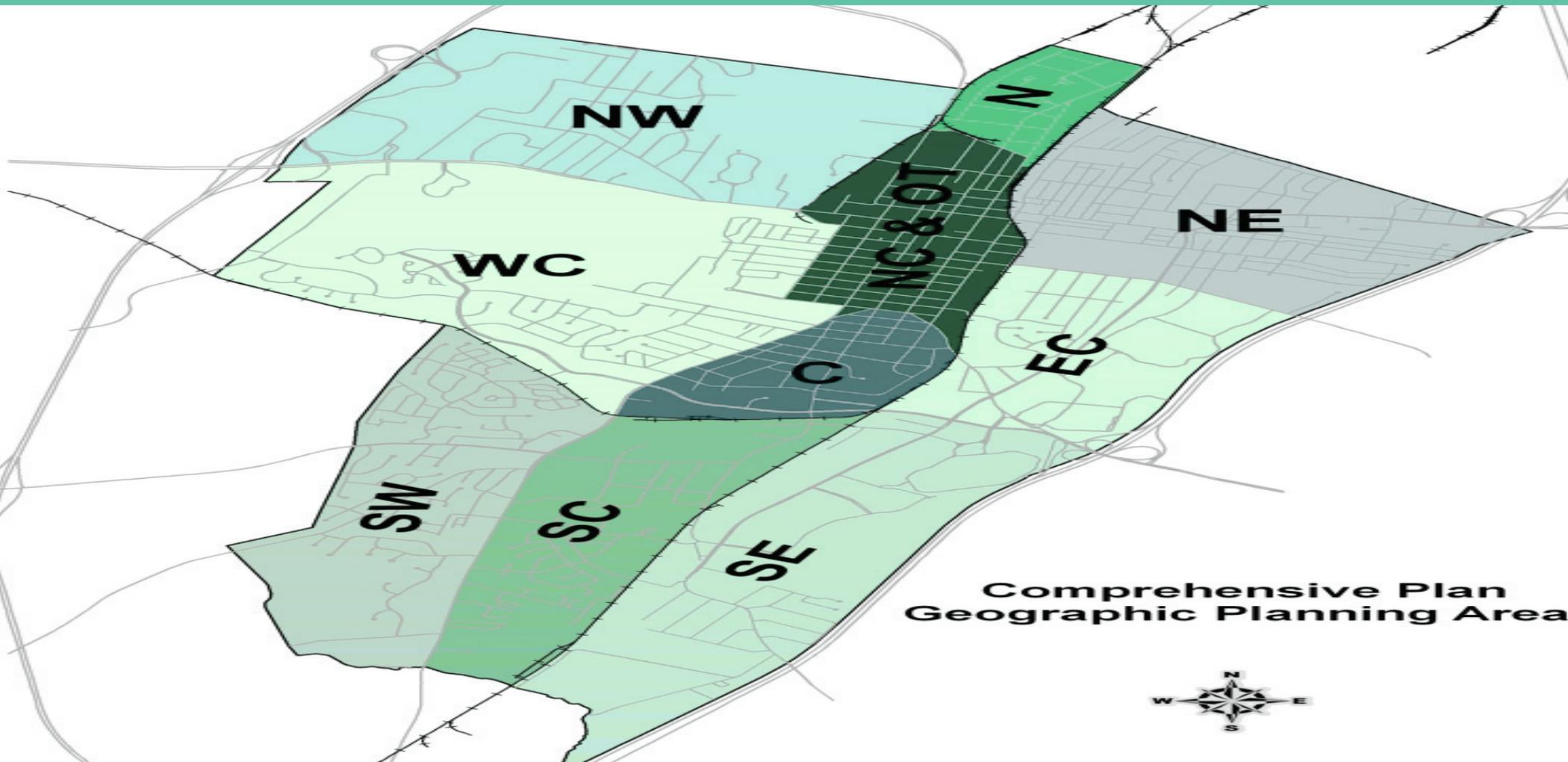
The Land Subdivision Ordinance also needs special attention. While subdivisions utilizing Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning permit flexible use of land, the current approach does not do enough to encourage traditional neighborhood design in all subdivisions. It is possible to build in a way that 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.

*chapter 11*

# GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



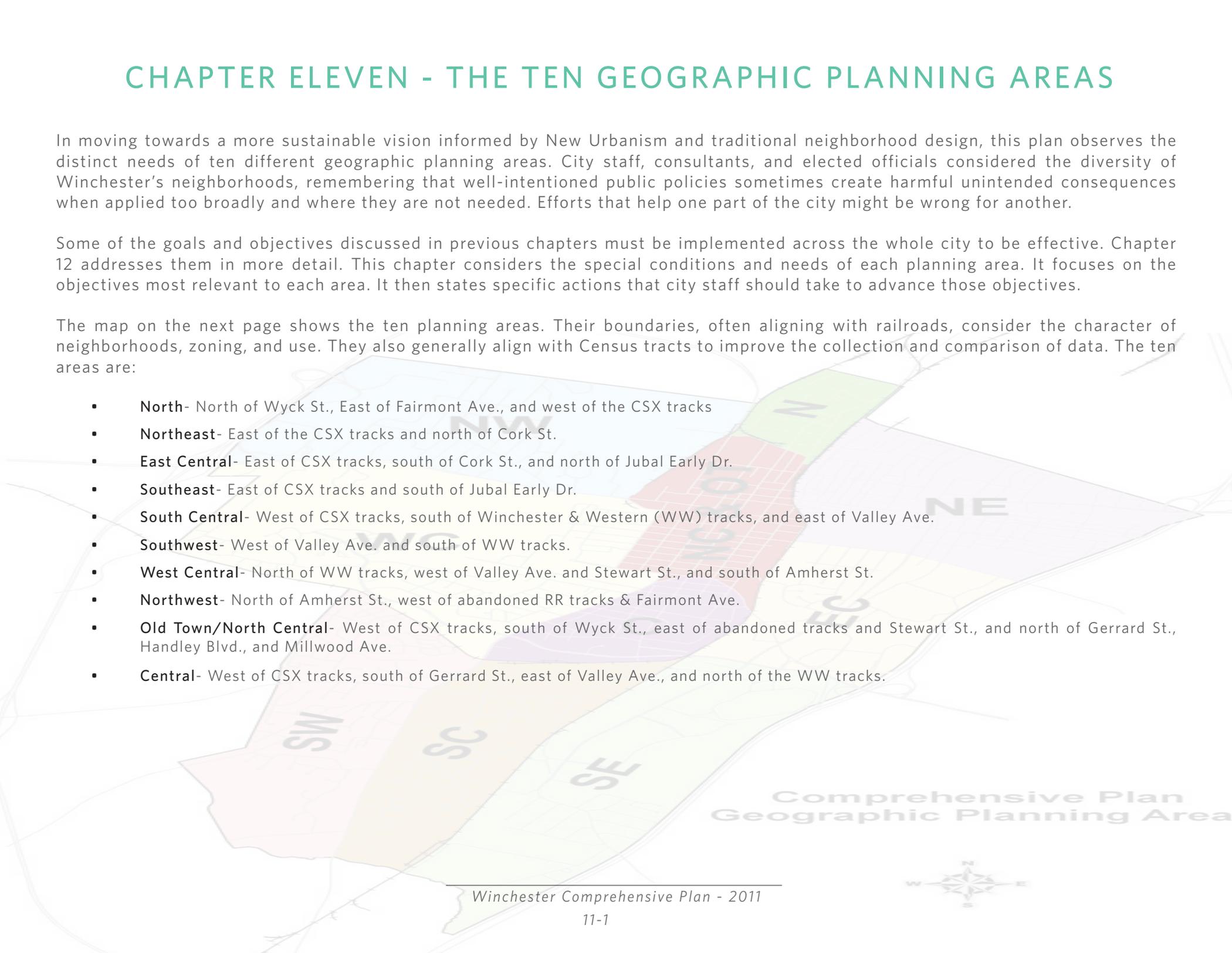
# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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. It then states specific actions that city staff 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:

