



AMHERST

Perfect Slice of Virginia

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

2007 - 2027

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

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AMHERST COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2007-2027

ADOPTED BY:

**AMHERST COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
JUNE 21, 2007**

**AMHERST COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION.....	6
Purpose	6
Community Involvement.....	6
Authority to Plan.....	6
Planning Horizon	7
CHAPTER II - PROCESS	10
Identification of Success Factors	10
Community Participation.....	10
Plan Development and Adoption.....	11
CHAPTER III – DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH TRENDS	13
Cost of Providing Services.....	13
Population.....	14
Population Trends.....	15
Population Age	19
Population Projections by Age.....	20
Population Racial Makeup.....	20
Impact on Development.....	21
Employment and Employers.....	22
Commuting Patterns.....	23
Unemployment Trends	23
Average Income.....	26
Household Income.....	26
County Income Comparison	27
Income and Poverty Status.....	28
Household Type.....	31
Housing – Year Built	33
Housing Size and Facilities.....	33
Housing Occupancy	34
Housing Types	37
Housing Value and Cost	38
CHAPTER IV: COMMUNITY FACILITIES.....	41
Introduction.....	41
Public Water and Wastewater.....	43

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Water:	45
Costs of Services:	47
ACSA Water and Wastewater Facility Plan:	47
Summary	48
Amherst County’s Watershed Protection Program	48
Solid Waste Management	55
Transportation	60
Introduction	60
Linking Transportation to Land Use Patterns and Plans	60
Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization	60
Development of Amherst County’s Transportation Network	61
Transportation Network Inventory & Existing Conditions	62
Air Service	65
Rail Service	67
Bus Service	68
Classification of Roadways	70
Traffic Analysis	73
Safety	81
Statewide Transportation Programs and Funding Opportunities	83
Statewide Transportation Improvement Funding Opportunities	94
Planning Assumptions	97
Assessment of the Multi-Modal Transportation System	97
Pedestrian Facilities	101
Bicycle Facilities	101
Recommendations	102
Education	111
Primary and Secondary Education	111
Public School Facilities	112
Higher Education	112
Adult Education	113
Public Library Service	118
Parks and Recreation	122
Existing Facilities	122

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Lake Parks	122
River Parks	123
Trails	123
Law Enforcement	128
Public Safety	130
Housing	134
Social Services and Health Care	137
Economic Development	139
Information Technology and Broadband Services	146
Cultural Resources and Community Aesthetics.....	148
CHAPTER V - ANTICIPATED GROWTH TRENDS	152
Route 29 Bypass Interchanges	152
29 Corridor	153
Old Madison Heights	153
River Parks and hiking/biking trails	154
Land and Environmental Protection.....	154
Designated Growth Areas	154
CHAPTER VI: LAND USE	156
Introduction	156
Existing Land Use	156
Blue Ridge Parkway	159
Amherst County Natural Heritage Resources.....	161
Environment	173
Agricultural/Open Space Preservation	174
Future Land Use	182
CHAPTER VII: URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS: BACK TO THE FUTURE	194
Designated Growth Areas	195
Urban Development Area Generally	195
UDA Policies	196

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for Amherst County, Virginia. As the master plan for governing the County, it is a guide for critical land use decisions that will determine growth and development within the County. It is also available to the private sector for decision-making and investment. The management objectives of the plan are intended to accomplish a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community in accordance with the values and aspirations of Amherst County's citizens. It was prepared and adopted as an update to the County's current comprehensive plan. The 2007 plan was written under the direction and guidance of the Amherst County Planning Commission and a Citizens Advisory Committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors. It is an official public document adopted by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors on June 21, 2007. An update of the plan was adopted by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors on May 21, 2013.

Community Involvement

Community involvement was one of the guiding principles that governed the preparation of this plan. Many citizens contributed to its development. A citizens planning academy, stakeholder interviews, community meetings, solicitation of written citizen comments, a citizen advisory committee, citizen task forces, planning commission work sessions, and public hearings were techniques used to effectively engage Amherst County citizens in the development of this important document.

Authority to Plan

All localities in Virginia are required to adopt comprehensive plans pursuant to Sections 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia, 1950. This plan was prepared in accordance with these provisions.

By law, the Amherst County Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility of preparing and recommending a comprehensive plan to the Amherst County Board of Supervisors for adoption and updating this plan approximately every five years. In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the Commission is required to conduct surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of County citizens. The Board of Supervisors has the legal responsibility to adopt a plan that covers all territory within the unincorporated areas of the County.

A comprehensive plan, by law, is general in nature. It serves, first and foremost, as a guide to future zoning and economic development priorities. It also must designate the approximate location, character, and extent of public park, school, road, and utility features and may indicate where existing public lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use.

A plan, with accompanying maps, charts, and descriptive matter, may include, but need not be limited to:

- The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation,

recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;

- The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;
- The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
- The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
- The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable surface water and ground water protection measures above those required by state law;
- An official map, as well as guidance for the development of a capital improvement program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps, and agricultural and forest district maps, where applicable;
- The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;
- The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels

of income in the County while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the County is situated; and

- The designation of Urban Development Areas (UDAs) which are sufficient to accommodate projected residential and commercial growth in a locality for a period of at least 10-years but not more than 20 years. Such an area must incorporate Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) principles, which may encourage and foster: (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) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, with affordable housing to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth, (vi) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (vii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

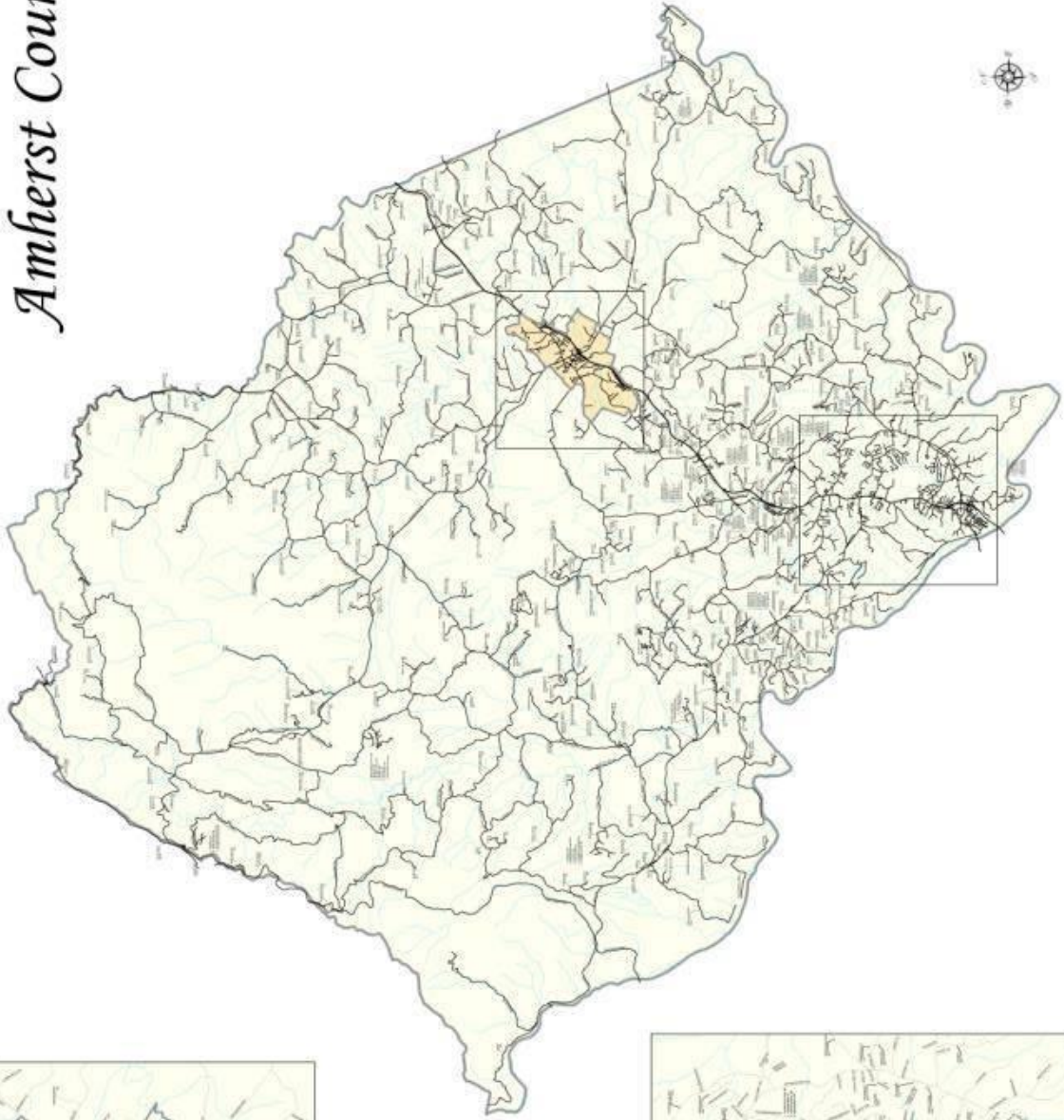
Planning Horizon

Typical planning horizons for comprehensive plans range from approximately 20 to 50 years with 20 years being the most common. This plan contemplates growth and development for the next twenty to twenty-five years.

Projections for population contemplate growth up to 2035. By law, this comprehensive plan must be reviewed by the Amherst County Planning Commission at least once every five years. Each review will serve as the basis to evaluate the

continued appropriateness of the plan's goals, objectives, and policies.

Amherst County



Amherst County
Virginia



CHAPTER II - PROCESS

Identification of Success Factors

In the autumn of 2003, a work session was held to “kick-off” the plan update process. At this work session, the Amherst County Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and key County staff began the formal comprehensive plan update process by identifying a number of factors and conditions key to a successful planning process and a successful plan.

The participants in this work session identified the following factors as being key to a successful plan update process. In summary, they stated there must be:

- Good communication with the citizens;
- Good public participation;
- Good public education on community planning and the planning process;
- Strong leadership;
- Citizen buy-in;
- Clearly defined growth patterns identified;
- A strong consensus on plan policies;
- Clear direction for zoning amendments;
- Well defined goals and objectives; and
- Accountability measures.

In addition, they stated that the plan must be responsive to public needs, provide for flexibility, and be easy to read and understand.



Community Participation

Many techniques were used to ensure that Amherst County citizens were knowledgeable of the plan update initiative and had the opportunity to contribute ideas throughout the process.

A Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) was appointed by the County to oversee the plan update process. Comprised of approximately 25 citizens, including representatives of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, the CAC played a vital role in defining community issues; approving meeting formats and agendas; reviewing information; and developing the plan’s goals, objectives, and strategies. They also reviewed and offered comments on successive drafts of this plan.

Early in the planning process, approximately 45 County citizens participated in an Amherst County *Citizens Planning Academy*. The academy, held over a six-week period at Sweet Briar College, was an opportunity for participants to learn the tools and techniques of community planning in Virginia. In addition, the academy allowed participants to discuss local planning issues and participate in exercises that were designed to encourage thought about the County’s future.

In August 2004, stakeholder interviews were held with approximately 20 civic and community leaders. Interviewees were asked their general impressions of the County, their opinions on short and long-term community issues, and their views on community strengths and weaknesses. The consultant team used the information gained from these interviews to better understand Amherst County and to design a community meeting format and agenda that was relevant to Amherst County. In general, the interviews identified recurrent themes - common topics

discussed by the interviewees. These themes were one source of data used by the staff, the CAC, and the Planning Commission in the development of the plan's goals, objectives, and strategies.

Broader community involvement was obtained through a series of six community-wide workshops held in September 2004. To obtain geographic dispersion, these workshops were held in six of the County's elementary schools. Each workshop began with participants having the opportunity to review and discuss Amherst County demographic information. Participants were asked to offer their ideas on the County's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities the County should pursue, and perspectives on threats to the County's quality of life.

The majority of each workshop was devoted to small group discussions on a broad range of community issues. Participants undertook a community SWOT analysis, identifying County Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Participants also engaged in a Change Analysis exercise, offering their ideas on what aspects of the County should stay the same and which should change. Significant commonality of ideas and opinions emerged from the small group discussions. In addition, many of the comments expressed at the community meetings paralleled those expressed in the stakeholder interviews. The Planning Commission and CAC reviewed a summary of the six workshops and considered the citizens' comments in the development of this plan.

The CAC held a series of work sessions in late 2004, through 2006. These work sessions were open to the public. The CAC used the

work sessions to discuss the content and direction of the new plan. Ideas for the plan emerged from many sources, including the demographic analysis, citizen comments, CAC and Planning Commission discussions and Amherst County staff perspectives. During this same time period, seven subject specific task forces were appointed and convened. These task forces¹ comprised of CAC members and other interested Amherst County citizens, developed the goals, objectives, and strategies contained in this plan.

Plan Development and Adoption

In early 2006, a rough draft of the plan was made available to the general public, and all citizens who had contributed to the plan's development were contacted and given the opportunity to comment on the plan. All citizen comments on the draft plan were reviewed by the CAC and Planning Commission. The CAC concluded their work sessions in August 2006. The Planning Commission commenced weekly meetings to review and modify the plan in beginning in September. Much of their work was influenced by discussions with county and state officials after the aforesaid officials had an opportunity to review the draft plan.

A Planning Commission public hearing on the plan was held on March 27, 2007 and the Planning Commission recommended approval of the plan to the Board of Supervisors on May 3, 2007. The Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on June 11, 2007 and thereafter adopted this plan.

Per § 15.2-2230 of the Code of Virginia, the Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed and updated every five years. The process to

¹ Comprehensive Plan task force committee sections: Transportation, Environment, Land Use, Economic Development, Housing, Community Facilities and

Services, Cultural Resources and Community Aesthetics.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

update the plan began in 2012. The Amherst County Planning Department updated the plan based on comments from County departments and the Planning Commission. Census figures in the plan were also updated from the most recent Census. A meeting was held by the Planning Department on March 12, 2013, to update and answer questions from the public concerning the updated plan. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors held a joint public hearing and

thereafter adopted the updated plan on May 21, 2013.

CHAPTER III – **DEVELOPMENT AND** **GROWTH TRENDS**

Cost of Providing Services

Growth in a community is generally perceived as a positive and even necessary occurrence. Growth in employment, income, and tax base are considered to be indicators of a good place to live. From a public service and facility perspective population growth means an increase in demand for schools, roads, law enforcement, recreational opportunities, and the staffing to operate and maintain them all. These services and facilities are largely paid for by taxes generated by real estate values. Communities must balance their demand for services (and consequent costs) with the income (taxes) that are generated primarily by the property tax; therefore, it becomes important to understand the relationship that exists, with a given type of land use, between the services needed by that given land use and the taxes generated by it. The question becomes “does the use pay for itself?” For example; on the surface a new subdivision may be considered a positive thing since it is a component of a growing community. Raw unimproved land generates a taxable value of x . The same land with new homes on it generates a taxable value of x plus the added value of all the lots, the roads, the utilities and the houses that were constructed. The taxable value of the original property could be from three to ten times higher after being developed. If, however, the additional taxes do not meet the associated costs required by the new residents, such as the need for more teachers, classrooms, police, fire protection, road

maintenance, soccer fields, etc., then the new growth has placed a strain on the public sectors ability to maintain the quality of life in that community.

In 2004, a “Cost of Land Use Study” was performed for Amherst County by Tischler and Associates. The study clearly showed the relationship between land use and provision of public services. Open space/agricultural lands, most business properties, and industrial developments proved to be paying more in taxes than the demand they created for services. Some business properties and most residential developments did not pay their equivalent costs. It should be noted that these results reflected the allocation of capital expenses for schools, which totaled ninety percent of capital expenditures in the study. When the costs of indebtedness for schools were removed from consideration, all classifications of land use generated positive returns. This study is referenced as an associated document and considered part of the plan.

The results of the aforementioned study are repeated in many communities throughout the United States. For example, in a study of the fiscal impacts of major land uses in Culpeper County, Virginia, it was found that “for every dollar of revenue collected from residential land, \$1.25 is spent on county services; for every dollar collected from industrial/commercial land, 19 cents is spent on services; similarly, for every dollar collected from farm/forest/open space, 19 cents is spent on services.” According to the study, farm/forest/open space in Amherst County generates revenues of \$1.9 million and expenditures of \$350,000. Even with the deferral for current-use taxation, farm/forest/open space land provides a net tax benefit to the County.² Studies such as

² Vance and Larson, 1988. *Rural By Design*, Randall Arendt

this were considered when developing the future land use map.

In consideration of these anticipated costs, this plan recommends that realistic estimates be made of each new proposed development, in order to evaluate the cost impact of maintaining desired County Levels of Services (LOS) in such areas as public schools, public water and sewer, transportation, fire and rescue, etc. It is recommended that proffers be encouraged to help defray these anticipated costs. County planners should establish the desired LOS to facilitate this process. This plan offers basic LOS factors for schools, public water service, and transportation routes in chapter IV.

The remainder of this chapter contains information and discussions on population, income, housing, employment, the economy, and education. An understanding of a community's demographic characteristics – its past trends, current conditions and future projections – can be a vital component of community planning. An analysis of these data helps a community identify emerging community issues and allows a community to respond proactively to these emerging trends.

Population

Geographic Definition

For analysis purposes, Amherst County's demographics were evaluated based on six Census tract divisions (see Figure 1). The northern part of the County contains Census tract 101 and a small portion of Census tract 102. The southern part of the County includes Census tracts 102, 103, 104, 105,

and 106. In the 2020 Census, census tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Tract 104 consisted of Census tracts 104.01 and 104.02 and tract 105 consisted of Census tracts 105.02, 105.03 and 105.04. Census tract 102 contains the town of Amherst. Neighboring communities include Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Nelson, and Rockbridge Counties, and the City of Lynchburg.

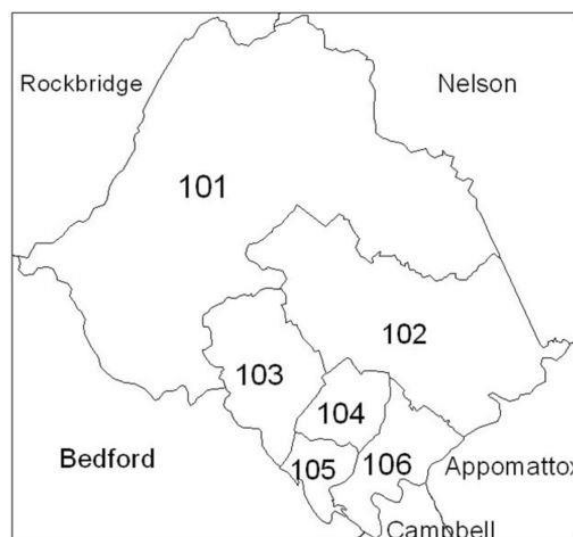


Figure 1.

Amherst County Census Tracts and Neighboring Counties

Population Trends

In 1790 the population of Amherst County was 13,703; the state, 691,737. Ninety years later, in 1880, the population of both places had increased to 18,709 and 1,512,565 respectively. That represented a 36.5 percent increase for Amherst and a 118.7 percent increase for the state. Between 1880 and 1950 Amherst increased to 20,332 or by 8.7 percent. The state grew to 3,318,680 or 119.4 percent. The next thirty years represented the most significant continuous period of growth for Amherst. In 1980 the County population had risen by 43.2 percent to 29,122. Statewide the numbers increased by 61.1 percent to 5,346,797. Since 1980 the Census Bureau indicates that Amherst lost a few hundred persons by 1990 but rebounded

in the 2000 count to 31,895. The 2010 census put our population at 32,353. Comparatively, the state's 2000 census was 7,078,515. The 2020 census illustrated a 3.2% decrease in the county's population, giving a count of 31,307. The decrease in total population is a consequence of two elements. The first of which includes the closure of the Central Virginia Training School, which was the County's largest employer and had a population of roughly 600 people in 2010. Secondly, the closing and reopening of Sweet Briar College greatly affected their on-campus population and the number of staff employed by the College.

Despite the County seeing a minimal decrease in population, the state's population grew 7.9% from 8,001,024 to 8,631,393. Table 1 and Figure 2 further demonstrate the County's growth relative to the state's growth.

TABLE 1: VIRGINIA AND AMHERST COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH AND PERCENT CHANGE, 1900-2020					
Census Year	Virginia		Amherst County		
	Total Population	Percent Change	Total Population	Percent Change	Percent of Virginia Population
1900	1,854,184		17,864		0.96%
1910	2,061,612	11.19%	18,932	5.98%	0.92%
1920	2,309,187	12.01%	19,771	4.43%	0.86%
1930	2,421,851	4.88%	19,020	-3.80%	0.79%
1940	2,677,773	10.57%	20,273	6.59%	0.76%
1950	3,318,680	23.93%	20,332	0.29%	0.61%
1960	3,966,949	19.53%	22,953	12.89%	0.58%
1970	4,651,448	17.26%	26,072	13.59%	0.56%
1980	5,346,797	14.95%	29,122	11.70%	0.54%
1990	6,187,358	15.72%	28,578	-1.87%	0.46%
2000	7,078,515	14.40%	31,894	11.60%	0.45%
2010	8,001,024	13.00%	32,353	1.40%	0.40%
2020	8,631,393	7.9%	31,307	-3.2%	0.36%

Note: These figures are the published decennial census counts and are not adjusted for census count revisions, boundary adjustments, or other changes. Source: U.S. Census, Weldon Cooper Center

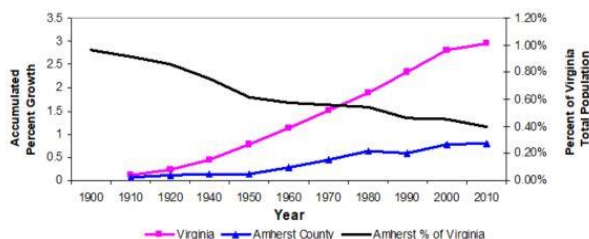


Figure 2.

Virginia and Amherst County Accumulated Percent Population Growth and Percent of Virginia Population from 1900 to 2010

Table 2 demonstrates how Amherst County roughly compares with the parts of the state that are not overly influenced by the Washington, DC, area (the DC Metro area is defined here as Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William,

Spotsylvania and Stafford Counties, plus the cities within their borders*).

Generally, areas closer to Madison Heights have experienced the greatest amounts of growth between 2000 and 2020. From 2000 to 2010, the more rural north-central and south-eastern portions of the County experienced higher rates of population growth, altering a historic trend of higher population growth in the immediate Madison Heights area. This trend is even more evident with Census tract 102 being more populous than Census tract 105 (which was predicted by the 2007 Comprehensive Plan). Overall, Census tracts 103 and 104 experienced the greatest amount of growth during the twenty-year monitoring period, which aligns with the historic trends of Amherst County.

TABLE 2: POPULATION 1950-2020 CENSUS VIRGINIA (EXC DC METRO) & AMHERST COUNTY (NUMBERS IN THOUSANDS, PCT CHANGE FROM PRIOR CENSUS)				
CENSUS YEAR	VIRGINIA EXC NO. VA	PCT CHNG	AMHERST	PCT. CHNG
1950	2,979.1		20.3	
1960	3,352.6	12.5%	23.0	13.3%
1970	3,712.6	10.7%	26.1	13.5%
1980	4,241.1	14.2%	29.1	11.5%
1990	4,721.0	11.3%	28.6	-1.7%
2000	4,962.3	5.1%	31.9	11.6%
2010	5,405.9	8.9%	32.3	1.2%
2020	5,656.3	4.6%	31.3	-3.1%

Source: Weldon Cooper Center, US Census Bureau

*Prior to the 2010 census, the northern Virginia/DC Metro area was defined as being Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William Counties, plus the cities within their borders

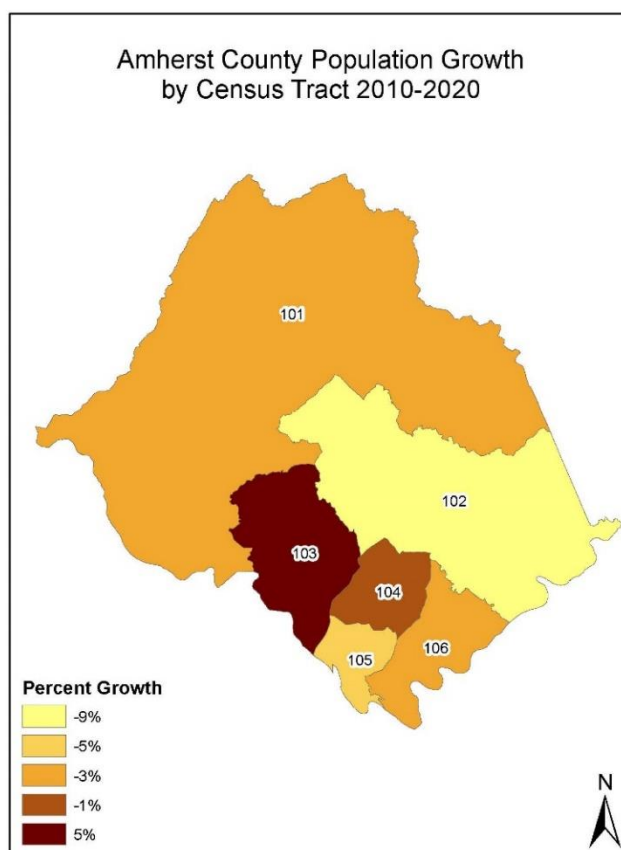
**TABLE 3: AMHERST COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH
AND DISTRIBUTION BY CENSUS TRACT FROM 2000 TO 2020**

Census Tract	2000		2010		2020		Percent Growth 2010-2020
	Population	Percent of Population	Population	Percent of Population	Population	Percent of Population	
101	5,064	16%	5,288	16%	5,103	16%	-3%
102	7,135	22%	7,238	22%	6,621	21%	-9%
103	3,336	10%	3,477	11%	3,638	12%	5%
104	6,287	20%	6,408	20%	6,445	20%	1%
105	7,253	23%	7,184	22%	6,813	22%	-5%
106	2,819	9%	2,758	9%	2,687	9%	-3%
Total	31,894	100%	32,353	100%	31,307	100%	-3%

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tracts 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.
Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data

Figure 3.

Percent Population Growth from 2010 to 2020



Population Density

The median density for the County's population in 2020 was 66 people per square mile (see Table 4). Population densities were highest in the southern portions of the County (see Figure 4). Census Tract 101 which is located in the northern portion of

the County, had the smallest population and the largest land area per square mile, which equaled out to a density of 19 people per square mile. Census tract 105 had the highest population density with 568 people per square mile which was followed by Census tract 104 with 358 people per square mile.

Table 4: 2020 POPULATION DENSITIES BY CENSUS TRACT

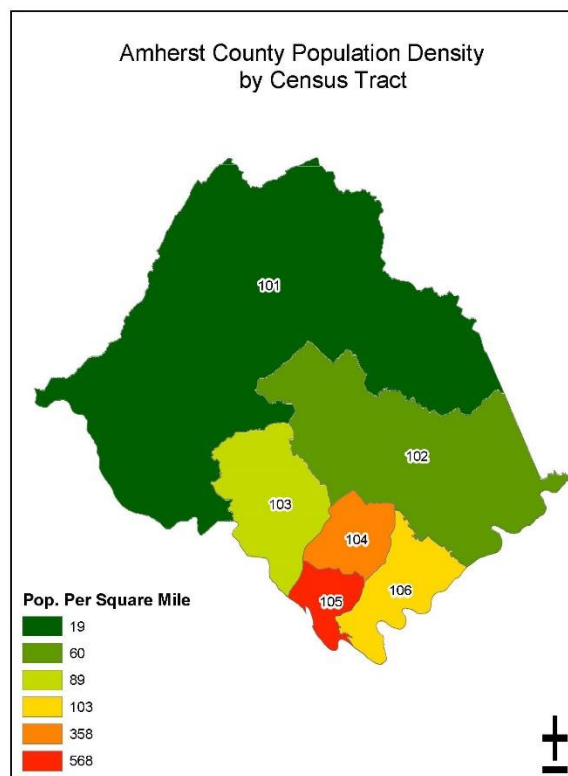
	Census Tract						County
	101	102	103	104	105	106	
Total population	5,103	6,621	3,638	6,445	6,813	2,687	31,307
Square Miles	267	111	41	18	12	26	474
Population per Square Mile	19	60	89	358	568	103	66

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tracts 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2020

Figure 4.

2020 Population Density



Population Age

Population age between 2010 and 2020 staid relatively stagnant. The County's age cohorts below 55 years of age saw a slight

decrease in population. However, the age cohort of 55 years or older increased from 2000 to 2020 (see Table 5). This reflects a general trend toward an older median age, which is consistent with the rest of the state.

TABLE 5: AMHERST COUNTY POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND CHANGE FROM 2000 TO 2020 BY AGE*							
Age Cohort	2000		2010		2020		
	Total Population	Percent of Population	Total Population	Percent of Population	Total Population	Percent of Population	Percent Change
Under 15 years	6,123	19%	5,581	17%	5,222	16%	-15%
15 to 24 years	4,478	14%	4,629	15%	3,667	12%	-18%
25 to 44 years	8,867	28%	7,262	22%	7,035	22%	-21%
45 to 54 years	4,571	14%	5,081	16%	4,341	14%	-5%
55 to 64 years	3,481	11%	4,470	14%	4,896	15%	41%
65 to 74 years	2,566	8%	3,034	9%	3,781	12%	47%
75 to 84 years	1,406	4%	1,702	5%	2,083	7%	48%
85 years and over	402	1%	594	2%	757	2%	88%
Total population	31,894	100%	32,353	100%	31,782	100%	-0.4%

* Population data is derived from population data estimates created from the 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and should not be construed as exact data numbers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Virginia Employment Commission, Amherst County Community Profile, Weldon Cooper Center, 2019 American Community Survey, 2020 American Community Survey

Population Projections by Age

The Virginia Employment Commission and Weldon Cooper Center projects the total population for the County to have a slight decline over the next 20 years (see Table 6). This projection indicates that the age cohort 75 years old and above will have the greatest growth (59.5 percent) over the next twenty-years. In 2010, the population within the age cohort 45 to 59 years old was greater than any other age cohort of the County population (22.9 percent). In 2020, the 60 to 74-year-old cohort is projected to show the largest percentage increase in population from 2010. Overall, age cohorts 15 to 29 and 45 to 59 are projected to decline slightly over the twenty-year period. The projections indicate that if the current growth trends continue, the population of Amherst County will mostly be growing in the 60 years old and above cohorts in the next twenty years. The implications of long term growth in the under 15 age cohort should be considered relative to our public schools and preschool child care.

Population Racial Makeup

Overall, the racial makeup of Amherst County is slowly becoming more diverse and multiracial. The racial distribution of the County has changed from 2010 to 2020 with the white and black percentage of the total population decreasing 6.2 percent and 12.4 percent respectively (see Table 7). In 2020, the most interesting changes occurred outside of the black and white race

TABLE 6: AMHERST COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS: 2020 TO 2040								
	Age (Years)	Under 15	15 to 29	30 to 44	45 to 59	60 to 74	75 and Above	Total
2010	Population	5,581	6,238	5,653	7,417	5,168	2,296	32,353
	% Pop	17.3%	19.3%	17.5%	22.9%	16.0%	7.1%	100.0%
2020	Projections	5,202	5,692	5,221	6,644	6,394	2,677	31,831
	% Pop	16.3%	17.9%	16.4%	20.9%	20.1%	8.4%	100.0%
	% Change from 2010	-6.8%	-8.8%	-7.6%	-10.4%	23.7%	16.6%	-1.6%
2030	Projections	5,088	5,389	5,480	5,596	6,571	3,277	31,402
	% Pop	16.2%	17.2%	17.5%	17.8%	20.9%	10.4%	100.0%
	% Change from 2010	-8.8%	-13.6%	-3.1%	-24.6%	27.1%	42.7%	-2.9%
2040	Projections	4,998	5,236	5,282	5,856	5,564	3,663	30,599
	% Pop	16.3%	17.1%	17.3%	19.1%	18.2%	12.0%	100.0%
	% Change from 2010	-10.4%	-16.1%	-6.6%	-21.0%	7.7%	59.5%	-5.4%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Amherst County Community Profile, Weldon Cooper Center

categories. The Hispanic origin population continued to steadily rise, increasing by 34.1 percent during the ten-year period. In addition, the Asian and Pacific Islander population increased by 29.4 percent. It is also important to recognize that in 2000, the US Census Bureau introduced the ability for respondents to choose more than one race. For comparison purposes, multiracial respondents were included only within the other race category. With this in mind, from 2010 to 2020, the number of individuals who identified themselves as being multiracial increased by 152.0 percent. Thus, representing the racial cohort with the largest increase in population from 2010 to 2020.

Impact on Development

Population growth or decline in a community generally dictates the amount of new development. All things being equal, there is a minimum threshold of population increase necessary for additional businesses, such as restaurants or doctors, to be successful. Housing is somewhat different, however. The U.S. Census indicates that in 1980 the average number of persons per household in Amherst County was approximately 3. That number decreased by 1990 and continued downward to 2.5 persons per household in the 2000 census and 2.3 in the 2010 census. This reflects a national trend toward smaller family sizes. During that thirty year period, our population increased by approximately 3,220, and the total number of additional housing units increased by approximately 5,300. Even with a recognition that “households” are decreasing in size, it is reasonable to note that the housing stock is increasing at a disproportional rate to our population and other types of development. More housing means more roads, utilities, higher maintenance costs, and environmental disturbances.

While there is little a government can do to affect sociological changes, such as the number of persons living in a dwelling, the number of children couples have, etc., it can plan to accommodate these phenomena in a responsible fashion to minimize the tax burden on all County residents.

TABLE 7: AMHERST COUNTY RACIAL AND HISPANIC ORIGIN DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2010 AND 2020

RACE	2010		2020		Percent Change
	Population	Percent of Population	Population	Percent of Population	
White	24,491	75.7%	22,967	73.3%	-6.2%
Black	6,104	18.9%	5,346	17.1%	-12.4%
Hispanic Origin	625	1.9%	838	2.7%	34.1%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	296	0.9%	243	0.8%	-17.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	160	0.5%	207	0.7%	29.4%
Other race*	677	2.1%	1,706	5.4%	152.0%
Total Population	32,353	100.0%	31,307	100.0%	-3.2%

* Other race includes some other race or more than one race.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2020

Employment and Employers

Employment within the County is broken down and shown in Figure 5 and Table 8 by sector. Educational, health care and social services employee the largest amount of individuals in Amherst County. Manufacturing and then retail trade follow as the second and third largest sector employer.

Table 8.

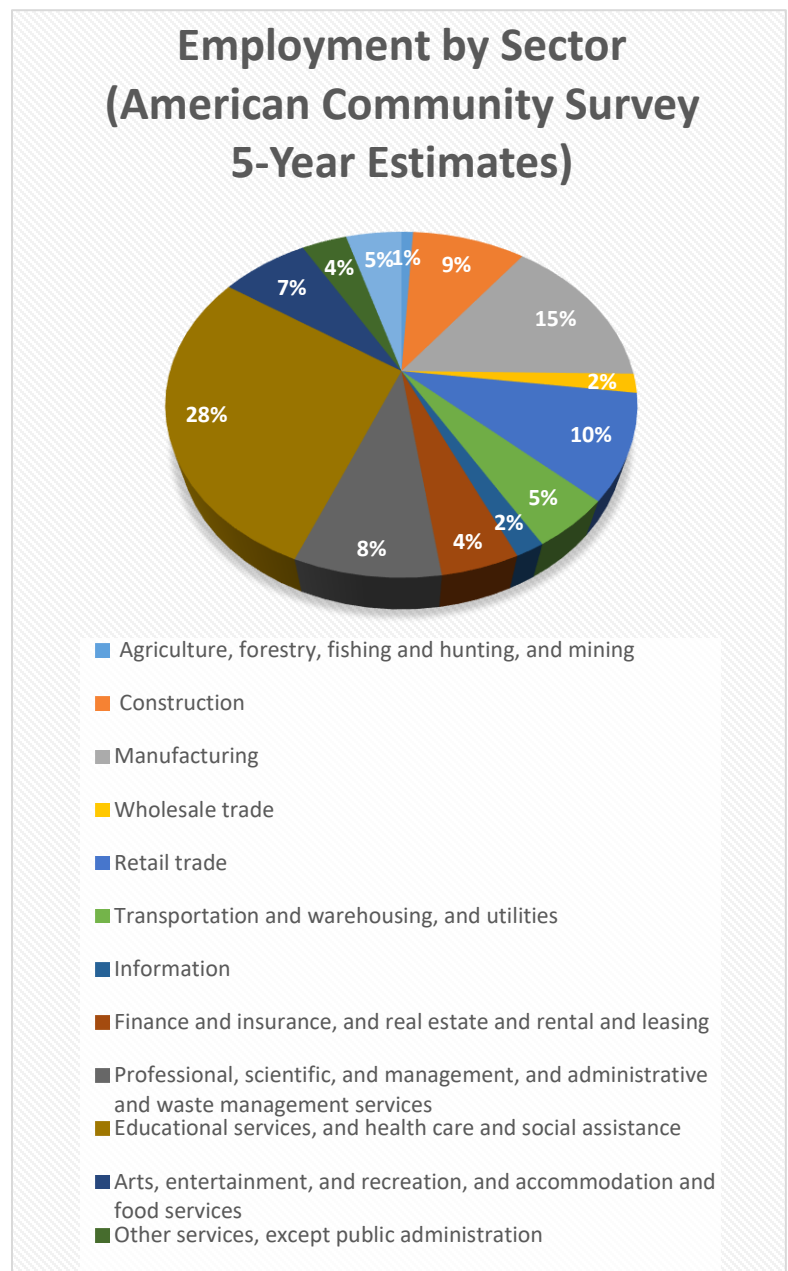
Employment by Sector (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Employment By Sector (ACS 5-Year Estimates)	Number of Individuals	Percentage
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining	145	1.0%
Construction	1,415	9%
Manufacturing	2,253	15%
Wholesale Trade	270	2%
Retail Trade	1,478	10%
Transportation and Warehousing and Utilities	718	5%
Information	255	2%
Finance and Insurance and real estate and rental and leasing	677	4%
Professional, Scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,268	8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	4,275	28%
Arts, Entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1,089	7%
Other Services, except public administration	562	4%
Public Administration	695	5%
Total:	15,100	100.0%

Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 5.

Employment by Sector



Commuting Patterns

Approximately one-third of the people employed in the County reside in the County; the remainder commutes into the County from other locales. There is a net outflow every morning of commuters. The following table is from the 2015 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program:

Table 9: Commuting Patterns	
Live and work in Amherst County	3,493
Total In-Commuters	5,543
Total Out-Commuters	9,498

In-Commuters from:

Lynchburg, Campbell Co., Bedford Co., Appomattox Co., & Nelson Co.

Out-Commuters to:

Lynchburg, Campbell Co., Nelson Co., Bedford Co., & Roanoke Co.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, Weldon Cooper Center (Virginia Locality to Locality 2015 Commuting Data)

Unemployment Trends

As shown in Table 10, beginning in the early 1990s, unemployment rates dropped steadily in the County from 6.3 percent in 1992 to a low of 1.8 percent in 1999. The recession that began in late 2000 pushed unemployment rates upward for two years, peaking at 5.4 percent in 2002. From 2002 until 2006, unemployment rates decreased prior to the late-2000s financial crisis (which is informally referred to as the “Great Recession”) which caused unemployment rates to spike upward, reaching a peak of 8.1 percent in 2010. From 2011 through 2015, unemployment rates have decreased each year in the recovery from the “Great Recession 2007-2009”. It is also worth noting that the labor force has decreased each year since 2010. From 1990 to the present, unemployment rates in the County have closely tracked unemployment rates in the Lynchburg MSA, which comprises the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, and Bedford plus the Town of Bedford and the City of Lynchburg. During the 1990s County and regional unemployment rates were lower than the rate for the state as a whole. Since the recession of the early 2000s, however, County and regional unemployment rates have been higher than that of the state average.

