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 21 st 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.

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.

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HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Shenandoah University (SU) is the most visible higher education resource in 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.

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.

Shihadeh Innovation Center is vocational school that the City is planning to be constructed at the site of the old John Kerr elementary school. This will provide training in a variety of trades and professions which may not otherwise be accessible.

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.

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.

In 2019, Winchester and Shenandoah University began formalizing an agreement in which Shenandoah University takes over maintenance of the City's two baseball fields, Bridgforth & Rotary fields, as well as providing funding for four other athletic fields. In this agreement, the University will renovate the fields so that they are able to host regional and national baseball events for Handley High School and Shenandoah University. A second public/private partnership will be the Patsy Cline Park on E. Pall Mall Street. This facility will be established by a private benefactor and will be converted to a public park upon completion. Other private and public partnerships such as these should be pursued.

The Winchester Parks & Recreation 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 .~~ The Parks Master Plan expired in 2014. Since that time, the City performed a needs assessment of the parks in 2015, seeking citizen feedback regarding the parks and recreation. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Plan is anticipated to be done in 2022. Parks and Rec also plans to begin planning and construction of a new natatorium as identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

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.

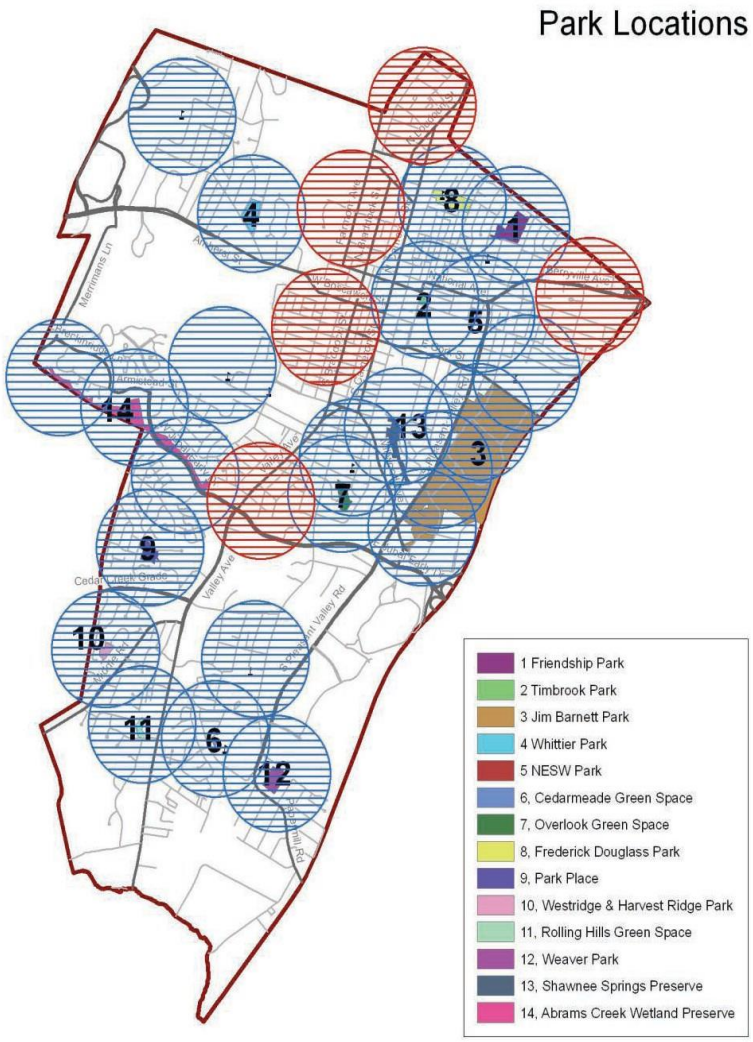
Regional parks within an hour's drive include about 830,000 acres of federal reservations and parks, including the Appalachian Trail. Over 100,000 acres of the Shenandoah National Park, and over 700,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests administered by the U. S. Forest Service,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

We may want to consider mentioning the plan to begin planning and construction of a new natatorium as identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP currently identifies this project will be initiated during the FY-22.

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. Currently, a new neighborhood park is scheduled to be completed in 2020 at the intersection of South Kent Street and East Cecil Street. 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. 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.

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.

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.

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:

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.

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, the area is currently being looked at for a denser mixed-use development, which would incorporate the existing uses and add on an assisted living center. ~~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.

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

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

OTHER FACILITIES

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

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

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

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.

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. In 2019, Winchester began remodeling the City's Public Works site.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.