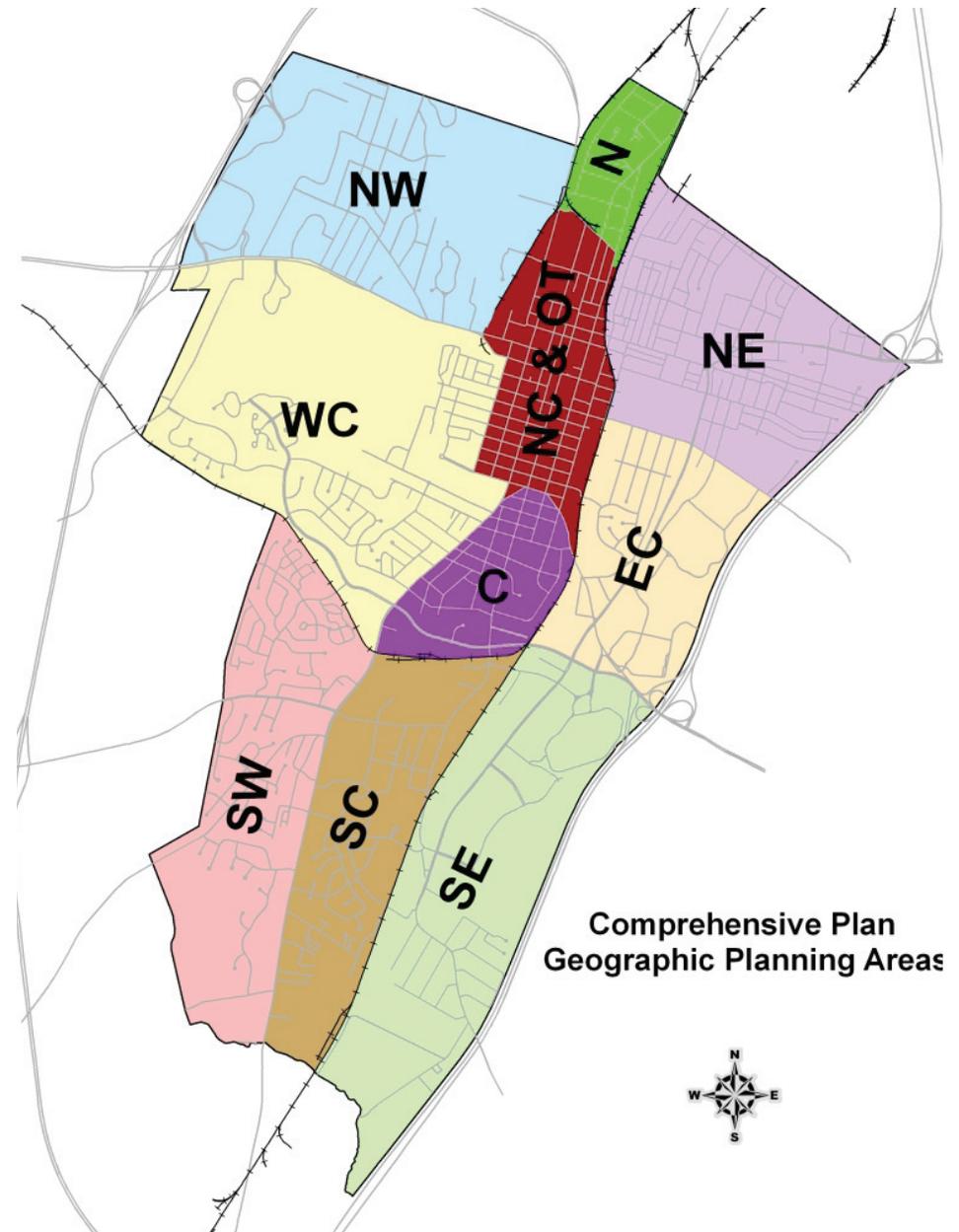
- **North**- North of Wyck St., East of Fairmont Ave., and west of the CSX tracks
- **Northeast**- East of the CSX tracks and north of Cork St.
- **East Central**- East of CSX tracks, south of Cork St., and north of Jubal Early Dr.
- **Southeast**- East of CSX tracks and south of Jubal Early Dr.
- **South 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  
Geographic Planning Area

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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 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.



**Comprehensive Plan  
Geographic Planning Areas**

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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
- Older but stable single-family and duplex housing areas
- Newer, high-density apartments and townhouses
- No parks or schools
- No clear community hubs

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

### Mobility

1. 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.*

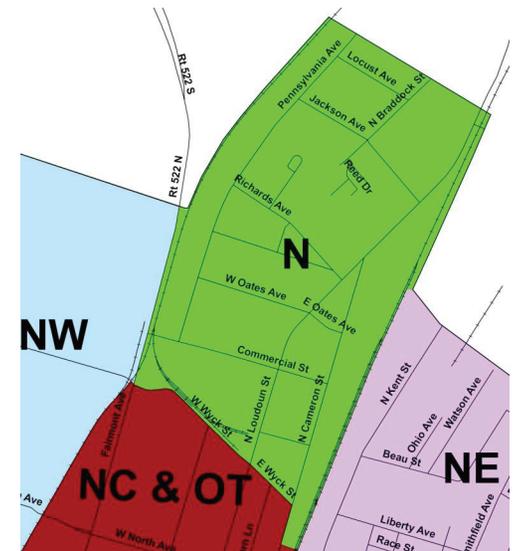
2. Alter conventional street standards, especially in mixed use and planned residential developments, by encouraging New Urbanistic layouts of interconnected grid streets.

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

3. 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 as recommended in the MUMI Study.*

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



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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

7. 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.*

9. 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.*

## Economic Development

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

*Action: Expand the analysis in the MUMI Study to include properties 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.

*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.*

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 Gibbens St. that should be consolidated to create major redevelopment opportunities.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Land Use

1. Incentivize the construction of compact, 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.*

3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units 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.

*Action: Continue code enforcement efforts 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. as suggested in the MUMI study.*

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: Determine the market for a large grocery store in either this North Area or the adjacent National Fruit site in the Northwest Area that could expand upon the products offered at the multiple convenience stores currently in the area.*

5. Develop a diversified, sustainable industrial base at appropriate locations which are accessible to transportation facilities, convenient to the workforce and in harmony with other community development and which attract higher income workers that contribute to the general betterment of the community.

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

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

6. 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 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 North entry corridor.*

## Parks & Recreation

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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 Gibbens Street to the south, and 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 potential CE overlay district. As the area redevelops, both streets should be equally prioritized for building frontage 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 East Commercial Street reflect the scale of adjacent buildings along East 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 East Commercial Street to provide parking for the surrounding area, while maintaining an urban form of development.



*Example of interior courtyard/public plaza*



*Example of small scale mixed use development fronting a bi-directional street*



*Example of larger scale office or industrial buildings*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## NORTHEAST (NE)

East of the CSX tracks and north of Cork St.

### Key Features

- Low density commercial to serve I-81
- Largest area population
- Some major areas of residential blight
- Some stable residential neighborhoods
- Significant low-income housing
- Good public resources: 2 schools, 2 parks, numerous churches.

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. and National Ave.*

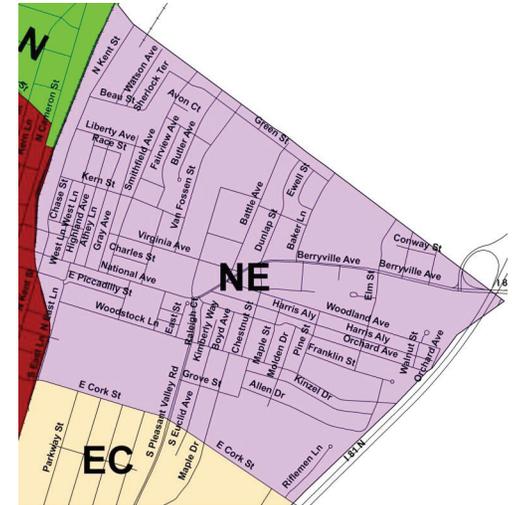
5. Identify and facilitate new infrastructure development to enhance and stimulate commercial development.

*Action: Promote the recent 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 interparcel connections and shifting Maple St. and Spruce St. to align with existing signalized intersections at Baker St. and at Apple Valley Square.*

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

*Action: Coordinate property consolidation of the separately owned residential lots along the south side of Berryville Ave. between Elm St and Woodland Ave.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

9. Proactively redevelop property where needed to achieve maximum 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

2. 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: 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.*

*Action: Study expanded permission of accessory dwellings to increase low-income housing and residential density.*

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

## 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: Spur redevelopment opportunities including mixed use and major commercial use and ensure the retention of the one grocery store 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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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- 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 in to the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

*Action: Implement the Corridor Enhancement (CE) Overlay zoning on properties along Berryville Ave. and National Ave. to improve the visual and functional aspects of the Route 7 entry corridor.*

## 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 and the Douglass Learning Center.*

## 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.

*Action: Provide adult learning opportunities at the Douglass Learning Center and Daniel Morgan Middle School.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS



## Northeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 1: Berryville Avenue Corridor

The images below offer somewhat different redevelopment scenarios for the Route 7 (Berryville Avenue) corridor extending from Interstate 81 on the east (left) westward toward the downtown area. Both scenarios include 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. A “fly-thru” video presentation of the lower redevelopment concept can be accessed via the [Comprehensive Planning](#) portion of the City of Winchester’s website.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Northeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: Baker Street Revitalization 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. The plan enables improved safety, intermodal accessibility, and traffic flow within a currently congested neighborhood. Proposed improvements include: new or improved public sidewalks; widening of existing streets; a new public street extension; additional on-street and off-street parking; improved lighting; the creation of newly subdivided residential lots; and, opportunities for additional green space within the community. City Council authorized implementation of the Baker Street Revitalization Plan in September 2010 and intends to proceed through the utilization of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, along with other financial resources such as private investment and public-private partnerships.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## EAST CENTRAL (EC)

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

### Key Features

- Shenandoah University hub
- Student population
- Stable single-family neighborhood
- Jim Barnett Park
- Low density commercial to serve I-81
- Visitor center, museum, and several churches

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 property between Spring St. and the K-Mart site to provide safe and convenient access serving new commercial development.*

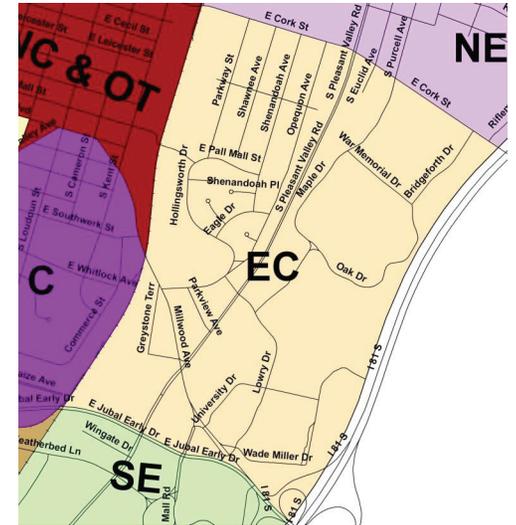
### Housing

2. 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: Work with the major owner of property along Millwood Ave, Opequon Ave and S. Pleasant Valley 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 permission of accessory dwellings to increase low-income housing and residential density.*

*Action: Study mixed use redevelopment of the City Yard linked to the Green Circle Trail.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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. Reduce the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses.