Table 10: Amherst County Employment from 1990 to 2010						
Year	Labor Force	Labor Force Growth	Employed	Employment Growth	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
1990	14,416		13,676		740	5.1%
1991	14,827	2.85%	13,928	1.84%	899	6.1%
1992	14,846	0.13%	13,888	-0.29%	958	6.5%
1993	14,724	-0.82%	14,080	1.38%	644	4.4%
1994	14,912	1.28%	14,251	1.21%	661	4.4%
1995	14,904	-0.05%	14,356	0.74%	548	3.7%
1996	14,607	-1.99%	14,026	-2.30%	581	4.0%
1997	14,254	-2.42%	13,797	-1.63%	457	3.2%
1998	14,337	0.58%	14,011	1.55%	326	2.3%
1999	14,688	2.45%	14,431	3.00%	257	1.7%
2000	15,411	4.92%	15,082	4.51%	329	2.1%
2001	15,178	-1.51%	14,623	-3.04%	555	3.7%
2002	15,200	0.14%	14,365	-1.76%	835	5.5%
2003	15,152	-0.32%	14,397	0.22%	755	5.0%
2004	15,033	-0.79%	14,336	-0.42%	697	4.6%
2005	15,320	1.91%	14,685	2.43%	635	4.1%
2006	15,529	1.36%	15,023	2.30%	506	3.3%
2007	15,528	-0.01%	14,988	-0.23%	540	3.5%
2008	16,024	3.19%	15,364	2.51%	660	4.1%
2009	15,627	-2.48%	14,417	-6.16%	1,210	7.7%
2010	16,352	4.64%	15,030	4.25%	1,322	8.1%
2011	16,181	-1.05%	15,003	-0.18%	1,178	7.3%
2012	16,075	-0.66%	15,001	-0.01%	1,074	6.7%
2013	15,806	-1.67%	14,841	-1.07%	965	6.1%
2014	15,688	-0.75%	14,838	-0.02%	850	5.4%
2015	15,544	-0.92%	14,803	-0.24%	741	4.8%

TABLE 11: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 1990-2020 LYNCHBURG MSA, AND AMHERST COUNTY			
Year	Virginia	Lynchburg MSA	Amherst County
1990	4.3	5.2	5.1
1991	5.9	6.1	6.1
1992	6.3	6.5	6.5
1993	5.2	4.6	4.4
1994	4.9	4.2	4.4
1995	4.5	3.8	3.7
1996	4.4	3.9	4
1997	3.8	3.8	3.2
1998	2.9	2.6	2.3
1999	2.8	2.1	1.7
2000	2.3	2.2	2.1
2001	3.2	3.9	3.7
2002	4.2	5.4	5.5
2003	4.1	4.9	5
2004	3.8	4.5	4.6
2005	3.6	4.1	4.1
2006	3.1	3.3	3.3
2007	3.0	3.4	3.5
2008	4.0	4.1	4.1
2009	6.8	7.4	7.7
2010	7.1	7.8	8.1
2011	6.6	7.3	7.3
2012	6.0	6.7	6.7
2013	5.7	6.2	6.1
2014	5.2	5.6	5.4
2015	4.4	4.9	4.8
2016	4	4.5	4.3
2017	3.7	4.3	4.1
2018	2.9	3.4	3.3
2019	2.7	3.1	3.1
2020	6.2	6	5.6

Average Income

The 2020 American Community Survey indicated a median household income \$57,368 for the County, which trailed the state level average (which was \$76,398).

Census tract 103 has the highest median household income of \$76,672, and the highest per capita income of \$36,902 (see Table 12). Comparatively, Census tract 106 has the lowest median household income, \$43,316 and lowest per capita income in the County at \$19,573.

Household Income

Average household income within Amherst County varies by geographic area, with the western portions of the County having higher household incomes than the east.

TABLE 12: AMHERST COUNTY 2020 HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY CENSUS TRACT AND COUNTY WITH PERCENT DISTRIBUTION PER GEOGRAPHIC REGION														
Geographic Region	101		102		103		104		105		106		County	
Households	1,862		2,542		1,284		2,547		2,789		1,137		12,161	
Household Income	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.	HH	% Dist.
Less than \$10,000	117	7.0%	115	7.5%	39	3.0%	86	3.4%	76	2.7%	86	7.7%	547	4.5%
\$10,000 – \$14,999	124	7.9%	74	3.7%	23	1.8%	123	4.8%	136	4.9%	96	8.4%	596	4.9%
\$15,000 – \$24,999	152	11.2%	284	11.3%	82	6.4%	199	7.8%	293	10.5%	64	5.6%	1,326	10.9%
\$25,000 – \$34,999	209	8.5%	231	10.3%	67	5.2%	273	10.7%	335	12.0%	103	9.1%	1,167	9.6%
\$35,000 – \$49,999	335	19.5%	216	11.0%	141	11.0%	450	17.7%	423	15.2%	217	19.1%	1,812	14.9%
\$50,000 – \$74,999	468	17.1%	217	15.7%	307	23.9%	533	20.9%	506	18.1%	175	15.4%	2,055	16.9%
\$75,000 – \$99,999	164	8.2%	446	14.5%	226	17.6%	270	10.6%	454	16.3%	199	17.5%	1,739	14.3%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	212	12.8%	653	19.1%	267	20.8%	417	16.4%	240	8.6%	121	10.6%	1,934	15.9%
\$150,000 – \$199,999	36	5.2%	183	4.5%	83	6.5%	132	5.2%	47	1.7%	11	1.0%	547	4.5%
\$200,000 – more	16	2.5%	125	2.5%	49	3.8%	73	2.9%	61	2.2%	65	5.7%	413	3.4%

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Median household income	\$41,827	\$82,281*	\$72,045	\$56,420*	\$44,009*	\$50,625	\$57,368
Per capita income	\$28,147	\$30,342*	\$35,285	\$27,654*	\$24,342*	\$28,944	\$28,866

*Averaged over inclusive Census Tracts

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tracts 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04. The figures given for “Census Tracts 104 and 105” represent an average of their respective smaller geographic Census Tracts.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

County Income Comparison

Personal income in Amherst County from 1970 to 2000 was not growing at the same rate as its neighbors. Neighbors to the west experienced the most growth. Bedford County had the largest percent personal income growth from 1970 to 2000, which was more than twice as large as Amherst’s percent growth (see Table 13). Bedford’s relative³ income was nearly three times greater than Amherst’s relative income in 2000. Campbell County and Rockbridge County grew at a smaller rate than Amherst did, but because these counties started with

personal incomes that were greater than Amherst’s was in 1970, they maintained a greater relative personal income in 2000. Neighbors to the east experienced higher rates of growth from 1970 to 2000, but maintained a lower relative personal income, which was approximately half of Amherst’s personal income in 2000. Similar to the distribution of wealth in Amherst County Census tracts, the wealthier population is in the southwest while the less wealthy population is in the east.

TABLE 13: RELATIVE PERSONAL INCOME TO AMHERST COUNTY, 1970 PERSONAL INCOME, \$69,367,000, AND PERSONAL INCOME PERCENT GROWTH FROM 1970 FOR NEIGHBORING COUNTIES AND COMBINED AREAS: 1970-2000

Year	Amherst		Appomattox		Bedford, Bedford City		Campbell, Lynchburg		Nelson		Rockbridge, Buena Vista, Lexington	
	Relative Income	Percent Growth	Relative Income	Percent Growth	Relative Income	Percent Growth	Relative Income	Percent Growth	Relative Income	Percent Growth	Relative Income	Percent Growth
1970	1.00		0.43		1.46		4.98		0.41		1.25	
1975	1.68	68%	0.70	64%	2.46	68%	7.90	59%	0.64	55%	1.81	45%
1980	2.74	174%	1.26	197%	5.19	255%	14.11	183%	1.37	234%	3.24	159%
1985	4.12	312%	1.89	344%	8.34	471%	20.96	321%	2.00	386%	4.64	271%

³ Relative income refers to one’s earnings in relation to average income.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

1990	5.62	462%	2.57	505%	12.96	786%	28.79	479%	2.59	530%	6.66	433%
1995	6.80	580%	3.06	620%	17.81	1118%	34.37	591%	3.29	700%	8.09	548%
2000	8.63	763%	4.04	849%	25.70	1658%	40.55	715%	4.45	982%	10.73	760%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis. Regional Accounts Data. CA1-3: Personal Income 1997-2001. Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

Income and Poverty Status

Poverty in Amherst County took a significant decline from 2010 to 2020. In total, the County saw a 23.5 percent reduction in poverty levels. People 65 years of age and over saw the largest decrease in poverty levels (see table 14). However, this may be attributed to the closing of the Central Virginia Training School, which had a total population of roughly 600 people less than the count in 2010. It also important to note that the cohort range of 18 to 64 years of age also saw a reduction in poverty levels by 7.6%. In total, each population cohort saw a

decrease in total population and poverty levels. Census tract 105 has the greatest percent of the County's population living below poverty level (see Table 15 and Figure 7). The majority of people living below poverty in Census tract 102 are the population under 18 years old and above 64 years old. Census tracts 103 and 106 contain the lowest percent of the County population below poverty.

TABLE 14: AMHERST COUNTY POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY AND PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2010 to 2020

	Total Population		Below Poverty Level				
	2010	2020	2010		2020		Total % Change of Individuals Living in Poverty
			Population	% of Pop	Population	% of Pop	
Total Population	32,353	31,002	4,433	13.7%	3,393	10.9%	-23.5%
Under 18 years old	6,689	6,154	897	13.4%	829	2.7%	-7.6%
18 to 64 years old	18,650	18,395	2,649	14.2%	1,994	6.4%	-24.7%
65 years old and above	7,014	6,445	877	12.5%	570	1.8%	-35.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

TABLE 15: AMHERST COUNTY 2020 POVERTY DISTRIBUTION BY CENSUS TRACT AND COUNTY*

Census Tract	Total Population	Population Below Poverty											
		Total Population			Under 18 years old			18 to 64 years old			65 years old and above		
		Pop Below Poverty	% of Total Pop	% of County Pop Below Poverty	Pop Under 18 years	% of Total Pop Below Poverty	% of County Pop Below Poverty	Pop 18 to 64 years	% of Total Pop Below Poverty	% of County Pop Below Poverty	Pop 65 years and over	% of Total Pop Below Poverty	% of County Pop Below Poverty
101	4,662	591	12.7%	17.4%	112	19%	3.3%	327	55.3%	9.6%	152	25.7%	4.5%
102	6,412	665	10.4%	19.6%	81	12.2%	2.4%	475	71.4%	14%	109	16.4%	3.2%
103	3,267	215	6.6%	6.3%	51	23.7%	1.5%	119	55.3%	3.5%	45	20.9%	1.3%
104	6,960	470	6.8%	13.9%	162	34.5%	4.8%	180	38.3%	5.3%	128	27.2%	3.8%
105	6,891	1,109	16.1%	32.7%	346	31.2%	10.2%	656	59.2%	19.3%	107	9.6%	3.2%
106	2,180	343	15.7%	10.1%	77	22.4%	2.3%	237	69.1%	7.0%	29	8.5%	0.9%
County	31,002	3,393*	10.9%	100%	829	2.7%	24.4%	1,994	6.4%	58.8%	570	1.8%	16.8%

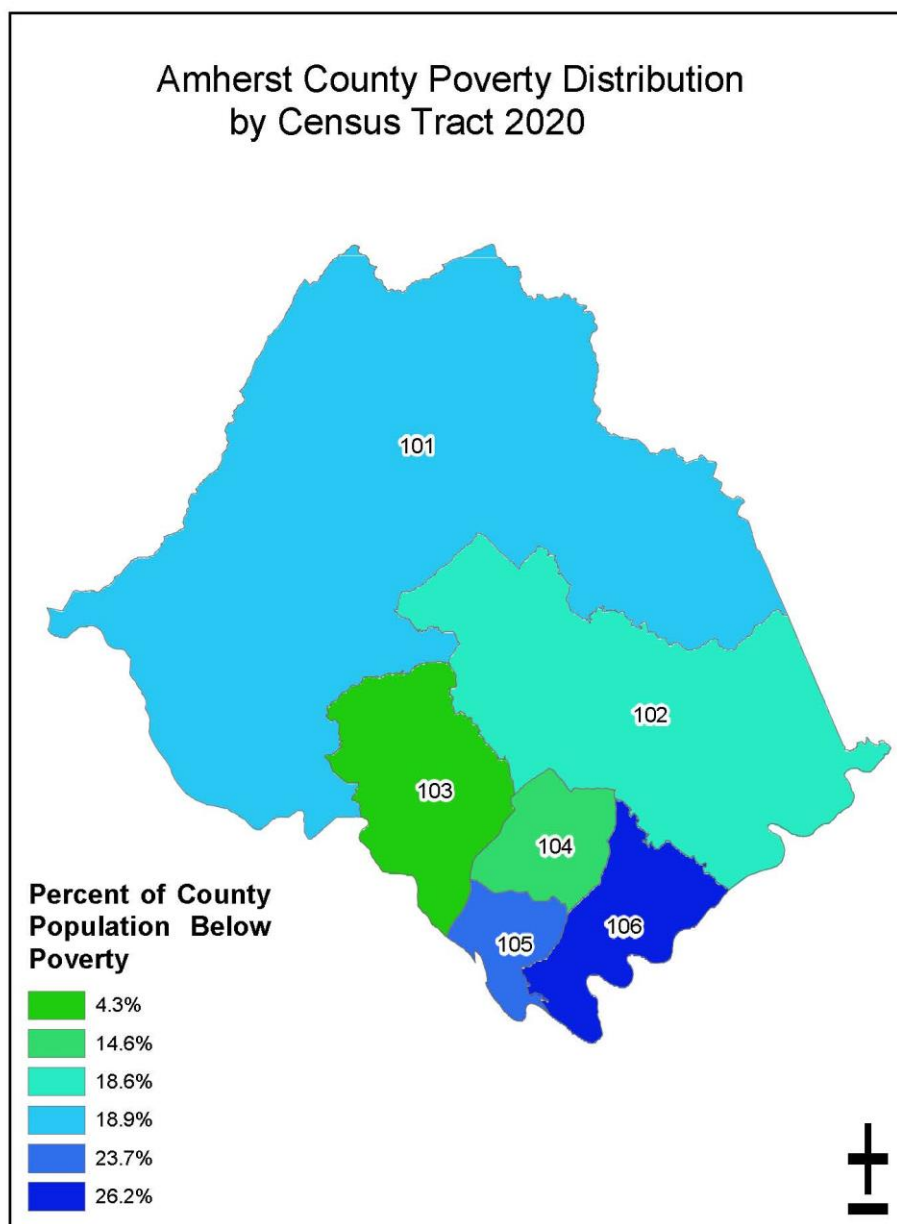
* Population data is derived from population data estimates created from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and should not be construed as exact poverty data numbers.

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 6.

Percent of County Population Living Below Poverty by Census



Household Type

While the population increased by 1.4 percent, the number of households increased by 5 percent from 2000 to 2010 due largely to the increase of non-family households, most of whom live alone (see Table 16). The majority of households in Amherst County consist of families, specifically married-couple families, although from 2000 to 2010, traditional married couple families experience a negative growth trend of negative 5 percent. Non-family household types increased the most significantly. Single male and female-headed family households increased by 1 percent each, and maintained the same relative percent of the population. Non-family householders living alone increased by 1 percent, and householders 65

years old and above experienced the largest percentage growth at 21 percent. As the 65 years old and above population increases, this trend in non-family household growth will continue.

Census tract 103 had the highest percentage of family households and married-couple family households in 2010 (see Table 17). Census tracts 101 and 106 also contain a large percentage of family households. Population growth in Census tracts 101, 103 and 106 are most likely due to family household growth. Census tracts 104 and 105 have the highest percentage of non-family households. Similar to the County as a whole, 27 percent and 30 percent of householders living alone are over age 64 in Census tracts 104 and 105, respectively.

TABLE 16: AMHERST COUNTY PERCENT CHANGE IN DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE FROM 2000 TO 2020

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	2000		2020		Percent Change
	Population	Percent of Total Households	Population	Percent of Total Households	
Family households* (families)	8,793	N/A*	8,150	N/A	-7%
Married-couple families	6,499	52%	6,194	51%	-5%
Other family, male householder	606	5%	539	4%	-11%
Other family, female householder	1,688	13%	1,417	12%	-16%
Non-family households*	3,767	N/A*	4,011	N/A	6%
Householder living alone	3,193	25%	3,259	27%	2%
Householder 65 years and over	3,839	31%	1,751	14%	-54%
Total households	12,560	100%	12,161	100%	-3%

*“N/A” represents the two main categories (Family Households and Non-Family Households) from which the subcategory types are derived.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010

TABLE 17: 2020 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS (HH) PER CENSUS TRACT BY TYPE

			Family HH (families)	Married-couple families	Other family, male HHR*	Other family, female HHR	Non-family HH	HHR living alone	HHR 65 years and over	Total HH	Persons per HH
Census Tracts	101	HH	1,219	1,058	108	53	643	491	297	1,862	2.52
		% of HH	65%	57%	6%	3%	35%	26%	16%	100%	
	102	HH	1,694	1,524	49	171	848	674	398	2,542	2.57
		% of HH	67%	60%	2%	7%	33%	27%	16%	100%	
	103	HH	961	807	60	94	323	276	139	1,284	2.54
		% of HH	75%	63%	5%	7%	25%	21%	11%	100%	
	104	HH	1,832	1,263	86	483	715	602	320	2,547	2.73
		% of HH	72%	50%	3%	19%	28%	24%	13%	100%	
	105	HH	1,644	1,109	136	399	1,115	927	462	2,789	2.58
		% of HH	59%	40%	5%	14%	40%	33%	17%	100%	
	106	HH	800	483	100	217	337	290	124	1,137	2.47
		% of HH	70%	42%	9%	19%	30%	26%	11%	100%	

*HHR = Householder

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04. For 1990: Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tracts 105.01 and 105.02.

Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing – Year Built

The majority of occupied housing units in Amherst County were built after 1969 (see Table 18.) For Census tracts 101, 102, and 103, the greatest percentage of occupied housing were built after 1980. Census tract

105 has the greatest percentage of occupied housing built prior to 1959. Census tracts 101 and 102 have the highest number of occupied houses built before 1940. Census tracts 104 and 106 have the lowest number of occupied housing built before 1940. Housing built after 2014 is predominately seen in census tracts 101, 105 and 106.

TABLE 18: AMHERST COUNTY DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY CENSUS TRACT AND YEAR BUILT, 2020											
Census Tract	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 to 2013	2014 or Later	Total Housing Units
101	386 15.8%	72 3.0%	401 16.5%	240 9.8%	317 13.0%	317 13.0%	324 13.3%	285 11.7%	25 1.0%	70 2.9%	2,437 100%
102	334 10.9%	114 3.7%	140 4.6%	332 10.8%	566 18.5%	713 23.3%	614 20.0%	214 7.0%	37 1.2%	0 0%	3,064 100%
103	147 10.1%	57 3.9%	97 6.7%	151 10.4%	174 12.0%	292 20.1%	301 20.7%	180 12.4%	8 0.6%	47 3.2%	1,454 100%
104	156 5.3%	155 5.3%	292 9.9%	459 15.6%	677 23.1%	494 16.8%	351 12.0%	302 10.3%	22 0.7%	28 1.0%	2,936 100%
105	497 16.0%	236 7.6%	367 11.8%	601 19.3%	365 11.7%	341 11%	321 10.3%	269 8.6%	48 1.5%	65 2.1%	3,110 100%
106	49 20.8%	59 4.8%	120 9.7%	103 8.3%	325 26.3%	165 13.3%	188 15.2%	110 8.9%	29 2.3%	88 7.1%	1,236 100%
County	1,569 11.0%	693 4.9%	1,417 10.0%	1,886 13.2%	2,424 17.0%	2,322 16.3%	2,099 14.7%	1,360 9.6%	169 1.2%	298 2.1%	14,237 100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Households Characteristics

Housing Size and Facilities

Overall, the County has a variety of housing unit size and they average approximately six rooms per unit. As previous population trends and year built statistics indicate growth in Census tracts 101, 102, and 103; new and larger housing units are being built to accommodate this growth. Census tract 103 has the largest percentage of housing units with six rooms, eight rooms, and nine or more rooms. Census tracts 101 and 102 have

greater percentage of housing units with more than six rooms. Census tract 104 had the largest number of one room housing units.

Few occupied units in the County lack plumbing facilities, kitchen facilities, or telephone service (see Table 19), and anecdotally the total number has continued to decrease in recent years. Relative to the County, Census tracts 101, 102, 104, and 105 lack a greater percentage of plumbing

facilities, kitchen facilities, or telephone service (see Table 19). Housing units in the

other Census tracts do not lack plumbing or kitchen facilities.

TABLE 19: 2020 AMHERST COUNTY OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS LACKING PLUMBING FACILITIES, KITCHEN FACILITIES, OR TELEPHONE SERVICE							
	101	102	103	104	105	106	County
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	26	0	0	5	9	0	40
	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	42	6	0	21	18	0	87
	2.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%
No telephone service	71	47	0	29	2	0	209
	3.8%	1.8%	0.0%	1.1%	0.1%	0.0%	1.7%

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics

Housing Occupancy

The majority of housing units in the County are owner-occupied. Occupied housing and the number of housing units saw a slight increase between 2010 and 2020 (see Table 20). Census tracts 103 and 106 saw the largest percent of housing unit growth, which is consistent with the County's population

trends in these areas. However, despite the slight increase of total housing units and occupancy status, vacancy rates throughout each census tract saw a dramatic increase. Between 2010 and 2020, the County saw an increase of vacancies by 26%. Census tracts 102, 105 and 106 saw the largest increase of housing vacancies of over 70. Table 20 depicts the vacancy rates through the County's Census tracts.

TABLE 20: 2010 and 2020 Housing Occupancy by Census Tract and County						
	Census Tract	Housing Units	Occupied		Vacant	
2010	101	2,681	2,145	80%	536	20%
	102	2,848	2,675	94%	173	6%
	103	1,466	1,383	94%	83	6%
	104	2,786	2,603	93%	183	7%
	105	2,994	2,844	95%	150	5%

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

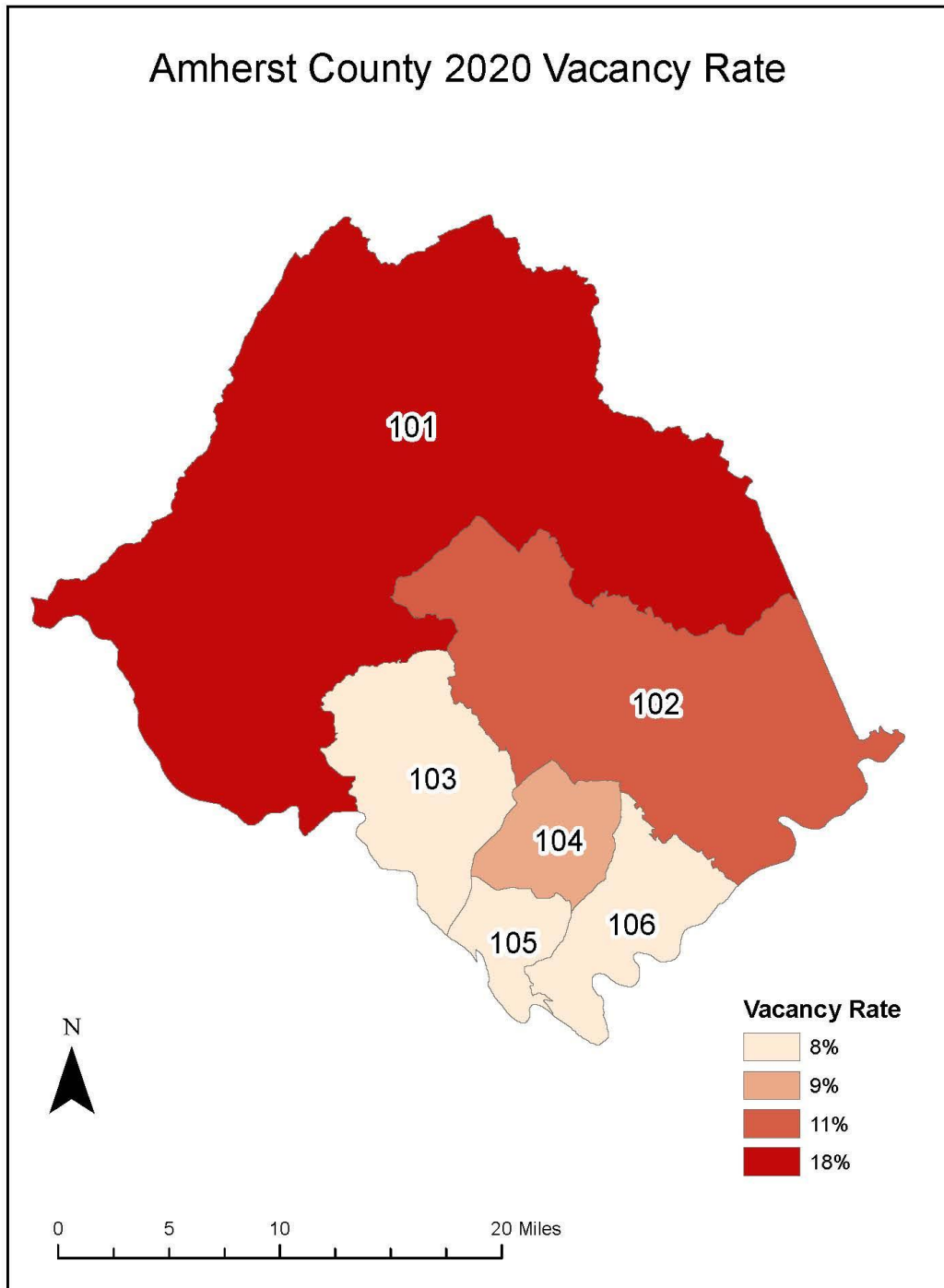
	106	1,109	1,056	95%	53	5%
	County	13,884	12,706	92%	1,178	8%
2020	101	2,562	2,110	82%	452	18%
	102	2,863	2,338	82%	305	11%
	103	1,592	1,458	92%	134	8%
	104	2,860	2,615	91%	245	9%
	105	3,130	2,872	92%	258	8%
	106	1,225	1,133	93%	92	8%
	County	14,232	12,746	90%	1,486	10%
Percent Change from 2000 to 2010	101	-4%	-2%		16%	
	102	1%	-13%		76%	
	103	9%	5%		61%	
	104	3%	0.5%		34%	
	105	5%	1%		72%	
	106	10%	7%		74%	
	County	3%	0.3%		26%	

Note: Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2020 Decennial Census

Figure 7.

2010 Percent Vacant Housing Units Per Census Tract



Housing Types

For purposes of discussion, the terms “single-family,” “multi-family,” “mobile home,” and “other” will be used to describe housing types. In Table 21, “Multi-family homes” are considered to be structures containing three or more units in accordance with the definition of a “multi-family dwelling” in the County’s Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance and the category “Other” units include single family attached and duplex units. From 2010 to the present, there has been very little change in the housing type ratio throughout the County. Single-family dwellings account for 79 percent of all housing, multi-family constitutes 7 percent, mobile homes make up 11 percent and single-family attached and duplex units make up the remaining 3 percent. Census tract 105 has the highest proportion of single-family dwellings and the lowest proportion of mobile homes. Conversely census tract 101 has the highest proportion of mobile homes, and low proportions of multi-family, and single-family structures. The entire area is zoned A-1 Agriculture where, currently, mobile homes are a “by-right” use and multi-family dwellings are not permitted. Table 21

compares 2010 and 2020 census data on housing type by census tract.

Using data collected by the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center and local permit data, the housing type trend can be followed through the end of 2011.

According to the Building Department’s Yearly Building Permit’s by Year Report, from 2006 through 2011, permits were issued for 375 single-family dwellings, 28 multi-family dwellings, and 156 manufactured home dwellings. It is not known how many dwellings were completed or how many were replacement homes. What can be inferred, however, is that manufactured homes continue to be a viable part of the Amherst County housing industry. Manufactured homes represent a “double-edged sword” for many communities. On one hand, they represent a reasonable, affordable home for lower-income households. On the other hand, they have a relatively low assessed value which results in low real estate taxes which increases the gap between taxes collected and services provided. This point was discussed previously in “Cost of Providing Services.”

TABLE 21: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE FROM 2010 TO 2020 BY CENSUS TRACT AND COUNTY

	Census Tract	Single-Family		Multi-Family*		Manufactured Home		Other		Total
2010	101	2,131	79%	0	0%	526	20%	24	1%	2,681
	102	2,006	70%	314	11%	344	12%	184	7%	2,848
	103	1,421	97%	0	0%	18	1%	27	2%	1,466
	104	1,941	70%	213	8%	459	16%	173	6%	2,786
	105	2,167	72%	397	13%	259	9%	171	6%	2,994
	106	871	79%	0	0%	180	16%	58	5%	1,109

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

	County	10,537	76%	924	7%	1,786	13%	637	4%	13,884
2020	101	1,961	81%	132	5%	266	11%	61	3%	2,420
	102	2,436	80%	235	8%	293	10%	100	3%	3,064
	103	1,264	87%	0	0%	151	10%	39	3%	1,454
	104	2,111	72%	217	7%	487	17%	121	4%	2,936
	105	2,462	79%	394	13%	166	5%	88	3%	3,110
	106	1,067	86%	23	2%	138	11%	8	1%	1,236
	County	11,301	79%	1,001	7%	1,501	11%	417	3%	14,220
Percent Change from 2010 to 2020	101	-8%		13100%		-49%		154%		-10%
	102	21%		-25%		-15%		-46%		8%
	103	-11%		0%		739%		44%		-1%
	104	9%		2%		6%		-30%		5%
	105	14%		-1%		-36%		-49%		4%
	106	23%		2200%		-23%		-86%		11%
	County	7%		8%		-16%		-35%		2%

*"Multi-family units" are defined as being structures containing three or more units in accordance with the definition of a "multi-family dwelling" in the County's Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance. "Other" units include single-family attached and duplex units.

Note: Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2006 to 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics; 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data

Housing Value and Cost

The majority of housing units in the County have a value between \$100,000 and \$200,000 with a median value of \$150,100 (see Table 22). Census tract 103 has the highest median value of \$183,400. Census tract 105 has the lowest median value of \$107,700.

The median contract rent value for the County is \$679 per month (see Table 23). The highest contract rent values are in Census tracts 103 and 106 and the cheapest are in Census tracts 101 and 102. Census tracts 103 and 106 also have the lowest numbers of renters in the County. Census tracts 104 and 105 have the highest number of rental units, with monthly rent between \$1,000 and \$1,499.

TABLE 22: 2020 AMHERST COUNTY HOUSING VALUES BY CENSUS TRACT							
Value	101	102	103	104	105	106	County
Less than \$50,000	130	62	100	169	183	21	665
	8.2%	3.2%	8.3%	8.8%	9.7%	2.4%	7.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	239	85	100	177	343	245	1,189
	15.0%	4.4%	8.3%	9.3%	18.2%	27.6%	12.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	141	324	137	702	565	312	2,181
	8.9%	16.7%	11.4%	36.7%	30.0%	35.2%	23.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	373	565	257	559	599	209	2,562
	23.4%	29.2%	21.5%	29.2%	31.8%	23.6%	27.2%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	369	554	337	263	142	80	1,745
	23.2%	28.6%	28.1%	13.7%	7.5%	9.0%	18.5%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	229	193	237	35	37	20	751
	14.4%	10.0%	19.8%	1.8%	2.0%	2.3%	8.0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	110	154	30	8	8	0	310
	6.9%	8.0%	2.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	3.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.05%
Median	\$182,400	\$190,050*	\$201,300	\$137,050*	\$115,467*	\$122,800	\$159,900

* Averaged over inclusive Census Tracts

Note: Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2011 to 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics

TABLE 23: 2020 AMHERST COUNTY CONTRACT RENT DISTRIBUTION BY CENSUS TRACT							
	101	102	103	104	105	106	County
Less than \$500	52	87	5	106	128	29	407
	28.3%	18.0%	13.2%	17.8%	15.2%	18.6%	17.7%
\$500 to \$999	132	271	33	409	572	127	1,544
	71.7%	56.0%	86.8%	68.7%	67.9%	81.4%	67.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	0	62	0	52	129	0	243
	0.0%	12.8%	0.0%	8.7%	15.3%	0.0%	10.6%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	0	58	0	28	13	0	99
	0.0%	12.0%	0.0%	4.7%	1.5%	0.0%	4.3%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

\$2,500 or more	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Total	184	484	38	595	842	156	2,299
Median	\$613	\$900*	\$905	\$691*	\$703*	\$567	\$700

* Averaged over inclusive Census Tracts

Note: Census Tract 102 consists of Census Tracts 102.01 and 102.02. Census Tract 104 consists of Census Tracts 104.01 and 104.02. Census Tract 105 consists of Census Tract 105.02, 105.03, and 105.04.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2011 to 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics

Approximately 90 percent of non-manufactured housing (mobile homes) building permits issued since 1990 were used to build single-family housing units and 10 percent were for multifamily (see Table 24). The number of building permits issued for single-family housing dropped precipitously after 1999, and gradually increased through the end of 2007, before spiraling downward during 2008 to present which can be associated with the “Great Recession.” Local permit information for 2011 shows 64 issued. Multi-family units continue to represent a

minor portion of housing. It is anticipated that, assuming the economy will gradually improve, with the growing number of retirees, this trend may change, making town homes and patio homes a more popular option with the construction community. 2011 figures show that 4 multi-family structures were constructed. The cost of single family units more than doubled from 1990 through 2006, increasing from \$84,000 to \$170,552. However, from 2006 to the present, values decreased by an average of \$35,000 per single-family unit.

TABLE 24: AMHERST COUNTY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED BY UNIT TYPE, 1990 TO 2011

Year	Single Family Units			Multi-Family Units		
	Number of Units	Average Cost per Unit	% of Total	Number of Units	Average Cost per Unit	% of Total
1990	135	\$84,087	81%	32	\$24,545	19%
1991	167	\$61,579	83%	34	\$23,253	17%
1992	163	\$71,604	96%	6	\$0	4%
1993	195	\$72,404	87%	30	\$0	13%
1994	173	\$73,569	84%	32	\$45,313	16%
1995	191	\$72,350	97%	6	\$30,500	3%
1996	202	\$76,731	94%	12	\$33,833	6%
1997	179	\$77,727	89%	23	\$34,152	11%
1998	217	\$83,237	97%	6	\$44,500	3%
1999	166	\$98,923	89%	21	\$52,857	11%
2000	93	\$101,605	88%	13	\$29,385	12%
2001	109	\$113,286	86%	18	\$57,056	14%
2002	118	\$131,244	100%	0	\$0	0%

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

2003	107	\$129,674	88%	14	\$46,143	12%
2004	117	\$170,388	89%	14	\$39,142	11%
2005	124	\$144,264	100%	0	\$0	0%
2006	142	\$170,552	58%	6	N/A	N/A
2007	147	\$146,636	95%	11	\$62,273	5%
2008	115	\$171,532	93%	9	\$65,556	7%
2009	109	\$130,640	96%	4	\$61,000	4%
2010	100	\$107,534	100%	0	\$0	0%
2011	60	\$122,284	94%	4	\$68,750	6%

CHAPTER IV: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief discussion of Amherst County community facilities and services. General community facility goals, objectives, and strategies are presented, followed by descriptive summaries of specific service areas and facilities. Goals, objectives, and strategies are provided for the areas of public water and wastewater facilities, watershed protection, solid waste management, transportation, public education, public libraries, parks and recreation, education, library, law enforcement, public safety, and emergency services, housing, social services and health care, economic development, information technology and broadband services, and cultural resources and community aesthetics.

Several key community facility concepts are presented in this chapter. First, adequately funding community facilities is a key to providing effective services. Second, the location and timing of planned community facilities has a major impact on land use patterns. Third, the private sector can contribute a fair share of funding towards the capital construction of community facilities in several ways.

The goals, objectives, and strategies contained in this chapter are not laws. Planned community services and facilities

are a function of the Board of Supervisors' and Amherst County School Board's annual decisions pertaining to capital and operating expenditures. County ordinances and policies, such as the zoning and subdivision ordinance, the building code, erosion and sediment control ordinances, water and wastewater ordinances, and economic development efforts are legal mechanisms by which land development is controlled.

However, decisions made in general accordance with this Comprehensive Plan hold great legal weight in Virginia. Making decisions that conform to a comprehensive plan demonstrates to the citizens of a community that elected and appointed officials have thought about the future of their community and are willing to plan for a desirable future.

In addition, Amherst County encourages youth participation across all boards, committees and commissions. Amherst County understands that youth participation can provide valuable insight to the ever-changing landscape of the County. Youth's perspective can help guide decision makers to foster a sustainable community that reaches all age cohorts throughout the County.

Finally, a comprehensive plan is not a static document. In addition to periodic five year reviews, a comprehensive plan may be formally amended at any time to address unanticipated community conditions or new or emerging community objectives.

GENERAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal # 1

Develop (or maintain) the programs, facilities, and services necessary to satisfy the needs and demands of Amherst County residents, businesses, industries, employees, and visitors.

Objective #1

Maintain high quality service and facility standards in Amherst County.

Strategies:

Incorporate the recommendations of various plans for specific areas of community facilities and services (e.g., public water and wastewater facilities, watershed protection, solid waste management, transportation, public education, public libraries, parks and recreation, law enforcement, public safety and emergency services, housing, social services and health care, economic development, information technology and broadband services, and cultural resources and community aesthetics) into the five year Capital Improvements Program.

Consider funding for Capital Improvement Plan and non-capital projects referenced in the Comprehensive Plan each year during the budget process.

Objective #2

Use community facilities and services as a growth management tool.

Strategies:

Plan community facilities and services for designated growth areas to maximize efficiencies and cost-effectiveness.

Amherst County has established boundaries where public water and sewer will and will not be extended over the next twenty years. Require all major subdivision developments to extend and use public water and sewer if they are developed within 1,000 feet of existing public water and sewer lines and within the associated designated growth boundary.

Develop strategies to ensure that the long-term return (financial, cultural, etc.) to the locality of new residential developments is related to their “fair share” of the cost to provide community facilities and services needed by such development.

Accommodate future facility expansion demands through renovation of existing, or the construction of new, facilities that are capable of containing other County departments and agencies (i.e., multi-use buildings). Design these facilities to be efficient and promote the pride of the community.

The remaining community facility goals, objectives, and strategies are presented within the specific community facility or service area of concern.

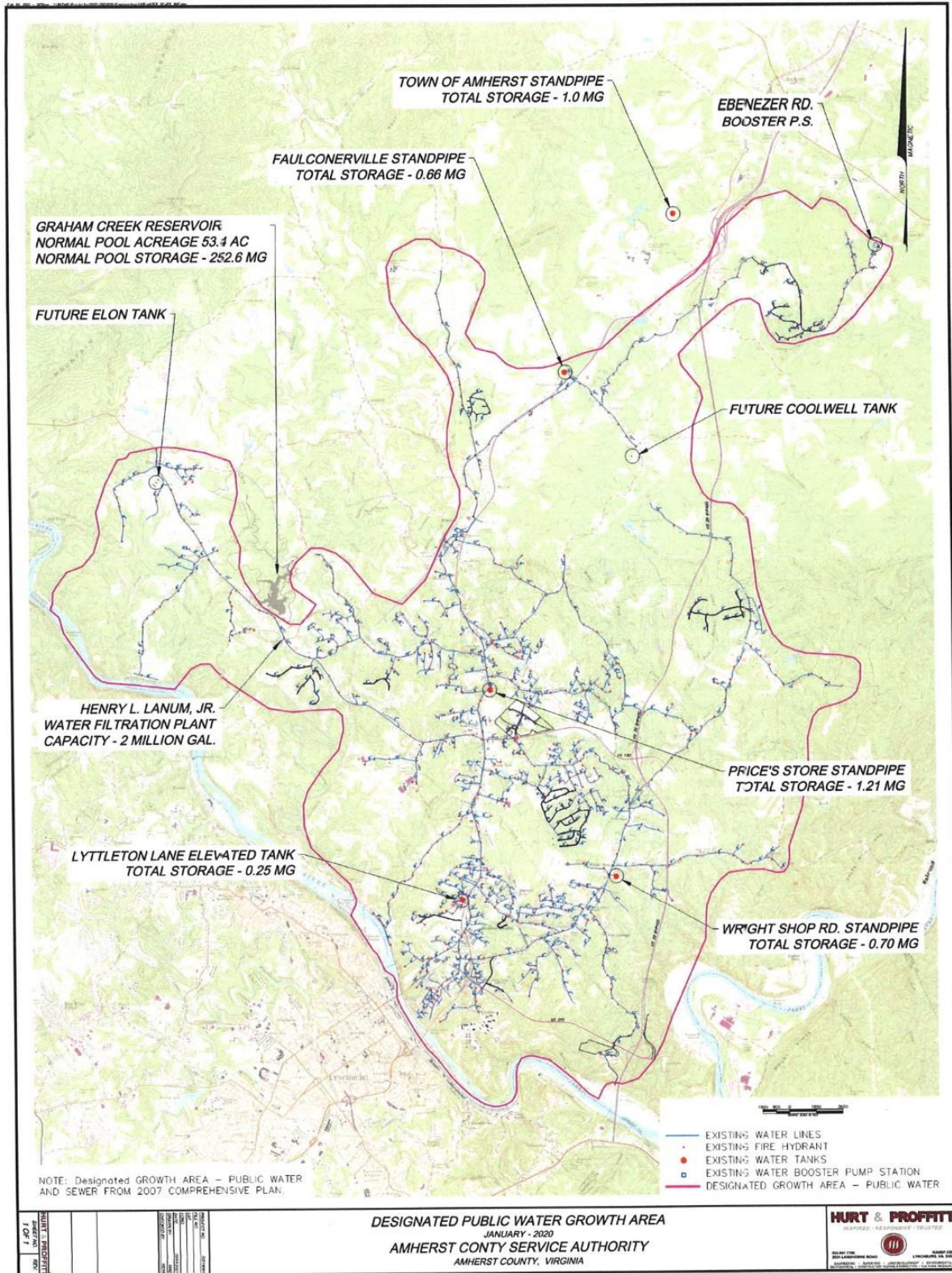
Public Water and Wastewater

Amherst County Service Authority (ACSA) is a public water and wastewater utility, governed by a Board consisting of five County citizens appointed by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, three of whom are elected Supervisors. It was established as the Madison Heights Sanitary District in 1936 to provide water supplied by the City of Lynchburg to residences and businesses at the southern end of Madison Heights. Over the next half century, it grew and expanded to include all of Madison Heights, extend water service into neighboring communities, discontinue the City supply in favor of its own water sources and treatment plant, add wastewater services, and, in 1987, be re-structured as Amherst County Service Authority, a branch of State government

under the Water and Waste Authorities Act. The evolution of ACSA is an ongoing process; the end of 2020 saw completion of a three-year program to re-structure the ACSA Board, from its 1987 composition of the five elected Supervisors to the current Board described above.

ACSA is headquartered in the ACSA Water Office, 113 Phelps Road, near the southern end of Madison Heights, and serves over half of the County's population, over 18,000 citizens, as well as the commercial hub of the County, Madison Heights. A staff of twenty-two (22) licensed water and wastewater operators, administrative staff, customer service staff, construction personnel, and utility workers use an annual budget of approximately five million dollars to operate and maintain the following water and wastewater infrastructure.





Water:

ACSA's 3.0 million gallon per day (MGD) triple water source withdrawal permit includes the following sources: Harris Creek (primary), Graham Creek Reservoir (secondary), and James River (emergency-only tertiary). Harris Creek flows past ACSA's water treatment plant, which uses an impoundment dam and pumps to draw water from the creek and convey it into the plant for potable treatment. Graham Creek Reservoir (below) was constructed a third of a mile north of the water plant. It has a 55' high earthen dam that impounds 255 MG of water for potable treatment, creating a 58-acre lake. ACSA will complete a two-million-dollar project in 2022 to improve the dam and its emergency spillway. The James River intake was established during the 2002 drought; it is currently an emergency-only intake, but will become a permanent tertiary raw water source with completion in 2026 of a six-million-dollar project to install an intake structure to pump river water to the upstream end of the reservoir. When the Mill Creek flood control lake was constructed north of the Town of Amherst, the County invested additional local funds to expand the project to include a public water supply purpose, resulting in its being named Mill Creek Reservoir. This facility serves as an emergency back-up raw water source for the Town of Amherst water system, releasing water to Buffalo River as needed, and is a designated future raw water source for ACSA.



While ACSA has the legal authority to extend water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the County, water services are concentrated in a County Water Designated Growth Area comprising the medium residential density/commercial/industrial portions of southern Amherst County, in and around Madison Heights. ACSA's centralized water distribution system consists of approximately 165 miles of water mains, extending from James River in the south to an interconnection with the Town of Amherst water system east of the Town at Union Hill Road (refer to the Amherst County Service Authority Designated Public Water Growth Area, next page). Water mains also extend from the Galts Mill Rd./Brightwells Mill Rd. area in the east to the Village of Elon in the west. The water system also includes four strategically located, above-ground water tanks, totaling almost three million gallons of storage, with two more in planning. As of December 2020, there were 6,347 total active residential and commercial connections to the water system, using an average of 170 gallons per day per connection.

ACSA's Henry L. Lanum, Jr. Water Filtration Plant has a design capacity of 2.0 million gallons per day (MGD) and currently produces an annual average of approximately 1.1 MGD, including summer high production

periods, of high quality treated water (ACSA has received eight consecutive, and 10 in 12 years, annual waterworks performance awards from the VA Dept. of Health). This would enable service to as many as ten thousand accounts. ACSA completed a three-year technological upgrade of the Lanum plant in 2012, which included the first phase of work to expand capacity to 4.0 MGD. Planning for a capacity expansion must begin when average daily water production consistently exceeds 85% of plant capacity; with historic County growth rates and current Lanum production only slightly over 50% of capacity, plant expansion is not expected to be needed for many years.

ACSA's centralized wastewater collection system is within a County Sewer Designated Growth Area concentrated in Madison Heights, from James River in the south to South Coolwell Road in the north (refer to the Amherst County Service Authority Designated Public Sewer Growth Area, next page). Sewer service is currently concentrated in the Williams Run drainage basin and the South Amherst Highway commercial corridor. The system consists of approximately 36 miles of sanitary sewers, 7 lift stations, and the Williams Run Sewage Pump Station at James River, which pumps all collected wastewater across the river to the Lynchburg Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. Within the



next eight years, ACSA plans to complete a three million dollar upgrade of the Williams Run pump station.

As of December 2020, there were 1,092 total active residential and commercial connections to the sewer system. Current wastewater volumes pumped to the regional plant average only 0.30 MGD; almost all other wastewater generated in the ACSA service area is treated by private onsite treatment systems (drainfields). ACSA and Amherst County jointly fund a program to extend public sewers into developed areas currently served by private drainfields, to have public sewers in place when aging drainfields fail.

ACSA is a regional partner in the Lynchburg Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, with a contract with the City that allots 11.36% (2.5 MGD) of treatment plant capacity to ACSA to support future County growth; the contract also makes ACSA responsible for 11.36% of plant capital improvements. The only wastewater treatment for which ACSA is directly responsible is performed by two neighborhood facilities in north Madison Heights, west of S. Amherst Hwy., one on each side of Winesap Rd. Both of these small facilities are owned and operated by ACSA, approximately 45 years old, and slated to be replaced by sewage pump stations within the next 15 years as parts of projects to extend public sanitary sewers into these residential areas.

Costs of Services:

ACSA performs an annual study to compare its commodity water and sewer rates and development fees with those of similar size and type utilities across the Commonwealth and with its immediate neighbors, with whom ACSA competes for economic development. The April 7, 2020 study benchmarked ACSA rates and fees against 15 water and 19 wastewater utilities of similar size and type to ACSA, and with the other Lynchburg Municipal Service Area (MSA) utilities, Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA) and Campbell County Utilities and Service Authority (CCUSA). (This annual study does not include the City of Lynchburg because of the inequity of comparing a much smaller service authority with the size and financial resources of the City.) Briefly, it was determined that ACSA's water rates were lower than 8 of the 15 similar utilities and between those of BRWA and CCUSA; similarly, sewer rates were lower than 10 of the 19 similar utilities and between those of BRWA and CCUSA. This demonstrates that ACSA's water and sewer rates are very competitive.

ACSA new water service tap (availability and connection) fees were found to be midway between BRWA and CCUSA, while ACSA new sewer service tap fees were below both of its MSA neighbors, demonstrating ACSA's competitiveness with its neighbors regarding development and economic growth. (These fees are not compared to those of similar size and type utilities across Virginia because ACSA does not compete with more distant utilities for economic development; they are not compared to those of the City of Lynchburg because of the difference in system size and financial resources.)

ACSA Water and Wastewater Facility Plan:

ACSA most recently updated its Facility Plan on March 6, 2012 (another update is in progress for adoption no later than 2022). This is a fifty-year utility planning document projecting community water and wastewater needs and how they should be met over that period. Following the analysis and evaluation of several alternative plan approaches to fulfilling these needs, the ACSA Board found it appropriate to continue to provide utility service through only centralized water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Centralized systems are generally more reliable, less labor-intensive, more cost effective, and better community planning tools than isolated community wells or prefabricated "package" wastewater treatment facilities.

As described in the Facility Plan, the ACSA Board has determined that the most appropriate public water supply plan alternative is to first expand the Lanum water plant to its maximum capacity of 4.0 MGD, including a second or enlarged water main from the Lanum plant to a second water storage tank at Prices Store. The 4.0 MGD raw water sources would include the permanent James River intake and distribution system modifications and a reduction in the allowable water withdrawal from Harris Creek; this reduction is a permit condition required by the VA Dept. of Environmental Quality to allow the James River tertiary intake to be made permanent and will make Graham Creek Reservoir the primary raw water source for the Lanum plant. At current County annual growth, this work is not expected to be necessary before 2035. When it happens, this capacity expansion will double service capability, to approximately twenty thousand customer accounts. Community water demand beyond that point would be met through a water systems interconnection with the City of

Lynchburg or construction of other new sources. The ACSA-City systems interconnection is currently in planning, with completion of a Master Plan expected in 2022. Under this approach, Mill Creek Reservoir will continue to serve as an emergency back-up supply for the Town of Amherst for the foreseeable future. Use of this reservoir as an ACSA raw water source remains one of the ACSA's alternate plans, though not for many years. As currently planned, development of the Mill Creek Reservoir source will most likely take place well beyond the fifty-year planning period of ACSA's 2012 Facility Plan.

Under this Facility Plan, ACSA-owned capacity at the Lynchburg Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility is sufficient to meet the current demand projections of the fifty-year planning period. As a result, the Plan's wastewater emphasis is on collection system expansion. Such expansions would occur over several decades throughout the drainage basins on either side of South Amherst Highway, between James River and South Coolwell Road, with major emphasis on extending public sanitary sewers into existing developed residential areas that are served by drainfields. Construction of the Williams Run Trunk Sanitary Sewer in 1995 stimulated development east of S. Amherst Hwy. in Madison Heights; the lack of a similar trunk sewer west of S. Amherst Hwy. has limited development west of Madison Heights and should be constructed as soon as possible to promote development west of the S. Amherst Hwy. commercial corridor.

Summary

Extension of public water and wastewater services should be used as a growth management tool. As such, public wastewater service should only be extended into areas where more intensive development, with higher densities, is desired (refer to the designated growth area maps

earlier in this section). This would include industrial, commercial, and selected medium density residential areas. Public water should be made available throughout these areas. In rare instances, public water service may be determined to be appropriate for very small portions of rural low-density residential areas, when bordered by more intensive land uses. In order to implement this goal fully, the zoning and subdivision ordinance might be crafted to provide for higher densities within service areas, or to provide density bonuses for development that pays for extensions of water and sewer mains into new areas.

Because the presence of public water and wastewater services stimulates higher densities and more intensive land uses, neither water nor wastewater service should be extended beyond the boundaries of areas designated and planned for growth. To this end, Amherst County's 2007

Comprehensive Plan established the County's first formal Designated Growth Areas (refer to the maps earlier in this section) to further reinforce existing zoning regulations.

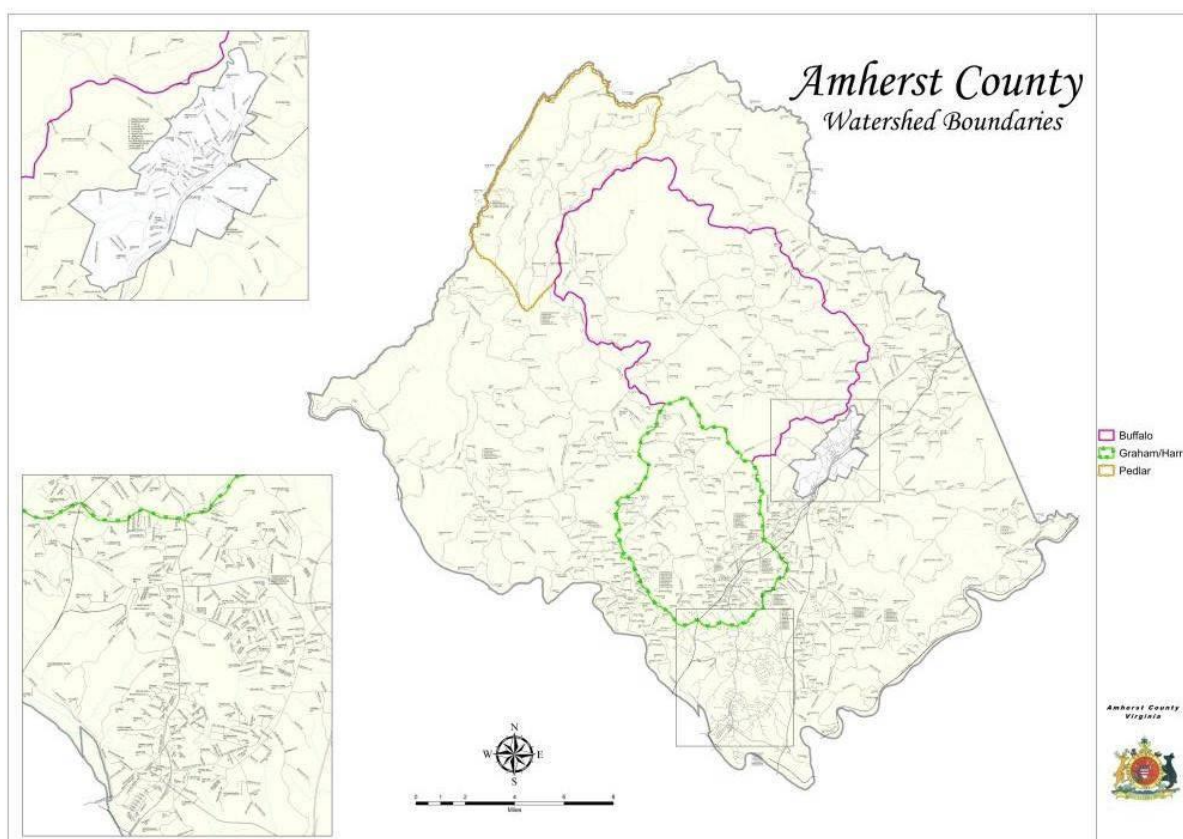
Amherst County's Watershed Protection Program

Historically, Amherst County, Amherst County Service Authority (ACSA), the Town of Amherst, the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District, and local colleges worked in partnership with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VADCR) to preserve and enhance water quality within the watersheds of the County's public drinking water sources. The District terminated its affiliation with these efforts in 2018, but ACSA is working to replace the District with a new affiliation with the James River Association. The program consists of educating landowners of the benefits, to

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

themselves as well as the public and the environment, of protecting water quality; enhanced voluntary land use controls, with funding assistance for implementation; an ongoing program of watershed land use surveys; and a Best Management Practices (BMP) promotional program. The 75% BMP “cost share” funds available through VADCR’s Chesapeake Bay Initiative are leveraged with 25% local grants from ACSA to provide BMPs at little to no cost to the agricultural landowner. The BMPs promoted

for use include treed buffers on both sides of waterways, pollinator buffers, livestock exclusion fencing, watering facilities for livestock that formerly had access to waterways, etc. While this program could be further strengthened through adoption of additional land use controls consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Program, it has twice received national recognition from Region III of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.



**PUBLIC WATER AND WASTEWATER
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal # 1

Operate and administrate ACSA responsively and responsibly. As the primary agency responsible for public health, environmental protection, and economic growth in Amherst County, it is critical to the County that ACSA continue to be able to provide its products and services uninterrupted, at a high level of quality, and throughout the current and future developed areas of the County.

Objective 1

As an enterprise agency, ACSA is more of a business than a government agency. Responsiveness to the public and the economic development community is essential to its reputation and finances.

Strategies:

Provide customers a safe, aesthetically pleasing location and facilities for inter-action with ACSA staff.

Provide products and services at rates and fees that are sufficient for daily operations, asset management, debt service, and adequate financial reserves, but low enough to be affordable to customers.

Constantly strive to find new ways to improve the excellent service provided to customers.

Work with the development community and the County Economic Development Authority to find innovative ways to facilitate economic growth projects.

Objective 2

Proper stewardship of public funds is critical to ACSA's reputation and continued operation and financial viability.

Strategies:

Develop an annual budget for ACSA Board adoption and ACSA staff implementation that maintains daily operations, asset management, debt service, and financial reserves.

Satisfactory annual audits of ACSA finances by an independent third party financial firm.

Annual adjustments of rates to maintain ACSA revenues at an adequate level to maintain operations and financial viability. Annual adjustments minimize the impacts on customer household or business finances.

Occasional adjustments of development fees to provide additional funding for operations, asset management, and economic growth assistance, while keeping fees competitive with those of water-sewer utilities in neighboring areas with which Amherst County competes for economic growth.

Find innovative ways to extend limited ACSA financial resources, such as partnering with economic growth stakeholders to share project costs, getting funding from outside sources, monitoring existing debt service for opportunities to save money in refinancing, etc.

Operate and administrate ACSA in a manner which minimizes unnecessary expenditures and maximizes the use of public funds.

Maintain debt within manageable limits and ACSA's reputation. Only borrow money for

projects that are necessary to enhance ACSA operations and customer service, and only within thresholds established by ACSA's creditors.

Objective 3

Operate and administrate ACSA to maintain its reputation with water and wastewater regulatory agencies.

Strategies:

Comply with all pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and industry standards.

Maintain and renew all permits pertaining to ACSA operations and infrastructure.

Objective 4

Cooperation with many stakeholders, in many fields, is critical to maximize ACSA effectiveness as a partner in public health, environmental protection, and economic growth.

Strategies:

Work with County staff to facilitate ACSA participation in County projects for economic growth, public infrastructure improvements, County events, etc.

Work with the County Economic Development Authority to promote County economic growth and development, including communicating knowledge of potential development, providing water and wastewater products and services available for such projects, assisting in specific projects by providing ACSA resources, etc.

Work with the development community in Amherst County to promote economic growth and development, including communicating to developers knowledge of ACSA resources and willingness to assist, formulating stakeholders partnerships to share costs and benefits, and getting feedback from developers regarding ACSA performance and ways to improve.

Objective #5

Maintain a staff adequate to the operational and administrative needs of ACSA and to prevent the overworking of staff, but without excessive expenditure on manpower that would require increases to rates and fees that would burden ACSA's customers.

Strategies:

Keep a sufficient number of adequately licensed water and wastewater operators on staff for infrastructure operation and maintenance, promoting licensure advancement and cross-training of water and wastewater operators to advance their careers and ACSA operations.

Keep a sufficient number of adequately trained Water Office staff for superior customer Service.

Keep a sufficient number of adequately trained field staff for meter reading, construction and repairs of existing and new ACSA infrastructure, and customer service in the field.

Keep a sufficient number adequately trained managers and supervisors to monitor activities of subordinate staff and ensure proper ACSA operations.

Contract with outside consultants (including County departments) to provide services that ACSA does not have the time or the expertise to provide in-house, including engineering, construction, financial, etc.).

Objective #6

Maintain equipment adequate to the needs of operating and administering a public water and wastewater utility the size of ACSA.

Strategies:

Practice adequate asset management of water and wastewater infrastructure to ensure rehabilitation or replacement before significant deterioration of performance or failure.

Maintain adequate tools, equipment, machinery, and vehicles for installation, operation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of ACSA water and wastewater infrastructure.

Plan and implement the installation and use of equipment to provide sustained, sufficient water and sewer systems operation, without unnecessary equipment expenditures resulting in increased revenue needs resulting in higher rates and fees.

Goal #2

Continue to provide water and wastewater utilities in a manner that supports the County's growth management, land use, environmental, and economic development goals and objectives.

Objective # 1

Use the planned presence, or absence, of public water and wastewater services as a growth management tool.

Strategies:

Extend centralized public water service throughout the Designated Water Service Growth Area, as opportunities arise.

Restrict the extension of public water service beyond the boundaries of the Designated Water Service Growth Area.

Extend public wastewater service only into the Designated Sewer Service Growth Area, which is the portion of the Designated Water Service Growth Area where more intensive growth is desired.

Work with developers, County Economic Development Authority, and other stakeholders in economic growth, by altering ACSA water and sewer infrastructure asset management schedules as needed to coincide with development projects; by forming partnerships of project stakeholders to share project costs and benefits; by finding innovative ways to mitigate obstacles to development projects and facilitate their completion; by finding innovative ways to assess development fees in accordance with the County Code and ACSA needs, without being an obstacle to development projects; and other means.

Objective # 2

Provide adequate and reliable water distribution and wastewater collection systems in geographic areas identified for growth.

Strategies:

Utilize existing and emerging technologies to better serve the customers of the utility system.

Maintain water and wastewater revenues at levels which support the operation, maintenance, and capital improvement needs of the utility systems, using minimal annual increases of water and sewer rates and fees, rather than periodic large increases.

Maintain utility system development fees at levels necessary to off-set the costs to provide water and wastewater service to new development.

Use availability fees to fund system capacity improvements and debt service for long-term infrastructure improvements.

Continue to require 100% reserve drain fields for new development and promote responsibilities of property owners in areas without public sewer

Coordinate Board of Supervisors activities and funding assistance to promote community economic growth and development with the provision of the ACSA public water and wastewater services necessary to support those efforts.

Coordinate County Economic Development Authority activities and funding assistance to promote community economic growth and development with the provision of the ACSA public water and wastewater services necessary to support those efforts.

Continue to use ACSA revenues to match County Board of Supervisors' annual contributions from the General Fund for extensions of public sanitary sewers into previously developed areas of southern Amherst County that have been identified by the Virginia Department of Health as being at high risk of private wastewater septic system failure due to age, soil conditions, lot size, or topography.

Objective # 3

Continue to participate with other local governments in regional water and wastewater utility planning and participate with those projects that meet future needs.

Strategies:

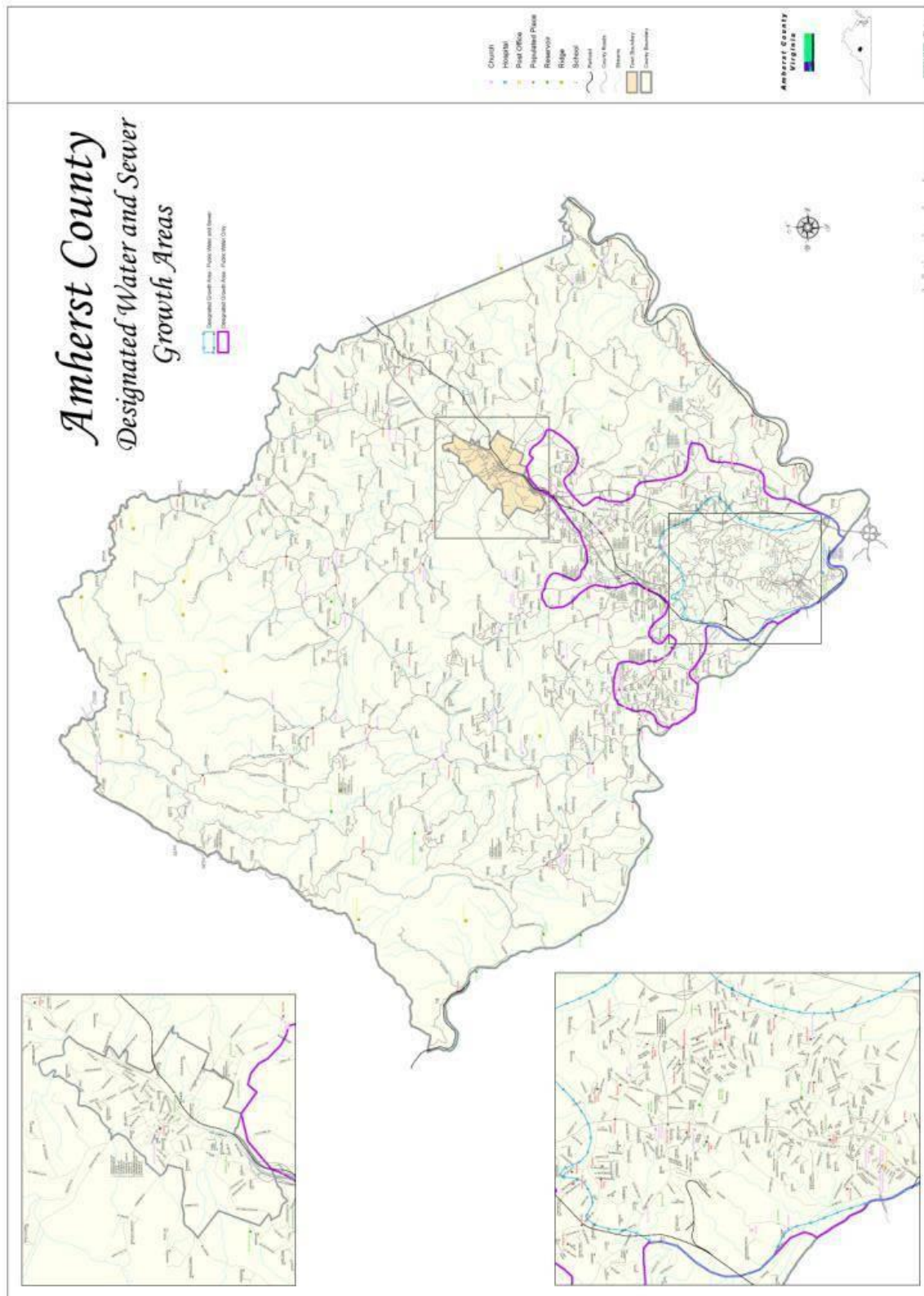
Implement the ACSA Water and Wastewater Facility Plan.

Develop mutually beneficial joint ventures with the Town of Amherst and the City of Lynchburg to interconnect existing and future water and wastewater utilities within the County designated growth areas, in ways determined to be desirable and cost effective.

Continue regular meetings of the directors/administrators of the Region 2000 water/wastewater utility organizations (City of Lynchburg, Bedford Regional Water Authority, and Campbell County Utilities and Service Authority) to discuss shared services (regional wastewater treatment plant and wholesale water), the rapidly changing regulatory environment, operational matters, staff issues, and other matters of mutual concern.

Participate with the Region 2000 Local Government Council and other jurisdictions in the development of a regional water supply plan for central Virginia.

Participate in efforts pertaining to the re-development of Central Virginia Training Center upon completion of its phased closure, including planning to replace the aging and failing CVTC campus water and sewer systems with new infrastructure; maintain water and sewer services to campus buildings and other ACSA customers currently served by the City (water) and ACSA (sewer); and promote a potential inter-connection of ACSA-City water systems for sustainability in case of ACSA loss of the Lanum water treatment plant.



Solid Waste Management

The Amherst County Public Works Department handles all non-hazardous solid waste generated in the County. The facilities consist of a Subtitle D landfill, six manned convenience centers with recycling containers, a pending transfer station, and a closed landfill in post-closure care.



Dumpsters overflowing with trash



Amherst County Landfill, 2006

The active landfill consists of approximately 275 acres, which are divided into four sections. Section one houses the current fill area with a footprint of thirty-eight acres (including buffer areas) that has been permitted for four cells by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. At the current rate of receiving 95 tons of waste per day, cell one has 2-3 years of life remaining; this is due to the County's



decision to discontinue landfilling materials and, instead, haul off all waste to landfills located outside of Amherst County. Once cell one is filled, the County will begin using the pending transfer station exclusively. Cell two is currently being used as a borrow site. Cell three, shallow bedrock, will be the future site of the Amherst County transfer station. Cell 4 will remain available for landfilling, should the County elect to discontinue using the pending transfer station. The remaining three sections of the site involve a mixture of borrow pits and vegetation.

Solid-waste management is an essential service for residents and businesses in the County. These services are delivered through a public/private partnership as outlined in the Solid Waste Management Plan for Amherst County and the Town of Amherst. The plan was adopted by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors on May 4, 2004, and by the Town of Amherst Council on June 9, 2004. It is the plan of record for the most recent submittal to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

The County encourages recycling by providing containers throughout the County of plastics #1 through #7, cardboard, mixed paper, aluminum cans, steel food cans, and newspaper. At the landfill, residents and businesses can recycle scrap metal, and tires. Through partnership with the City of

Lynchburg, County residents can now participate in a household hazardous waste program.

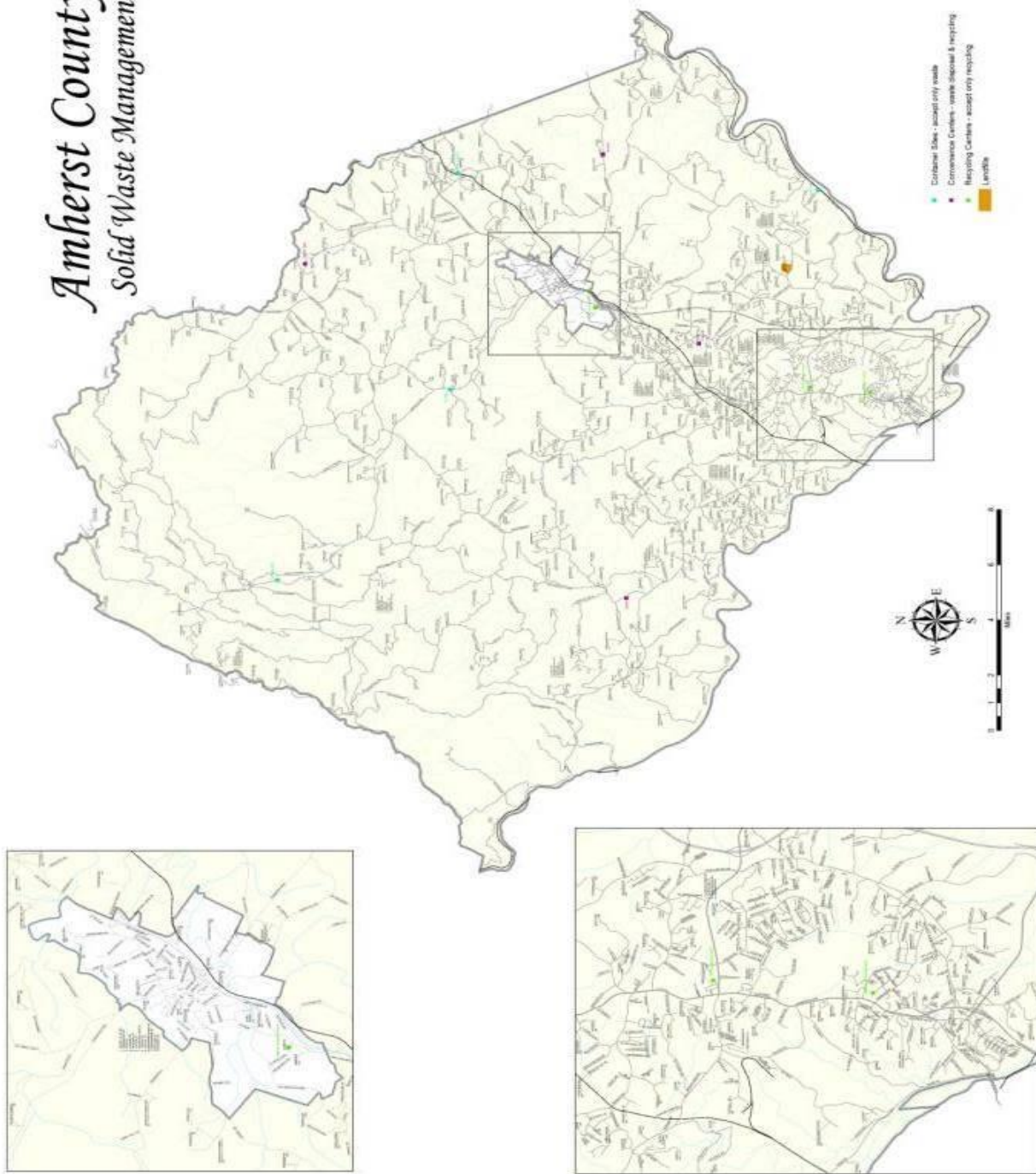
All Amherst convenience centers are staffed and provide a means for residential household waste disposal and recycling, making this a more efficient and environmentally sound way of handling residential waste and recyclables.

An immediate concern this plan wishes to address is littering and trash accumulation.

The County should take necessary measures to discourage both of these practices. The County is currently undertaking this initiative through multiple facets: Encouraging additional private sector involvement in trash removal by tripling the number of private haulers now serving Amherst residents, organizing a volunteer committee to help identify locations throughout Amherst that require litter pickup, and updating County ordinances to compel businesses to help share the waste and litter burden.

Amherst County Solid Waste Management

Amherst County
Virginia



**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Maintain the focus on the County's long-term solid waste management and recycling needs.

Objective #1

Maximize efficiency of transporting and/or disposing of solid waste and recycling

Strategies:

Explore other cost sharing or saving opportunities.

Identify alternative future solid waste and collection options.

Encourage private haulers to expand waste and recycling services to all Amherst County residents.

Haul containers from convenience sites when they are full or near-full only.

Goal #2

Reduce County's waste stream.

Objective #1

Continue to implement and explore opportunities to expand recycling programs and increase efforts in waste reduction, sustainable building, and resource conservation.

Strategies:

Encourage residential and business participation in waste reduction programs.

Continue to provide recycling and waste segregation at all convenience centers.

Continue promoting household hazardous substances program with scheduled period for turning in hazardous material.

Provide educational and technical assistance to help businesses and residents reduce waste.

Develop partnerships with other agencies and environmental organizations to maximize the impacts of waste reduction and conservation message.

Consider developing a staffed convenience center in Madison Heights.

Goal #3

Facilitate a clean, safe, and beautiful community.

Objective #1

Work with citizens, businesses, and other agencies to improve litter prevention, beautification, and community improvements.

Strategies:

Monitor the effectiveness and applicability of the existing solid waste and litter ordinances and identify recommendations for improving its effectiveness.

Expand community partnerships to help citizens keep their neighborhoods clean and safe.

Expand volunteer outreach, especially to youth.

Transportation

Introduction

§15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia requires the planning commission of every locality to prepare a comprehensive plan for consideration by the governing body and for the governing body of every locality to adopt a comprehensive plan. Localities must review their comprehensive plan and associated transportation plan at least every five years, pursuant to §15.2-2230 of the Code, to determine whether it needs to be updated.

The comprehensive plan must include a specific section dedicated to transportation planning or reference a separate document that serves as the community's transportation plan (§15.2-2223).⁴ The comprehensive plan, therefore, provides policy guidance and criteria for making both land use and transportation decisions and recommendations. This section of Amherst County's comprehensive plan is intended to meet the letter and spirit of Chapter 527 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly.

⁴ Chapter 527 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly added § 15.2-2222.1 to the *Code of Virginia*. The amendment establishes procedures by which localities submit proposals that will affect the state-controlled

Linking Transportation to Land Use Patterns and Plans

The efficiency and safety of the County's transportation system is highly dependent upon County land use patterns – existing and proposed. Future County transportation plans should be developed with a full understanding of, and respect for, the County's growth objectives as expressed in this plan. Future land use decisions should be made with consideration of the impact of the land use on the County's transportation system. Linking transportation and land use decisions is a critical component of a community planning program.

Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization

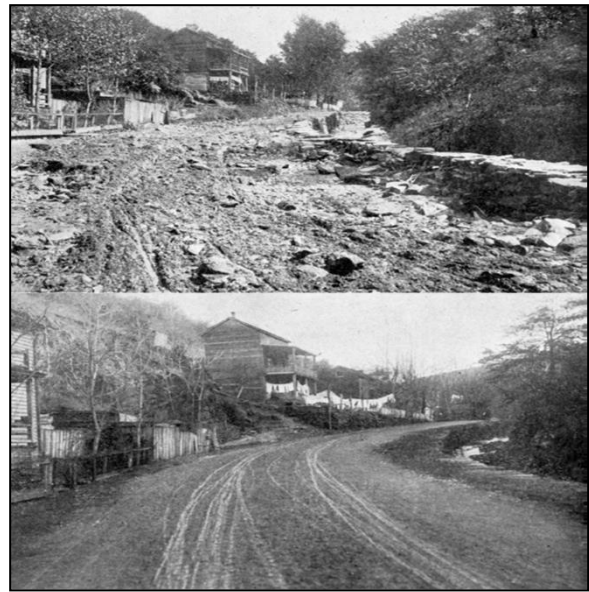
A portion of Amherst County stretching from Madison Heights to the Town of Amherst is included within the boundaries served by the Central Virginia Transportation Planning Organization (CVTPO), the federally-designated transportation planning agency for the Lynchburg urbanized area. The primary activities of the CVTPO are developing and updating the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan, developing and updating the Central Virginia Transportation Improvement Program, and developing and executing the annual Central Virginia Unified Planning Work Program.

transportation network to the VDOT for review and comment. The chapter also directs VDOT to promulgate regulations to carry out the provisions of the statute.

Development of Amherst County's Transportation Network

The James River facilitated the settlement of Amherst County in the eighteenth century and linked it to eastern markets. In 1832 the James River and Kanawha Company was incorporated to construct a more advanced canal for most of the length of the river above Richmond with the ultimate purpose of linking to the Kanawha (New) River and the Ohio River basin. The canal entered Amherst County at its eastern tip and crossed the river to the Campbell County side near Joshua Falls. That allowed direct service to Lynchburg on the south side and avoided the bluffs at Madison Heights. The course then continued upstream from Lynchburg through Bedford County before crossing back to the Amherst side near Rope Ferry/Snowden. The company constructed a number of massive stone locks in the County as well as aqueducts to carry the canal across creeks.

Nearby Lynchburg was a rail hub by the mid-nineteenth century; the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad constructed its eastern terminus in the city in 1850 and by the end of 1852 had trains running as far west as Salem. Whereas Amherst County indirectly benefited from the Virginia and Tennessee and another antebellum line that connected to Lynchburg, the Southside Railroad, the County was directly served by the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which was completed through the County in 1860 to link Charlottesville and Lynchburg. The Orange and Alexandria eventually became



Lynch's Ferry Road in Old Madison Heights before and after state aid improvements ca. 1907 (photo credit: Virginia Transportation Research Council)

part of the Southern Railway and is today a link in the Norfolk Southern system.

Roads were an important component of local transportation networks and they improved in quality with the creation of turnpike companies in the antebellum period. Amherst County was a leader in the better roads campaigns of the early twentieth century. By 1910-11, at the dawn of the Automobile Age, it had funded the construction of twenty-two miles of macadamized roads. A nationally significant highway construction project to affect the county was the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the 1930s and connected the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks.⁵ In addition, the first roundabout within the VDOT system was built in the Town of Amherst in 1936.

⁵ Excerpted from "Amherst County Historic Resources Survey Report" by HistoryTech and Landmark Preservation Associates, 2010.

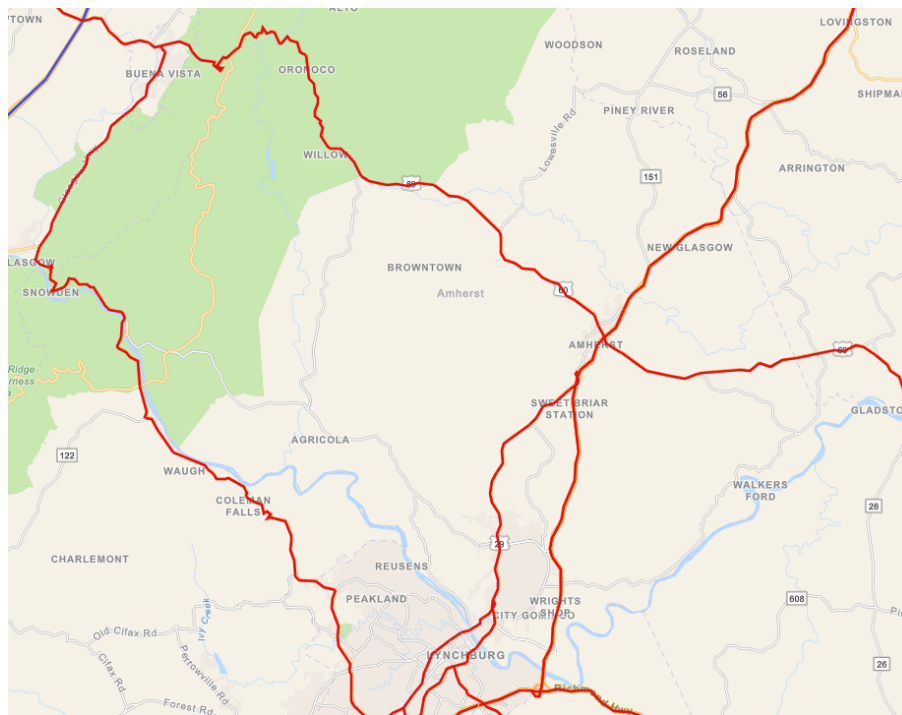
Transportation Network Inventory & Existing Conditions

The Statewide Mobility System (SMS) is a highway system of statewide significance that represents the base system for planning improvements to highways and other models. The SMS is comprised of routes from the National Highway System (NHS), the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET and STRAHNET connectors),

Amherst County is served by two arterial highways: U.S. Routes 29 and 60. U.S. Route 29 is a multi-lane highway passing from Baltimore, Maryland, through Amherst County and southward to Lynchburg, Danville and on to Pensacola, Florida. Just south of the James River, Route 29

intermodal connectors, hurricane evacuation routes, multilane primaries that provide regional connectivity and other primaries that serve as vital links between jurisdictions. The SMS identifies highway facilities that are essential to the movement of people and goods, ensuring that all regions in Virginia are reasonably accessible by a single highway system. The SMS is a major component of Virginia's statewide transportation planning efforts, including the State Highway Plan and Vtrans. intersects with U.S. Route 460, a major east-west highway. Route 29 intersects with Interstate 64 approximately 50 miles to the north of Amherst County. The U.S. Route 29 bypass travels along the eastern edge of the communities of Madison Heights, Monroe, Sweet Briar, and the Town of Amherst.

Statewide Mobility System in Amherst County



Map 1: Provided by VDOT; Available at <http://vdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=6476b4ca05bf45d68dbc8e6b021eaf25>

U.S. Route 60, a two-lane roadway through the County, is an east-west highway stretching from the Atlantic Ocean at Virginia Beach to the Pacific Ocean at Los Angeles. Route 60 provides both a direct route of travel from Amherst to the state capital in Richmond to the east as well as to westward to Interstate 81, a north-south interstate that passes through the Shenandoah Valley. U.S. 60 intersects with the Blue Ridge Parkway at the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the western portion of the County.

U. S. Route 29 is a North-South corridor from Southern Maryland to Northern Florida. It is also part of the National Highway System (NHS) as designated by the Congress of the United States. This designation stresses the importance of NHS highways to the economic and defensive well-being of the nation. Interstate highways are now classified as a sub-group of NHS highways.

The **U.S. Route 29 Bypass** (also known as the Madison Heights Bypass or Monacan Parkway) in Amherst County was completed in 2005. Extending from the James River on the south to the Southern corporate limits of the Town of Amherst, this new four-lane divided highway provides quick and easy access to the central portions of Amherst County and points north along Route 29. Users of this new highway can avoid the commercial development and periodic traffic congestion in southern Amherst County along Route 29 Business, specifically in the Madison Heights area of the County.