*Action: Work with the university to preserve tax-generating commercial activity near Exit 313.*

## Parks & Recreation

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 Parks & Recreation Master Plan for Jim Barnett Park.*

*Action: Partner with Shenandoah University to reintroduce the McCormac Amphitheater for seasonal entertainment and cultural offerings.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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

This irregular-shaped site consists of nearly 4 1/2 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 1 1/2 to 3 stories and take advantage of the sloped site to have at-grade access from both the front (toward S. Pleasant Valley Rd) and 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 might be for only bike/pedestrian and emergency access.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## SOUTHEAST (SE)

East of CSX tracks and south of Jubal Early Dr.

### Key Features

- No clear hub
- Sprawling “big box” commercial
- Aging Apple Blossom Mall
- No parks and little green space
- Heavy industry in NW and SW corner
- Stable residences in a range of densities and incomes

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

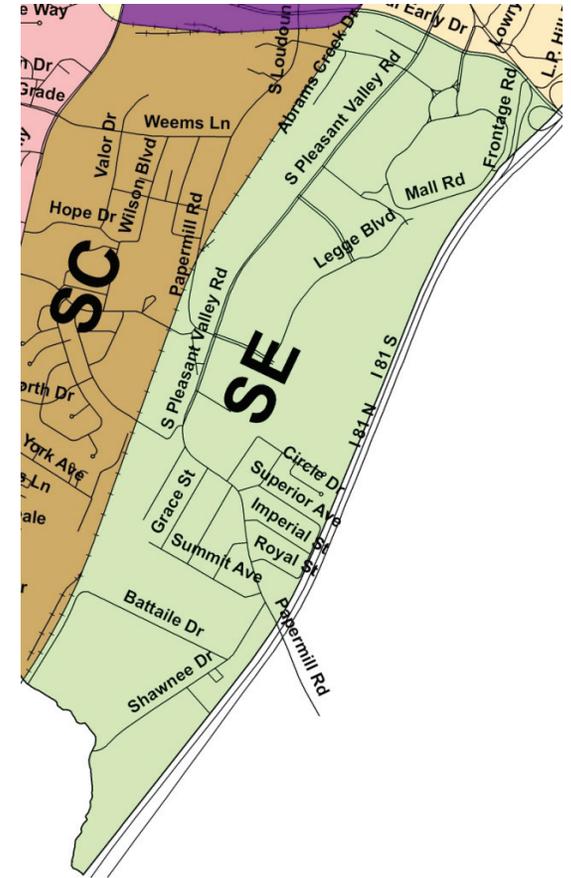
### Economic Development

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

*Action: 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, Norwood and other industrial property owners to create a secured data park for federal agency record centers.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Mobility

7. 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 private property developers through a Community Development Authority or other creative funding method to extend E. Tevis St to a proposed overpass of I-81 which would then connect with Rte 522 South.*

*Action: Continue coordinating with the MPO, VDOT and FHWA to advance the creation of an interchange on I-81 at Battaile Dr utilizing Collector-Distributor (C-D) Roadways.*

*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 Frontage Rd.*

*Action: Work with Shenandoah University, Apple Blossom Mall, and other major adjoining property owners to implement grade-separation as recommended in the adopted MPO Long-range Plan or other solutions to better handle east-west traffic.*

## Environment

4. Undertake riparian measures to address the causes of pollution contributing to the State designation of certain City waterways as "impaired waters."

*Action: Work with Apple Blossom Mall and Toy's 'R Us to establish sustainable riparian buffers along Abrams Creek between S. Pleasant Valley Rd and E. Jubal Early Dr.*

8. 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 hazards at the Abex site along the west side of S. Pleasant Valley Rd.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Parks & Recreation

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 land owners 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 E. Jubal Early Dr.*

## Southeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 1: Apple Blossom Mall



The regional mall, built in 1981, has remained largely unaltered and is due for repositioning from an economic sustainability standpoint. The expansive 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 illustrative development scenario shows a new spine road through the middle of the site, connecting Apple Blossom Drive and Legge Blvd. It assumes partial demolition of some existing mall square footage and the introduction of multiple

buildings linked by interconnected drives and smaller surface parking areas. To compensate for lost parking area, a parking structure could be included in the area between a 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 Jubal Early Drive.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Southeast Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: S Pleasant Valley Rd. / Battaile Dr.

This illustrative development scenario on the right shows an extension of S. Pleasant Valley Rd south to Battaile Dr., through undeveloped land to the north and east of the Henkel-Harris furniture facility in the Winchester Industrial Park near the southeast corner of the City. The scenario 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 secured office or data site without a residential component. Connecting Pleasant Valley Rd with Battaile Drive at the south end of the site would remove commercial traffic from the medium density single-family residential area along both sides of Papermill Road to the east. The graphic also depicts the possible introduction of a new interchange on I-81 at Battaile Drive.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## SOUTH CENTRAL (SC)

West of CSX tracks, south of Winchester & Western (WW) tracks, and east of Valley Ave.

### Key Features

- No clear hub
- Sprawling, aging highway commercial
- Vacant Montgomery Ward's site
- No parks and little green space
- Important industrial sites
- Stable residences in a range of densities and incomes
- One school, with few other green areas

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

### Mobility

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

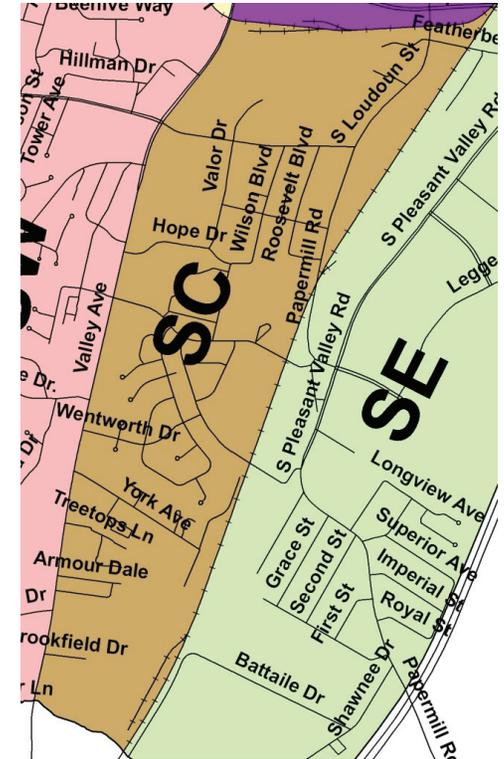
*Action: Work with the Packer St subdivision developer to extend Packer St as a fully extended through street connecting with W. Cedarmeade Ave.*

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

*Action: Utilize revenue-sharing or other matched funding sources to connect Hope Dr. eastward through the Robinson School site to connect with Papermill Rd. at a new intersection along the west side of the CSX Railroad.*

*Action: Utilize Urban Program funds as called out in the MPO Plan to undertake the design, right of way acquisition, and construction of Weems Lane widening.*

*Action: Secure funding to complete the drainage, curb and gutter, sidewalk, and bike lane improvements along Valley Avenue that were not done with the Phase 1 widening.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Economic Development

9. 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 development of the former O'Sullivan property to the north of Weems Lane and the former Robinson School site in a way that is compatible with adjacent residential and industrial uses.*

## Environment

4. Undertake riparian measures to address the causes of pollution contributing to the State designation of certain City waterways as "impaired waters."

*Action: Work with the State Dept of Conservation and Recreation, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, and with local partners including O'Sullivan Films and the Environmental Studies Department of Shenandoah University to develop strategies to improve the quality of the waterway.*

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

*Action: Work with O'Sullivan Films and appropriate State and Federal agencies to address unresolved landfill sites on the property.*

## Housing

2. 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: 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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

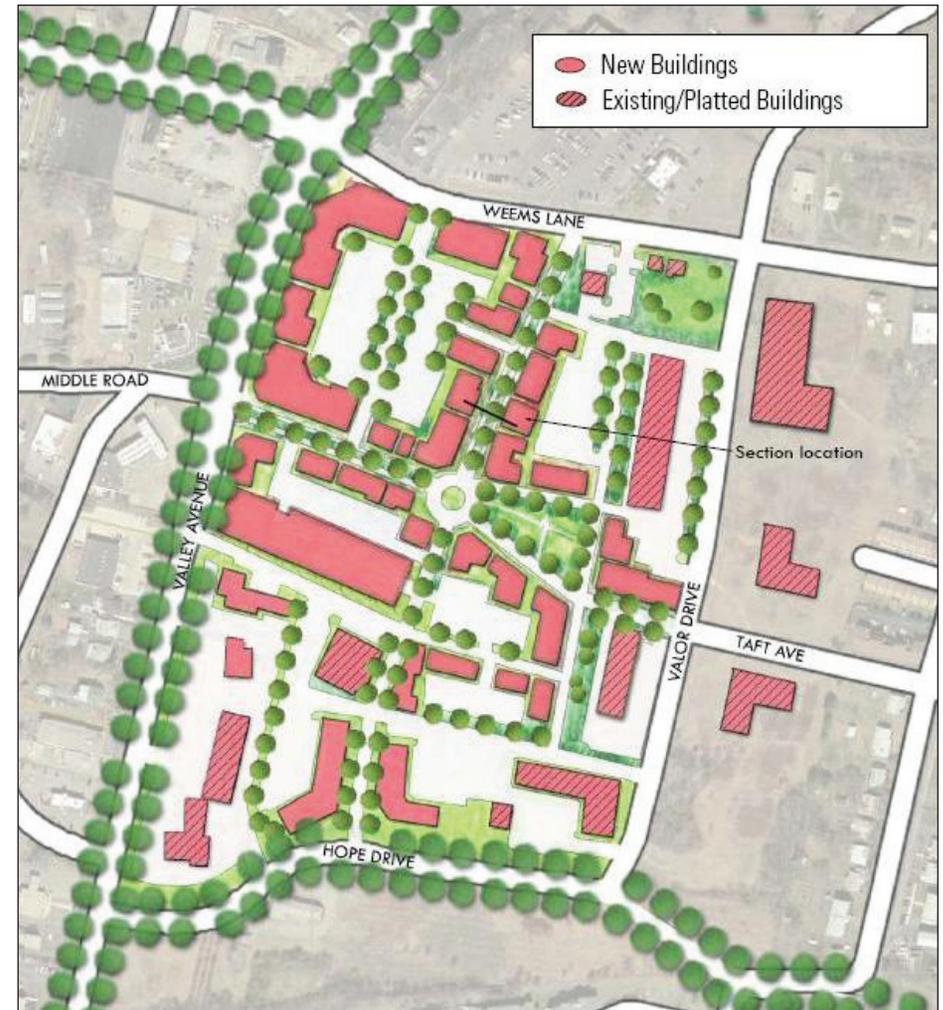
3. Facilitate the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units in suitable living environments while maintaining and preserving the existing character of vibrant residential neighborhoods designated in this Plan.