Virginia Primary Route 130 connects Madison Heights in Amherst County with

Natural Bridge in Rockbridge County, and passes through the communities of Winesap, Elon, Agricola, and Naola. This roadway serves as the primary access corridor for

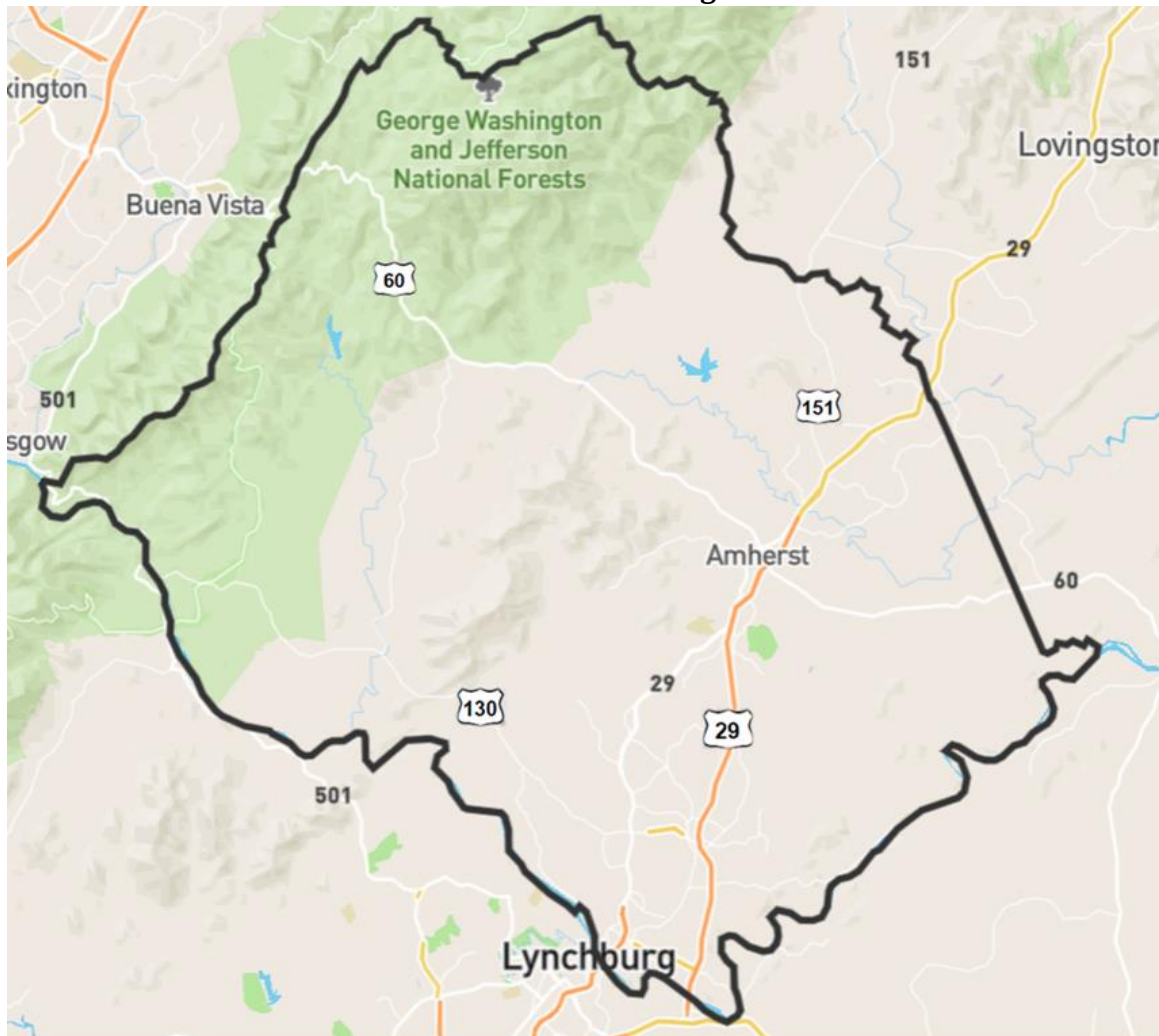


The U.S. 29 Bypass and Monacan Bridge looking northward to Amherst County (photo credit: D. Allen Covey, VDOT)

residents and businesses in the southwestern quadrant of the County, and intersects with the Blue Ridge Parkway near the Otter Creek Campground. Between Snowden and the Rockbridge County line, the highway also carries the designation of U.S. 501. Route 130, also known as Elon Road, is one of the region's few official Virginia Scenic Byways (although Route 622 is classified as a Scenic Road). Route 130 also serves a substantial amount of tractor trailer traffic between U.S. Route 29 and I-81.

Other Virginia Primary routes in Amherst County include **Route 151** (Patrick Henry Highway), which runs through the community of Clifford, **Route 163** (Amherst Highway), which skirts Old Town Madison Heights and connects with Lynchburg's Fifth Street at the James River, and Virginia Primary **Route 210**, a limited-access extension of Colony Road that connects to the U.S. 29 Bypass.

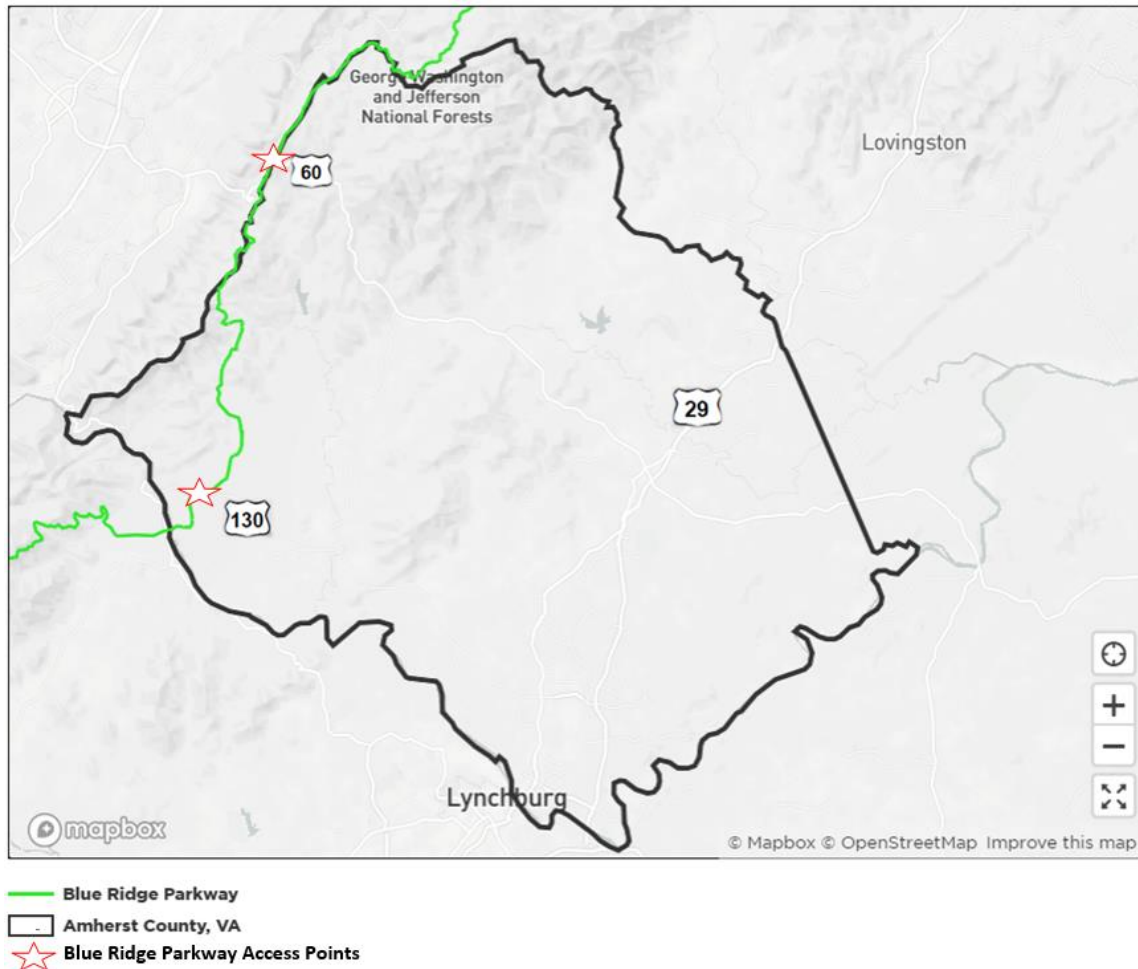
US 29 Corridor in Virginia



Map 2: Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a National Parkway and All-American Road which traverses the Blue Ridge Mountains for 469 miles between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Shenandoah National Park. The federally-maintained roadway snakes in and out of Amherst and Rockbridge Counties after it crosses the James River at Snowden and before it enters Nelson County to the north.

Blue Ridge Parkway in Amherst County



Map 3: Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

All of the other Amherst County roadways except for those mentioned above are state secondary roads, frontage roads, or privately-maintained streets.

Air Service

There are no licensed public airports in Amherst County. However, there are two airports: Lynchburg Regional Airport and Falwell Aviation which can be found in the Lynchburg metropolitan area.

Lynchburg Regional Airport is the air service provider for the greater Lynchburg area. The airport is located along U. S. 29 within Campbell County, just outside the

City of Lynchburg limits. The airport is located at the intersection of U.S. 29 and U.S. 460 and is considerably more convenient to access from Amherst County since the U.S. 29 Bypass was opened in 2005. The airport has two runways; one measuring 7,100 feet in length; and the other measuring 3,387 feet. There are currently up to 14 daily arriving and departing flights, including direct flights to Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Expanding the capabilities of the airport is currently being

considered as a part of long-term facility planning. Lynchburg Regional Airport also provides general aviation and air freight service.

Falwell Aviation, Inc. is a general aviation airport located on U.S. Route 460/29 in the

City of Lynchburg. The hard surface runway is 2,900 feet in length and has lights for night landings. The airport is attended from 8:00 A.M. to dusk daily. Repairs, fuel, lodging, and surface transportation are available.

Airports in Virginia



Map 4: Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Other nearby airports can be found in Charlottesville, Roanoke, Richmond, Washington, D.C., and Greensboro, North Carolina.

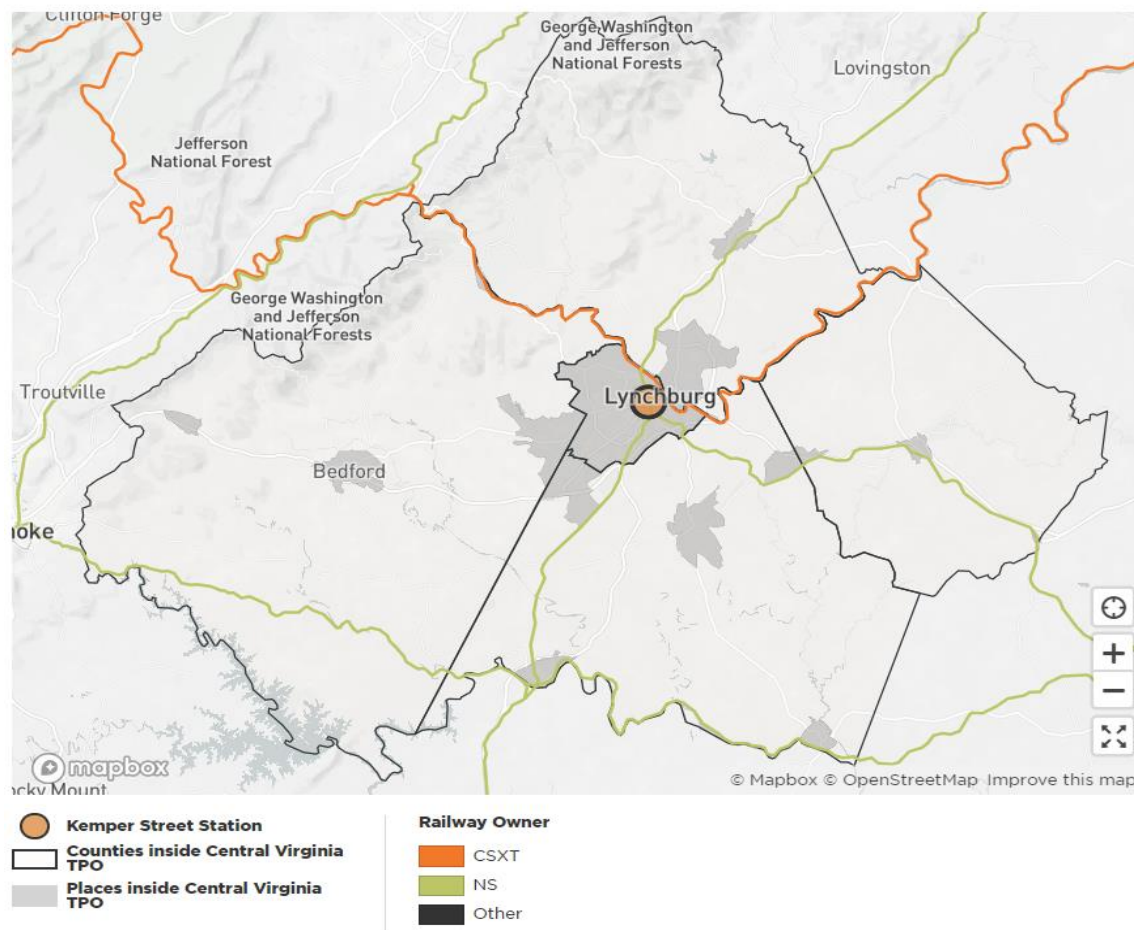
Rail Service

Norfolk Southern's north-south mainline between Washington, D.C., and Birmingham, Alabama, passes through Amherst County. This line serves Clorox with two or three freight stops per week. Many manufacturers in the region use rail as a cost-effective and reliable means of goods transport.

Passenger service within Amherst County was discontinued decades ago, with no prospect of this service being resurrected even though Amtrak, using the Norfolk Southern (NS) mainline, passes through the County. The Amtrak Crescent, which makes

a daily trip between New York and New Orleans, may be boarded at Lynchburg or Charlottesville. In October of 2009, additional daily Amtrak service was established in Lynchburg, extending a Northeast Regional line that can take travelers to Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston. As of 2018, the Northeast Regional Line was extended to Roanoke, with plans to extend services into the New River Valley, which would add a third daily Amtrak train through Kemper Station. In addition to the two Amtrak trains that service Lynchburg, Charlottesville is served by the Amtrak Cardinal, which runs east-west from Washington, DC through Chicago and to the west coast.

Rail Lines in the Central Virginia Region



Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Map 5: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

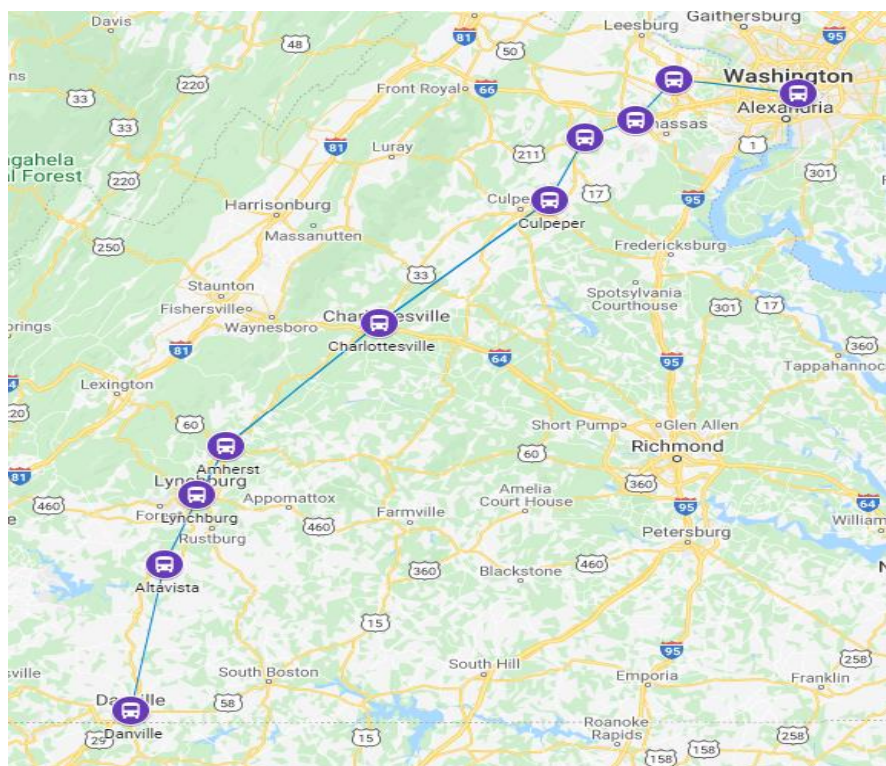
Bus Service

Piedmont Express

The Piedmont Express now connects towns and cities throughout Virginia's southern and Central Piedmont region to Washington, D.C. every day.

Piedmont Express Schedule and Route Map

Danville to Washington, D.C.		Washington, D.C. to Danville	
Stop	Northbound Departure	Stop	Southbound Departure
Danville (Danville Transit System Hub)	8:00 AM	Washington, D.C. (Union Station Bus Deck)	10:15 AM
Altavista (Altavista Commons Shopping Center)	9:00 AM	Dulles Airport (Curb 2A)	11:05 AM
Lynchburg (Kemper St Station)	9:35 AM	Gainesville (University Boulevard Park & Ride)	11:40 AM
Amherst (171 S. Main St)	10:05 AM	Warrenton (Warrenton Park & Ride)	12:00 PM
Charlottesville (Arlington Blvd @ Barracks Rd)	11:10 AM	Culpeper (Brandy Station Park & Ride)	12:35 PM
Culpeper (Brandy Station Park & Ride)	12:15 PM	Charlottesville (Arlington Blvd @ Barracks Rd)	1:40 PM
Warrenton (Warrenton Park & Ride)	12:50 PM	Amherst (171 S. Main St)	2:45 PM
Gainesville (University Boulevard Park & Ride)	1:15 PM	Lynchburg (Kemper St Station)	3:15 PM
Dulles Airport (Curb 2A)	1:50 PM	Altavista (Altavista Commons Shopping Center)	3:50 PM
Washington, D.C. (Union Station Bus Deck)	2:40 PM	Danville (Danville Transit System Hub)	4:50 PM



Map 6: Available at <https://virginiabreeze.org/routes/>

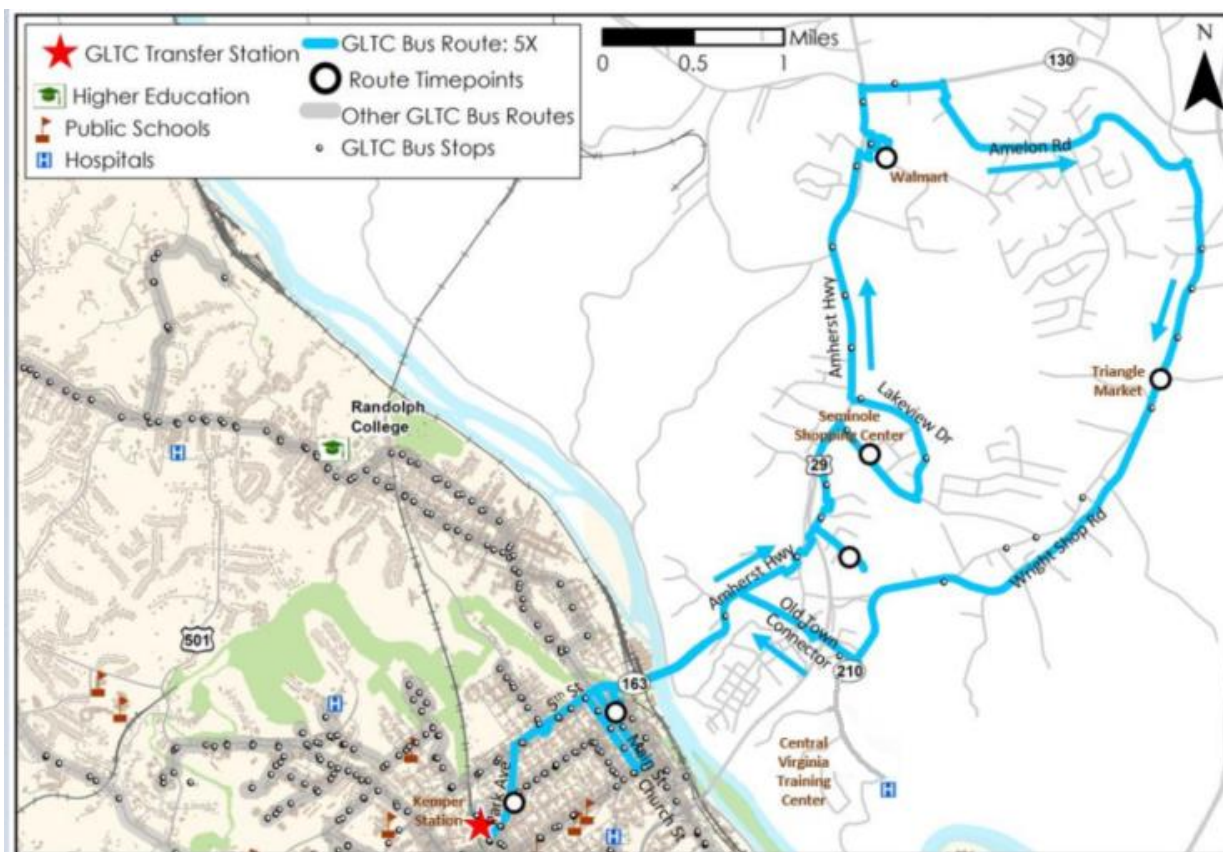
Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Greater Lynchburg Transit Company Bus Service

GLTC's Route 5 provides access from Kemper Street Transfer Station and downtown Lynchburg to Madison Heights, Wal-Mart, Triangle Market, and the Seminole Shopping Center.

GLTC Bus Route 5 through Amherst County

MONDAY - FRIDAY							
DEPART							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Kemper Station	7th / Main	Phelps Road	Lakeview Drive	Woodys Lake Road	Triangle Market	7th / Main	Kemper Station
6:15 AM	6:25 AM	6:30 AM	6:35 AM	6:40 AM	6:50 AM	7:05 AM	7:15 AM
8:15 AM	8:25 AM	8:30 AM	8:35 AM	8:40 AM	8:50 AM	9:05 AM	9:15 AM
10:15 AM	10:25 AM	10:30 AM	10:35 AM	10:40 AM	10:50 AM	11:05 AM	11:15 AM
12:15 PM	12:25 PM	12:30 PM	12:35 PM	12:40 PM	12:50 PM	1:05 PM	1:15 PM
2:15 PM	2:25 PM	2:30 PM	2:35 PM	2:40 PM	2:50 PM	3:05 PM	3:15 PM
4:15 PM	4:25 PM	4:30 PM	4:35 PM	4:40 PM	4:50 PM	5:05 PM	5:15 PM

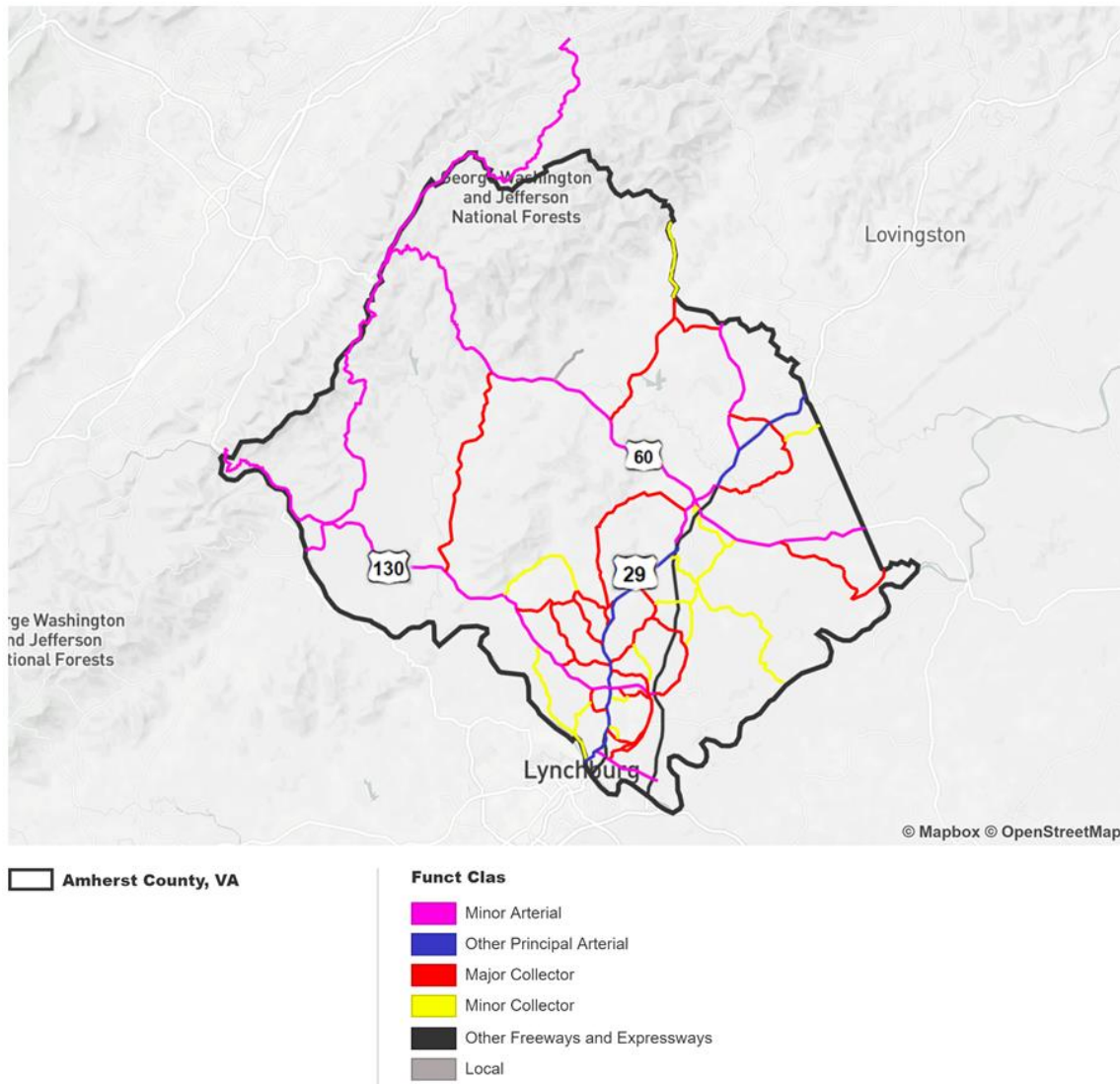


Classification of Roadways

All roadways in Virginia are classified by the geographic area that they serve, as well as their purpose and traffic volume. Most

roads in Amherst County are classified as being “rural local,” but the County is also home to a number of rural and urban collectors and arterials. Definitions of these classifications are provided below.⁶

Map of Roadways by Functional Classification



Map 8: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

⁶https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning%20/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/section03.cfm#Toc336872980

MILES OF ROADWAY BY FUNCTIONAL CLASS (Provided by VDOT)

Functional Classification	Miles
Minor Arterial	106.68
Major Collector	83.37
Minor Collector	44.93
Other Principal Arterial	18.34
Other Freeways and Expressways	17.29

Geographic Areas

- **Urbanized** - Areas designated by the Census Bureau having a population of 50,000 or more
- **Small Urban** - Areas designated by the Census Bureau having a population of 5,000 to 49,999 and not part of an urbanized area, also referred to as urban clusters on the maps
- **Rural** - All areas not designated urbanized or small urban

Functional Classification System

(from FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines – Section II – Concepts, Definitions, and System Characteristics):

Interstate:

Interstates are the highest classification and designed with mobility and long-distance travel in mind. This classification is for highways designated as part of the Eisenhower Interstate System. Roadways classified as interstates are limited access, divided highways with the highest level of mobility. There is also no ambiguity in the functional classification, as only the Secretary of Transportation can designate a roadway as an interstate.

Other Freeways and Expressways:

This classification is for highways that are generally divided with partial or full control-of access. They primarily serve through traffic and major circulation movements within or around Urban Areas. These routes

provide connecting links between interstates, principal arterials, and minor arterials.

Other Principal Arterials:

The classification of Other Principal Arterials differs based on whether the facility is located in an urban or rural area. In rural areas, Other Principal Arterials serve corridor movements of substantial statewide or interstate travel and provides an integrated network without stub connections (dead ends). This network connects all or nearly all Urbanized Areas and a large majority of Urban Clusters with populations of 25,000 and over.

Other principal arterials in urban areas serve the major activity centers of a metropolitan area and the highest traffic volume corridors. These facilities carry a high proportion of total urban travel on the minimum amount of mileage and provide continuity for major rural corridors to accommodate trips entering and leaving an urban area. Lastly, Other Principal Arterials carry a significant amount of intra-area travel and serve demand between the central business district and outlying residential areas of a metropolitan area.

Minor Arterials:

Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system. Classification is based on whether the facility is in an urban or rural area.

In rural areas, Minor Arterials link cities and large towns, along with other major traffic generators, and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. The design in rural areas typically provides for relatively high overall speeds, with minimum interference to the through movement. Minor Arterials are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas within the state are within a reasonable distance of an arterial roadway. They also provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by rural collectors or local systems.

In urban areas, Minor Arterials interconnect with principal arterials, augment the urban principal arterial system, and provide service to trips of moderate length at a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials. Minor Arterials include all arterials not classified as principal arterials and contain facilities that place more emphasis on land access. These facilities provide more land access than Principal Arterials without penetrating identifiable neighborhoods. Minor Arterials serve trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than Principal Arterials and distribute traffic to smaller geographic areas than those served by higher level Arterials.

Major Collector:

Major Collector routes are longer in length; have lower connecting driveway densities; have higher speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors may. In rural areas, Major Collectors provide service to any county seat not on an arterial system, to larger towns not directly served by higher systems. Major Collectors also link these places to nearby larger towns and cities or

with arterial routes and serve the most important intra-county travel corridor. Major Collectors in Urban Areas provide land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas. These collectors distribute trips from the arterials through the aforementioned areas to their ultimate destination, collect traffic from local streets, and channel it to the arterial system.

Minor Collector:

In rural areas, minor collectors are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density. Minor Collectors collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. Minor Collector facilities provide service to the remaining smaller communities and link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

In urban areas, Minor Collectors serve both land access and traffic circulation in lower density residential and commercial/industrial areas. Typical operating characteristics of Minor Collectors include lower speeds and fewer signalized intersections. Minor Collectors penetrate residential neighborhoods, but only for a short distance.

Local:

Locally classified roads account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long distance travel, except at the origin or destination end of the trip, due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. Bus routes generally do not run on Local Roads.

In rural areas, local roads serve primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land. Local Roads provide service to travel over relatively short distance as compared to collectors or other higher systems. All

facilities not classified on one of the higher systems in rural areas are classified as Local Roads.

In urban areas, Local Roads serve primarily as direct access to abutting land. Local Roads provide access to higher order systems and all facilities not on one of the higher systems. Through traffic movement is deliberately discouraged for Local Roads in urban areas.

Traffic Analysis

Traffic Analysis is critical to maintaining and improving the transportation network. There are a number of different methods of analysis such as Level of Service (LOS), Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) and Volume to Capacity (V/C ratio) which can help which can help planners identify road inefficiencies and find opportunities for road improvement projects.

Level of Service (LOS):

Levels of service are used as measures of highway performance in transportation planning analysis and help define public policy concerning highway performance. They are also used in traffic impact analyses to determine local traffic of proposed developments. Levels of service reflect driver satisfaction with the various factors that impact congestion, including speed, travel time, traffic interruption, safety, and delays. VDOT uses six levels of service to describe highway flow conditions as derived from the “Highway Capacity Manual”.

- LOS A: Represents a free flow of traffic with low volumes and high speeds with little or no delays.

Drivers are virtually unaffected by others in the traffic stream.

- LOS B: Is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. This level affords above average driving conditions.
- LOS C: Is also in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of individual users becoming significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. This level is normally utilized as a measure of “average conditions” for design of facilities in suburban or rural locations.
- LOS D: Represents high density but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted and the driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems.
- LOS E: Represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. Operations at this level are usually unstable because small increases in traffic flow, or minor perturbations within the traffic stream, will cause breakdowns in flow.
- LOS F: Is used to characterize demand volumes which exceed roadway capacity as complete. Congestion occurs. Under these conditions motorists seek other routes in order to bypass congestion, thus impacting adjacent streets.

Levels of Service

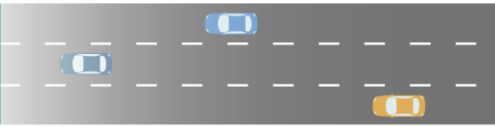
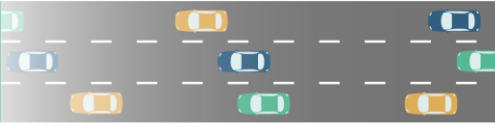
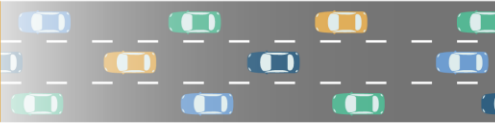
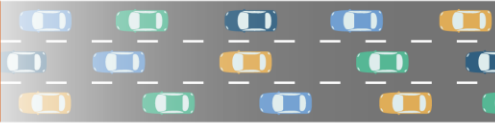
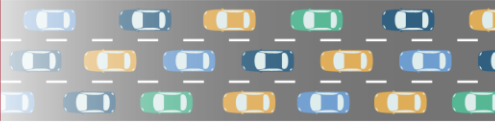
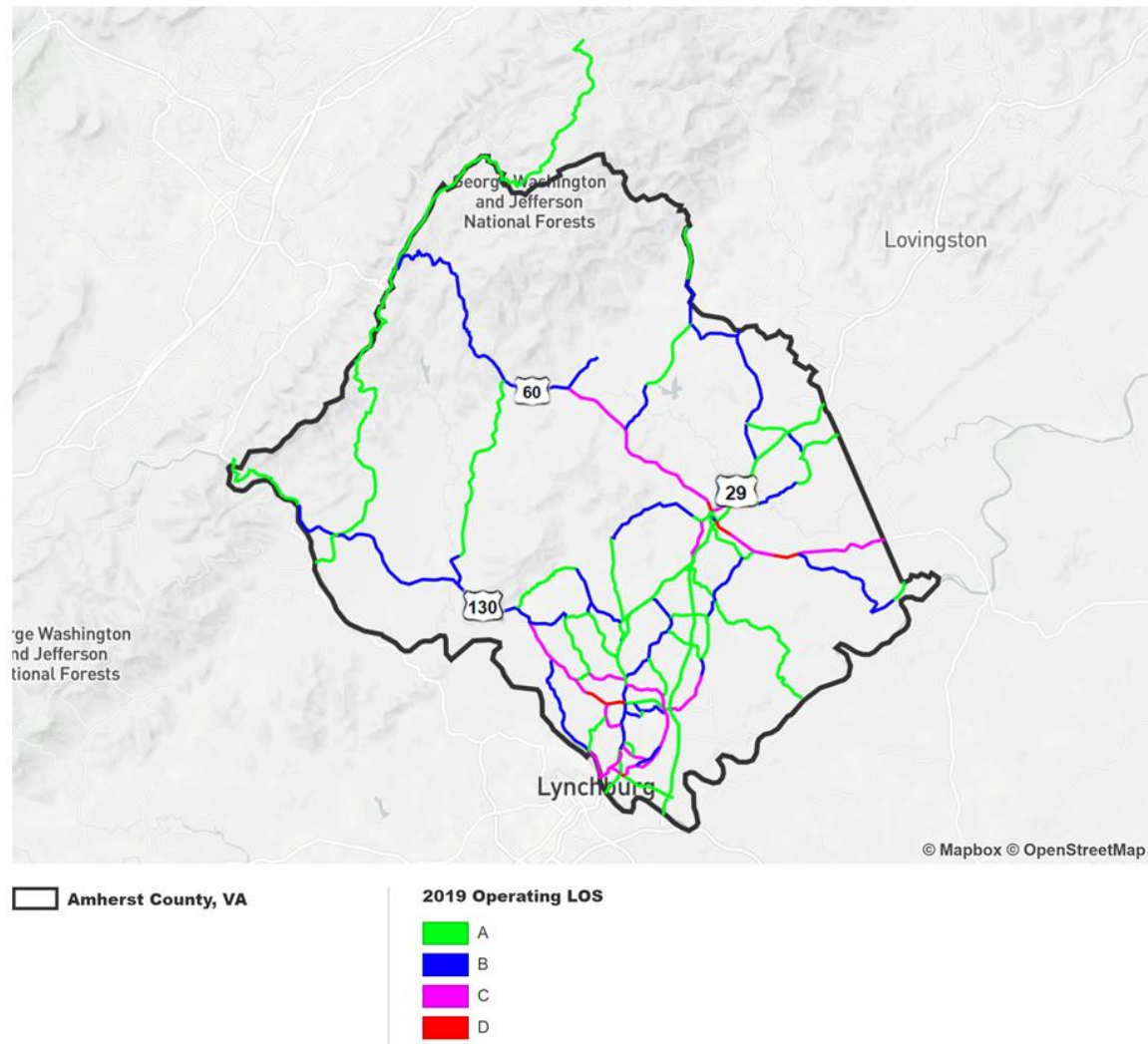
FREE FLOW Low volumes and no delays.	LOS A	
STABLE FLOW Speeds restricted by travel conditions, minor delays.	LOS B	
STABLE FLOW Speeds and maneuverability closely controlled because of higher volumes.	LOS C	
STABLE FLOW Speeds considerably affected by change in operation conditions. High density traffic restricts maneuverability; volume near capacity.	LOS D	
UNSTABLE FLOW Low speeds; considerable delay; volume at or slightly over capacity.	LOS E	
FORCED FLOW Very low speeds; volumes exceed capacity; long delays with stop-and-go traffic.	LOS F	

Image: Utah Department of Transportation; Available at <https://www.parleyseis.com/>

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

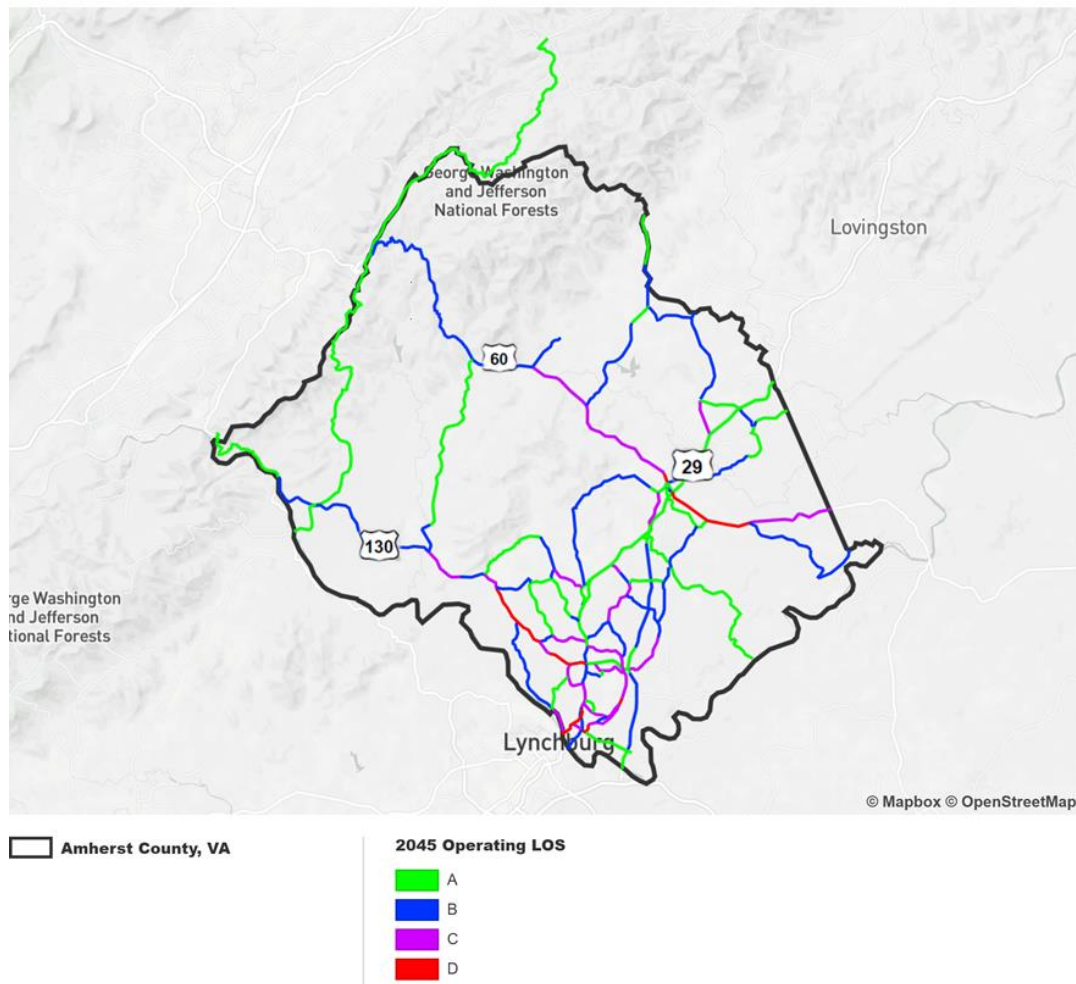
The maps below display the current Level of Service in Amherst County and the anticipated Level of Service by Horizon Year 2045. In areas where Level of Service is either currently sub-optimal, or where there is a predicted decrease in LOS by 2045, there are opportunities to consider road improvement projects to improve Level of Service.