*Action: Preserve the character of housing in the Stonecrest and Cedarmeade subdivisions and rehabilitate housing in the York Ave and Pineville areas.*

## 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. 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.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## SOUTHWEST (SW)

West of Valley Ave. and south of WW tracks

### Key Features

- No clear hub
- New subdivision housing: low-density to south and higher-density to north
- Some aging highway commercial
- Low-income transient housing in motels
- Underused warehouse facility
- Two neighborhood parks, large battlefield park, and a large church property

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

### Economic Development

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

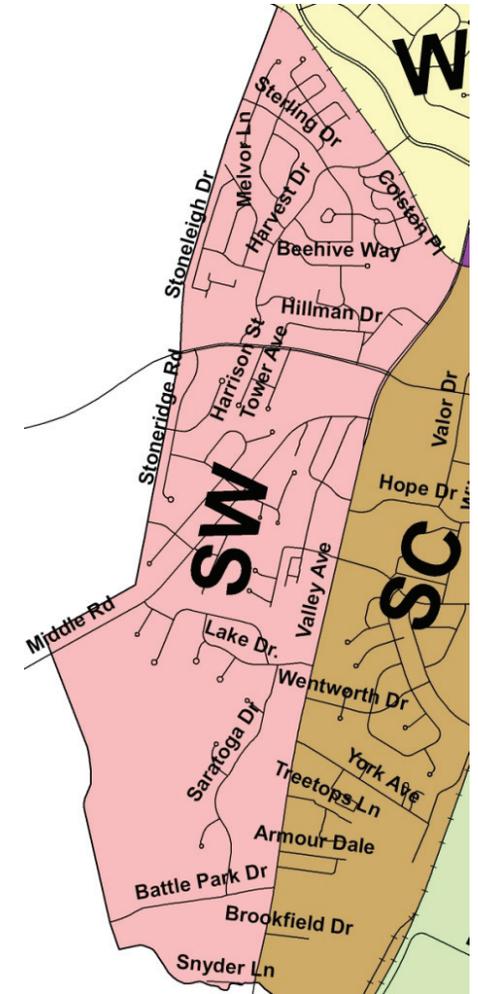
*Action: Redevelop obsolete and blighted commercial properties along Rte 11 such as the three older motel sites and the nonconforming Simbeck Truck Terminal site.*

*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

1. 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.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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: Expand commercial use along the Cedar Creek Grade corridor.*

## Parks & Recreation

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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 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 the residential units in the tall historic warehouse structure, near row houses, duplexes, and single-family detached units could be added, backing up to and connecting in 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.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## WEST CENTRAL (WC)

North of WW tracks, west of Valley Ave. and Stewart St, and south of Amherst St.

### Key Features

- Potential hubs at rehab center, regional museum, and 2 schools
- Stable, high-income, low-density residences.
- Wetlands Preserve and Green Circle Trail spur
- Old plantation's open space, 4 schools, and multiple churches

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 including school use and planned unit development in conjunction with construction of Meadow Branch Avenue near Amherst Street.*

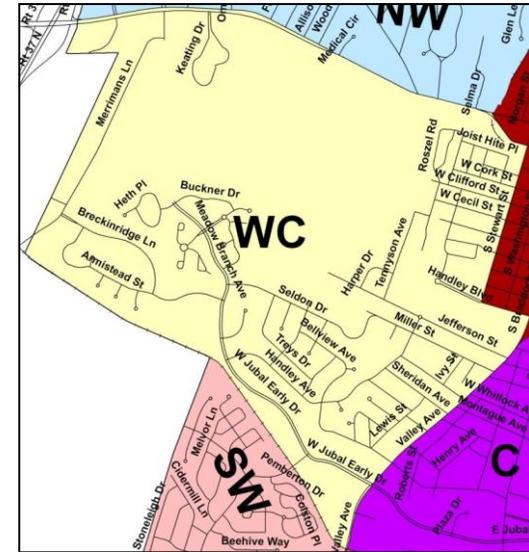
*Action: Encourage redevelopment of older commercial sites on Amherst Street.*

### Mobility

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

*Action: Extend Meadow Branch Avenue from Buckner Drive to Amherst Street*

*Action: Extend W. Jubal Early Dr west to County line for future connection to Rte 37*



## CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

### Parks & Recreation

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 land owners to provide easements for and construction of the Green Circle Trail along the south side of Jubal Early Drive and the east or west side of Meadow Branch Ave, including a spur on the east side to connect with future private trail network on the Glass-Glen Burnie Foundation property.*

*Action: Utilize federal Safe-Routes-to-School (SRTS) grants or other funding sources to construct a bike and walking trail across the Bridgeforth property to connect the Williamsburg Heights Subdivision to the John Handley High School along Jefferson Street.*

### Design

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.

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

*Action: Consider establishment of National Historic District designation for the area around the old hospital including South Stewart St as well as the area containing Craftsman-styled homes along the west side of Valley Ave between Bellview Ave and Jefferson St.*

### 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: Explore the feasibility of attracting a specialty or high-end grocery store to serve the high-income households in this area as well as the Old Town and Northwest Planning Areas.*

6. 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, civic, and health needs of the community.

*Action: Anticipate the closure of the existing John Kerr Elementary School on Jefferson Street and consider reuses for the property that enhance the livability of that area while also facilitating the establishment of a new, larger John Kerr Elementary School along the west side of Meadow Branch Avenue extended.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## West Central Planning Area Site Development Concept: Meadow Branch Avenue Extension

The extension of Meadow Branch Avenue through the Ridgewood Orchard (Smith) and Moffett properties between Amherst St on the north and Buckner Drive within the Meadow Branch North subdivision to the south offers many opportunities for mixed use. The Comprehensive Agreement associated with the PPEA for construction of the replacement John Kerr Elementary School on the Ridgewood Orchard and DBL Holdings property will result in roadway and Green Circle Trail improvements as a center spine for development. The neighboring regional medical center makes the site attractive to housing for high-income professionals and seniors. As part of a Planned Unit Development, a variety of housing types, ranging from luxury condominiums/apartments to high-and mid-rise retirement housing and assisted living, may be appropriate for the central portions of the site. Zoning for development in this central area should be medium density unless age-restricted housing is proposed, in which case, high density zoning may be appropriate. The portion of the site between the new school and Amherst Street may be appropriate for planned commercial use including offices and retail. The south portion of the site is best suited for low and medium density clustered residential use compatible with adjoining development in Meadow Branch North.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## NORHWEST (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.*

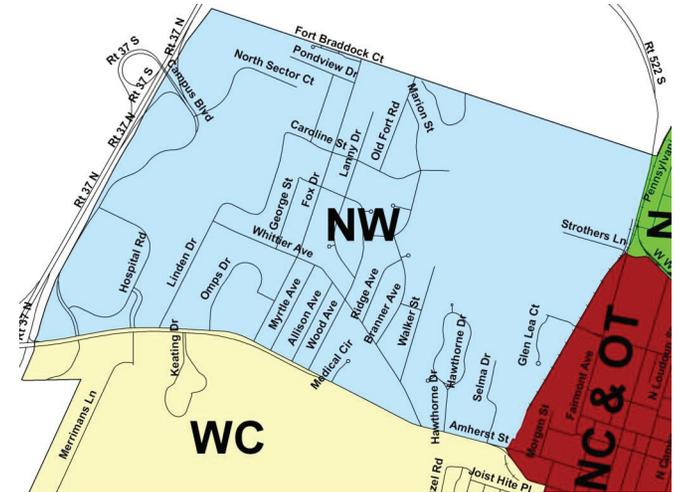
### Mobility

2. 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.*

9. 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).*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 commercial redevelopment alternatives for the Frederick County Middle School site that preserve neighborhood recreation facilities. 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: Frederick County Middle School

The 23-acre site housing the Frederick County Middle School on a plateau along the west side of Linden Drive is a potentially prime redevelopment site. The current facility, constructed in 1966, is among the oldest school facilities in the County public school system and has been considered for replacement by a middle school somewhere out in Frederick County and further away from the recently renovated James Wood Middle School (also inside the City limits).

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 for mixed use. Any nonresidential uses would need to be buffered to the single-family homes being constructed along the east side of Linden Drive. 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.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Northwest Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept 2: National Fruit

The large industrial tracts housing the National Fruit Product Company and the Frederick Fruit Growers Migrant Camp offer opportunities for creating a 'new town' at the north end of the City. The lower, relatively flat areas along Fairmont Avenue offer opportunities for reusing large brick industrial buildings



and the former corporate office building just south of Wyck Street. The intersection of Wyck and Fairmont could become a focal point for arrival into the City on Rte 522 via Rte 37 to the northwest. A roundabout could be incorporated into the design consistent with the recommendations in the MUMI Study.

On the steeper ridge area to the rear (west) portion of the site, medium density residential development could be introduced in a way that is sensitive to the environmental constraints of the site. In the graphic, streets follow the contours of the ridge, and trees prevent erosion while providing privacy. A network of roadways could be developed that link that residential development in with existing residential development to the west and south.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 and churches
- No parks and little green space
- Mixed uses, but many vacant buildings
- Obsolete and blighted industrial and commercial buildings on 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.

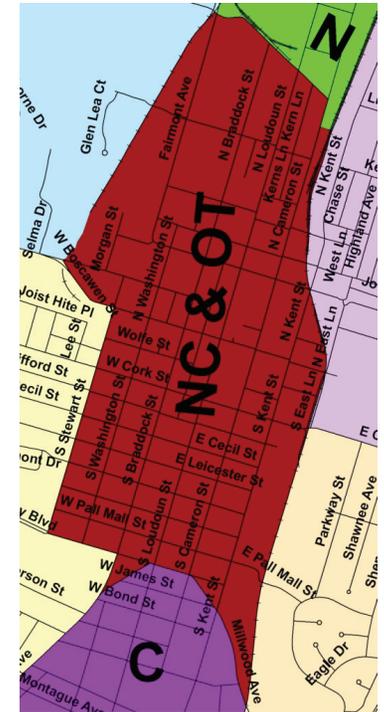
*Action: Work with the Department of Historic Resources and grassroots organizations such as Preservation of Historic Winchester to assist private redevelopers by providing grants to cover the upfront expenses until tax credits are realized.*

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

*Action: Facilitate redevelopment of the Taylor Hotel 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.*

*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.*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

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

6. 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.*

8. 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: Establish 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 in to the City's core historic district by utilizing a combination of standards and guidelines.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

*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.*

## Housing

2. 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.*

4. 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

6. 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.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

*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.*

*Action: Relocate the detox and court services from the old jail to less disruptive sites. Reuse the historic building for a public or private use more compatible with the area.*

## 7. Reduce the conversion of taxable property to non-taxable land uses.

*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.*

### 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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Parks & Recreation

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 including:*

- 1. the blighted property (146-148 N. Loudoun St) along the east side of the mall north of the alley beside the former Solenberger Hardware Store which provides a visual connection between the walking mall and the G.W. Parking Garage;*
- 2. the lots situated across from the Old County Courthouse where a westerly extension of the courthouse lawn would connect the historic center of the mall with an elevator/stairtower at the south end of the Braddock Street AutoPark; and,*
- 3. the southerly portion of the Taylor Hotel site which would expand the visual connectivity between the existing Braddock Street AutoPark and the 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 to a new facility farther west to improve response times. Preserve the historic fire hall for public or private use compatible with the downtown character.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Old Town / North Central Planning Area Site Redevelopment Concept:

### Downtown Courthouse Lawn Extension



EXISTING - VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM THE COURTHOUSE

This concept illustrates an idea to extend courthouse plaza across the pedestrian mall to North Indian Alley by removing two or three buildings across from the courthouse and expanding the plaza into the existing rear parking lots. The site extends to Indian Alley and the Braddock Street parking structure. A new “gateway plaza” would anchor the west end of the Loudoun Street Mall and welcome visitors parking in the garage and using a new stair and elevator tower.

The gateway plaza includes a landscaped pathway connecting Indian Alley through the site to the steps of the courthouse on axis with the statue in the square. The expanded plaza courtyard could host larger outdoor events, additional dining, or public gatherings. For the plaza to be most successful, liner buildings should flank the sides and back of the site, where room exists. Windows and doors should front the plaza and landscaping can be strategically used to highlight a pathway, provide shade and soften the lines of the hardscape elements. This design emphasizes the historic courthouse and further strengthens pedestrian connections to the Loudoun Street mall.





# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 the use of a Redevelopment Authority or other mechanism to undertake redevelopment of substandard 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 into 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 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.*

## 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.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## Parks & Recreation

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.

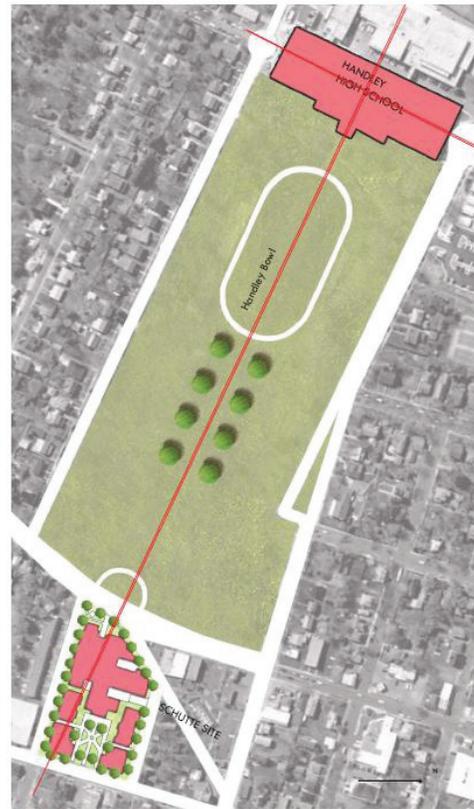
*Action: Work with private land owners to provide easements for and construction of the Green Circle Trail along the south side of Jubal Early Drive.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE TEN GEOGRAPHIC PLANNING AREAS

## 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 and access to downtown gives this site substantial development potential.

This illustrative development scheme rises seven stories from Valley Avenue, taking advantage of the City's existing economic development bonuses. This scenario could easily include over 100 residential units on the roughly 98,000 s.f. site encompassing an entire city block. The concept calls for 25% of the built square footage to be dedicated to commercial uses. By placing a structured parking lot within the mass of the seven-story building, The remainder of the site's interior open space can be utilized as a pocket park, surrounded by three- and four-story buildings that mirror the scale of the surrounding neighborhood. Additional open space is carved out of the Valley Avenue right-of-way, mediating the height of the building and allowing a park-like connection to Handley High School.



HANDLEY AXIS ALIGNMENT



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN



EXISTING SITE

### DESIGN CONCEPTS

- Park/Plaza fronting Handley High School
- 7 Story building steps back from Valley Avenue, providing terraced balconies
- Parking Structure embedded within the building and accessed from James Street

*chapter 12*

# IMPLEMENTATION



## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

Winchester's citizens tell city staff and elected officials that they do 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 economic partners." To that end, this Comprehensive Plan states eleven goals 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 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 issue. Planning and building such works often takes five to ten years, and the bonds financing them are repaid over twenty or thirty years.

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## UNDERSTANDING LABELS FOR ACTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

Scale	Timeframe	Cost	Examples
Policy	< 1 year	Minimal	Revise Zoning Ordinance; Telework training for city staff.
Program	1-5 years	Significant	Open a teen health clinic; Plant thousands of new trees.
Capital	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 the most 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. The Metropolitan Planning Organization, detailed in Chapter Six, provides a formal setting 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.

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## *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 City Engineering and Public Works departments set 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 & Map*

Chapter 9 describes the Zoning Ordinance and 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 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 Subdivision Ordinance regulates how larger parcels of land are split for multiple owners. Some of the fastest and most dramatic changes to urban geography and demography occur through large subdivision projects, 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.

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## *Historic District Design Guidelines*

Special land use and design rules apply in the city's historic district. Winchester's historic core contains many fine old buildings; it is a unique place to live 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 Development Board 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.

## *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, provide decades of benefits, and can be financed appropriately 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 with the plans and prospects of the City's finances.

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.

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES

Listed below are the objectives from Chapter Three which were not assigned to a planning area in Chapter Eleven.

### 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 (i.e. LEED certifiable) on major public construction projects and provide incentives for private development to also do so.

*Policy Action: Commit to build future Capital Plan projects to LEED standards.*

*Policy Action: Study the LEED bonuses in the Zoning Ordinance, and expand them if necessary.*

6. Encourage the use of Universal Design 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.

*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.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

### 2. Increase Median Household Income of City residents.

*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 \$13/hour. Adult education efforts also tend to increase earnings.*

### 3. Raise the average salary of jobs 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.*

### 11. Increase income levels of all employable citizens in order to facilitate improved prosperity and quality of life.

*Policy Action: Earned income tax credits encourage work and increase income with less red tape than welfare payments. City Council may advocate for more generous terms of the EITC.*

## 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.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

3. Increase the percentage of citizens with a post-high school graduation education.

*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

1. Reduce the City's carbon footprint and overall environmental impact on air quality by looking at the way City business is conducted on a daily basis and also encouraging residents and the business community to do their part in order to create a more sustainable and responsible community.