Current 2019 Level of Service (LOS)



Map 9: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Forecasted Level of Service (LOS) in 2045



Map 10: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C Ratio):

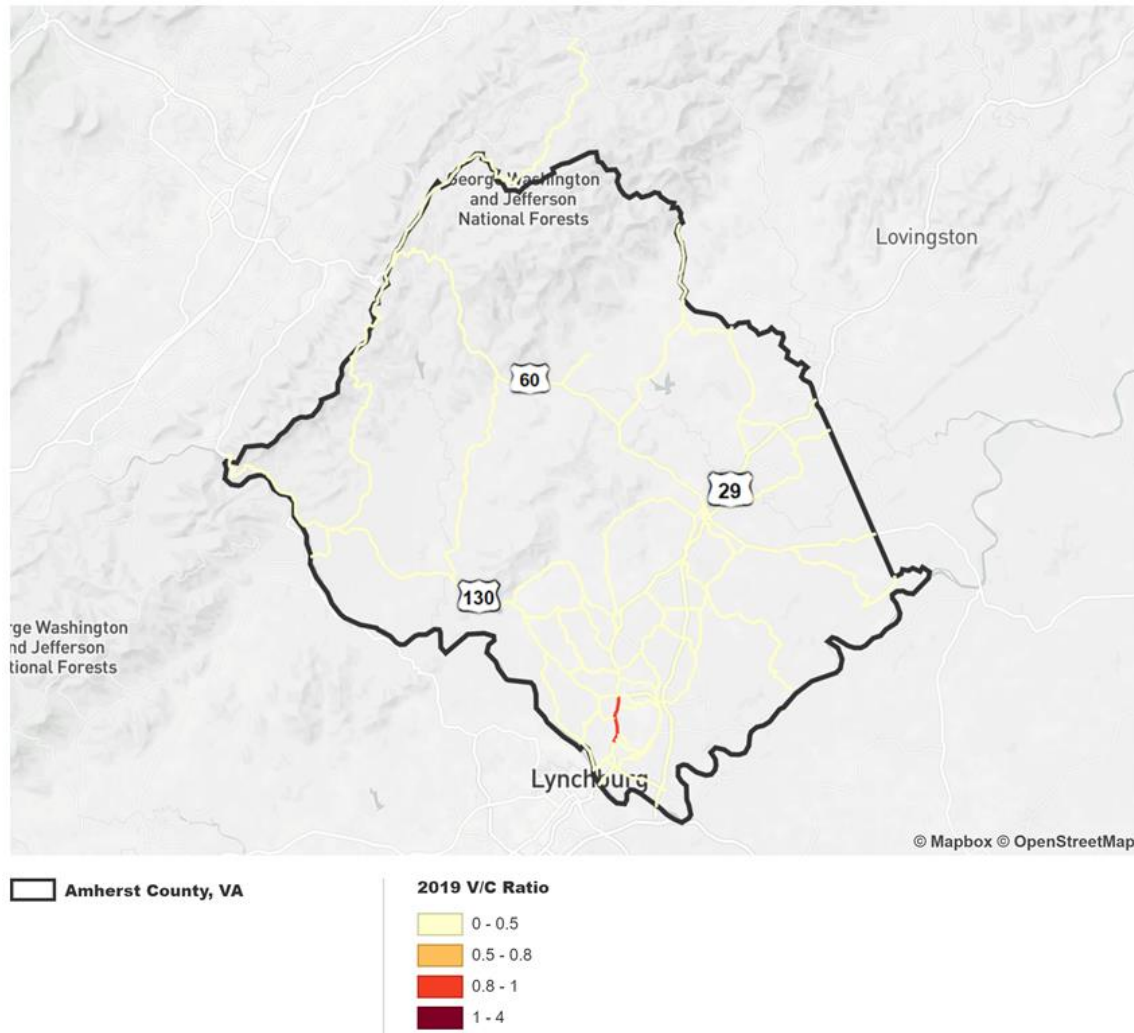
Capacity is defined⁷ as the maximum rate at which vehicles can pass through a given point in an hour under prevailing conditions. A road or intersection's capacity is compared to the volume at which it is able to accommodate the vehicular demand. A V/C ratio less than 0.85 generally indicates that adequate capacity is available, and

vehicles are not expected to experience significant queues and delay. Alternatively, a V/C ratio greater than 1 indicates unstable traffic flow with excessive queuing and delays. Most roads within Amherst County are currently and are expected to remain at a V/C ratio of less than 0.5 which indicates adequate capacity. Road segments which exceed a V/C ratio of 1 should be considered for future improvements.

⁷

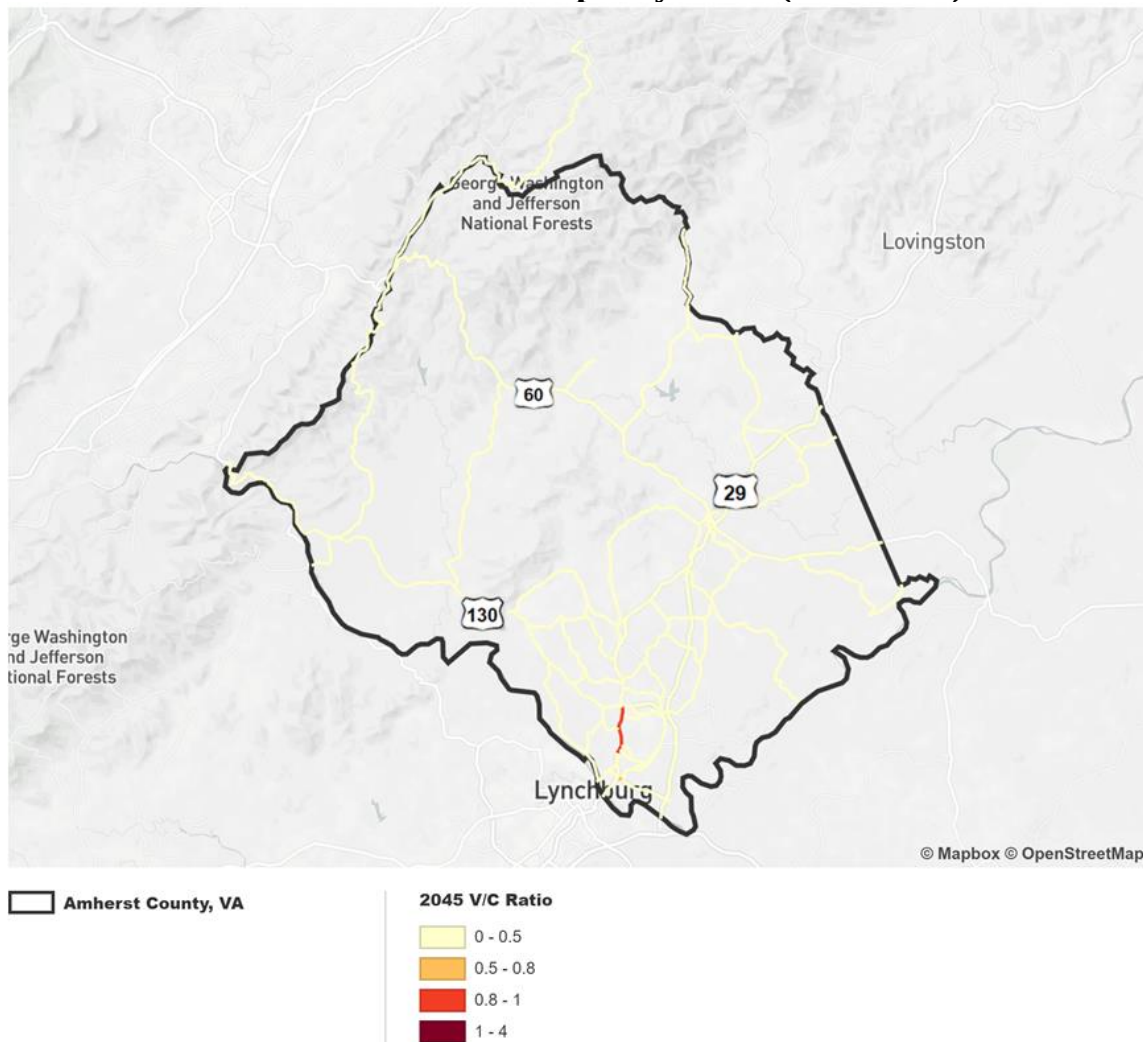
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/y/04091/07.cfm>

Current 2019 Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C Ratio)



Map 11: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Forecasted Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C Ratio) in 2045

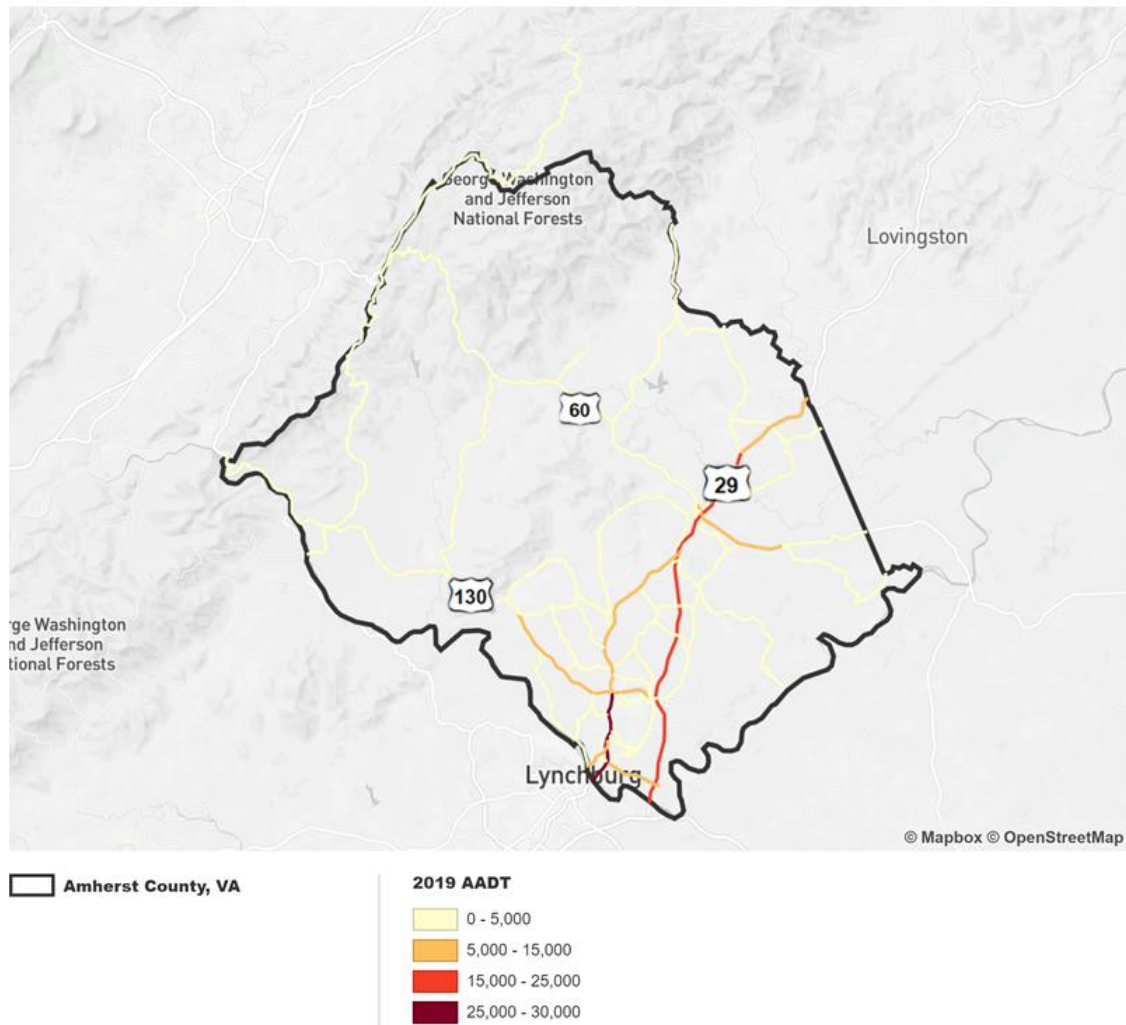


Map 12: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT):

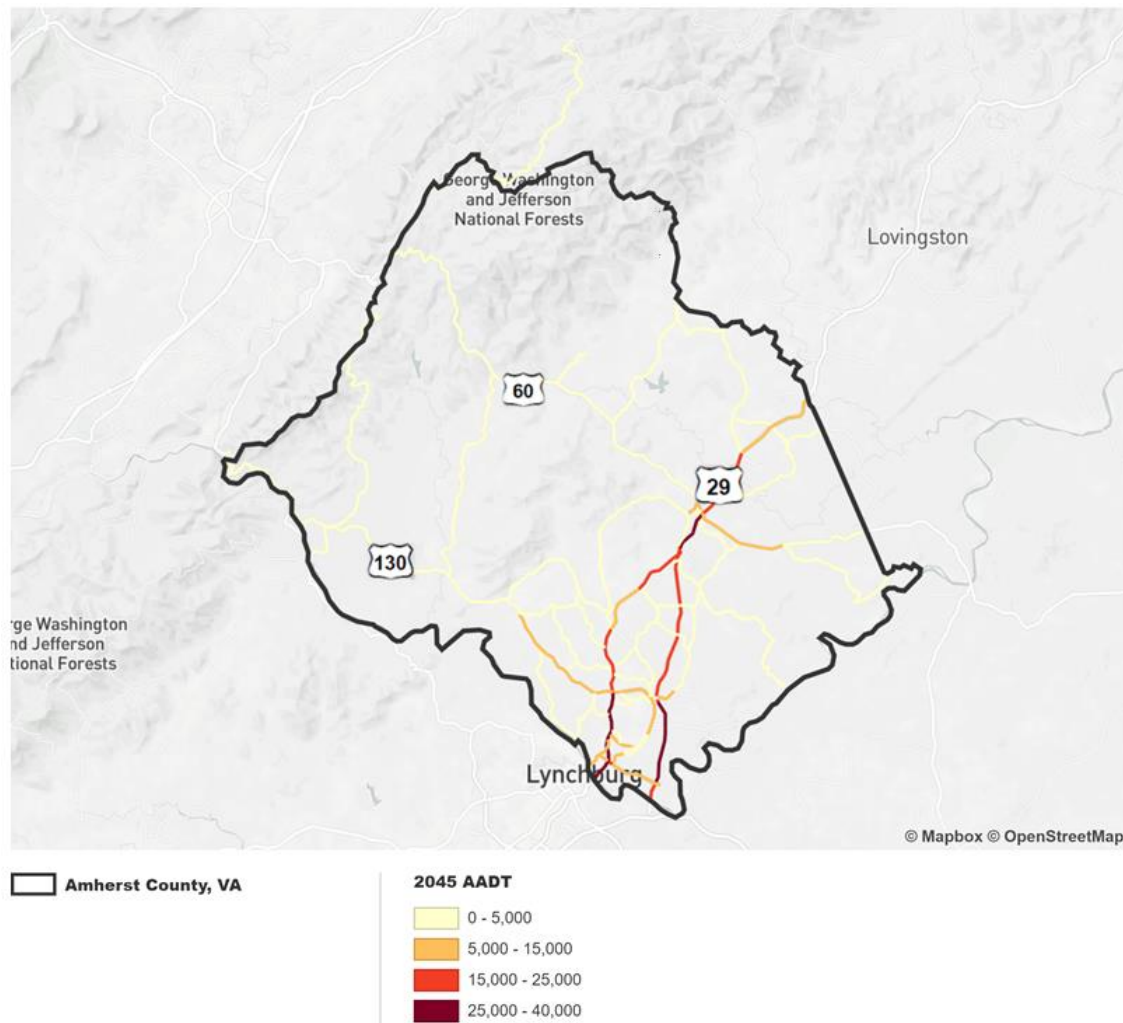
Annual Average Daily Traffic is an estimate of typical daily traffic on a road segment for all days of the week, Sunday through Saturday, over the period of one year. US 29 and US 29 Business currently have the highest AADT. For more information on specific road segments, there is a list of roads, their AADT and forecasted AADT available in the appendix for this chapter.

Current 2019 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)



Map 13: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Forecasted Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in 2045



Map 14: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Safety

Safety is of vital concern for the region's transportation system. The ability of area residents to move safely is of paramount concern for the County. While there are many modes of transportation, the most safety data available is in regard to roads and intersections. The Virginia Department of Transportation receives data from the Department of Motor Vehicles regarding

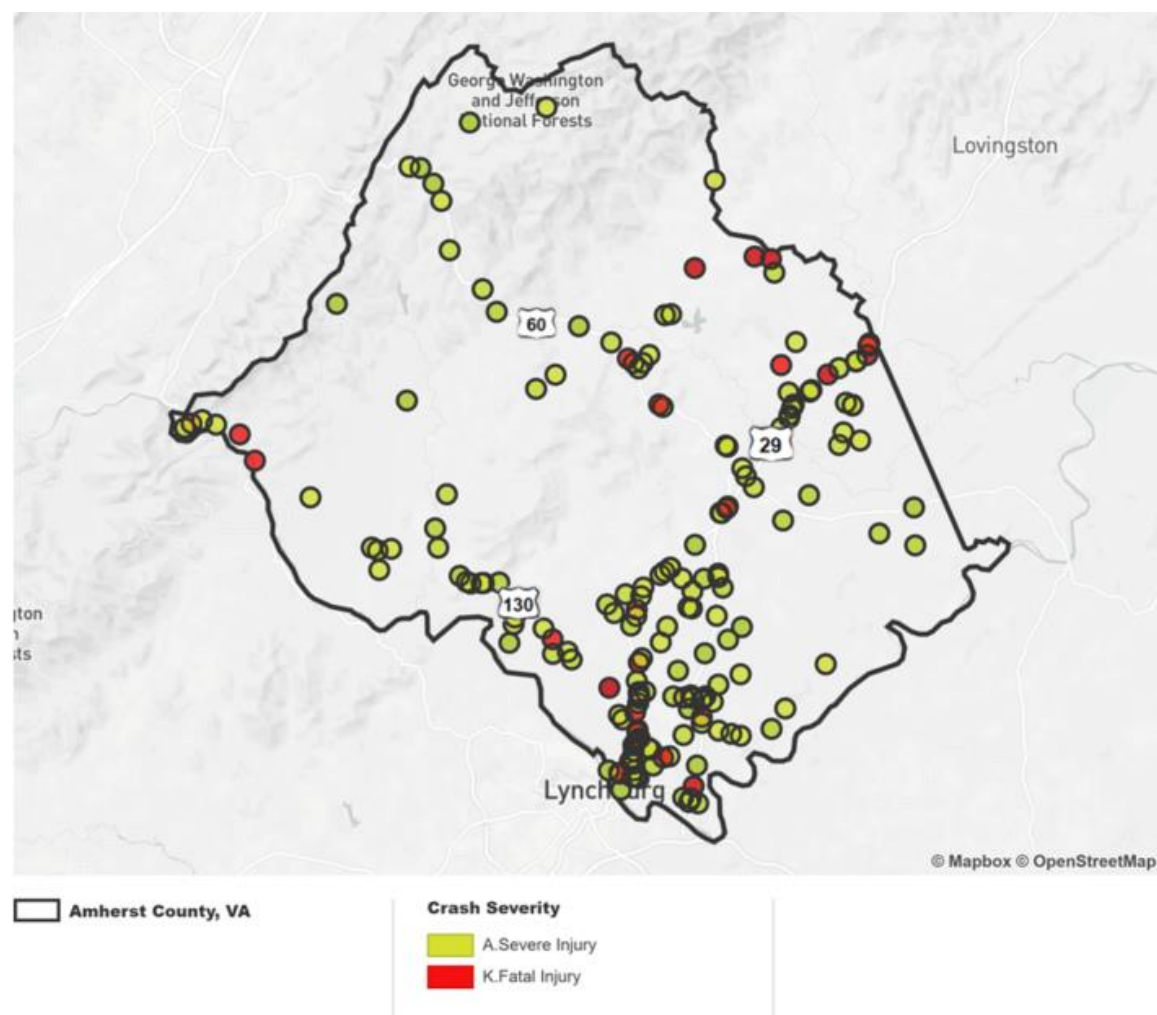
accidents on a regular basis and incorporates that data into the two maps shown below. The first map represents the locations of both severe and fatal injury crashes, whereas the second map shows the Top 100 Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) areas within the county. Areas with a high concentration of PSI locations or multiple severe/fatal crashes should be considered for further study to limit potential crashes in the future.

Number of fatal and Injury Crashes per Year (2015-2019)					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
# of crashes	333	313	385	573	409

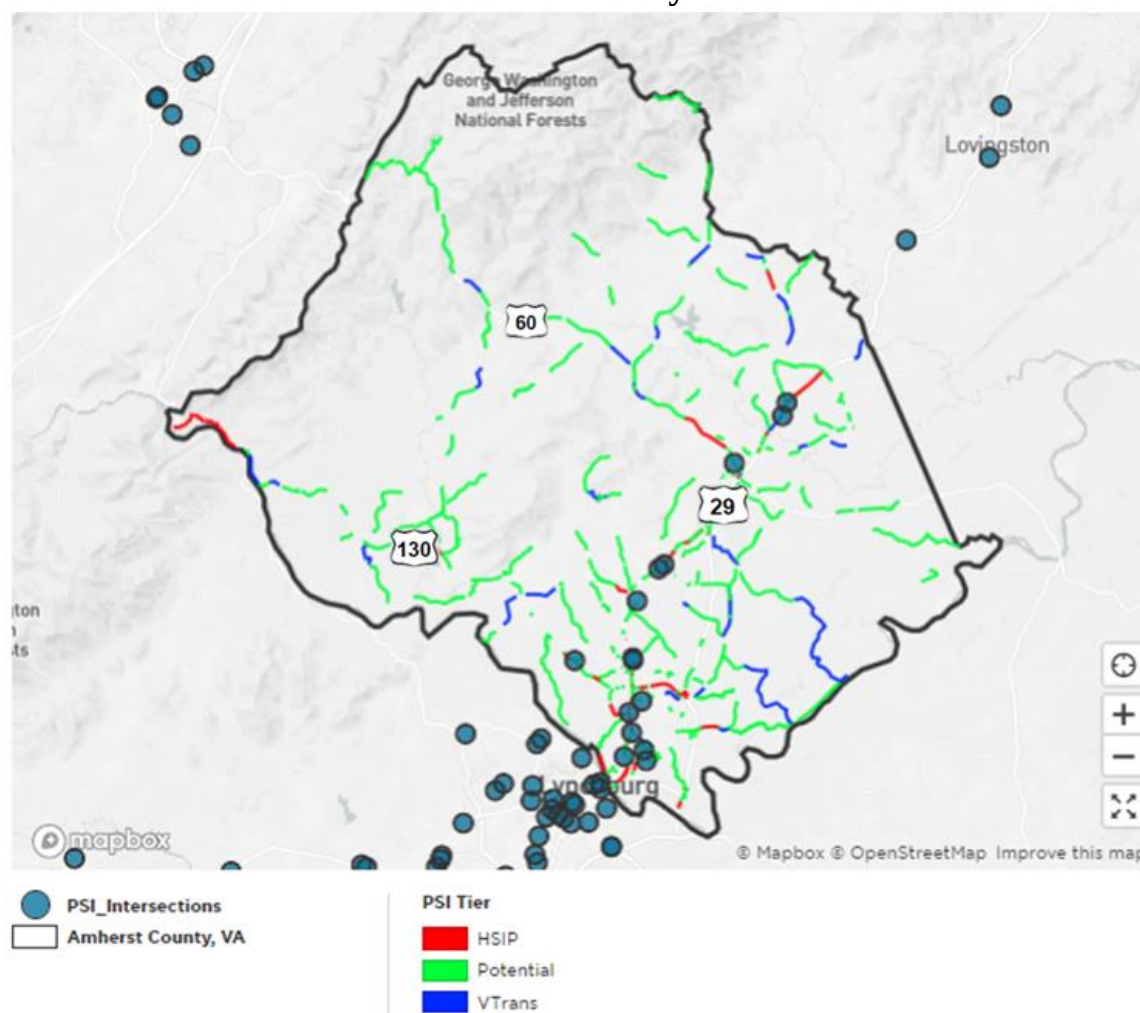
Number of Fatal and Injury Crashes (2015-2019)	
Fatal	51
Injury	2,331

Collision Type	Number
Fixed object-off road	954
Deer	519
Angle	504
Rear end	471
Sideswipe-Same direction	111
Non-collision	95
Other	79
Sideswipe-Opposite direction	74
Head on	72
Other animal	46
Fixed object in road	30
Backed into	14
Pedestrian	10
Train	1

5 -Year Crash Data by Severity (2015-2019)



Top 100 Potential For Safety Improvement (PSI) Locations in Amherst County



Map 16: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Statewide Transportation Programs and Funding Opportunities

The Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIP) is the state's agency responsible for prioritizing transportation projects on a statewide level. OIP is charged with drafting VTrans, Virginia's statewide Transportation Plan. Within VTrans, there are several assessments which help shape the recommendations set forth in the VTrans planning documents. These include a:

Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS) Needs Assessment, Regional Networks (RN) Needs Assessment, Urban Development Area (UDA) Needs Assessment, Statewide Safety Needs Assessment [which indicates Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) locations] and VMTP or the VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan.

The findings and recommendations which are described as part of VTrans have a significant impact on the types of funding transportation

projects are eligible. These programs are explained in greater detail at the end of this section.

Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS)

(From the VTrans2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan)⁸:

The VTrans2035 plan, as adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, initially designated 11 Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS); a 12th corridor was subsequently added in 2011. The VTrans2035 plan defines a CoSS as:

“An integrated, multimodal network of transportation facilities that connect major centers of activity within and through the Commonwealth and promote the movement of people and goods essential to the economic prosperity of the state.”

The Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) are broadly drawn and include other modal facilities, such as highways (e.g., I-81,

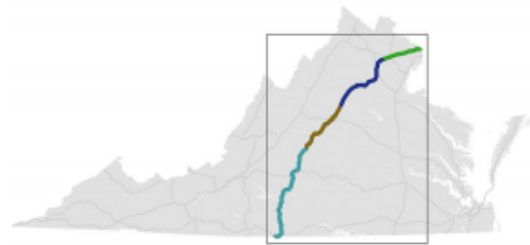
I-95, U.S. 460, etc.), rail lines, transit services, port facilities, and airports. Parallel roadway facilities are also included in addition to the main Interstate or U.S. Highway (e.g., U.S. 11 along the I-81 corridor and U.S. 1 and U.S. 301 along the I-95 corridor). The designation and study of these multimodal corridors is a responsibility of the Commonwealth Transportation Board in accordance with the Code of Virginia §33.2-353. To be considered a CoSS, a corridor must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. **Multimodal** – must involve multiple modes of travel or be an extended freight corridor.
2. **Connectivity** – must connect regions, states, and/or major activity centers.
3. **High Volume** – must involve a high volume of travel.
4. **Function** – must provide a unique statewide function and/or address statewide goals.

The Seminole Corridor

Of the twelve Corridors of Statewide Significance, one, the “Seminole Corridor,” runs through Amherst County. This corridor connects the Northern Virginia region to Charlottesville, Lynchburg, and Danville, operating as a parallel option between I-95 and I-81. It runs parallel to the Bull Run Corridor within Northern Virginia, and there are multiple transit options in the Northern Virginia region. In addition, there are three other main transit options: The Northeast Regional Amtrack line, the Norfolk Southern Crescent line, and the Virginia Breeze Piedmont service.

There are multiple general aviation and reliever airport facilities along the corridor as well. The image to the right, taken from the VTrans 2040 Plan, displays the Corridor’s stretch from Northern to Southern Virginia.



⁸[https://www.vtransvtrans.org/archive/vtrans2040#:~:text=Corridors%20of%20Statewide%20Significance%20\(CoSS,as%20well%20as%20interstate%20traffic](https://www.vtransvtrans.org/archive/vtrans2040#:~:text=Corridors%20of%20Statewide%20Significance%20(CoSS,as%20well%20as%20interstate%20traffic)

Regional Networks

The VTrans 2040 Plan, which is the statewide transportation plan for Virginia, designated 15 Regional Networks to be the basis for an analysis and assessment of intraregional transportation needs through the lens of economic development.

According to the Vtrans website, “Regional Networks refer to multimodal networks that facilitate intra-regional travel within urbanized areas. They fill in a gap between Corridors of Statewide Significance that serve statewide objectives, and UDAs which serve local objectives. Regional Networks was a new concept introduced in VTrans2040, and Transportation Needs for Regional Networks focused on economic competitiveness in a region and the transportation network needed to support each region's economic future.”

Amherst County is included as part of the Central Virginia Region. The Regional Networks needs assessment indicated that Route 29’s long term transportation reliability is critical to the regional economic success, especially as the corridor serves major knowledge-based and freight-based industries, provides access to numerous activity centers, Lynchburg Airport and major employers such as Liberty University.

More information on the specific recommendations for the region are available on the VTrans website at <https://www.vtrans.org/archive/vtrans2040>.

Urban Development Areas (UDA)

The VTrans 2040 plan describes Urban Development Areas⁹ as:

- Areas designated by a locality that may be sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for at least 10 years.
- Areas that may be appropriate for development at a density on the developable acreage of at least four single-family residences and an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acres for commercial development.
- Areas that incorporate principles of traditional neighborhood development (TND).

There is one Urban Development Area (UDA) in Amherst County. Tyler Tracts is an area of vacant land along Route 29 Business that is within the County’s Designated Growth Area. There is greater potential for financial or other types of incentives when an area is designated as a UDA, which led the county to specifically designate this area in 2013 despite already being within the Designated Growth Area. The UDA needs assessment that was undertaken as part of the Vtrans planning process indicated that in the future, there will be high internal needs for Roadway Capacity and Infrastructure Improvements. Presently, the highest rank needs within the UDA are access to transportation networks beyond the UDA and a more friendly environment for Bicyclists and Pedestrians.

In the future, the County plans to undertake a study to develop a Master Plan for the Tyler Tracts area. The goal is to incorporate mixed use development, including a variety of housing types, public spaces and commercial uses. By integrating multiple

⁹https://icfbiometrics.blob.core.windows.net/vtrans/assets/docs/VMTP2025-Needs-Assessment/UDA-Profiles/UDA_PublicFactsheet_Overview.pdf

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

uses into the area as well as pedestrian friendly infrastructure, the area will be well connected and embrace a sense of place and community.

Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP)

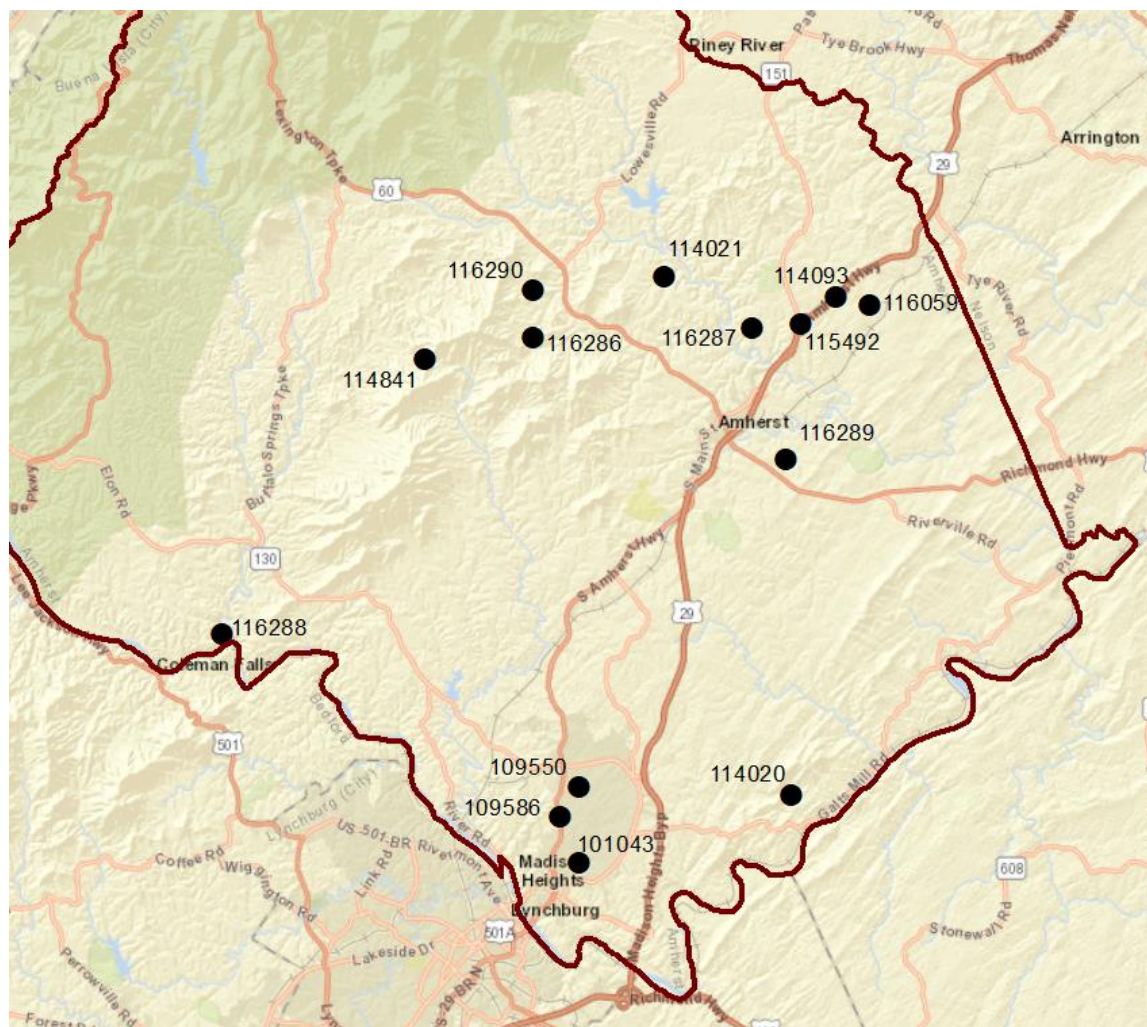
The Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is a statewide document which outlines

transportation spending for construction or study over a six-year time frame. The Commonwealth Transportation Board updates the revenue and cost estimates, priorities, and project schedules. The projects included in the SYIP within Amherst County are shown below:

Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Projects 2021- 2026 (Provided by VDOT)

UPC	Description	Route #	Route Name	From	To	CN Start	CN End	Cost Estimate
101043	#SGR17VB - RT 681 - BRIDGE REHAB OVER WILLIAMS RUN Fed 01524	681	Seminole Drive	0.71 MILE EAST OF RTE 29	0.69 MILE EAST OF RTE 29	9/8/2020	9/22/2021	\$1,492,258
109550	#HB2.FY17 RTE 682 - RECONSTRUCTION	682	Woody's Lake Road	0.794 MILE EAST OF RTE BUS 29	RTE. BUS 29	12/8/2020	12/20/2021	\$7,855,088
109586	BUS 29 - CONSTRUCT SIDEWALK (MADISON HEIGHTS)	BUS 29	South Amherst Highway	0.010 MILE NORTH OF RTE 682 (WOODYS LAKE RD)	0.011 MILE SOUTH OF RTE 1054 (LAKEVIEW DR)	7/7/2020	12/6/2021	\$1,853,177
114020	RTE 648 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	648	Beck Creek Road	ROUTE 613	ROUTE 622	9/17/2019	7/7/2020	\$479,219
114021	RTE 692 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	692	Muddy Branch Road	ROUTE 616	ROUTE 752	10/28/2019	9/9/2020	\$199,672
114093	RTE 29 - SHOULDER WIDENING AND RUMBLE STRIPS (AMHERST)	29	North Amherst Highway	US-29 NB AMHERST / NELSON LINE	0.19 MILE NORTH US-29 NB ON RAMP FROM BUS US-29 S. INT.	7/6/2020	10/29/2020	\$1,976,874
114841	RTE 636 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	636	Wares Gao Road	3.00 MILE WEST RTE 643	1.79 MILE WEST OF RTE 643	12/4/2019	9/9/2020	\$244,000
115492	#SMART20 RTE 29 - CONSTRUCT RCUT AT INTERSECTION OF RTE 151	29	North Amherst Highway	0.047 MILE NORTH OF RTE 151	0.047 MILE SOUTH OF RTE 151	6/11/2024	4/18/2025	\$3,300,027
116059	RTE 729 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	729	Chestnut Lane	DEAD END	RTE 742	7/12/2023	11/13/2023	\$108,000
116286	RTE 743 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	743	Lavender Lane	DEAD END	RTE 615	9/1/2020	2/24/2022	\$90,000
116287	RTE 608 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	608	Campbells Mill Road	2.35 MI SOUTH RTE 736	0.60 MI. SOUTH RTE 736	9/18/2020	3/14/2022	\$324,000
116288	RTE 650 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON-HARDSURFACE)	650	East Perch Road	0.06 MI WEST RTE 691	2.04 MI EAST RTE 695	7/16/2021	1/5/2023	\$500,000
116289	RTE 606 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON - HARDSURFACE)	606	Fox Hall Drive	DEAD END	RTE 60	5/17/2022	11/1/2023	\$252,000
116290	RTE 696 - RURAL RUSTIC (SURFACE TREAT NON - HARDSURFACE)	696	Shady Mountain Road	DEAD END	RTE 715	8/3/2023	12/7/2023	\$180,000

Map of Six Year Improvement Program Projects by UPC



Map 17: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Six Year Improvement Project (SYIP) Details

Project Summary									
UPC	101043								
Project	#SGR17VB - RT 681 - BRIDGE REHAB OVER WILLIAMS RUN FED 01524								
Scope of Work	Bridge Rehab w/o Added Capacity								
Description	FROM: 0.69 MILE EAST OF RTE 29 TO: 0.71 MILE EAST OF RTE 29								
Report Note	Funded to anticipated award estimate								
Fund Source	HB1887SG								
Project Location				Estimates & Schedule					
District	Lynchburg	Jurisdiction	Amherst County		Estimated Cost (Thousands)	Schedule			
Road System	Secondary	Length	0.0200 MI	Prelim. Eng. (PE)	\$0	N/A			
Route	0681	Street	SEMINOLE DRIVE	Right of Way (RW)	\$0	N/A			
Structure No.	1524	Sufficiency Rating	49	Construction (CN)	\$1,492	Underway			
MPO Area	Lynchburg			Total Estimate	\$1,492				
Required Allocations									
			Previous Allocations	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	Required After FY2026
Fund Sources			Values in Thousands of Dollars						
State of Good Repair: State			\$0	\$1,032	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Funding			\$0	\$1,032	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$460
© Copyright 2008 Virginia Department of Transportation. All Rights Reserved.					VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program v1.0				
Project Summary									
UPC	109550								
Project	#HB2.FY17 RTE 682 - RECONSTRUCTION								
Scope of Work	Reconstruction w/o Added Capacity								
Description	FROM: 0.195 MI. EAST OF RTE. BUS 29 TO: 0.776 MILE EAST OF RTE BUS 29								
Report Note									
Fund Source	HB1887DG								
Project Location				Estimates & Schedule					
District	Lynchburg	Jurisdiction	Amherst County		Estimated Cost (Thousands)	Schedule			
Road System	Secondary	Length	0.5800 MI	Prelim. Eng. (PE)	\$770	Complete			
Route	0682	Street	WOODY'S LAKE ROAD	Right of Way (RW)	\$2,280	Complete			
MPO Area	Lynchburg			Construction (CN)	\$4,805	Underway			
				Total Estimate	\$7,855				
Required Allocations									
			Previous Allocations	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	Required After FY2026
Fund Sources			Values in Thousands of Dollars						
District Grant Program: GARVEE			\$7,855	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Funding			\$7,855	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Project Summary									
UPC	109586								
Project	BUS 29 - CONSTRUCT SIDEWALK (MADISON HEIGHTS)								
Scope of Work	Safety								
Description	FROM: 0.011 MILE SOUTH OF RTE 1054 (LAKEVIEW DR) TO: 0.010 MILE NORTH OF RTE 682 (WOODYS LAKE RD)								
Report Note	Funded to anticipated award estimate								
Fund Source	HSIP								
Project Location					Estimates & Schedule				
District	Lynchburg	Jurisdiction	Amherst County			Estimated Cost (Thousands)	Schedule		
Road System	Primary	Length	1.4210 MI		Prelim. Eng. (PE)	\$197	Complete		
Route	7029	Street	SOUTH AMHERST HIGHWAY		Right of Way (RW)	\$25	Complete		
MPO Area	Lynchburg				Construction (CN)	\$2,073	Underway		
					Total Estimate	\$2,295			
Required Allocations									
			Previous Allocations	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	Required After FY2026
Fund Sources			Values in Thousands of Dollars						
Specialized State and Federal: Federal			\$1,829	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Specialized State and Federal: Match			\$24	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Funding			\$1,853	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$442
© Copyright 2008 Virginia Department of Transportation. All Rights Reserved.					VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program v1.0				
Project Summary									
UPC	115492								
Project	#SMART20 RTE 29 - CONSTRUCT RCUT AT INTERSECTION OF RTE 151								
Scope of Work	Safety								
Description	FROM: 0.047 MILE SOUTH OF RTE 151 TO: 0.047 MILE NORTH OF RTE 151								
Report Note									
Fund Source	HB1887DG								
Project Location					Estimates & Schedule				
District	Lynchburg	Jurisdiction	Amherst County			Estimated Cost (Thousands)	Schedule		
Road System	Primary	Length	0.0950 MI		Prelim. Eng. (PE)	\$462	Underway		
Route	0029	Street	NORTH AMHERST HIGHWAY		Right of Way (RW)	\$583	FY2023		
MPO Area	NonMPO				Construction (CN)	\$2,255	FY2024		
					Total Estimate	\$3,300			
Required Allocations									
			Previous Allocations	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	Required After FY2026
Fund Sources			Values in Thousands of Dollars						
District Grant Program: Federal			\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$0
District Grant Program: State			\$400	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$400	\$0
Total Funding			\$400	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$2,000	\$400	\$0
© Copyright 2008 Virginia Department of Transportation. All Rights Reserved.					VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program v1.0				

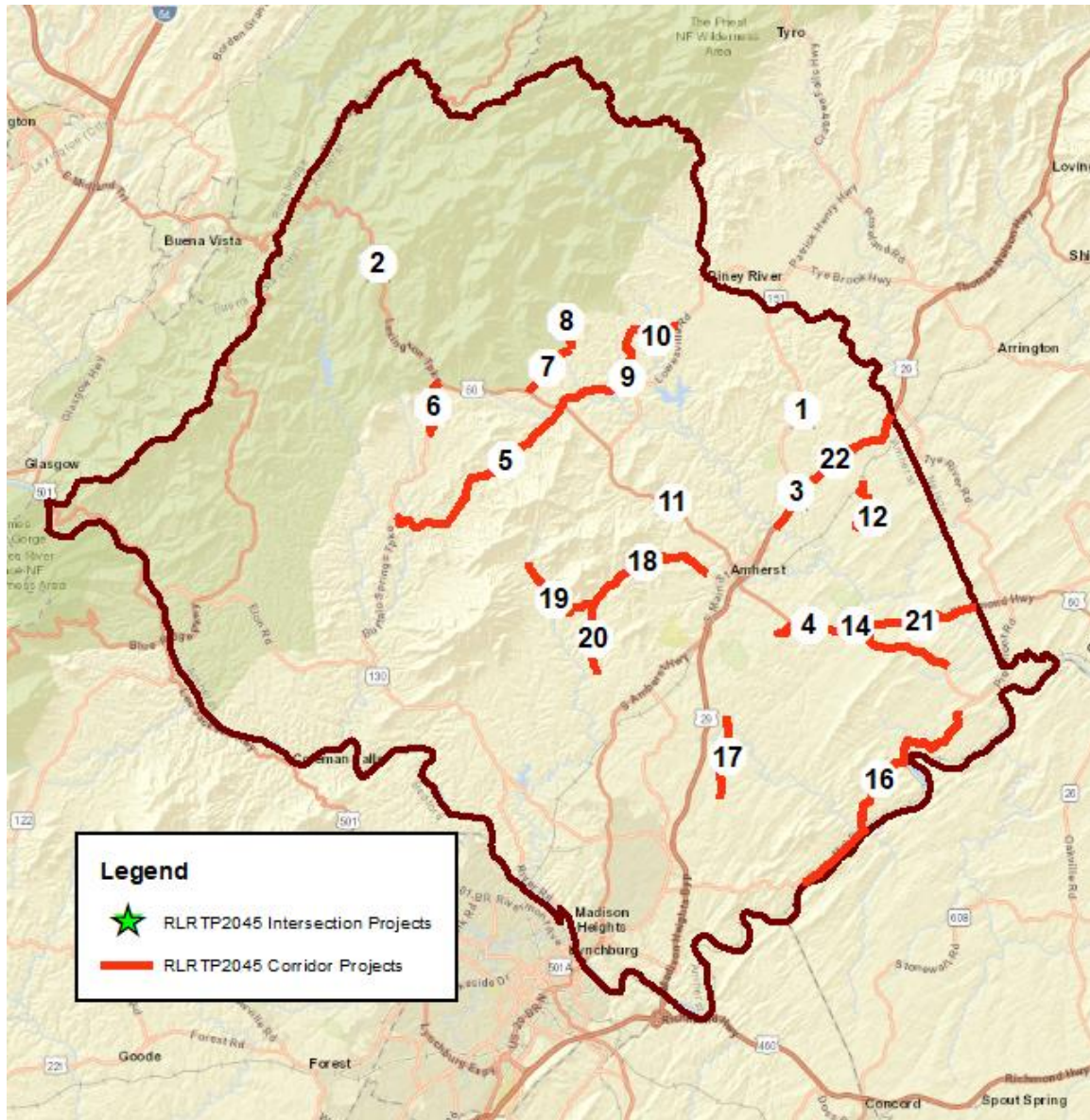
Recommended Road & Intersection Improvements

Below is a list of potential road and intersection improvements, a description of action, and the estimated cost (if available). These improvements should be considered by the Virginia Department of Transportation, Central Virginia Transportation Planning Organization, and other bodies when crafting future plans; they should also be considered when future developments are built along roads that cannot handle an increased capacity, which may affect the level of service.