*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.*

3. Preserve healthy, mature trees and preserve and restore sensitive wetland areas.

*Policy Action: Work with developers to limit impacts on mature trees.*

*Policy Action: Revise City Code Chapter 9 to promote LID 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.*

*Policy Action: Based on a city-wide inventory, identify priorities for environmental protection among sites with significant ecological value.*

5. 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 LEED bonuses in the Zoning Ordinance.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

*Program Action: Support opportunities for City employees to attend LEED workshops and other training opportunities pertinent to sustainable development. Encourage the staff of local and regional corporations to attend. 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.*

7. Increase the rate of recycling and reuse while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill.

*Program Action: Study best practices, including fee structures, to reduce overall waste and increase the proportion recycled.*

9. Promote an increase in the City's urban tree canopy.

*Program Action: Implement the 2019 ten-year program to add 30,000 new trees.*

*Policy Action: Emphasize significant tree plantings through proffers, especially on parcels where canopy is less than 20% of area.*

10. 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 LFCC in city environmental actions.*

### Health and Human Services

1. Assist persons and families overcome poverty, abuse and neglect.

*Program Action: Improve capacity to identify families in need, inform them of available government and community services, and monitor progress.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

### 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.*

*Program Action: Support the efforts of "L8trbaby.org", a local collaborative effort of the Health Department, Winchester Public Schools and others to prevent teen pregnancy.*

### 3. Ensure that the health and human needs of the local population are adequately served.

*Policy Action: Maintain adequate funding of social services agencies.*

*Policy Action: Continue exploring the benefits of consolidated and/or co-located Winchester and Frederick County Social Services agencies.*

### 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.*

## 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.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

### 5. Increase homeownership opportunities.

*Policy Action: Other redevelopment activities should shift rental housing from detached single-family structures into denser forms, freeing homes for ownership. Staff research and Census data should be used to evaluate results.*

*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.*

### 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 tax assessment approaches.

*Policy Action: Study other revenue tools and real estate assessment methods such as income-based assessments that better align costs and benefits fairly.*

### 9. Discourage the conversion of single family detached units to multi-family rental units.

*Policy Action: Revise Zoning Ordinance to stiffen regulatory barriers to inappropriate home conversions in stable residential neighborhoods where mixed housing types are not recommended.*

*Policy Action: Emphasize construction of new multifamily units, the rental use of rear accessory cottages, and other alternatives to conversion of single-family homes.*

## Land Use

### 2. 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 2011 update of the 2008 Citizen Satisfaction Survey to benchmark changes in perception regarding the importance of various city services and the satisfaction levels associated with them.*

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## Mobility

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

*Policy Action: Support MPO efforts to add hangar space, technology, and amenities.*

5. Support the resumption of rail passenger service to Winchester.

*Policy Action: Monitor demand for a shuttle bus to Martinsburg and explore a public-private partnership.*

*Program Action: Partner with Amtrak and the Maryland Area Rail Commuter system to study long-term spur services connecting Winchester to Martinsburg, WV.*

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.*

11. 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.

*Capital Action: Implement the operational changes and undertake the capital expenses identified in the MPO Transit Study needed to develop a truly regional transit service that allows City residents to access services currently situated beyond the limits of existing transit routes.*

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

*Program Action: Encourage private-sector and government employers to provide 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.*

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## Parks and Recreation

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.

*Capital Action: Upgrade the radio equipment to fully comply with federal standards.*

*Capital Action: Continue renovating the Fire Training Center off Woodstock Lane.*

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.*

# CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

## 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 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. But making the plan a reality requires careful monitoring of progress to build on success, identify problems, find solutions, 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 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.

## CHAPTER TWELVE - IMPLEMENTATION

In creating this plan, city staff involved a diverse group of citizens. Such involvement should continue. As Winchester develops 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 normal 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.

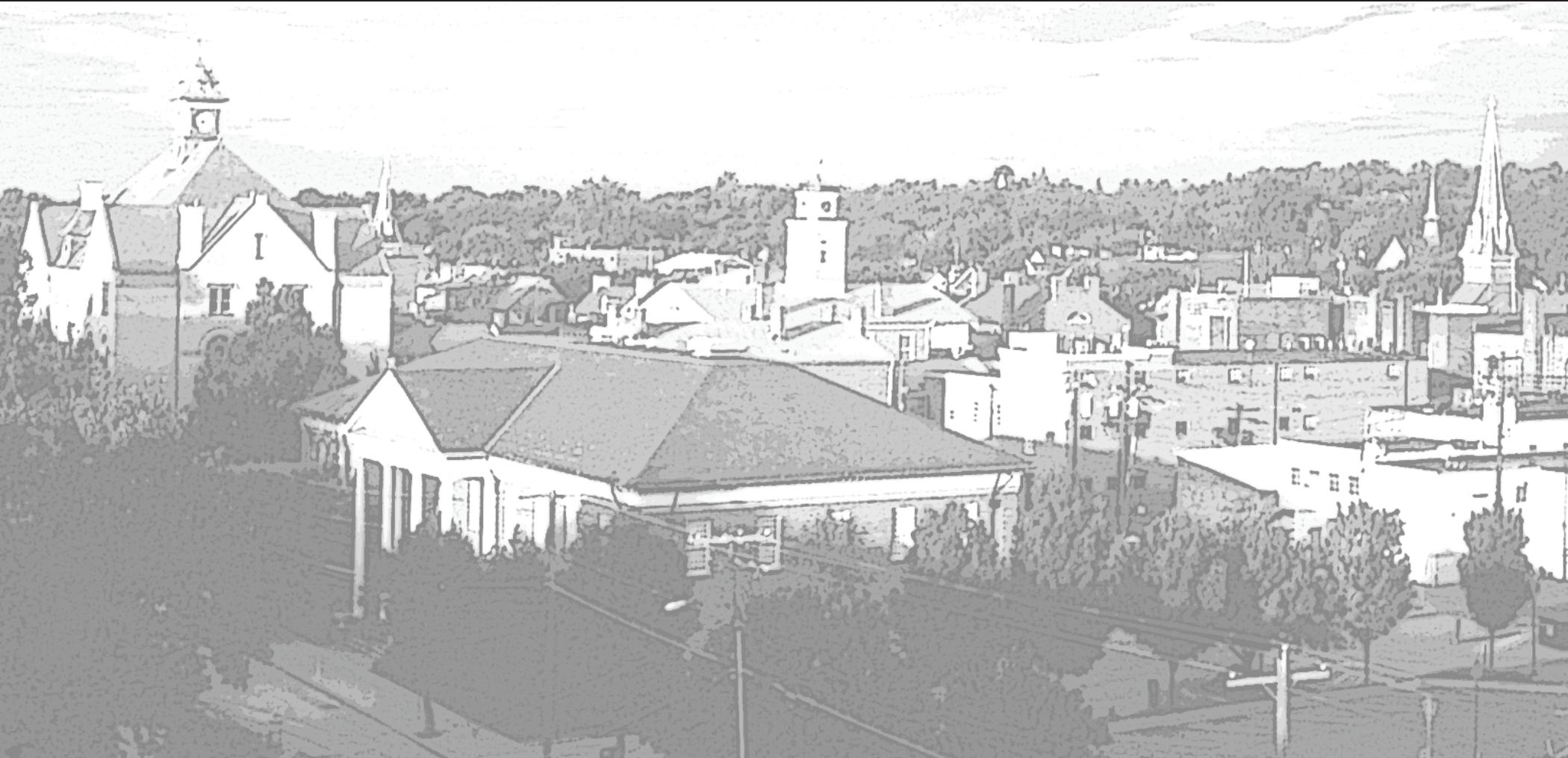
The Planning Commission's annual report should convey considerable detail to the City Council. There should also be status updates for the public in a more accessible form. Highlights and summaries of this Plan should be readily available as pamphlets and interactive digital content. Citizens should 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 2010 Census will have become available in 2011 and 2012 after 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 2015 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 represents a significant shift in the direction of Winchester's development. New Urbanism will not be finished in 2015. So 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.

# *appendices*



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Comprehensive Plan State Enabling Legislation

Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia provides the enabling legislation for how Comprehensive Plans are to be prepared and adopted and what must be included in the scope.

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.”

Comprehensive plans in Virginia are required to be general in nature as to how they designate the location, character, and extent of recommended features, such as a transportation improvement. However, they should specifically indicate where existing public facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use.

State Code specifically requires that the Winchester Planning Commission prepares and recommends a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City and that Winchester Common Council (‘City Council’) adopt the Plan. In the preparing the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission is mandated to make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of the City and its residents.

Comprehensive plans in Virginia are required to be general in nature as to how they designate the location, character, and extent of recommended features, such as a transportation improvement. However, they should specifically indicate where existing public facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use. Per Section 15.2-2223 of State Code, this may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
3. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
4. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;
5. A Capital Improvements Program (CIP), a Subdivision Ordinance, a Zoning Ordinance and Zoning District map;
6. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;
7. The location of military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas; and
8. The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more.

# APPENDICES

The plan must include designation of areas and implementation measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs within the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Planning District.

Further, the plan must include a map showing road improvements and transportation improvements, including the cost estimates of such road and transportation improvements as available from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the City while considering the current and future needs of the region.

The Plan, by means of maps, charts, and descriptive matter, must show the City's long-range recommendations for the general development of the City as called out by the plan.

Section 15.2-2223.1 requires that comprehensive plans include Urban Development Areas (UDA's) and provisions supporting New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND). Specifically, State Code requires that every city, town, and county, that: a) has adopted zoning pursuant to State Code; b) has a population of at least 20,000; and, c) experienced population growth of at least 5%, must amend its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate one or more urban development areas. Urban Development Areas (UDA's), per State definition, are locally designated areas that are appropriate for higher density development due to proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or proximity to a city, town, or other developed area.

State Code requires that the comprehensive plan provide for commercial and residential densities within UDA's that are appropriate for reasonably compact development at a density of at least four residential units per gross acre and a minimum floor area ratio of 0.4 per gross acre for commercial development. UDA's may provide for a mix of residential housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth.

Comprehensive Plans must designate one or more UDA's sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 20 years. Future growth is based on official estimates and projections of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia or other official government sources. The boundaries and size of UDA's must be reexamined and, if necessary, revised every five years in conjunction with the update of the comprehensive plan and in accordance with the most recent available population growth estimates and projections. UDA's may be areas designated for redevelopment or infill development. This is particularly relevant to Winchester.