Rural Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 (RLRTP) Recommendations

Map ID	Description	VTRANS Need Met
1	US 29/VA 151 Short-Term: MidTerm: Safety: Conduct access management to better define entrance on eastside. Congestion: Consider signalization based on further signal warrant analysis. Long-Term: Congestion: Construct quadrant interchange based on "Route 29 corridor study"	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.5
2	US 29/MPO Boundary/Nelson County Line Long-Term: Congestion: Upgrade to four lane parkway with interchanges.	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.5
3	US 60/East Town Limit/VA 600 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
4	U.S. 60/VA 600/County Line Long-Term: Safety: Reconstruct US 60 to current standards and maintain two-lane roadway. Install center left turn lanes and right turn lanes near intersections. Congestion: Replace and widen bridge structures #1007 and #1006 near US 29 bypass.	N/A
5	VA 655/Fall Rock Creek Bridge/VA 643 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 24 Feet	N/A
6	VA 600/ US 60/ VA 601 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
7	VA 662/VA 151 Long-Term: Safety: Reconstruct intersection to improve angle with which VA 662 ties into VA 151 and to improve overall roadway geometrics and sight distance.	N/A
8	VA 617/US 60/VA 616N Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
9	VA 643/VA 636N/VA 655 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
10	VA 604/ VA 659N/US 60 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 24 Feet	N/A
11	VA 643/VA 655/County Limits Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
12	VA 610/VA 635N/VA 625 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
13	US 60/ VA 686 Short-Term: Safety: Consider installing warning signs on both US 60 approaches advising drivers to watch for entering vehicles. Long-Term: Safety: Realign intersection with roadway on opposite side of US 60 from off-set T intersection into a standard 4-legged intersection, improve sight distance, and add appropriate turn bays. Will likely require coordination with Forest Service, as they are the owners of the other minor roadway at this location.	N/A
14	VA 670/ VA 670S/ VA 604 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 24 Feet	N/A
15	VA 622/ VA 648/ VA 624 S Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
16	VA 635/ VA 636N/ US 60 E Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 22 Feet	N/A
17	VA 739/VA 608/ VA 708 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
18	VA 708/VA 739S/VA 610 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
19	VA 631/ US 60/ VA 617 W Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
20	VA 627/ VA 625S/VA 778 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
21	VA 617/ VA 631W/ VA 627 Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A
22	VA 625/ VA 830/ VA 627 S Long-Term: Safety: Rural - 2 Lane 20 Feet	N/A

Map of Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) Projects

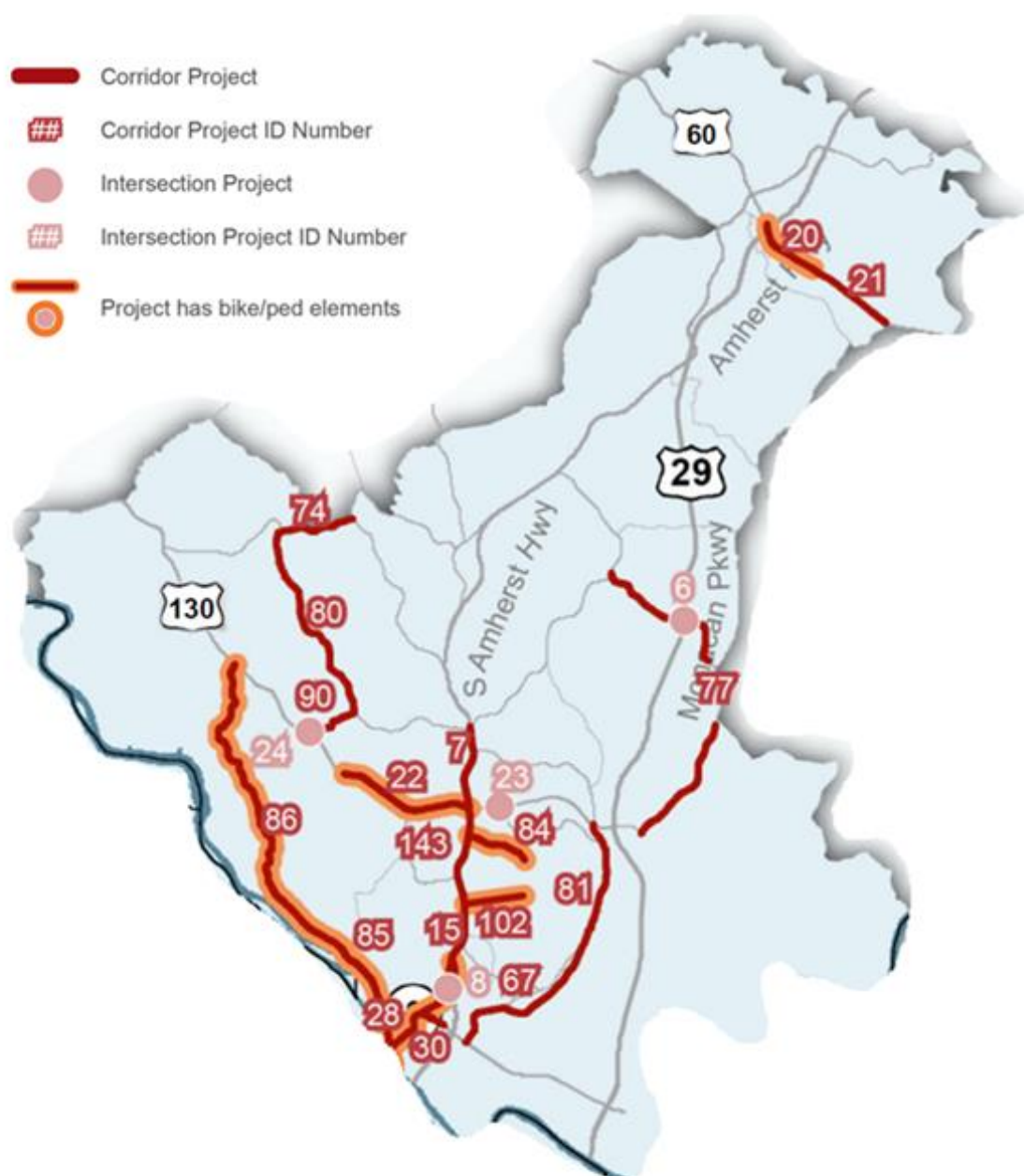


Map 18: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Recommendations

Map ID	Description	Segment	Cost	VTRANS Need Met
7	Traffic Operations/ Signal Coordination/ ATPSM Upgrades	South Amherst Highway From Route 163 to S Coolwell Road (Rt 694)	\$2,500,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.5
143	Potential phased approach of upgrading 29 to meet access management and safety concerns.	South Amherst Highway From Route 163 to S Coolwell Road (Rt 694)	\$20,000,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.6
8	Add ramp to complete interchange	South Amherst Highway @ Route 163	\$13,910,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.7
24	Add two left turn lanes	Route 130 @ Berg Dr.	\$1,143,000	N/A
23	Intersection improvements with review of alternative intersections	Amelon Expressway @ Amelon Center	\$2,000,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.7
84	Reconstruct Roadway	Woody's Lake Rd @ South Amherst Highway	\$8,350,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.8
28	Widen to 4 lanes with bike lane	South Amherst Highway from River Rd to 29 Business	\$23,000,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.9
20	2 lane improvements	Route 60 from 29 Bypass to Rt 606	\$10,840,000	N/A
6	2 lane reconstruction with shoulder	Monacan Parkway @ Izaak Walton Rd.	\$11,590,000	Corridor of Statewide Significance, VTRANS Need L.9
67	Reconstruct 2 lane road	New Wright Shop Rd. from Colony Rd to Dixie Airport Rd.	\$19,629,000	N/A
22	Widen to four lanes	Route 130 from NS Railroad to 29 Business	\$25,000,000	N/A
90	Reconstruct 2 lane roadway	Winridge Rd from Route 130 to Route 675	\$10,930,000	N/A
21	Widening/improvement	Route 60 from Dulwich Dr. to CVMPO Eastern Boundary	\$54,460,000	N/A
77	Reconstruct 2 lane roadway	Izaak Walton Rd from Glade Rd to S Coolwell Rd.	\$29,740,000	N/A
81	Reconstruct 2 lane roadway	Dixie Airport Rd from Amelon Rd to Galts Mill Rd.	\$11,890,000	N/A
74	2 lane reconstruction	Cedar Gate Rd from Route 657 to Route 675	\$7,270,000	N/A
102	New 2 lane connector road	New Road from 29 Business to Fernwood Dr.	\$7,220,000	N/A
86	Reconstruct 2 lane roadway	River Rd from Rt 130 to NS Railroad	\$31,160,000	N/A
85	Reconstruct 2 lane roadway	River Rd from NW Railroad to Route 163	\$24,880,000	N/A
80	Widen pavement to 22 ft.	Winesap Rd from Route 652 to Route 795	\$20,490,000	N/A ⁹²

Map of Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Recommendations



Region 2000 Rural Scenic Corridors Study
Creation of a scenic corridor along “the continuation of Route 624 to create a loop” (Virginia Outdoors Plan [VOP]). Editor’s note: While detail is not given, this is assumed to be Earley Farm Road in Amherst County, which intersects with Route 622 (Scenic Road) at Stapleton. Route 624 transitions to Higginbotham Creek Road in the Sweet Briar vicinity. This roadway does possess many scenic characteristics, although the VOP’s mention of a “loop” is not clear.
Creation of a scenic corridor along State Route 685 (River Road)
Creation of a scenic corridor along State Route 635 (Buffalo Springs Turnpike)
Creation of a scenic corridor along U.S. 60 (Lexington Turnpike)- between the Town of Amherst and the Rockbridge County line.
Creation of a scenic corridor along State Route 653 (Ambrose Rucker Road)/ State Route 636 (High Peak Road)/ State Route 643 (Matohe/Kenmore Road)- Between Elon and Town of Amherst
Creation of a scenic corridor along State Route 610 (Sandiges Road) & State Route 778 (Lowesville Road)- between U.S. 60 and Amherst/Nelson line.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Funding Opportunities

There are multiple funding options sponsored by the state that are available to finance transportation projects. The following list is a product of the *Connect Central Virginia 2045* Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

SMART SCALE

Purpose: SMART SCALE is the statewide program that intends to distribute funding based on a standard and objective evaluation of projects that will determine how to effectively help the state achieve its transportation goals.

Funding: there are two main pathways to funding within the SMART SCALE process—the construction District Grant Program (DGP) and the High Priority Projects Program (HPPP). A project applying to funds from the DGP is prioritized with projects from the same construction district. A project applying for funds from the HPPP is prioritized with projects statewide. The CTB then makes a final decision on which projects to fund.

Eligible Projects: Projects must address improvements to a Corridor of Statewide Significance, Regional Network, Potential

for Safety Improvement (PSI) locations or Urban Development Area (UDA). Project types can include highway improvements such as widening, operational improvements, access management, and intelligent transportation systems, transit and rail capacity expansion, and transportation demand management including park and ride facilities.



Eligible Applicants: Projects may be submitted by regional entities including MPOs and PDCs, along with public transit agencies, counties and cities that maintain their own infrastructure. Projects pertaining to UDAs can only be submitted by localities.

Evaluation Criteria: There are five factors evaluated for all projects: Safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, environmental quality, and economic development. MPOs with a population greater than 200,000 are also evaluated by land use policy consistency.

Highway Safety Improvements Program (HSIP)



Purpose: Established by the federal transportation legislation MAP-21, this program is structured and funded to make significant progress in reducing highway fatalities and injuries on all public roads.

Funding: The Federal share for highway safety improvements is 90%, with certain types of projects (including, as relevant to this study, maintaining retro-reflectivity of pavement markings and the installation of traffic signs) eligible to be funded at 100%. If project cost is higher than what was originally submitted, the project manager and sponsor will be responsible for identifying sources for funding those estimates.

Eligible projects: Projects involve the identification of high-crash spots or corridor segments, an analysis of crash trends and existing conditions, and the prioritization and scheduling of improvement projects.

Eligible applicants: Local governments, VDOT District and Regional Staff

Evaluation criteria:

- Evaluated on a statewide basis rather than on a local or district basis.
- Locations or corridors where a known “substantive safety” problem exists as indicated by location-specific data on severe crashes, and where it is determined that the specific project action can with

confidence produce a measurable and significant reduction in the number and/or consequences of severe crashes.

- To achieve the maximum benefit, the focus of the program is on cost-effective use of funds allocated for safety improvements.
- Priority will be given to projects having higher total number of deaths and serious injuries.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)



Purpose: This program is intended to help local sponsors fund community-based projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. It focuses on providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other community improvements.

Funding: TAP is not a traditional grant program and funds are only available on a reimbursement basis. It is therefore important to have the necessary funding available to pay for services and materials until appropriate documentation can be submitted and processed for reimbursement. The program will allow a maximum federal reimbursement of 80% of the eligible project costs and requires a 20% local match.

Eligible projects:

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared use paths.
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities such as classroom projects, safety handouts and directional signage for trails (Safe Routes to School)
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors such as the development of a rails-to-trails facility.

Eligible applicants: Any local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local educational agencies, or school, tribal government, and any other local or regional government entity with responsibility for overseeing transportation or recreation trails.

Evaluation criteria:

- Number of federal enhancement categories.
- Inclusion in a state, regional, or local plan.
- Public/private venture-cooperation (multi-jurisdictional).
- Total cost and matching funds in excess of minimum.
- Demonstratable need, community improvement.
- Community support and public accessibility.
- Compatibility with adjacent land use.
- Environmental and ecological benefits.
- Historic criteria met, significant aesthetic value to be achieved and visibility from a public right of way.
- Economic impact and effect on tourism.

VDOT Revenue Sharing Program



Purpose: This program provides additional funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct, reconstruct, improve, or maintain the highway systems within such county, city, or town and for eligible rural additions in certain counties of the Commonwealth. Locality funds are matched, dollar for dollar, with state funds, with statutory limitations on the amount of state funds authorized per locality.

Funding: Application for program funding must be made by resolution of the governing body of the jurisdiction requesting funds. Project funding is allocated by resolution of the CTB. Project costs are divided equally between the Revenue Share Fund and locality funding.

Eligible projects:

- Supplemental funding for projects listed in the adopted Six-Year Improvement Plan.
- Construction, reconstruction, or improvement projects not included in the adopted Six-Year Improvement Plan.
- Improvements necessary for the specific subdivision streets otherwise eligible for acceptance into the secondary system for maintenance (rural additions).
- Maintenance projects consistent with the department's operating policies.
- New hard surfacing (paving).
- New roadway.
- Deficits on completed construction, reconstruction, or improvement projects.

Eligible applicants: Any county, city, or town in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Evaluation criteria:

- Priority 1: Construction projects that have previously received Revenue Sharing funding.
- Priority 2: Construction projects that meet a transportation need identified in the Statewide Transportation Plan or projects that will be accelerated in a locality's capital plan.
- Priority 3: Projects that address deficient pavement resurfacing and bridge rehabilitation.
- Priority 4: All other projects.

VDOT Road Maintenance

The VDOT Road maintenance category of funding covers a wide variety of maintenance and operations activities. Road maintenance funds comprise the majority of VDOT's scheduled funding (versus new construction). Road maintenance funding addresses needs having to do with pavement management, signals, pavement markings, signs, stripes, guardrails, and ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) assets that are considered to be of critical safety and operational importance. Maintenance funding also addresses operation services comprising ordinary and preventative maintenance work such as cleaning ditches, washing bridge decks, patching pot-holes, debris removal, snow and ice removal, emergency response, incident management, mowing, and equipment management.

Planning Assumptions

Amherst County's population has remained constant over the past three decades, growing minimally. The majority of residents live in the central area of the County, generally in a

swath encompassing five miles to the east and west of U.S. 29. The population is most dense in the areas of Madison Heights, the Town of Amherst, Elon, Monroe, and Coolwell.

Likewise, most of the County's employers are located along this same corridor, with particular focus along U.S. 29 Business in Madison Heights and the Town of Amherst. Another major employer is located at Riverville in the southeast corner of the County.

Future commercial, industrial, and large-scale residential development in Amherst County will likely be tied to the combined availability of transportation resources (particularly rail and highway) and utilities (including water and sewer). Portions of the southern and central areas of the County are provided with water and sewer service by the Amherst County Service Authority and Town of Amherst Utilities.

Three particular areas of the County with water and sewer availability and ready access to U.S. 29 consist of the interchanges with the Madison Heights Bypass at Route 210 (Colony Road), Route 130 (Amelon Expressway), and the Ambriar vicinity in the Town of Amherst. These areas are likely to see most of the noticeable growth in the County for the foreseeable future.

Assessment of the Multi-Modal Transportation System

Roadways

Amherst County's multi-modal transportation system is functional, and typically performs at a level above that of other localities within the region. Generally speaking, the County's road network provides little difficulty for the average

driver. Many traffic issues (primarily congestion-related) were mitigated with the construction of the Madison Heights Bypass.

Bridges and Culverts

The inspection and evaluation of bridges has been an ongoing focus of VDOT, but has received particular attention in the past several years as infrastructure continues to age. Bridges and culverts are rated using a “general condition rating (GCR)”. Good

Structures have a minimum GCR ≥ 7 ; Fair Structures have a minimum GCR = 5 or 6; while Poor Structures have a minimum GCR ≤ 4 . VDOT is responsible for maintaining these bridges and has been working to improve bridge/culvert conditions more quickly as funding allocations become increasingly available for maintenance and repairs.

Amherst County Bridge Ratings (Provided by VDOT)

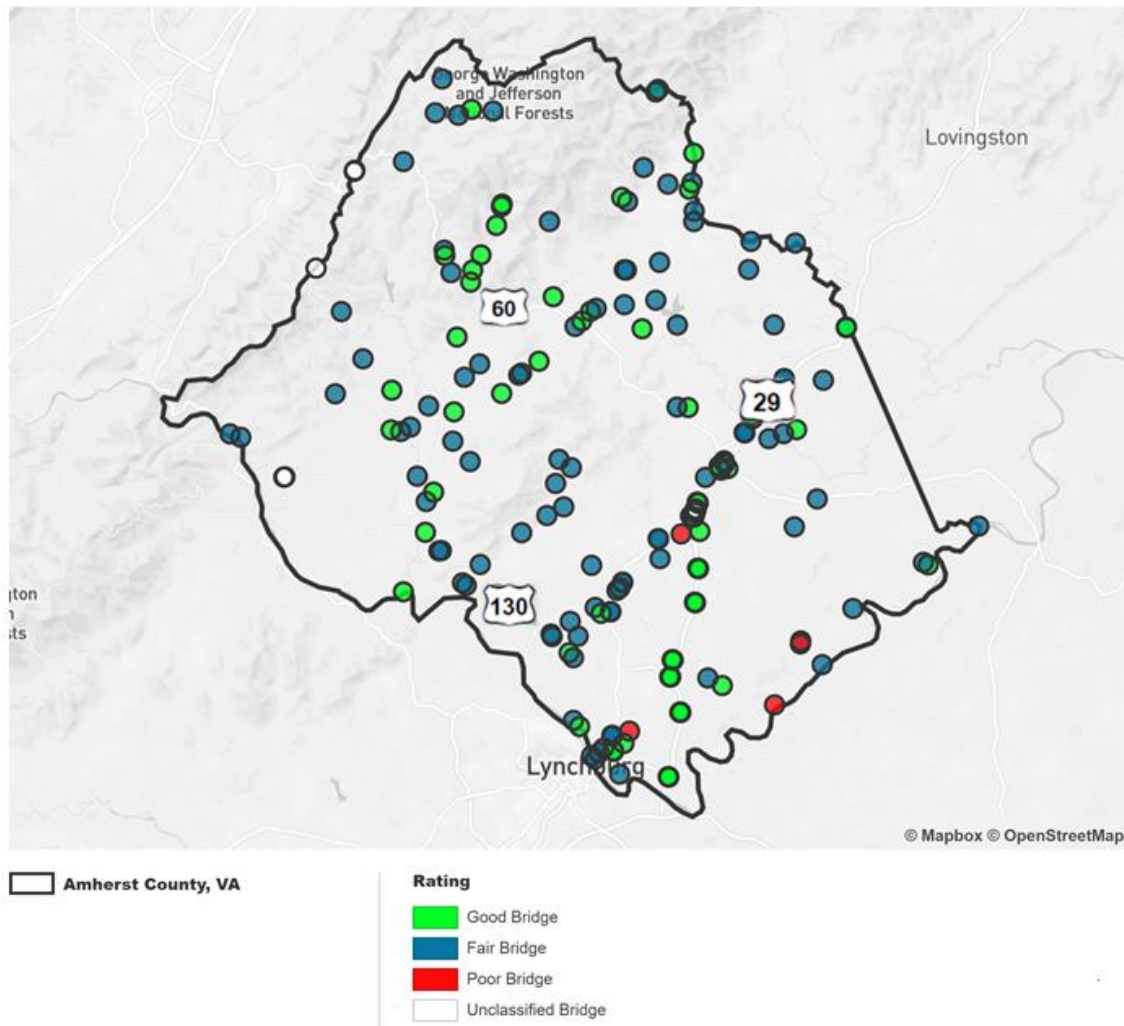
CONDITION TYPE	COUNT	PERCENT
Good (Rating: 7)	78	40%
Fair (Rating: 5 or 6)	103	53%
Poor (Rating: 4)	9	2%
TOTAL	193	100.0%

The table below specifically lists four Amherst County bridges that are classified as being in poor condition.

Table 30: Deficient Bridges (Provided by VDOT)

FACILITY	CROSSING	YEAR BUILT
Seminole Drive	Williams Run	1954
Galts Mill Road	Beck Creek	1949
Old Stage Road	NS Railway	1964
Earley Farm Road	Partridge Creek	1932

Map of Amherst County Bridges by Rating



Map 19: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

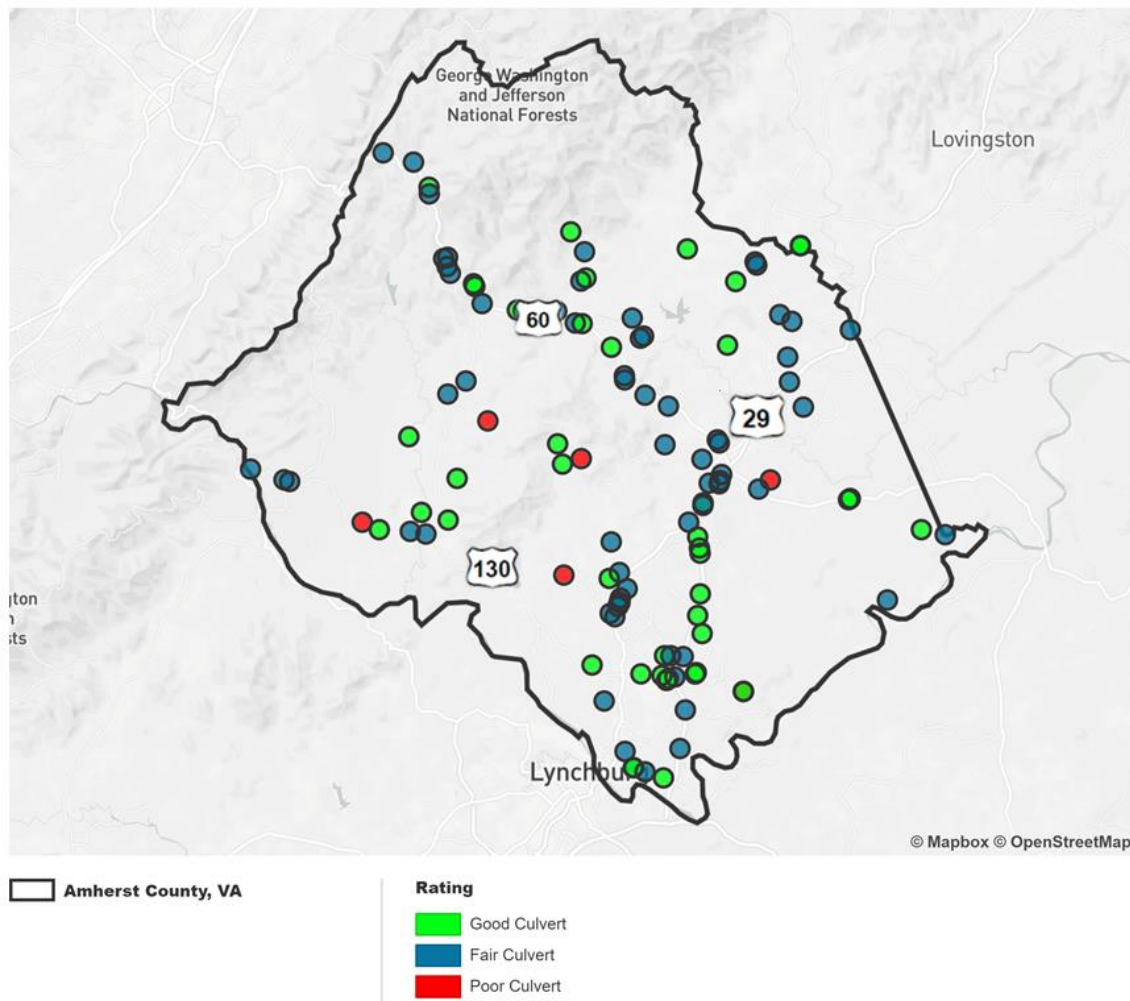
Amherst County Culvert Ratings (Provided by VDOT)

	COUNT	PERCENT
Good (Rating: 6, 7, 8)	42	22%
Fair (Rating: 5)	67	35%
Poor (Rating: 4)	6	3%
TOTAL	193	100%

Deficient Culverts (Provided by VDOT)

FACILITY	CROSSING	YEAR BUILT
Maple Creek Rd	Maple Creek	1491
Cedar Gate Road	Muddy Creek	1980
Pryors Creek Road	Pryor Creek	1969
Bear Creek Road	Branch Beck Creek	1997
Fox Hill Drive	Trib. Buffalo River	1997
Peter's Hollow Rd	Childress Creek	1995

Map of Amherst County Culverts by Rating



Map 20: Data Provided by VDOT; Available at <https://data.mysidewalk.com/reports/36920>

Pedestrian Facilities

As expected, sidewalks are prevalent in the older and more densely developed areas of the County, including Old Town Madison Heights. Route 163 (Amherst Highway), has a sidewalk on its east side from its intersection with Main Street to its intersection with U.S. 29 Business. This sidewalk continued along the east side of 29 Business for approximately 2,300 feet. In 2021, VDOT began installing a new portion of sidewalk on the Eastern side from Lakeview Drive to Woody's Lake Road, where existing sidewalk continues past the Walmart and Amelon shopping centers before terminating just north of Amer Circle and Amelon Elementary School.

Bicycle Facilities

Cycling is becoming popular in Amherst County, with particular corridors (such as River Road) seeing frequent use by individuals and groups riding for recreation. The elements that make certain rural roadways attractive for bicyclists (low traffic, moderate terrain, beautiful views) can also create vehicle to bicycle conflict, particularly involving speed differential. "Share the Road" signs have recently been installed on River Road to remind drivers that a slower-moving cyclist could be just around the next bend in the road.

Bicycle use on roads is an appropriate, expected, and legal transportation mode. The only exception is in specific locations where bicycle use is stated as illegal, these locations are in general along high-speed, limited-access highways (such as U.S. 29 Bypass and the Lynchburg Expressway). While almost any road may be used by cyclists for transportation purposes, there are a number of key obstacles that limit comfortable transportation use by most cyclists. Most of

these obstacles are related to safety and cyclist vulnerability by traveling on the same grade surface as motorized vehicles.

Below is an overview of the more common obstacles faced by cyclists when traveling along the road network. Addressing solutions to elevate these conditions through design and education is crucial in creating an atmosphere that supports a safe and efficient bicycle transportation network. The most common obstacles faced by bicyclists include:

- Not enough separation from motorized vehicles/effective width available for bicyclists;
- Speed of traffic along road
- Volume of vehicles along the road
- Surface conditions of the pavement along the road
- Existence of parking along the road
- Amount of large vehicles/trucks that travel along the road
- Lack of motorist and cyclist education on each other's rights and practices

The difference in the physical characteristics and bicycle knowledge of potential cyclist, variation in facility condition, and cyclist obstacles highlight the need to implement the physical and programmatic solutions necessary to create a safe bicycle network.

Currently within Amherst County, there exist only a few examples of specific on-road accommodations, such as signage, marking, or specific designated lanes, designed to alert motorists to anticipate cyclists or to provide cyclists specific riding guidance. However, in 2017, VDOT and the Town of Amherst completed a road diet project which removed a two-way left turn lane to allow for both sides of the roadway along the Business 29 Corridor. Additionally, there are also bike

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

lanes on RTE 60 near the Town's roundabout. The Town has considerable on-road accommodations compared to the rest of the County.

While the use of bicycles along the road network has increased greatly overall, the safety for area cyclists and motorist is compromised by a combination of lack of road accommodations and limited cycling education of some motorists and cyclists. Some of these conflicts can be avoided using

existing (or creation of new) educational programs and materials that focus on road rules, safe behaviors, and road responsibilities of cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians.

The *Connect Central Virginia 2045 Plan*, published by the Central Virginia Planning District Commission in 2020, outlined several priorities for Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements, as shown below:

Multimodal Recommendations from CVPDC's *Connect Central Virginia 2045 Plan*

South Amherst Highway/ Woody's Lake Rd (Rt 682)/ Dillard Rd (Rt 766) Multimodal Improvements
Install 3,800 ft of sidewalk on east side of US 29 business

South Main St/ Lexington Turnpike (Rt 60) Multimodal Improvements *Improve sidewalks and pedestrian crossings at traffic circle*

South Main St/ Lexington Turnpike (Rt 60)/ 2nd St Multimodal Improvements *Improve sidewalks and pedestrian crossings*

Riveredge and JRHT Extension/ Riveredge Trail/ James River Heritage Trail Multimodal Capacity Expansion: *An approximately 6,500 foot, 10-foot wide, shared use asphalt trail that will connect Riveredge Trail to the James River Heritage Trail (JRHT).*

James River Heritage Trail Multimodal Capacity Expansion: *Completing the James River Heritage Trail throughout the region*

Recommendations

The County's major highways provide vital community access. Maintaining the efficiency and character of these highways is of critical importance. The County should continue to evaluate all development proposals along these primary corridors to ensure that new development does not negatively impact the safety, efficiency, or aesthetics of these important routes. Maintenance and enhancement of these highways will require a partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation and adjoining landowners. Additionally, it is important that any improvements or future development of roads is consistent with the

recommendations and goals which are put forth by the state's transportation plan, VTrans.

The County's major highways, Routes 29, 60 and 130, are important transportation corridors within the County. These corridors allow for the efficient movement of people and goods, and thus are critical to the County's economic health and quality of life, and also serve as gateways into Amherst County and surrounding communities. Visitors' first impressions of the County are developed partly on the basis of the function and appearance of these corridors.

Maintaining and enhancing traffic flow within these corridors is of crucial importance to the County. Future development along these corridors should be designed to ensure that it does not impede or further restrict traffic flow. In this regard, access management is very important. The County should adopt local access standards that meet or exceed VDOT minimums. Minimizing the number of driveway entrances, increasing the distance between new driveway entrances, and minimizing the number of new median cuts and traffic signals all can have a positive effect on traffic safety and traffic efficiency.

From an aesthetic perspective, signage, landscaping, building character, and scale all can influence the visual qualities of these important corridors, and define the quality of Amherst County's gateways. Recent changes to the County's zoning ordinance pertaining to commercial landscaping and signage have positively influenced the character of new development in the County. Continued equitable enforcement of these provisions is critical. In addition, the County should evaluate the need for more stringent signage and landscaping standards for the more rural portions of the County and develop standards as needed.

Route 29 Bypass

Interchanges along the new Route 29 (Bypass) should increase demand for commercial and other high intensity land uses at these locations. The County should anticipate increased development pressure at these locations and plan for and allow development consistent with this plan and the economic development objectives of the County.

The future land use plan does not designate areas for new commercial development at the

northern terminus of this new highway, south of the Town of Amherst. Any new commercial development in this location should be located/concentrated within the Town of Amherst, if it is to be consistent with the Town's land use plan. In addition, the Town and County should jointly coordinate future land use planning initiatives around the town's borders. Not only will this action ensure the optimum use of community services and facilities, but also the development of a land-use pattern consistent with the objectives of both jurisdictions.

Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalk improvements should be considered along U.S. 29 in Madison Heights, particularly between Dillard Road and Woody's Lake Road as part of an overall desire to create pedestrian connectivity between the intersection of S. Amherst Highway/Lyttleton Lane to the south and the Coolwell Road vicinity to the north. If it is deemed appropriate to maintain the tradition of having a sidewalk on only one side of this road, crosswalks and other protective measures should be added at appropriate locations, as allowed by VDOT policy.

In addition to these improvements, there are recommendations for the Town of Amherst within the Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Plan (2016). These recommendations include pedestrian signalization improvements and sidewalk ramp improvements that have already been completed. However, there are still curb extension, pedestrian crossing improvement and streetscaping projects which are recommended along Main Street.

Rural Scenic Corridors

In 2012, the Region 2000 Local Government Council (now known as the Central Virginia Planning District Commission) conducted a study of best practices relating to rural scenic corridors within the region. The resulting report made numerous recommendations on evaluating the scenic (visual) as well as cultural (historic) significance of rural roadways. Within Amherst County, six corridors were recommended to be studied further and/or designated as scenic corridors. These are:

- **“The continuation of Route 624 to create a loop”** (Virginia Outdoors Plan [VOP]). Scenic Corridor Study Editor’s note: While detail is not given, this is assumed to be Earley Farm Road in Amherst County, which intersects with Route 622 (Scenic Road) at Stapleton. Route 624 transitions to Higginbotham Creek Road in the Sweet Briar vicinity. This roadway does possess many scenic characteristics, although the VOP’s mention of a “loop” is not clear.
- **State Route 685 (River Road)-** Views of James River, Tobacco Row Mountain, historic homes
- **State Route 635 (Buffalo Springs Turnpike)-** Views of Pedlar River Valley, Pedlar Mills Historic District, communities of Pleasant View and Allwood, mountain vistas
- **U.S. 60 (Lexington Turnpike)-** between the Town of Amherst and the Rockbridge County line.

Mountain vistas, farmland, historic homes, access to National Forest, Blue Ridge Parkway



Graham Creek Orchard Packing Shed and stone wall along Ambrose Rucker Road (SR 653)

- **State Route 653 (Ambrose Rucker Road)/State Route 636 (High Peak Road)/State Route 643 (Matohe/Kenmore Road)-** Between Elon and Town of Amherst through apple orchards, views of Tobacco Row Mountain, Monacan Indian heritage sites, historic homes
- **State Route 610 (Sandidges Road) & State Route 778 (Lowesville Road)-** between U.S. 60 and Amherst/Nelson line. Mountain vistas, historic homes, farmland, access to watershed lakes, Sandidges Historic District, historic community of Lowesville

Traffic Impact Analysis

Recent additions to VDOT planning procedures require close co-operation between locality planning commissions and VDOT. Localities will be required to submit certain documentation, as described in VDOT regulations section 24 VAC30-155, for review and comment by VDOT. As part of this coordination, localities are encouraged to submit an information packet, which shows the impact of the development on primary and secondary highways, to VDOT for certain size developments. Part of this package consists of a traffic impact analysis in accordance with procedures defined in section 24 VAC30-155-50C of VDOT procedures. All reviews of significant new developments or requests for rezoning should

comply with these procedures. The end result of these procedures should produce a Level of Service calculation per the Highway Capacity Manual (see 24 VAC30-155-90). Development planning by the County should require a minimum Level of Service “C” for affected roads and intersections. Proposed developments, in areas where existing road Level of Service is already level “D” or poorer, should be required to assist in overcoming obstacles to bring the projected Level of Service to at least a level “C”.

Developments in Amherst County which fail the Level C requirement should require VDOT/developer co-operation to resolve the traffic problems arising from the new development, so that the Level C service can be maintained.

**TRANSPORTATION
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Ensure that the County's transportation systems complement desired land uses.

Objective #1

Adopt and implement a future land use pattern that provides for mixed land uses, thus minimizing the mileage necessary to drive to work, school, or businesses.

Strategies:

Incorporate appropriate multi-purpose mixed-use zoning districts into the County's zoning ordinance.

Work with government agencies and private developers for the redevelopment of the Training School in accordance with the approved Central Virginia Training School Master Plan (See Appendix A).

Objective #2

Include VDOT in all stages of the planning process.

Strategies:

Continue to involve VDOT in the County's comprehensive planning, capital facility programming, development code preparation initiatives, and the review of development proposals. Coordinate land-use planning with VDOT 6 year plan and Central Virginia TPO transportation plan.

Continue to involve VDOT in the planning and implementation of the Central Virginia Training School Master Plan.

Objective #3

Seek other funding to assist in development of transportation projects in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies:

Work with the General Assembly to provide for an increased percentage of state transportation funding to be set aside for VDOT to allocate on future transportation projects in support of the County plan.

Goal #2

To improve and preserve the safety, efficiency, and aesthetics of all roads.

Objective #1

Maximize safety at points of access to the County's primary and secondary roads.

Strategies:

Amend the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances to require the construction of service roads in conjunction with new development along primary and secondary highways, thereby minimizing the quantity of new highway intersections. Maximize the appropriate use of "right in and right out" traffic flow designs when reviewing and approving new site designs. Promote the development of new cul-de-sacs to provide access for new larger scale commercial/industrial development along primary corridors.

Objective #2

Improve the safety and aesthetics of certain road corridors.

Strategies:

Reinstall median strip with plantings on Route 29 from Coolwell Road to 29 business exit to Lynchburg. Use roundabouts wherever possible to promote traffic flow and minimize traffic signals. Encourage the appropriate use of traffic calming devices wherever possible. Utilize pullouts for public transport and school bus stops on transportation corridors. Modify codes for parking standards to make commercial lots more efficient and aesthetically appealing. Include Low Impact Development techniques in all road and parking design to minimize environmental impact. For guidance on access management, safety, and aesthetics, refer to the 2002 Route 29 Corridor Management Study.

Goal #3

Promote and develop multi-modal transportation system.

Objective #1

Promote walking and biking.

Strategies:

Plan bikeways and sidewalks when improving or designing roads and public transportation facilities. Consider requiring all new developments along Business 29 in Madison Heights to install sidewalks to improve pedestrian access. Plan trails and bikeways as alternative means to roads. Consider requiring biking or walking trails in new subdivisions.

Objective #2

Promote passenger rail service from Amherst to major metropolitan areas

Objective #3

Promote hiking and biking trails.

Strategies:

Identify and work with surrounding city and County groups. Obtain legal assistance as needed for gaining public ownership of roadbeds. Seek grants for expansion of trails in Amherst County.

Goal #4

Strive to improve on surrounding visual qualities of existing transportation systems and every transportation infrastructure design.

Objective #1

Improve litter control.

Strategies:

Require secured trash loads during transport. Increase enforcement and penalties of litter laws. Promote education in grades K – 5. Increase participation in Adopt-A-Highway Program and make the sections adopted small enough to be easily managed. Encourage the development of an “adopt-a-spot” program.

Objective #2

Protect view-sheds along primary corridors.

Strategies:

Promote conservation easements along roads with view sheds.

Objective #3

Improve and strengthen the landscaping ordinance.

Strategies:

Add options to landscaping ordinance to create more variety for property owners. Grant exceptions only in extreme and rare circumstances.

Objective #4

Promote THE LEAF¹⁰ Program.

Strategies:

Form a volunteer committee of citizens and businesses to plan and raise money for “recognition signs”.

Objective #5

Create treescape plans for primary corridors, by-pass and scenic primary corridors.

Strategies:

Apply for Transportation enhancement funds for design and implementation.

Objective #6

Seek funding and grant opportunities through the State of Virginia.

Strategies:

Work with VDOT to increase the percentage of funding for landscaping along road projects.

¹⁰ Program adopted by the City of Lynchburg that promotes beautification along the Lynchburg expressway.

Goal #5

Increase the use of public transportation by Amherst County citizens.

Objective #1

Provide public transportation service to the Town of Amherst and Sweet Briar College.

Strategies:

In coordination with Greater Lynchburg Transit Corporation (GLTC), undertake a feasibility study of providing transit service to the Town of Amherst and Sweet Briar College.

Use the JAUNT¹¹ system or vans for express service to the Town of Amherst and Sweet Briar College.

Objective #2

Expand public transportation service with respect to both hours of operation and route frequency.

Strategies:

Coordinate with GLTC and JAUNT to improve services in Amherst County

Objective #3

Review expansion of taxi service.

Strategies:

Assist in efforts to promote taxi service as an alternative means of travel for those without access to a private vehicle or public transportation.

Objective #4

Promote “Park and Ride”.

Strategies:

In coordination with VDOT, promote park and ride opportunities and locate parking for park and ride services in proximity to businesses and shopping.

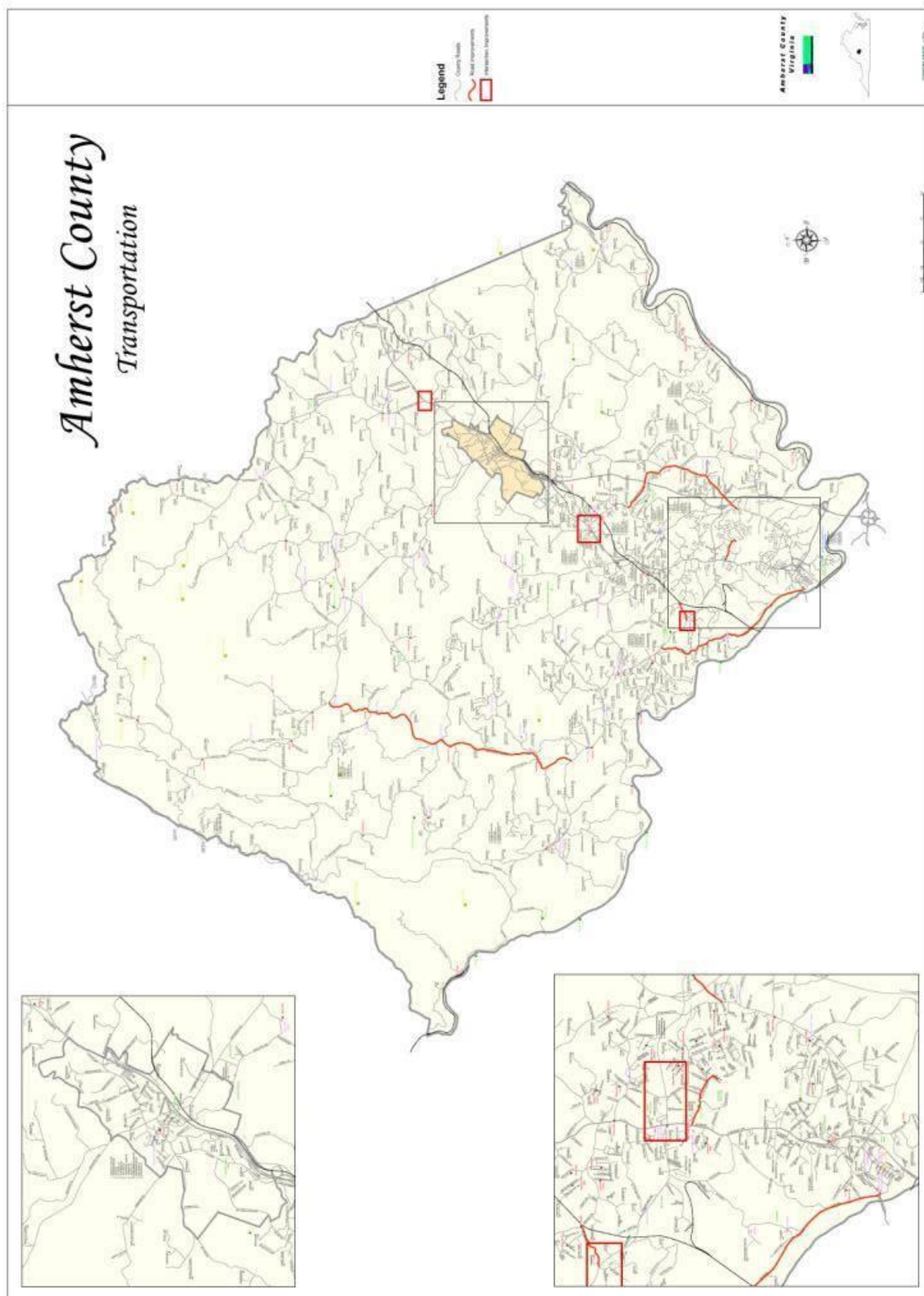
Objective #5

Market all public transport alternatives.

Strategies:

Support the use of brochures, television, radio, and other marketing strategies to promote the use of public transit.

¹¹ Jefferson Area United Transportation.



Education

The residents of Amherst County have access to a wide range of public and private education services ranging from pre-kindergarten programs to university-level institutions. Providing life-long learning opportunities is essential to the sustained development of the County and the overall quality of life for all residents and visitors. This Comprehensive Plan endorses a balanced approach that gives appropriate attention to opportunities in primary and secondary education, higher education, and adult education. In addition, this plan also supports the mission, goals, objectives and strategies of the Amherst County Public School system.

Primary and Secondary Education

Public Schools

Amherst County Public Schools (ACPS) are committed to excellence in education, equality of educational opportunity, and the recognition of each student's learning needs. ACPS currently supports the educational needs of approximately 3,895 students and operates six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one alternative school. Federal and state funded preschool opportunities are also located at several elementary schools. Map VII shows the location of these educational facilities. ACPS participates in the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology in Lynchburg, the Central Virginia Community College's (CVCC) Early College program, and the Governor's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Academy in Lynchburg. Eligible kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) students are also served by a Talented and Gifted Program, the Title I reading program,

English Language Learner (ELL) services and comprehensive special education services.

Ever-changing program offerings and program mandates have a direct impact on the adequacy of specific schools and requires continuous evaluation and adjustments. Critical planning factors affecting the efficiency of schools are the total number of students enrolled, the school/grade-specific staffing, required and planned programs and the physical capacity of each school, as well as, the overall resources available to support the system. ACPS is committed to maintaining quality and efficiently run schools through collaborative efforts with the Board of Supervisors, the County citizens and the entire school staff.

Public School Enrollment

Like other rural counties, the enrollment in the ACPS has declined for a number of years due to shifting population demographics and from the impact of economic development shortfalls in the County. State projections for enrollment anticipate a continued decline in school-age population over the next five years. With State funding for the school system directly linked to enrollment, the County has also experienced a decline in overall state funding. Strategic planning and decisions assure Amherst County citizens a quality education for the children of the County. In 2017, a realignment and consolidation of school attendance zones resulted in the closure of one elementary school.

Public School Facilities



Amherst County High School

Buildings and facilities are a critical component of the public educational services provided by the community. ACPS annually reviews its building and support facilities improvement plan, called the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In 2016-2017, the County Board of Supervisors, in conjunction with the School Board, secured bonds for a total of \$23 million dollars to modernize and improve the instructional environment of all schools in the division. Projects have included roof replacements, state of the art lighting systems, and a wide range of electrical and technological upgrades. Air conditioning and heating systems have been replaced and upgraded in all schools. Heightened high speed internet/ broadband services are now provided throughout all schools and offices.

Private Schools

Students from the County attend several private pre-kindergarten schools and one private K-12 school, as well as various private schools in the immediate surrounding area.

Homeschool

The number of children being homeschooled nationally has increased in recent years. This growing trend has also been observed in the

County. During the 2016-17 school year there were approximately 161 students being educated at home. Parents or legal guardians choosing to homeschool their children are required by Virginia Code to obtain the approval of the local school board.

Higher Education

The Central Virginia region has a wide range of both public and private higher education opportunities for its residents. Central Virginia Community College (CVCC), a 2 two-year public college, has operated a satellite campus in the Town of Amherst since 2007. A range of coursework is offered at this campus with an emphasis on Early College courses for high school students. Adult education opportunities are also available at this site. The main campus of CVCC is located in the nearby City of Lynchburg where numerous college preparatory courses and vocational certification courses are offered.

Amherst County is also home to Sweet Briar College, a private liberal arts and science school for women that has been in existence since 1901. The college is acclaimed for the strength of its liberal arts offerings and is particularly well-known, both nationally and globally, for its equestrian programs. In 2015, a grass roots effort, led by alumnae and County officials prevented the potential closure of the college due to financial concerns. The college continues to partner with the local community by providing many cultural and educational opportunities to the public. County residents are routinely encouraged to participate in these opportunities.

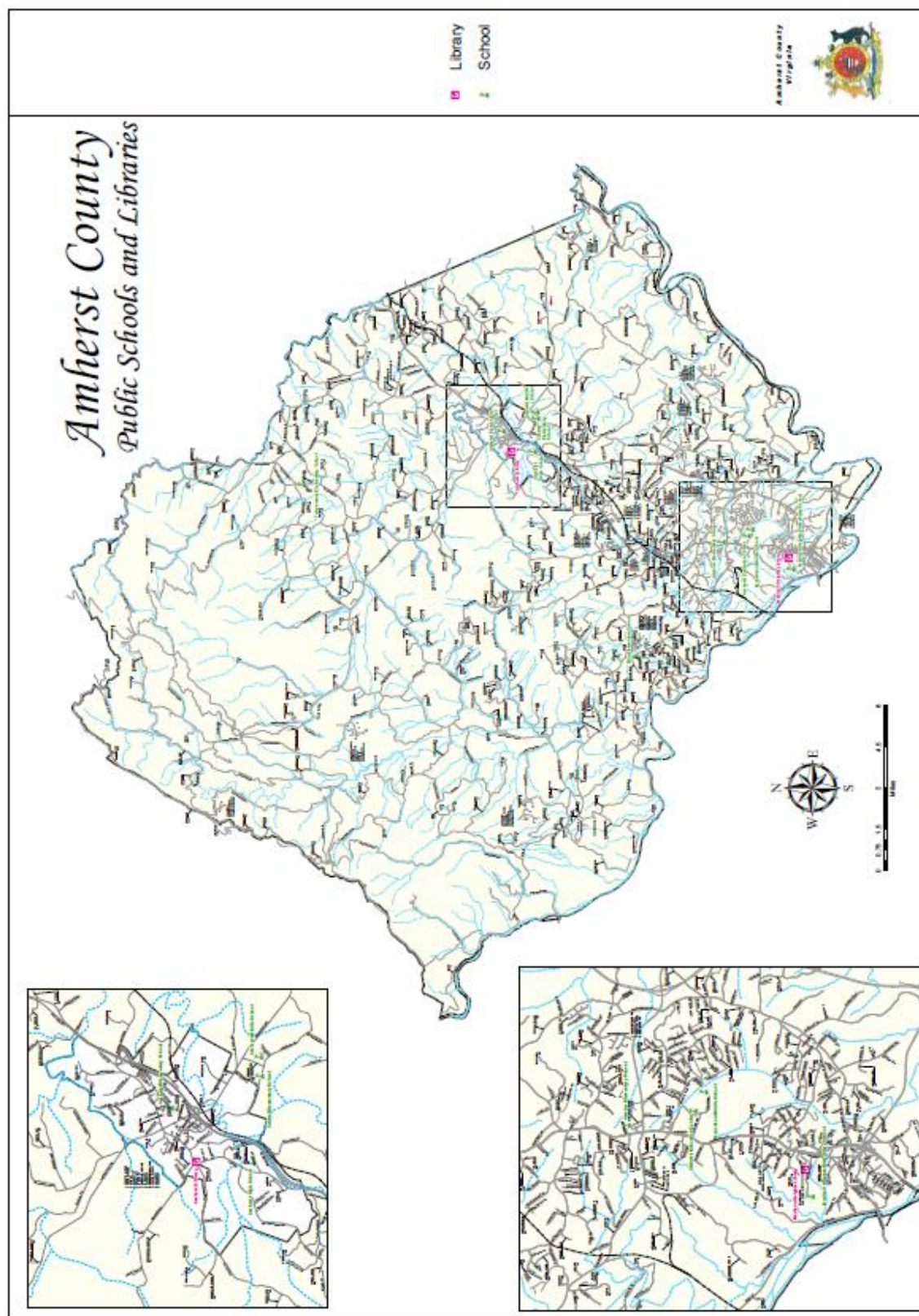
A number of other non-profit colleges and universities operate in the surrounding Lynchburg area including Liberty University, Lynchburg College (soon to be known as the University of Lynchburg), Randolph College, and the Virginia University of Lynchburg.

Adult Education

Adult Basic Education is available through the ACPS system at no charge to qualifying adults. Instructional programs provide basic skills for adults who are performing below the ninth grade level in reading, writing, English, computation, history and other basic skills. General Educational Development (GED) instructional programs and testing are also available through the adult education system.

The Old Dominion Job Corps Center operates a facility in the Monroe area of the County providing no-cost education and career technical training programs for qualifying young people from the ages of 16 to 24. Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, the Job Corps program is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (supersedes WIA 1998).

Additional job training opportunities are available through training and skill development services at the Region 2000 Workforce Center located in Lynchburg. The Center provides a broad range of employment services for area employers and potential employees are provided with job-search assistance and various instructional programs to help improve job skills.



**PUBLIC EDUCATION
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

The County supports the mission, goals, objectives and strategies of the Amherst County Public School System's Six-Year Strategic Plan.

Mission:

Goal #1: Ensure continuous improvement in student and school achievement.

Objective #1: Strive to continually maintain fully accredited schools with approved curriculums that meet VA Department of Education requirements and are relevant to students' needs, interests, abilities, and goals.

Strategies:

Examine curriculum offerings annually to ensure students are afforded the best opportunities to address their individual interests, abilities, and goals including vocational occupations.

Provide opportunities for students to pursue endeavors during and after their K-12 education based on their learning styles, interests, and preferences.
Ensure a strong instructional program in every classroom.

Utilize appropriate programs beyond basic education to meet the various needs of students, to include remedial services, gifted and advanced educational programs, Career and Technical courses, and STEM opportunities.

Maintain the pupil to teacher ratios in compliance with current VA code for Standards of Quality or better.

Objective #2: Hire and retain highly qualified faculty and staff personnel for ACPS.

Strategies:

Work together with the Board of Supervisors to fund competitive compensation, including attractive benefit and wellness packages.

Promote professional development and a wide range of professional learning opportunities for ACPS employees with an emphasis on improving student achievement, professional growth, diversity, and school safety.

Provide and maintain a desirable working environment to attract and retain effective educators and staff.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Recruit and hire quality candidates from diverse colleges and universities to maintain a staff representative of Amherst County demographics

Goal #2: Promote and maintain a safe, clean, inviting, supportive and healthy school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning for all students and staff.

Objective #1: Ensure that all ACPS buildings, facilities and transportation assets are maintained in a safe and operable condition at all times.

Strategies:

Monitor environmental conditions routinely at all ACPS facilities and operations. Maintain indoor-air quality and support equipment in compliance with the appropriate state and federal regulations.

Provide safe, reliable transportation to eligible public school students with reasonable riding times and distances.

Adopt and enforce requisite policies that keep schools safe from all illegal activities per the guidelines of the General Assembly and the Virginia Board of Education.

Review and update on an annual basis the overall capital improvement plan and pursue necessary funding to finance the capital projects/requirements identified in the ACPS Capital Improvement Plan for facilities and transportation.

Goal #3: Strengthen relationships with students, parents, community members and local organizations.

Objective #1: Create collaborative initiatives

Strategies:

Establish standing advisory committees with County resident representatives including; but not limited to, the Superintendent's Senate, a Division-wide Parent Advisory Council, and Student Leadership Councils in order to provide recommendations regarding the ACPS' role in the community.

Support the ACPS business partnership program and internship opportunities for students in the local community.

Objective #2: Improve communication with all stakeholders.

Strategies:

Develop avenues to engage with the community and to promote transparent communication.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Create a vibrant public relations / media presence and utilize various media outlets, such as newsletters and websites, to facilitate collaboration.

Continue to operate collaboratively with County leadership, including the Board of Supervisors.

Goal #4: Expand Opportunities to Learn

Objective #1: Evaluate current initiatives/programs and include additional high-quality learning opportunities that promote lifelong learning.

Strategies:

Seek new partnerships and continue to support effective advanced learning programs for students such as college partnership, laboratory schools, online learning programs, Governor's Schools, CVCC satellite campus, and STEM academies.

Encourage opportunities for parents, students, educators, and community to collaborate in creating innovative instructional programs and spaces.

Support adult education opportunities such as the adult literacy program and GED program.

Expand educational opportunities for students in need of additional support, including available regional programs.

Continue to engage with homeschool or private school families in order to expand learning opportunities.

Continue to participate in continuing education opportunities and initiatives with area four-year colleges and universities.

Engage with two and four-year colleges and universities in the surrounding area to help determine educational needs relevant to the future of Amherst County and its residents.

Strengthen affiliations with local colleges and universities to continue to develop strategic partnerships aimed at fulfilling the needs and development of the local workforce.

Public Library Service

Mission

The mission of the Amherst County Public Library is to enrich the county and its residents principally through advocating reading, literacy, and lifelong learning. To accomplish this, we provide the community with physical & digital collections of shared resources including books, audiobooks, movies, music, library staff, the internet, public spaces, and library programs.

Vision

Our vision is to spread the joy and benefits of reading to every person in the county.

Core Values

WE HAVE THE BEST CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Staff are a resource to assist and enrich the community.
- We are always friendly & helpful to everyone.
- We go out of our way to find solutions to difficult questions & problems.
- If we cannot find answers, we offer alternative solutions and resources.

WE HAVE THE BEST COLLECTION

- We maintain a collection that is reflective of our community & their reading habits.
- Patron requests are our first priority; if we don't have it, we find a way to get it.

- If we own a series, we own every published book in that series.
- We own both classic and contemporary titles in every major genre.

WE INNOVATE

- We actively find ways to better serve.
- We use creativity, collaboration, and common sense to solve problems.

WE COLLABORATE

- We actively build & maintain strategic partnerships.
- We leverage our partnerships to fulfill our mission and goals.

WE EMPOWER STAFF

- We understand that making strategic exceptions leads to exceptional service.
- We understand that making mistakes is part of making progress.

WE GET THINGS DONE!

- We set ambitious goals and achieve great things.
- We regularly report our progress and activities with all of our stakeholders.

About the Library

The Library provides access to over 100,000 physical items and over 1,000,000 digital titles. The collection includes items for

children, teens and adults. Limited homebound delivery of materials is offered for senior citizens and others who cannot visit the library physical due to disability or handicap.



Picture: Madison
Heights Branch

Both Amherst County libraries are open six days per week, including evening and Saturday hours. The Library provides free community events both onsite and offsite, and a listing of those events can be found on the library's webpage at www.acpl.us.



Picture: Amherst
Main Library

**PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

GOALS

Goal #1 - Bring the Library to the People

- **Strategy #1** – Hire 1-2 additional professional Librarians dedicated to offsite programming and community outreach.
- **Strategy #2** – Develop strategic partnerships with schools, daycares, assisted living, etc. to deliver books and provide programs to people who do not visit the library.
- **Strategy #3** – Develop a larger collection of digital titles that residents can access in their homes, businesses, and other gathering places.
- **Strategy #4** – Modernize and enhance the library’s website and catalog to make them more accessible.
- **Strategy #5** – Circulate Internet hotspots to individuals who are unable to access affordable and/or reliable internet in their homes.
 - **Strategy #6** – Install 24-hour holds pickup lockers and book returns at strategic locations throughout the county.

Goal #2 – Better Support Library Staff to Attract and Retain Talent

- **Strategy #1** – Ensure competitive and equitable pay for all staff by performing a compensation study and then adjusting compensation accordingly.
- **Strategy #2** – Provide professional growth opportunities and training for staff to gain skills and experience that will improve their ability to serve the county and advance their careers.
- **Strategy #3** – Implement a monthly reporting system that will motivate staff to make significant strides toward our goals and will inform all of our stakeholders of our progress.

Goal #3 – Enhance Library Facilities & Grounds

- **Strategy #1** – Install unique playgrounds worthy of making a daytrip to visit at both library locations to inspire tourism and increase library usage.
- **Strategy #2** – Install outdoor shade, seating, and picnic areas at both library locations to inspire outdoor use of library property.
- **Strategy #3** – Increase and improve library parking to improve access to the library.
- **Strategy #4** – Replace the circulation desk at Madison Heights library with a unit that can accommodate for modern technology and current workflows.

- **Strategy #5** – Replace and/or refurbish worn out furniture at both library branches to maintain a professional appearance.
- **Strategy #6** – Refurbish and enhance staff areas to meet current needs and workflows
- **Strategy #7** – Evaluate the demand for other common and/or trending library facility features such as study rooms, maker spaces, charging stations, etc.
- **Strategy #8** – Install security cameras in indoor and outdoor public areas to ensure the safety of library patrons, staff, and property.
- **Strategy #9** – Replace old signage with current county standardized logos.
- **Strategy #10** – Install gardens at both library locations for library programming.
- **Strategy #11** – Renovate public and staff restrooms at both library locations.
- **Strategy #12** – Renovate meeting rooms at both library locations.
- **Strategy #13** – Develop a library capital improvement plan to establish timelines and funding for future library expansions, renovations, relocations, and building of additional locations.

Parks and Recreation

The active and passive recreational needs of Amherst County residents and visitors are met through recreational services and facilities that are provided by a broad cross-section of local, state, federal, and private sector entities. An increasing population with ever-changing priorities and demographic composition requires that our recreational amenities stay current with the needs. We are fortunate in Amherst County to have such a wide range of recreational diversions for the public to enjoy. Those offerings are described below along with the identification of future needs.

Existing Facilities

Coolwell Park

This multi-purpose park comprised of 33 acres provides passive and active opportunities. This recreational park has picnic facilities, a children's play area, restrooms, lighted all-purpose fields, outdoor basketball courts, picnic shelter, a nature trail, and an outdoor amphitheater.

Coolwell Community Center is an indoor facility with a kitchen located at Coolwell Park and is used for a variety of recreational classes. It is also available for rent.

Monroe Community Center, located in Monroe, is used for a variety of recreational classes. This facility is also used by other organizations and agencies for meetings and programs on a reservation basis.

Lake Parks

All three of these lakes were constructed to provide recreational opportunities and to provide as flood control measures. Mill

Creek is further distinguished by being a designated future public drinking water supply. Mill Creek also serves as the backup drinking water supply for the Town of Amherst.



Stonehouse Lake Park

Located in the Temperance area of the County, this park is located on a 41-acre watershed lake and is open for fishing only. There is a boat ramp providing access into the lake (no gasoline-powered boats are allowed.) Other facilities include a covered picnic pavilion, picnic tables, grills, a play area for children, and restroom facilities.

Thrashers Lake Park

Located in the Temperance area, this park rests on a 36-acre watershed lake open for fishing only. There is a two-boat ramp providing access into the lake (no gasoline powered boats allowed). Other facilities include picnic tables, grills, a play area for children, and restroom facilities.

Mill Creek Lake Park

Located in the Temperance area, this park comprises a 190-acre lake. Facilities include a boat ramp, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, a play area and a beach for public swimming. Like the other two lake parks, gasoline motors are not allowed.

Pedlar Reservoir

Pedlar reservoir was established in 1907 as a drinking water source for the City of Lynchburg. The original water lines conveying water to the city were constructed of redwood. The impounded water covers approximately 125 acres and holds approximately 1 billion gallons. The contributing watershed is 35 square miles in size. The city allows limited recreation by some Lynchburg residents. Several permits for fishing are available daily from the Department of Billings and Collections. The permit includes a fishing license and a boat provided by the City of Lynchburg. Pedlar supplies ninety percent of Lynchburg's drinking water. A recent survey indicated that dredging is not currently necessary (it has never been dredged).

River Parks

Monacan Park

Located on the James River at the end of Route 652 in Elon, Monacan Park is the only public place in the County allowing speed boats and water skiing. Facilities at the park include a boat ramp a small dock for boat access to the river, a covered pavilion, a picnic area, a play area for children, and restroom facilities.

Riveredge Park

Situated along the James River in Madison Heights across from Lynchburg's riverfront, this park is a work in progress. There exists a boat ramp suitable for backing batteaus into the water and approximately 0.7 mile of shoreline. The County has an approved master plan for park development which includes hiking and biking trails, fishing coves, an existing ferry landing joins with

the Lynchburg landing, and a restored building to be used by James River Adventures. It is hoped that the Riveredge Park trail will connect with the James River Heritage Trail. There are plans to provide a pedestrian/bike bridge under the Expressway Bridge which will link the park with Percival Island and Lynchburg's riverfront.

Trails

James River Heritage Trail

This trail system joins with Lynchburg's Blackwater Creek Trail/Riverfront and Percival Island. It crosses over the James River via a former railroad bridge and continues along the former railroad right-of-way for 1.4 miles to the current terminus. The long-term plan contemplates this trail continuing from the terminus, 2.4 miles to another former railroad bridge which crosses the James River into Campbell County. Access to the existing trail is provided by Fertilizer Road.

Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail

The former Blue Ridge Railroad provides the basis of this hiking/biking/equestrian trail. It begins in Nelson County at the former depot in Piney River and continues one mile to the County line where it crosses the Piney River into Amherst. At that point, there is the Rose Mill Trailhead with parking and restroom facilities. From there it continues another four miles, crosses back into Nelson, and ends in the community of Tye River. Interesting additions to this trail include a covered bridge and a caboose.

Sweet Briar College Trails

Sweet Briar College boasts more than 18 miles of trails to explore by foot, horse or bike.

Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail

A state-wide system of trails for viewing wildlife includes Amherst County in its “Mountain Phase” of a three phase trail system. Maps that indicate where the various trails are located can be obtained at the County parks and recreation office.

Appalachian Trail

Approximately 25 miles of this nationally-recognized trail passes through Amherst County.

National Forest

The County has approximately 38,000 acres of the George Washington National Forest situated within its borders. It is predominantly in the northwest part of Amherst County. A subset of the national forest is 7,600 acres; it is designated as the

Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area.

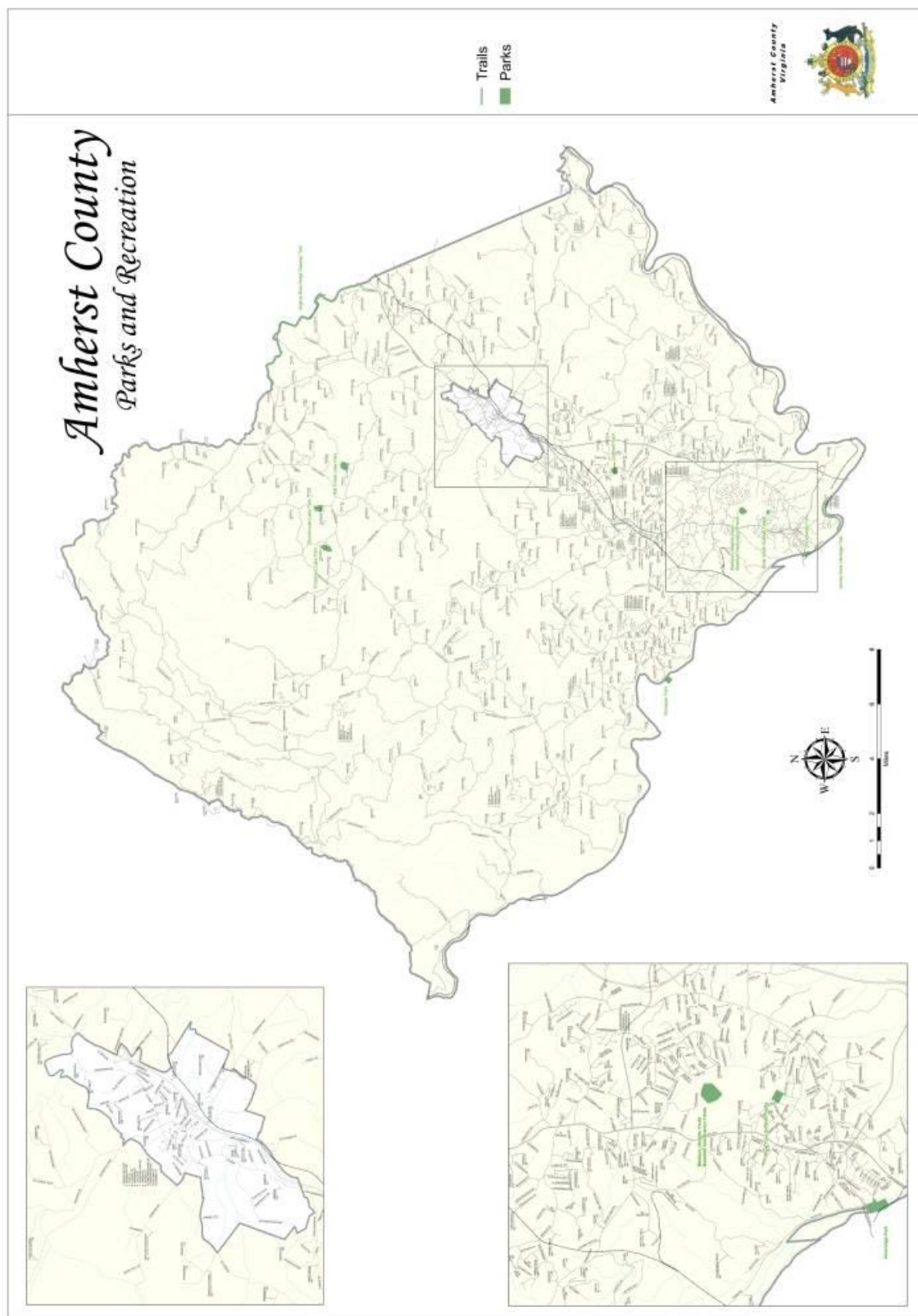
Outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, observing scenery, hunting, fishing, and camping abound in these areas.

Blue Ridge Parkway

Parkway attractions located in Amherst County include Otter Creek campgrounds, restaurants, gift shop and Humphrey’s Gap. Enter the parkway from Amherst County via Route 60 near milepost 45 or via Route 130, a recognized scenic byway. Numerous scenic overlooks, well-marked trails and parking areas are located along the parkway.

Athletic Organizations

The County Recreation Department sponsors multiple youth sports. Seasonally, soccer is offered in the fall for children ages 4 – 18; basketball is offered in the winter for ages 7 -17; soccer is also offered in the spring, for ages 5 – 12. Nonprofit groups also sponsor activities. Dixie Youth Baseball organizes baseball and owns and/or operates several ball field complexes. Dixie Youth Girls Softball organizes softball and operates a softball complex. The Youth Football Leagues organize football and cheerleading and operate football fields.



**PARKS AND RECREATION
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Provide adequate and varied activities/programs/services to satisfy the needs of the residents of and visitors to Amherst County.

Objective #1

Prepare and implement a comprehensive plan for park and recreation facilities and programs, including a plan for greenways (land for recreational use) and blueways (designated waterways for recreational use) within the County.

Strategies:

Research and secure Federal, State, and private grant funding as may be appropriate.

Work in partnership with surrounding communities to promote improvements in parks and recreation facilities.

Consider developing water recreation facilities such as lake swimming, a swimming pool, a spray park and whitewater features on the James River.

Consider developing more indoor and outdoor soccer fields and indoor and outdoor basketball courts.

Consider multiple uses of future land acquisitions.

Consider building campgrounds at the county lakes.

Consider building hiking trails around the county lakes.

Goal #2

Maximize utilization of parks and recreation services for all ages.

Objective #1

Promote the year round use of public facilities for recreation.

Strategies:

Improve access to services and improve identification of destination points throughout the County.

Create a communications plan and implementation strategy to promote tourism.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Advertise the park and recreational assets of the community, including the County's walking and biking trails, in pamphlets identified in the communications plan.

Develop facilities and programs that have multiple users, such as parks and school sites sharing facilities, especially for new school expansions.

Objective #2

Protect natural resources while promoting public access.

Strategies:

Work in cooperation and conjunction with environmental groups within the County to protect and enjoy the natural beauty of the County.

Promote environmental education programs.

Goal #3

Include future sites in the County's capital improvement plan.

Objective #1

Identify potential sites.

Objective #2

Identify primary, alternative, and supplementary funding sources.

Law Enforcement

The Amherst County Sheriff's Office is the principal law enforcement agency in the County. Its approximately 60-person staff provides services to citizens in the areas of field operations (patrol and enforcement), criminal investigations, crime prevention and inmate workforce program. The Sheriff also provides court house security and process serving services. Facilities used by the Sheriff's Office include the main administration and jail building in the Town of Amherst and two unmanned satellite offices in Madison Heights. These are located at Wright Shop Road and Riveredge Park. The Virginia State Police assign ten officers to highway patrol. They are also involved in criminal investigations. The division headquarters for Amherst-assigned State



Police is located in Appomattox and their local area office is in the Town of Amherst. The Town of Amherst also maintains a police force of five officers. Their office is located adjacent to Town Hall on Main Street in Amherst.

LAW ENFORCEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal #1

Ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of public safety in the community through proactive law enforcement and judicial administration.

Objective #1

Assess the status of law enforcement and judicial system in the County.

Strategies:

Encourage the sheriff's department to develop a comprehensive plan for law enforcement and the judicial system.

Acquire and maintain appropriate law enforcement resources (staff and equipment).

Promote professional development and training centered on improving public safety.

Obtain federal and state grants to support staff and equipment.

Consider participation in regional activities and authorities to improve upon available resources and assets for service delivery.

Establish and track reasonable response-time targets for law enforcement calls for service.

Ensure sheriff office department communication compatibility with Virginia State Police.

Objective #2

Promote a positive, safe climate for all who come in contact with judicial/law enforcement facilities.

Strategies:

Provide safe and functional facilities for the court system and law enforcement which meet the needs of the community and judicial system.

Consider participation in regional activities.

Regularly assess security needs, trends, and equipment to ensure the County is keeping current and providing the best possible safety to its employees and the citizens they interact with.

Public Safety

The Amherst Department of Public Safety is responsible for operating the 911 communications center, career EMS and fire personnel, fire inspections, fire investigations, Emergency Management, 911 addressing and coordination with state emergency services, protecting against and responding to natural or man-made disasters. The department consists of four divisions: Emergency Management Division, Communications Division, Fire Division, and EMS/Rescue Division. A Public Safety Director, using an Integrated Emergency Management System approach, manages the Department of Public Safety. The Department also coordinates with three volunteer fire departments and two volunteer rescue squads. In addition, EMS providers, cross trained in fire suppression, staff all the volunteer rescue squads twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week with Advanced Life Support personnel and an Emergency Medical Technician providing continuous coverage and responding to over 95% of all EMS calls. In addition, Public Safety staffs one operator at Amherst Fire Department Monday through Friday 7am – 3pm. The dedication and commitment of the volunteers to serve their fellow citizens is the foundation of the County's fire protection. There are three non-jurisdictional fire departments and rescue squads located in Nelson and Bedford

Counties that provide first response service to the County. Fire and Rescue stations are located in the Town of Amherst, Pedlar (Forks of Buffalo), Elon, and Madison Heights.

Public Safety Achievements include:

- The purchase of a ladder truck in 2016
- Investment of \$592,000 toward Monelison fire engine in 2017
- New Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system in 2017
- Upgraded regional radio system in 2017 (Bedford and Lynchburg also upgraded)
- Replacement of three volunteer ambulances with County ambulances 2016-2017
- Continued NG 911 System upgrade in the USA
- Investment of \$640,000 toward an Amherst fire engine in 2020
- Updated Emergency Medical Dispatch operating software in 2020
- New Public Safety ambulance Medic 6 in 2021 with a 50/50 grant VAOEMS
- New Public Safety Malley ambulance Medic 7 Cares Act Funding
- Elon Station 3 updates for EMS and Volunteer Fire personnel

**PUBLIC SAFETY
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of 911 communications to the community and public safety agencies.

Objective #1

Assess the status of the communications system and personnel to promote an effective network for receiving calls for assistance (emergency and non-emergency) and for dispatching the appropriate resources through a reliable radio system.

Strategies:

Regularly assess trends, staffing, and equipment needs to ensure the County is keeping current and providing the best possible communications systems to the citizens and the emergency responders in the County.

Acquire and maintain appropriate resources to effectively maintain the communications network (staff and equipment).

Consider participation in regional activities and authorities.

Ensure communication compatibility between Public Safety personnel and Virginia State Police.

Objective #2

Establish a South County Government Complex (including a public safety substation) in the southern portion of Amherst County.

Strategies:

Consider identifying a site location and begin preliminary planning for a south County government complex.

Objective #3

Take a proactive or preventative approach to facility safety.

Strategies:

Establish standards for provision of fire protection to be applied to all developments including the structure(s) roads and bridges.

Goal #2

Provide state-of-the-art emergency service facilities and services that keep pace with future growth and development.

Objective #1

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Assess status of emergency services in the County and develop a comprehensive emergency service/public safety plan.

Strategies:

Leverage advances in technology to meet state and local requirements.

Conduct regular evaluations of present equipment and technology. Ensure that trained personnel and adequate equipment are available in the event of a natural or man-made disaster by participating in regional disaster simulation training exercises.

Recruit, train, and retain personnel for all areas of public safety.

Consider providing a modern facility conducive to teaching and learning to provide ongoing training to public safety personnel.

Develop County-wide standards for interchangeable equipment and promote cooperation between public safety agencies to make the best use of all available resources and reduce duplication where feasible.

Promote generation of revenue from private and public use of public safety facilities.

Objective #2

Improve response times.

Strategies:

Establish reasonable response-time targets by fire departments and emergency medical services agencies based on the ability in the County.

Utilize advances in technology to meet and improve response times.

Goal #3

Support, embrace, and encourage the tradition of the volunteer system for emergency service provision within the County.