Of greater importance than the establishment of UDA's to Winchester's Plan update is the state mandate that comprehensive plans incorporate principles of New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). These principles may include but need not be limited to (i) pedestrian-friendly road design, (ii) interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, (iii) connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, (iv) preservation of natural areas, (v) satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management, (vi) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, (vii) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (viii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

# APPENDICES

Per State Code, comprehensive plans must describe any financial and other incentives for development within UDA's. If the City of Winchester determines that its plan already accommodates growth in a manner consistent with the UDA, New Urbanism, and TND provisions of State Code this section, it could adopt a resolution certifying such compliance, and not be required to further amend its plan. Lastly, State Code requires that, to the extent possible, state and local transportation, housing, and economic development funding must be directed to UDA's. This is particularly relevant to allocation of State funding for roadway projects being considered in the non-UDA portions of adjoining Frederick County.

State Code requires that surveys and studies be made in preparing a Comprehensive Plan and specifically requires that the Planning Commission survey and study the following:

- Use of Land
- Character & Condition of Existing Development
- Trends of Growth or Change
- Employment & Economic Factors and Needs
- Transportation Facilities, including road improvements and any estimated cost thereof, and transportation improvements, and any cost thereof
- Historic Areas
- Natural Resources & Environmental Factors
- Ground & Surface Water protection
- Population Factors and Needs
- Existing Public Facilities
- Drainage, Flood Control/Prevention
- Need for Affordable Housing in City and Region
- production of food and fiber

The comprehensive plan must also recommend methods of implementation and must include a current map of the area covered by the comprehensive plan. Methods of implementation may include but need not be limited to:

- • An official map;
- • A capital improvements program;
- • A subdivision ordinance;
- • A zoning ordinance and zoning district maps; and,
- • A recreation and sports resource map

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 2

### PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

This update of the Winchester Comprehensive Plan was truly a collaborative effort of citizens, elected officials, and appointed officials working closely with a wide cross-section of City staff and, for the first time in many decades, a consultant team. The roles of certain key stakeholders such as the Planning Commission and City Council have already been noted above as mandated by State Code.

In addition to the Planning Commission, City Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee consisting of four (4) At-Large members and nine (9) members serving as representatives of existing boards and commissions. The nine boards represented were:

- Board of Architectural Review (BAR)
- Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
- Community Development Committee (CD Committee)
- Industrial (Economic) Development Authority (EDA)
- Old Town Development Board (OTDB)
- Winchester Parks & Recreation Board (WP&R)
- Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board (CTB)
- Winchester School Board (School Board)
- Tree Commission

At a staff level, preparation of the Plan Update was handled through a team approach which was led by Planning & Zoning staff. The multidiscipline team included representatives from many City agencies including planning, zoning, economic development, Old Town Development, engineering, public works, utilities, GIS, social services, parks and recreation, schools, fire and rescue, police, and tourism.

Consultant services were secured to assist City staff in selected tasks outlined in an approved Plan of Action adopted by City Council. Activities for which consultant services were used include: facilitating initial public input sessions, including a SWOT Analysis and an overview to educate the public of past and current conditions as well as future trends; compiling and analyzing responses from a separately contracted Citizen Survey and the four public input sessions; generating Alternatives and Scenarios consistent with newly defined goals to address identified issues and threats in each of ten geographic Planning Areas; developing graphics for public presentation and inclusion in draft and final Plan documents illustrating preferred alternative development models; and assisting the Commission and City staff with City-wide public information meetings to review suggested alternatives and scenarios. Additionally, the City asked the consultant to assist with redefining goals, evaluating alternatives, and preparing an Implementation Plan.

# APPENDICES

The City selected Herd Planning & Design, Ltd of Leesburg, Virginia with Milton Herd as the primary consultant. Mr. Herd assembled a consulting team that included Renaissance Planning Group (RPG) based in Charlottesville, Virginia to assist him. Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic led the RPG contribution which, notably, included creation of the Alternative Development Scenarios for the Key Redevelopment sites identified in this Plan. Michael Baker Corporation also served as a sub consultant to Herd Planning & Design on transportation issues.

## APPENDIX 3

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

A multitude of outreach efforts were employed during the various stages of this Plan update to engage the Winchester citizenry and economic community and solicit their input toward shaping the future vision presented herein. These efforts include maintenance of a webpage devoted to the Comprehensive Plan on the City's website, a 2008 Citizen Survey, a Visioning Exercise, a series of initial public inputs sessions during the summer of 2008, a public feedback session in February of 2010, and the state-mandated public hearings before the Planning Commission's recommendation forwarding the Plan to City Council, and the final adoption of the Plan by City Council.

#### Citizen Satisfaction Survey

In 2008, the City of Winchester contracted with ETC Institute, a private firm to professionally conduct a Citizen Satisfaction Survey. ETC Institute administered a DirectionFinder® survey for the City of Winchester. The purpose of the survey was to assess citizen satisfaction with the delivery of major city services as part of the City's on-going effort to identify and respond to the needs and concerns of residents. The five-page survey was administered by phone and mail to a random sample of households in the City. Response rate to the survey was very high indicating a desire for the public to provide feedback to the City on the importance of certain public services and the public's level of satisfaction with those services. The results for the survey of 1,019 households had a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 3%.

The report generated by the Citizen Survey is posted on the City's website and contains the following: a summary of the methodology for administering the survey and major findings; charts showing the overall results for most questions on the survey; an Importance-Satisfaction analysis; benchmarking data that shows how the results from Winchester compare to other communities; and finally, GIS maps that show the results of selected questions on the survey.

# APPENDICES

Major Findings from the Survey were as follows:

- **General satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the City of Winchester.** High levels of satisfaction with City services among residents were: the quality of public safety services (85%); the quality of wastewater utility services (78%); the quality of parks and recreation services (77%); and, the quality of water utilities (76%). Residents were least satisfied with the management of traffic flow on City streets (33%). It should be noted that the survey was undertaken just prior to the citywide traffic signal upgrade effort.
- **Three services that residents felt should receive the most emphasis from City leaders over the next two years.** The three City services that residents thought were the most important for the City to emphasize over the next two years were: (1) the management of traffic flow, (2) the maintenance of City streets and (3) the quality of public safety services.
- **Perceived Quality of Life in the City.** Seventy-nine percent (79%) of residents, who had an opinion, were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the quality of life in the City, 15% were “neutral” and only 6% were “dissatisfied.” Additionally, eighty-one percent (81%) of residents felt Winchester was an “excellent” or “good” place to live; 13% were neutral and only 6% felt it was a “poor” place to live.
- **Good Parks and Recreation.** The parks and recreation services with the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents were: the maintenance of City parks (80%), the number of parks (66%), the availability of information about programs (63%) and the quality of youth recreation programs (62%). Residents were least satisfied with walking and biking trails in the City (40%). It should be noted that the survey was undertaken prior to the major phase of Green Circle Trail construction from Wilkins Lake in Jim Barnett Park up to Pall Mall St near S. Kent Street.
- **Satisfaction with Public Safety Services.** Residents were generally satisfied with the quality of public safety services provided by the City. The public safety services with the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents were: the quality of fire services (89%), the quality of emergency medical services (88%), and how quickly fire and emergency medical service personnel respond to emergencies (88%). Residents were least satisfied with the City’s efforts to reduce gang related activity (55%).
- **Perceptions of Safety in Winchester.** Based upon the combined percentage of residents who felt “very safe” or “safe,” those residents felt most safe walking in their neighborhood during the day (92%) and walking in their neighborhood at night (55%). Residents felt most unsafe (a combined percentage of “very unsafe” and “unsafe” responses) in City Parks (35%).

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## Visioning Exercise

Separate from the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, the City solicited input via a Visioning Exercise. The simple exercise what undertaken to gauge the public's opinion on where the City was today versus where it should be in the future. This was done using the letters from two words. The initial exercise, which was primarily used to solicit input from internal City staff and participants in the City's annual citizen INSIGHT Academy, used the letters in the word W-I-N-C-H-E-S-T-E-R. As an example, using the first letter ('W') respondents described the current state of Winchester as: 'Worn out', 'Wishing', 'Ways set', 'Welcoming', and 'Weam'. For the future vision, phrases such as 'Wonderful Place to Live', 'Walkable', 'Willing to Change' and 'Welcoming' were listed.

A follow-up exercise that was placed out on the City's website and distributed during a Visioning reception held at the then recently reopened George Washington Hotel used the letters from the word D-R-E-A-M. using the first letter ('D') respondents described the current state of Winchester as: 'Dilapidated', 'Dingy', 'Divided' and 'Diverse'. For the future vision, phrases such as 'Dramatic', 'Drawn together', 'Downtown thriving', and 'Destination' were listed.

The 'take-away' from the visioning exercise was that the majority of respondents (though certainly not all of them) characterized the present-day Winchester in a somewhat or strongly negative manner while all but a very small number of respondents had a positive response for the desired future. In some cases, there was an indication of desiring the status quo as reflected by use of the same word or phrase (e.g. 'welcoming', 'diverse') for both the present day and the desired future condition.

## 2008 Initial Public Input Sessions

One of the first major steps in the City's Comprehensive Plan update process was to conduct four public input meetings held at each of the City's four public elementary schools during June and July of 2008. Each meeting drew roughly twenty to thirty citizens, who provided thoughtful and energetic input to the process. The meetings were led by Milton Herd of Herd Planning & Design, the consulting team leader, with support from Vlad Gavrilovic and others from Renaissance Planning Group.

Overall, the citizens who participated in the 2008 input sessions were civil, enthusiastic, and well informed about growth, development, and preservation in the City. Despite various disagreements about particular issues, participants were moderate and balanced in their views, and generally supportive of the City's long-range planning efforts. Each meeting began with a presentation summarizing the project objectives, scope and schedule, as well as some data on demographics and trends in the City, and the basic policies of the City's current Comprehensive Plan.

# APPENDICES

A Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-&-Threats (SWOT) Analysis for the future of Winchester was also conducted in brief group discussions at the 2008 input sessions. Following the SWOT Analysis, participants were divided randomly into small breakout groups to conduct mapping exercises in which they marked up base maps to identify in red features to preserve, and in green features to change, add or improve.

Common themes and ideas emerged during the SWOT exercises at the four initial input meetings. Among the listed Strengths and Opportunities were following:

- Location- relative to Northern Virginia, National Parks, battlefields, I-81, regional access.
- Major institutions- Winchester Medical Center and Shenandoah University
- Public facilities- schools, especially Handley High School, parks, library, and water and sewer availability
- People- diversity, spirit of volunteerism, community spirit
- Balance- Not so big/not so small - just right; small town feel, within commuting distance to the big city
- Historic character- historic fabric, vibrant downtown, walkability, connectivity, distinctive downtown identity, front porches, significant buildings with history behind them, distinctive downtown identity creates opportunity for development and redevelopment
- Local government
- Economy- employment base of medical center and university, cost of living relative to surrounding region, downtown environment is more competitive as costs of transportation go up.

Among the listed Weaknesses and Threats were following:

- City infrastructure- needs to keep up with the growth of the community - difficult to finance aging infrastructure - sidewalks, water, sewer, roads.
- Transit- need to extend and expand
- Lack of affordable housing
- Educational levels- need to be competitive for jobs
- City becoming a magnet for dependent populations
- Low income relative to Northern Virginia, housing prices down
- Cost of gas/commuting - rising gas prices will change the way we live and work
- City with 'urbanizing' county - inability to expand the city boundary, higher taxes with limited tax base, County development around City will tend to pull economic development from it
- What's the City's competitive niche and how do we get people to support retail?
- Historic income split in City - need diversity on City Council
- University and Hospital not taxable.

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In breakout groups at the 2008 input sessions, participants identified features, sites, and resources that should be preserved as well as things that should be improved, changed, or added. These features were marked on maps using red and green markers. These “brainstorm” discussions were not aimed at achieving consensus, but many of the ideas generated enjoyed broad support from participants. Only in a few areas, was significant opposition or disagreement evident.

Many ideas, recommendations, and concerns were identified and recorded during the breakout group discussions. These ideas are grouped into four broad thematic topics:

- *Key Sites*
- *Public Facilities, Services, and Institutions*
- *Downtown, Neighborhoods and Historic Resources*
- *Environmental Elements*
- *Key Corridors*
- *Economy/Housing*

Among the things called out to Preserve were the following:

## ***Key Sites***

- Glen Burnie - this site was mentioned numerous times for preservation
- Smith property (large vacant tract between National Fruit and Westminster Canterbury)
- Kernstown Civil War battlefield site
- Creekside - as a model for other development in the corridor

## ***Public Facilities, Services and Institutions***

- Schools - including the idea of keeping schools as hearts of neighborhoods
- Handley High School and Handley Library were also specifically cited
- Parks and parkland - these were also cited numerous times
- Medical Center
- Shenandoah University
- Trails and paths

## ***Downtown, Neighborhoods and Historic Resources***

- Downtown historic district
- Continue corridor overlay districts to protect gateway to city, historic district
- Historic sites (Abrams, Jackson’s Headquarters, Fort Loudon, etc...)
- Neighborhood-based identity and preservation

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## *Environmental Elements*

- Wetlands - including Abrams creek wetland
- Town Run

Among things called out to Change, Improve or Add were the following:

## *Key Sites*

- Redevelop Ward Plaza - nearly every group identified this as a key site
- Redevelop National Fruit
- Redevelop Apple Valley Square (Martin's Store) site
- Redevelop Papermill
- Coca-cola plant
- Redevelop O'Sullivan's
- Apple Blossom Mall - revive
- Holliday Apartments
- Redevelop old Nichols (Eastgate Plaza) facility
- Redevelop Abex Asbestos site - maybe into green
- Revitalize and complement Zero Pak redevelopment including the RR land
- Restore Triangle Diner
- Two other key sites identified for change by a minority of participants included:
  - Glen Burnie - allow public access and develop as New Urbanist community
  - Smith Property - develop into mixed-use community

## *Key Corridors*

- North Cameron -make it two-way - Don't rush traffic through town, and adding a landscaped median or greenway along sidewalk
- Enhance Berryville Avenue corridor
- Improve Route 11 (north) into town, national bike corridor
- Redevelop Valley Avenue
- Complete Meadow Branch Avenue [this was shown on numerous group maps]
- Revitalize Kent Street corridor
- Redevelop multi-family adjacent to I-81 (Franklin & Woodstock Lane)
- Fort Collier Road Area
- Woodstock Lane /East Lane Area
- Improve corridors to downtown
- All Entry corridors

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## *Downtown, Neighborhoods and Historic Resources*

- Downtown – keep historic buildings but revitalize; Theaters/Performance arts centers; fill/rehab vacant downtown spaces; downtown retail store hours to stay open for customers at key times; Mixed use on upper levels
- NE area of city in need of redevelopment
- Redevelopment of south industrial area
- Housing stock of older neighborhoods need rehabilitation
- Need affordable decent rentals
- Enforce current codes
- Rehab old houses
- Make streets grid pattern in new development

## *Public Facilities, Services and Institutions*

- Finish the Green Circle trail; Connect via Glen Burnie to Whittier Park
- Connect sidewalks in town
- More pedestrian friendly streets
- Bury telephone/utility lines downtown
- Need additional parkland – places to walk to
- Convert to two-way traffic on Cameron and Braddock (most done in 2009)
- Make downtown more tourist-friendly
- Problem – traffic flow
- Improve connectivity to the areas that need it.

## *Economy/Housing*

- More manufacturing jobs means higher incomes - Keep some industry in the city
- Need to generate revenue to support services
- Need vocational training in city
- Issue: Large amount of tax-exempt properties
- Older industrial areas can be redeveloped as new, clean industries with skilled labor – e.g. – sustainable energy industries
- Need more attractive/compatible new buildings
- Need Housing Authority

## *Environmental Elements*

- Naturalize Town Run – helps with clean up
- Don't need to mow everything – keep more native habitats/wetlands
- Plant more trees – street and in industrial areas
- More LID (Low Impact Development) – rain gardens/infiltration ditches

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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 sidewalks and key street connections, 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.

There did not appear to be a lot of fundamental disagreement among participants. Areas and topics where disagreement was evident concerned two key sites within the City:

- The Glen Burnie property, and
- The Smith property (and vicinity) in the northwest sector.

The strongest sentiment was clearly to preserve the Glen Burnie site as an open space resource, although at least one participant identified it as having potential for a “new urban” community. The Smith property generated stronger sentiment for development, although some participants preferred that it be preserved.

At each of the Summer 2008 input meetings, participants were divided at random into small groups to brainstorm ideas and issues, and to mark-up base maps of the City showing those ideas. Citizens were asked to show two basic items on the base maps:

- Areas or features that should be preserved or remain the same (green)
- Areas or features that should be changed, improved, or added (red)

Two maps were prepared which showed composite summaries of all 17 group maps from the four meetings held in 2008. The first map showed a total composite of the group maps, with all of the mark-up ideas layered over one another. The second map showed a simplified, interpretive summary of all of those mark-ups, with redundancies eliminated or reduced, revealing the major themes that appeared to enjoy broad support among participants.

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## 2010 Mid-course Public Input Session

A mid-course Public Input Session was conducted in February of 2010. This forum provided an opportunity for the public to see how the input from the four initial public input sessions had been compiled and factored into the draft goals and objectives, the draft Character Map, and the proposed alternative development scenarios. City staff, Planning Commissioners, and the consulting team were stationed at five stations around the Handley High School Student Union to explain the recommendations and answer questions about the illustrative concepts. Each station included content relevant to two of the ten Planning Areas. The portions of the Character Map included in those two areas were enlarged for more detailed examination so that property and/or business owners could view the recommendations pertaining to their neighborhoods or business areas.

The February 2010 input session also provided a venue for those citizens less familiar with the Internet to view the Berryville Avenue video and to see, in large hardcopy format, the alternative development concepts elsewhere in the City. The response from this mid-course session was overwhelmingly positive. A resurfaced proposal for an arena in the southeast area of the City and a fairly rapid reassignment of such use to Berryville Avenue near Interstate I-81 created some timely public interest in the Comprehensive Plan and proved to be the lightning rod for discussion as to where a large civic center and/or sports arena should be called for in the future vision. A grassroots effort was made to encourage placement of this kind of venue in the heart of Old Town, even if it meant replacing historic structures on the pedestrian mall.

While the specific plans for any particular arena may be beyond the scope of this Plan, the use served as a good focal point for a discourse on how the City addresses the issue of mobility, particular from the standpoint of creating a walkable environment while also ensuring safe and convenient vehicular access to activities, such as an arena, that rely upon good access to major roadways. The visual model for the Berryville Avenue Corridor, complete with a reverse frontage service road serving redevelopment along the south side of the Berryville Avenue, caused some residents in the area to question how the various redevelopment scenarios would impact their quality of life. Generally, the concerns were measured by today's standards (i.e. how long it takes to drive from one's single-family neighborhood to other city destinations). On a micro basis, the discussion illustrated how the recommendations contained in the Plan might lead to macro changes to lifestyles and the way people travel between home, work, recreation, and shopping in the future.

# APPENDICES

## WINCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHARACTER MAP