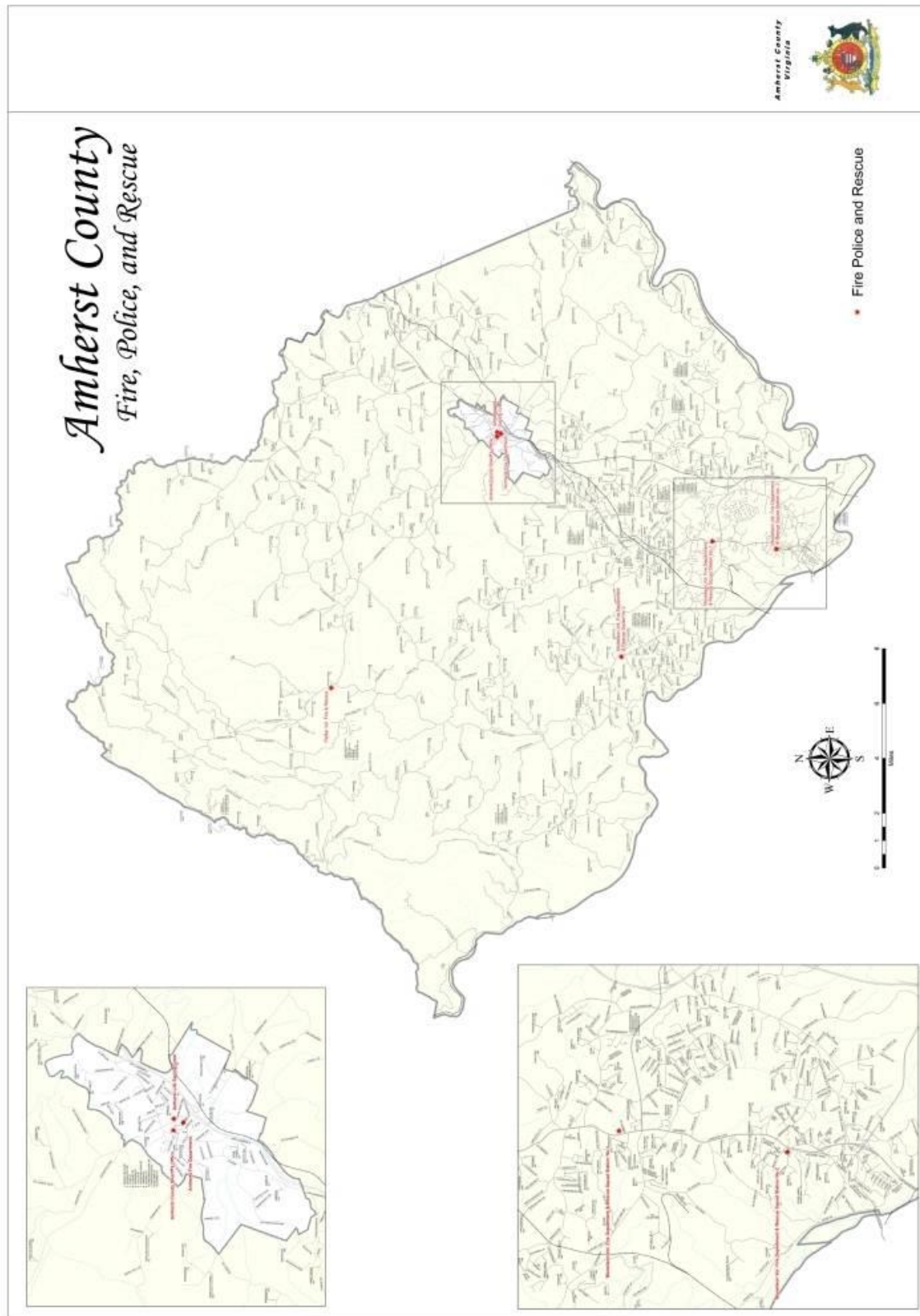
Objective #1

Maintain a strong system of volunteers for emergency response.

Strategies:

Work in conjunction with the local media outlets to promote incentives and opportunities, praise accomplishments, and educate the public on emergency service volunteerism.

Work with the Amherst County Chamber of Commerce to promote the value of volunteering and to identify potential emergency service recruits/resources.



Housing

A key measure of every successful County is the health of its housing and neighborhoods. This, in turn, plays an important role in the broader land-use mosaic that defines the community. In addition, housing and neighborhood policies must relate to economic opportunity, education, public safety and transportation. The provision of good housing is tied to good jobs, good schools, a safe community, and quality of life; all of which are desired outcomes of a well-planned county. Safe and decent housing contributes to neighborhood stability and long-lasting communities.

Emphasis placed on housing and neighborhoods in the County planning process acknowledges the fact that 65 percent of the County's \$1,770,407,800¹² in assessed real estate base is residential. For most

homeowners, housing represents the family's largest single financial investment. Housing is an indispensable building block of the economy. It contributes to household wealth, creates jobs, boosts local revenue, adds wages and contributes to taxes.

The promotion of construction and maintenance for affordable housing should be clearly identified for continued growth. Affordable housing should be designated in neighborhoods that promote mass transit, walk able communities, and public services. The Madison Heights area contains a section within the "designated growth area-public water and sewer boundary" which should promote affordable housing.

Good housing and neighborhoods are more than a path to economic prosperity. Decent, affordable, and stable housing have demonstrable positive and stabilizing effects on families with children.

¹² Figure is from 2014 reassessment data from the Commissioner of the Revenues office.

**HOUSING
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

To ensure access to safe, comfortable, attractive and affordable housing for all County residents.

Objective #1

Ensure that the identified housing needs of all segments of the County's population are addressed.

Strategies:

Adopt a future land use map that identifies areas for a wide variety of residential housing types and densities.

Attract the supply of high quality, affordable housing for those in the low-moderate income bracket.

Objective #2

Use the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances, the state building code, and enabling legislation as tools to achieve the County's housing goals.

Strategies:

Facilitate enforcement of applicable laws to sustain housing and neighborhood quality and to prevent the effects of blight.

Consider providing resources necessary to more rigorously enforce the County's zoning ordinance.

Amend the County's subdivision ordinance to encourage the use of underground utilities in new residential subdivisions.

Amend the County's development codes to require more open space within new residential developments.

Consider creating and encourage the use of zoning districts that allow and provide incentives for mixed-use developments.

Coordinate the timing and location of capital improvements in neighborhoods as interrelated systems in order to achieve multiple outcomes and advance the strategic goals of the County.

Consider the adoption of enabling legislation (Code of Virginia 58.1-3220 or 58.1-3220.01) to encourage private investment to rehabilitate, renovate, or replace certain residential structures.

Encourage high density residential development in areas served by public sewer and water.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Continue to work with state and federal programs to assist with affordable and safe housing.

Consider revisions to County Code addressing the Landlord-Tenant Act.

Encourage the preservation of manufactured housing to support a source of affordable housing as declared in state code § 15.2-2223.5.

Social Services and Health Care

A key measure of every successful county is the health and welfare of its citizens, especially the children and elderly residents. Health and welfare policies are important factors in neighborhood development, economic opportunity, education, public safety, and transportation. The provision of good health, welfare policies, and services are tied to good jobs, good schools, a safe community, and quality of life, all of which are desired outcomes of a well-planned county.

For FY21, the Amherst County Department of Social Services provided \$93,349,077 in services for the residents of Amherst County in the areas of Child and Adult Protective Services, Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, In-Home (Prevention) Services, Medicaid, SNAP (Food Stamps), Energy Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Employment Services, Emergency Assistance, Child Day Care, Auxiliary Grants, and Adult Companion Services.

Good health and welfare services in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and policies, have a demonstrably positive and stabilizing effect on families, children, and vulnerable adults.

**SOCIAL SERVICES
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Ensure that adequate health and welfare services are available in partnership with existing and future health and welfare providers.

Objective #1

To support the continued expansion of health and welfare services in the community.

Strategies:

Collaborate with the Virginia Department of Health, the Amherst County Department of Social Services, the Blue Ridge Medical Center, local hospitals and health and welfare providers.

Work with local hospitals and other health care providers to attract more doctors and dentists into the area.

Support workforce training initiatives aimed at increasing the number and skills of health and welfare personnel in the County.

Goal #2

Continue to assess and maintain the office space requirements for the efficient operation of the Amherst County Department of Social Services. In 2017, additional office space was added.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Authority of Amherst County (EDA) has made substantial advances in marketing, product development, workforce development, business support, and leadership development over the last five years. With funding and support of the Board of Supervisors, the EDA implemented the 2016 strategic plan, accomplishing all action steps that had a defined completion date and remained relevant. The investment Amherst County made in the 2016 strategic plan has led to more jobs, more taxable investment, enhanced business climate, and stronger business partnerships. Outside of strategic plan initiatives, the EDA led the county's effort to support small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic by administering grant programs, totaling almost \$1.8 million, and being the go-to source for business information.

Amherst County boasts many economic development assets: high quality of life, natural resources, transportation connections, strong work ethic, and institutions such as Sweet Briar College and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. The economic development strategic plan builds on those assets and addresses weaknesses such as availability/costs of such as water, sewer, broadband, workforce shortage and lack of sites and buildings. Strategic initiatives were designed to capture opportunities for attracting, retaining, starting up, and developing businesses in the target sectors of precision manufacturing, plastics and packaging, health care, and education and knowledge services. A significant opportunity is the redevelopment of the Central Virginia Training Center (CVTC). CVTC closed in 2020 but at full operations it had a \$87 million impact on the region and employed 2400 people. CVTC was once the largest employer in Amherst County for

decades. The 350-acre campus offers a significant opportunity to develop another major employment center for Amherst County and the region.

While recognizing the shift to higher emphasis on technology and services, it must be recognized that agriculture plays a significant role in the future of the Amherst County economy. There are a number of agribusinesses serving farmers, forestry personnel, and suburban residents. Agritourism is growing with vineyards, orchards, and farmer's markets. The 2017 census recorded the following data on Amherst County Agriculture:

- 369 farms, down from 426 in 2012;
- Total acreage of 78,812 down from 98,966 in 2012;
- Annual sales of livestock and poultry, \$4,626,000;
- Annual crop sales of corn, hay, nursery products, etc. of \$3,517,00; and
- Amherst County 2013 logging harvest (per Virginia Department of Forestry) \$4,037,724.

Virginia and the Lynchburg Region are growing while Amherst County's population growth is almost flat. With flat population growth and the loss of working aged people, Amherst County is losing its labor force. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the loss of labor as people stopped looking for work. The unemployment rate is now rebounding, more people are entering the workforce but there remains a workforce shortage. The jobs of today require more education than jobs of even a decade ago. The future workforce will need to be skilled and prepared for lifelong learning. On this front, Amherst County is making progress. Overall educational attainment has improved since 2015. The goals and strategies in this plan support

increasing income through attracting well-paying jobs that will be filled by boosting education and training.

The EDA conducted an update to the 2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan in 2021, launching in the 2022 fiscal year. The plan confirms five initiatives for the EDA to implement to help stimulate economic activity, and directly address challenges and opportunities in Amherst County. Economic development is a long-term process, not a one-time event, and the strategic plan initiatives are designed to be implemented over 3 to 5 years and updated annually. The EDA is aggressively working on the strategic plan initiatives, as well as supporting the redevelopment of the Central Virginia

Training Center, Madison Heights developments, and other ally initiatives.

Ally Initiatives includes Tourism Development, Parks and Recreation Development. These are important to Amherst County's economy, even though not led by the EDA. Amherst County has natural assets that attract visitors. A focused effort to develop tourism destinations and the tourism economy is needed in Amherst County. Supportive of that effort is additional investments in parks and recreation facilities and programs. Since much of Amherst County's tourism is outdoor tourism, developing recreational assets bolsters the economy. There are a host of related ally initiatives in placemaking that other organizations will lead.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

The EDA updated its 2016 strategic plan in 2021, launching implementation in fiscal year 2022. The plan has five initiatives that capture emerging opportunities and address weaknesses. The plan is designed to attract, retain, startup, and grow businesses that provide quality, well-paying jobs and opportunities to Amherst County citizens.

Initiative 1: Space for Businesses to Grow

All companies, new, expanding, or startup, need space. Product development is a critical function of economic development. Forward-thinking, planning, and previous investments in sites has resulted in new company locations and the retention of expanding businesses.

Goal: Create first-class business sites and buildings to attract new and retain existing businesses.

Strategy 1: Identify, research, and create development plans for a new business park development.

Action Steps:

- Based on the site identification study, option or form a partnership with the landowner(s) to conduct due diligence assessments (phase 1, geotech, wetlands identification, etc.). If the property remains in private ownership, some communities structure the investment in due diligence as a loan repayable when the property is sold.
- If assessments are positive, move on to develop a conceptual site plan and development cost estimates.
- If site planning results in a positive development plan, enter into a long-term option agreement, a partnership with the landowner, or purchase the property.
- Seek to leverage Virginia's Business Ready Sites Program for qualification and grant funding.
- Develop a conceptual building, complete with an electronic rendering that can be used on the website.
- Seek a private partner to develop a spec building in the new business park development. A public-private partnership could include the EDA funding a feasibility study, grading, and organizing a bank consortium for financing.

Strategy 2: Identify and inventory smaller, stand-alone sites and buildings with redevelopment potential.

Action Steps:

- Contract with a third-party to engage area realtors in a process to create an inventory of smaller, stand-alone industrial sites.
- Include in the inventory vacant and underutilized buildings that can be repurposed.

Strategy 3: Support infrastructure investments aligned with product development goals.

Action Steps:

- Advocate for infrastructure in areas designated for industrial and commercial development in the land use plan to develop sites (water, sewer, roads, broadband).
- Continue to support broadband development across the county.
- Advocate for the county to invest in amenities, streetscape, recreation facilities, and community development that will support attracting new residents and businesses.

Strategy 4: Invest in Highway 210.

Action Steps:

- Make the Highway 210 corridor a priority development area in the comprehensive land use plan connecting the bypass area, and CVTC with mixed-used development.
- Continue to advocate for infrastructure investments in the corridor.
- Include this area in CVTC redevelopment planning.

Initiative 2: Business Startup, Retention, and Expansion

Existing business is the cornerstone of the Amherst County economy. Existing businesses grow locally and reinvest in the community. The EDA facilitates business climate enhancements, space development, and resource partner connections to help existing and small business.

Goal 1: Retain and expand existing businesses.

Strategy: Continue a proactive business retention and expansion program.

Action Steps:

- Continue to regularly meet with Amherst County's largest employers, at-risk companies, gazelles (companies poised for fast growth), and target sectors to identify hurdles the EDA can help overcome.
- Conduct an annual survey of business needs and satisfaction to shape the BRE program.
- Continue to leverage the business intelligence the Regional Alliance and workforce development board gathers on skills in demand and share with education partners.
- Continue with existing business communications:
 - Companies appreciated the increase in communication during the pandemic to help them stay on top of the latest information. Continue with an as-needed e-newsletter on helpful topics. Guest writers could include the Lynchburg Regional Alliance and VEDP.
 - Expand website information for existing businesses. Add a list of resource partners that help expanding and small businesses (e.g., SBDC).
- Continue existing business roundtables for networking and information sharing.
- Communicate the results of the regional wage and benefits survey to help companies with recruiting and retaining talent.
- Repeat the work ethics survey every few years to have current data to promote the local workforce and to identify trends. This could be coupled every few years with the annual survey of needs and satisfaction mentioned above.

Goal 2: Grow small businesses and encourage entrepreneur development.

Strategy 1: Launch the Amelon Commerce Center Multi-Tenant Building.

Action Steps:

- Complete the grant process for funding.
- Launch marketing of the building both to attract tenants and to raise awareness of Amherst County as a business location.
- Complete construction. Outsource construction management to a third-party.
- Engage tenants in the EDA's existing business retention and expansion program.

Strategy 2: Expand services and support to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Action Steps:

- Promote the Business Starter Kit on the website, on social media, and with partners who engage with small business and entrepreneurs.

- Continue to support improving the business climate for small businesses.
- Advocate for a regional revolving loan program to aid Amherst County business with financing.
- Continue to support and sponsor small business training events organized by partners such as the Small Business Development Center.
- Advocate for a county tourism position and county tourism development program that will foster tourism-related small business development.
- Continue to support the development of a regional agriculture/training center (in partnership with Nelson County) which will provide support to ag-related businesses.
- Advocate for public investment in amenities that will support the development of recreation related small businesses (boat launch, greenways, trails, camping, etc.).

Initiative 3: Education and Workforce Development

All businesses need a pipeline of talent. Economic development organizations are an important partner of the education and workforce development system. The EDA plays the role of liaison, connecting business and education.

Goal 1: Support the development of a pipeline of talent.

Strategy 1: Support the development of a state-of-the-art workforce training system.

Action Steps:

- Support the restarting of the IT internship program that is a partnership between Amherst County High School, area IT businesses, and the EDA.
- Investigate the Giles County summer work experience program as a best practice.
- Co-sponsor with chamber and business partners marketing content that will promote local careers.
- Continue to support the development of a regional CTE academy at CVCC and a regional agriculture/training center in partnership with Nelson County.
- Continue to seek out best practices in business and education partnerships that can be facilitated by the EDA.

Strategy 2: Integrate talent attraction and development opportunities in the marketing strategy.

Action Steps:

- Promote apprenticeship and internship opportunities on social media and the website.
- Add video success stories to the website that highlight career opportunities in Amherst County and entrepreneurs.
- Add 'Live Here, Play Here' information to the website.
- On social media, profile people who have moved to Amherst County to work, retire, telework, start a business, etc.
- Develop a social media "Come Home Campaign" for Amherst County high school graduates and graduates of Sweet Briar College.

Goal 2: Develop leaders for the future.

Strategy 1: Continue leadership development support.

Action Steps:

- Continue Leadership Amherst program to develop future leaders for public service and business.

- Increase marketing and promotion of the program to ensure robust attendance. Encourage partners to promote the program.
- Make alumni aware of volunteer leadership opportunities with the EDA, Amherst County, and partners. This could be through social media or e-communications.
- Encourage alumni to start a network that will bring the group together for events and community projects. This could be in-person as well as online groups (e.g., LinkedIn discussion group).
- Tap Sweet Briar College professors to assist with programming/special programs for Leadership Amherst.

Initiative 4: Marketing and Communications

Marketing is a core function of the economic development program. Economic development organizations market externally to attract new business and internally to retain and grow existing businesses. The EDA invested in a new brand that can be further leverage and deployed.

Goal: Develop and implement internal and external marketing strategies.

Strategy 1: Enhanced external business recruitment marketing strategy.

Action Steps:

- Website enhancements.
- Invest in a photography library for Amherst County.
- Explore a cooperative advertising grant program.
- When a new business park is in the planning phase, or the new multi-tenant building is under construction, host a visit of VEDP staff.
- Participate in VEDP marketing and recruitment events in Amherst County's target sectors.
- Create an EDA company page on LinkedIn to further market the county.

Strategy 2: Internal marketing and communications strategy targeted to existing businesses and stakeholders.

Action Steps:

- Continue to seek agreements with allies to use the brand.
- Share the strategic plan with partners such as Amherst County, Town of Amherst, Amherst IDA, Amherst County Chamber of Commerce, and others.
- Publish an annual report of the EDA's accomplishments and program of work.
- Expand social media presence.
- Make regular update presentations to the County and annual updates to partners such as the Town of Amherst, chamber, etc.

Initiative 5: Allied Initiatives

The EDA is a sought-after partner for many initiatives that support economic development because of its network and expertise. The redevelopment of the Central Virginia Training Center and development of Madison Heights are example partner initiatives that align with the EDA's mission and program of work.

Goal: Increase Support for Projects Aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Strategy 1: Support Madison Heights development initiatives.

Action Steps:

- Work with Madison Heights Business 29 Beautification Committee to jointly support Hwy 29 Business beautification programs such as wayfinding and streetscape and the master plan.
- Support public investment in Madison Heights to provide more government services, community amenities, and recreation facilities.
- Support river development for tourism, residential, and commercial development.

Strategy 2: Support ally economic development initiatives (CVTC, recreation/ tourism destinations, etc.).

Action Steps:

- Continue to support the redevelopment of CVTC and take on local leadership roles in related projects that align with the EDA's mission and strategic plan.
- Advocate for Amherst County to create a tourism department with a robust tourism development plan and funding to implement.
- Support agriculture and ag-related businesses through regional efforts such as the current one to development an ag-related training center.

Information Technology and Broadband Services

Amherst County's Information Technology Department plays a critical administrative support role. The department generates all payrolls and accounts payables for the County and school system, all tax tickets, tax books, and vehicle license applications. The department is also responsible for all computer-related functions in all County offices, including technical support and installation and setup of all computer hardware and software. The IT Department

also maintains all fiber optic and wireless connectivity between the County facilities and within buildings and manages the County's networks, e-mail servers, and website.

The Board of Supervisors has also created the Amherst County Broadband Authority (ACBA) in order to extend broadband availability to unserved and underserved areas of the Count. It is in the process of exploring opportunities for a public-private partnership with private internet providers and Sweet Briar College.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND BROADBAND SERVICES
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Continue to improve the County's information technology infrastructure to deliver state-of-the-practice services within and outside the County to current residents, prospective residents, and business/industry.

Objective #1

Work to expand, develop, and/or maintain information technology assets that maintain current businesses and attracts new businesses, employees, and new residents to the County.

Strategies:

Assess the status of broadband Internet access in the County, the County's information technology needs and assets, and the County's geo-spatial data to develop a comprehensive broadband Internet access, information technology, and geographic information system implementation plan.

Encourage affordable access to broadband for all citizens.

Encourage and facilitate private sector investment in broadband infrastructure.

Maintain an Internet accessible GIS program with multiple types of information, including, but not limited to parcels, land use, cultural, and physical features.

Continue exploring, and if feasible create, a public-private partnership between the ACBA and a private firm or firms to provide broadband internet in unserved and underserved areas of the County.

Cultural Resources and Community Aesthetics

Cultural resources and community aesthetics are shaped by the residents over time. Thus, culture is made up of history and values. Physical characteristics also play a significant role. Here, the Blue Ridge Mountains, The James River and even the soil types have impacted settlement patterns and economic endeavors. Several examples of current events that are steeped in the past and the environment are:

- The Batteau Festival, a tribute to a time when tobacco was a major agricultural product in Central Virginia and was transported via the James towards Richmond;
- The Monacan Pow-Wow, a remembrance of when the Monacans were the primary residents here; and
- The Apple Festival, a remembrance of when apple orchards covered most of northern Amherst.
- The Amherst County Fair, a tradition that was forgotten for almost 40 years that has been revived and expanded and takes place on the grounds of Sweet Briar College.
- The Wine and Garlic Festival, a two-day festival at Rebec Vineyards that

includes a variety of Virginia Wines, music and handcrafted goods for sale.

- Clifford Ruritania Sorghum Festival, an annual event with crafters, vendors, music, a jousting tournament and much more.

These events and others keep our heritage alive and are enjoyed by locals and visitors as well.

For our own benefit and for the benefit of visitors and persons passing through the County, it is important that Amherst be pleasing to behold. This means that streets, ditches, and lands along roadways should be free of litter. It means that buildings and grounds should be maintained. It means that development should follow a plan or set of guidelines that ensures continuity and aesthetic appeal as well as functionality.



Monacan Indian Pow-Wow in Elon

**CULTURAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY AESTHETICS
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

To preserve and improve the aesthetics of Amherst County.

Objective #1

To improve the appearance of Amherst County's built environment.

Strategies:

Prepare, adopt, and implement a corridor enhancement plan for the Business Route 29 corridor near Madison Heights. The emphasis of the plan should be on improving the visual character of the corridor (underground utilities, signage, landscaping, buffers).

Publicize and expand an "Adopt-a-Spot" litter abatement program in the County.

Continue renovation and construction of additional staffed convenience centers.

Consider the adoption of an ordinance that would require an architectural review of commercial development along corridors leading to designated historic areas within the County.

Consider the architecture and aesthetics of a proposed development as one factor in recommending approval or denial of a rezoning or special permit request.

Consider adopting programs such as a "LEAF" or "Adopt-a-Landscape".

Objective #2

Preserve and maintain the unique natural features of Amherst County.

Strategies:

Adopt an official land-use map, land-use guidelines, and zoning provisions to protect and maintain the County's major scenic corridors (e.g., Rt. 29N, Rt. 60W & E, Rt. 151, Rt. 130, Rt. 635, Rt. 778).

Consider the market for, and availability of, existing commercial and industrial space as a factor when considering commercial and industrial rezoning requests.

Identify and adopt incentives to encourage infill development and renovation of existing commercial space.

Encourage and support the efforts of local land trusts and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to obtain conservation easements that protect viewsheds and open spaces.

Goal #2

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

To expand the cultural and recreational opportunities available in Amherst County for all age groups.

Objective #1

Promote activities that celebrate the County's cultural diversity.

Strategies:

Promote ecotourism – hiking, biking, visiting historic places, showcasing garden week, observing wildflowers, and bird watching. Promote trail development and use, through offering incentives to land owners to make their land accessible to these types of activities.

Identify and develop specific activities that promote awareness of cultural diversity and work in conjunction with other community partners to provide and promote these activities.

Promote more utilization of Sweet Briar College offerings.

Promote further connection between Sweet Briar College and the Town of Amherst by exploring the concept of a multi-use trail from the campus to the town.

Provide youth programs focused on cultural diversity issues.

With assistance of the VCCA, make Amherst a destination of the artisan's community through actively promoting, creating, and maintaining a climate conducive for artisans.

Objective #2

Undertake specific tourism and recreation-related activities.

Strategies:

Support Madison Heights Youth Baseball Association and future Dixie Youth World Series.

Develop a County Calendar of Events.

Enhance Tourism efforts by County (e.g. Tourism Department, Welcome Center with skilled personnel).

Promote Amherst County, Sweet Briar College, and the Monacan Museums.

Promote existing fall festivals (Sorghum, Garlic and Wine, Batteau, Apple Festivals and the County Fair) and encourage new festivals throughout the year.

Continue work on James River Trail/ Riveredge Park and continue to promote the Blue Ridge Railway Trail.

Create a performing arts/cultural center (dual purpose) that could include a movie theatre.

Goal #3

To recognize and promote our history.

Objective #1

To identify and preserve our historical sites, structures, objects, and areas.

Strategies:

Educate property owners as to preservation incentives and the mechanisms of registering and/or preserving the County's historic resources.

Promote historic tourism with encouragement for the County to develop site appropriate infrastructure, such as underground utilities, narrow roads, and building facade standards. Explore incorporating historic preservation incentives into the County's zoning ordinance.

Evaluate the need for and feasibility of creating additional historic districts/sites within the County.

Consider identifying and publicizing a heritage trail system within the County.

Work with VDOT to add County historic roadside markers as identified by the County historical society.

Consider conducting a historic inventory of sites/structures with state department of historic resources.

CHAPTER V - ANTICIPATED GROWTH TRENDS

This chapter attempts to explain recent trends or changes in Amherst County development. Consideration of these changes is important due to their influence on future public facilities and services and land use in general. It then looks at the major development topics this plan contemplates in the near term.

Of the years tracked (see Table 24), it is clear that most of the 90s were a time of gradual increase in single-family home construction. In 1998, there occurred a precipitous drop which continued into 2001. Steady growth brought the numbers back to those of the early 90s 2007. Since then construction activity has decreased in concurrence with the National Recession of the late 2000s.

Recognizing a fairly certain growth trend then becomes useful to speculate on a profile of the people moving into these new homes. County permits indicate that a large portion of new construction and recent real estate acquisitions is by retirees, exurbanites, and generally persons from a different locality. The temperate climate, natural beauty, low crime, and relatively low cost of living have made Amherst an attractive place to live.

While land values have increased in the last five years across the United States (as they have in Amherst), it is the relative low cost of land with proximity to the mountains and the James River when compared to near-by Albemarle, Nelson, Bedford, and Rockbridge counties that seems to be the deciding factor for new arrivals. The completed 29 Bypass has also impacted location decisions. Lynchburg and areas of Campbell and Bedford Counties directly adjacent to it are

now fifteen to twenty minutes closer for some commuters.

Market forces prevail and adequately address the demand for commercial services when an area experiences population growth. As pointed out in chapter three it is the local government that becomes challenged in providing public services when the tax base increase does not keep pace for the cost of the services. For that reason anticipating and adequately funding community facilities is key. The private sector should contribute a reasonable share towards funding community facilities and services. Facilities should be located based on best land use practices, meaning they should take advantage of proximity to water, sewer, roads, and population.

Route 29 Bypass Interchanges

New interchanges along the Route 29 Bypass may increase demand for commercial and other high intensity land uses at these locations. The County should anticipate increased development pressure at these locations and plan for and allow development consistent with this plan and the economic development objectives of the County.

The new Route 29 in Amherst County was completed in 2005. Extending from the James River on the south to the Southern corporate limits of the Town of Amherst, this new four-lane divided highway provides quick and easy access to the central portions of Amherst County and points north along Route 29. Users of this new highway are able to avoid the commercial development and periodic traffic congestion in southern Amherst County along Route 29 Business, specifically in the Madison Heights area of the County.

Characteristic of most new major highways, the Route 29 Bypass provides opportunities for economic development, particularly at the interchanges with Route 210 and Route 130, and at its northern terminus south of the Town of Amherst. The future land use map contained in Chapter VI of this plan designates the Route 210 and 130 interchanges as suitable locations for commercial development. Specific land uses identified as part of this planning process include hotel, restaurant, and other service functions.

The future land use plan does not designate areas for new commercial development at the northern terminus of the Route 29 Bypass, south of the Town of Amherst. Any new commercial development in this location should be located/concentrated in an area served by adequate public facilities. In addition, the Town and County should jointly coordinate future land use planning initiatives around the Town's borders to assure optimum use of community services and facilities and coordinate a land use pattern consistent with the objectives of both jurisdictions.

29 Corridor

The area referred to as the 29 Corridor within Amherst County begins at the Nelson County border, continues past Sweet Briar College and passes through Madison Heights as U.S. Route 29 Business before crossing over the James River into the City of Lynchburg. It is distinguished from the 29 Bypass. Land use along the corridor is varied from the pastoral north to the commercialized south. Traffic counts (vehicles per day) taken in 2004 ranged from 25,000 in the north to 35,000 in the south. The northern portion remains the main local route to Charlottesville and Washington, DC. Since the opening of the 29 Bypass the southern corridor is primarily the

gateway to downtown Lynchburg. Locally, however, the southern 29 corridor is the major commercial area.

Economic activity is substantial and includes the range of retail sales, restaurants, and lodging. Those three sectors account for approximately 20 percent of employment in the County and 15 percent of local taxes collected. The land use and the economic importance of the 29 corridor is likely to remain stable for the foreseeable future. Steps should be taken to enhance its viability. One major step is to improve the aesthetic quality, especially in the Madison Heights area. Building design, signage, utilities, landscaping, and multi-modal access should be scrutinized and improved upon throughout the corridor.

Old Madison Heights

Old Madison Heights is generally considered to be the older residential section directly across the James River from downtown Lynchburg. Its geographic area is roughly Route 163 to the west, Route 210 to the north, U.S. Route 29 Business to the east and the James River to the south. This lower central section of Amherst boasts the highest population density with 618 persons per square mile. The County average is 67. This concentration of people, along with the historical significance of Old Madison Heights, its proximity to the James River and Lynchburg, and its existing infrastructure, creates substantial potential for revitalization. A new zoning district was adopted in the Fall of 2012 to this area that considers the unique characteristics of the existing buildings, grid street pattern, varying land use types and the historic and cultural qualities of this community.

The central part of Old Madison Heights has been identified as historic by the Department

of Historic Resources. The layout with house location and street pattern is fairly unique in Amherst since it followed an urban design, as opposed to a suburban or rural development pattern. Most homes were constructed in the early 1900's and are in good or restorable condition.

Unfortunately, neighborhood stability seems to be tenuous. Census data indicates that this portion of Madison Heights has the slowest growth rate in the County. Additionally, renter occupancy has been on the increase as owner occupancy declines.

The gamut of revitalization programs should be explored and when appropriate, implemented in order to turn this hidden treasure into the most desirable neighborhood in the County.

River Parks and hiking/biking trails

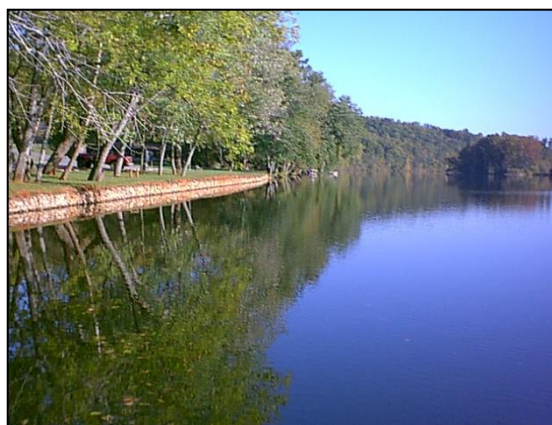
Two separate trail/parks are the focus of this discussion. To the north a converted railroad bed has become the Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail. It begins in Nelson County, crosses the Piney River into Amherst, and continues back into Nelson when it crosses the Tye River. It terminates in the Nelson community of Tye River. This seven-mile trail is pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian oriented.

In the south, situated between Old Madison Heights and the James River, is the Riveredge Park and a section of the River Walk Trail. The park is the site of the former Smiley Block plant/business. Existing improvements include parking and a boat ramp. Proposed improvements will be an access road built to state specification, a refurbished building for vendors and other uses, a mile of trail, a path connecting the park to Old Madison Heights, and a

pedestrian/biking bridge connecting the park to Percival Island. This park will enhance our connectivity with Lynchburg for work and recreation. It is also a vital part of revitalizing Old Madison Heights.

Land and Environmental Protection

More than any one topic, land preservation and environmental protection was emphasized by the citizens and the Citizen Advisory Committee to be the cornerstone of this plan. A lack of appropriate regulations was determined to be one of the main reasons for the appearance of our current landscape. Watersheds, viewsheds, streams, and steep slopes should all receive more attention for protection. Lot size and density are too permissive for development in the rural areas. Public facilities and infrastructure should be planned to compliment the intended land use, not facilitate unintended land use. Development should be directed in areas where public water and sewer facilities can be provided. In urban areas, regulations should be considered to accommodate creative, aesthetic sites. Impervious surfaces should be minimized and commercial areas should be walkable.



Designated Growth Areas

If a community decides to reduce the amount of development that can occur in areas that

are desired to remain rural, it is prudent to balance that with areas intended to accept development. The concept is very simple: Direct the growth to areas where roads, sewer systems, water, schools, and public transit are

desired. If planned properly, these areas will become the population and service hubs of the County and will be attractive places to live and work.

CHAPTER VI: LAND USE

Introduction

This Chapter presents information on land use issues considered in developing the proposed land use map found in the appendix. There are three main discussion areas: the environment, land preservation, and land-use categories. These issues were identified by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Citizen Task Forces and the Planning Commission during the development of this plan update. Citizen's comments, as well as topical presentations by the Amherst County staff and consultant team, were sources of information for the CAC and Commission. Comments from citizens indicated an overwhelming desire to protect natural resources, retain the rural nature of the County, and limit the cost of government services.

This chapter contains specific information to help better guide the County's month-to-month decision making on issues/requests, such as rezonings, special permits, and subdivision requests. Each of the main discussion areas is followed by specific policies that the County can use to help guide its decision making in regard to the timing, location, and character of future development in the County. Suggestions for land use have seriously considered the "cost of services study" as a helpful guide in determining development guidelines.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use map shows eight general categories of land uses. These categories are as follows:

Agricultural / Forestal

This is the largest land use category in the County, comprising approximately 32 percent of the County's land area. Agricultural uses in Amherst are generally located in the central, north central and eastern sections of the County. These areas are typically used for the planting and cultivating of crops and the raising and grazing of livestock. Buildings associated with these activities (single-family dwellings, barns, grain storage, etc.) are included as part of this land use category. Forestal land uses consist of forested lands that are privately or corporately owned.

National Forest

This category consists of the George Washington National Forest land publicly owned and managed by the Federal government. Located in the western portions of the county, the national forest comprises approximately 18 percent of the total land area in the County, or 57,877¹³ acres of land. This area includes National Park Service/Blue Ridge Parkway property.

Rural Residential

This category shows the general location of rural residential development clusters in the County. These clusters represent primarily single-family, low-density housing. This housing has been constructed in the very rural portions of the County on land previously used for agricultural or forestry uses. Almost universally, these properties have been developed without public water and sewer.

¹³ Department of Forestry

Single Family Residential

This category represents areas of the County that have been developed generally as single-family homes in suburban patterns of development. Low-density residential land uses are concentrated in the southern portion of the County.

Multi-family Residential

This residential category comprises a very small portion of the County's total land area. Multi-family residential areas include all apartment and townhouse developments. Most of these multi-family land uses are found in southern Amherst County and in or near the Town of Amherst.

Commercial

The commercial land use category consists of areas where the wholesale and retail sale of goods and services is the primary activity. Commercial development has historically occurred primarily in the southern portions of the County along and near Route 29 Business in Madison Heights.

Institutional

This category designates the location of major institutional sites in the County, such as Sweet Briar College and the Central Virginia Training Center.

Industrial

The industrial land use category is designated to show those areas where manufacturing is the primary activity. The major areas of industrial activity in Amherst County are

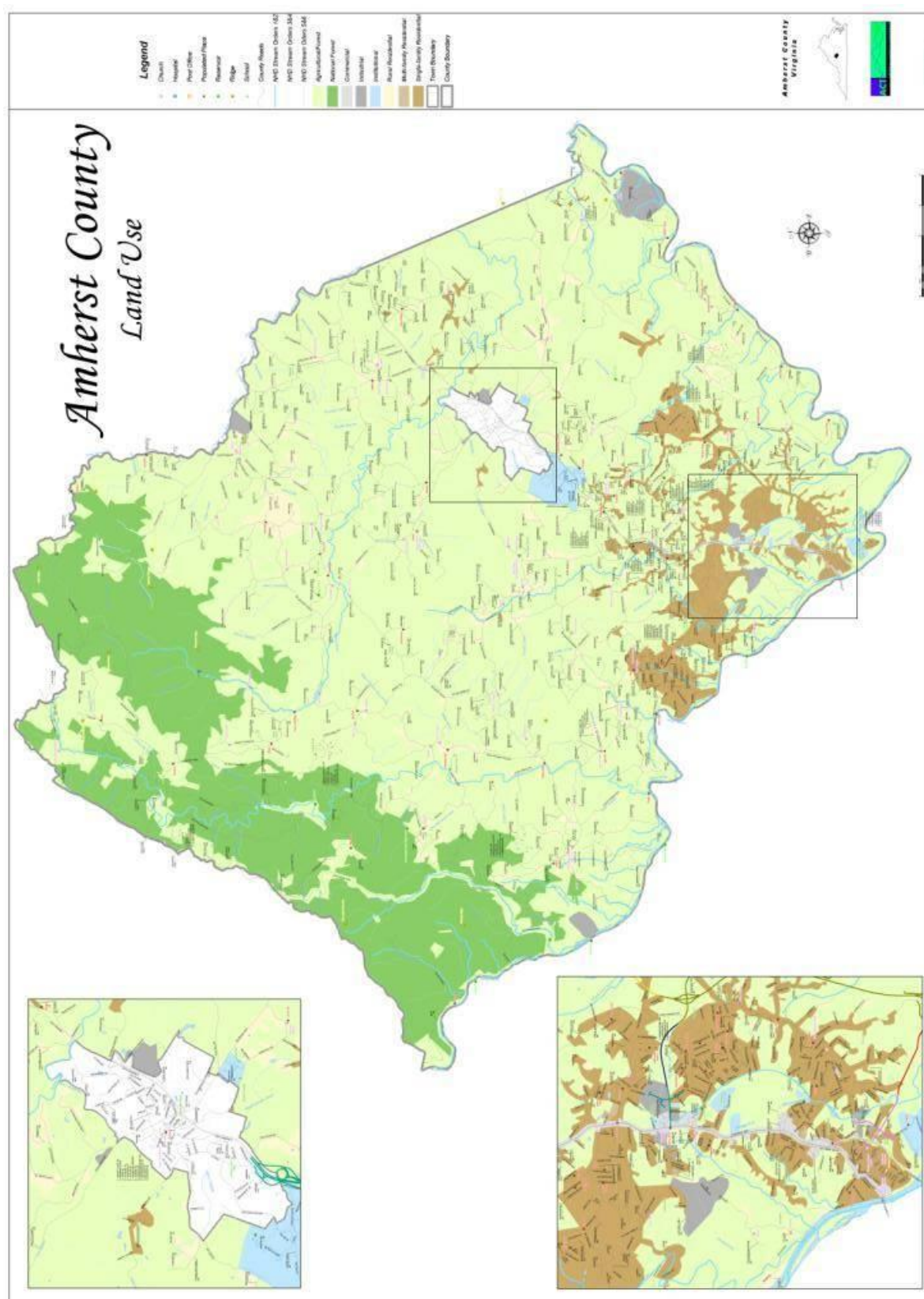
located in the southern portions of the County and in the two industrial parks within the Town of Amherst. Other smaller industrial uses and areas can be found on scattered sites and along highway corridors such as Route 29 Business.

Village

The village land use category is designated to allow minimal concentrations of commercial activity and residential-type development within a large agricultural or residential area. It is the intent to encourage cluster development or residential, commercial and public uses, thereby helping to discourage random scattering of these uses throughout agricultural, forested and residential areas. There are approximately 12 locations with a number of lots in each area zoned village in the County.

Public

The public land use category is designated to recognize lands owned or leased by the federal, state, county government and local and/or regional authorities as being distinct from non-public properties. The permitted uses in the public land use category are deemed by the County to serve the public interests, necessity and convenience of Amherst County. Public land use designation is seen throughout the entire County. Specifically, lands designated as national forest, publicly owned, reservoirs, parks, school, libraries, emergency services, animal shelters and governmental facilities are shown as public lands.



Blue Ridge Parkway

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a significant social, cultural, recreational and economic resource for Amherst County. The County must be proactive to ensure that this resource is sustained for future generations. The County should consider the visual negative impact of new development on the character of the Parkway, specifically development along the Route 130 and Route 60 approach corridors. In addition, the County should be actively involved in the development of future management plans for the George Washington National Forest, a key resource that protects the Parkway's long term environmental and visual character.

The Blue Ridge Parkway follows the Blue Ridge Mountains for 469 miles through Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. The Parkway passes through the western portion of Amherst County within the George Washington National Forest. Two Virginia primary highways within Amherst County, Route 130 and Route 60, provide vehicular access to the Parkway.

The Parkway was conceived and was designed in accord with four specific purposes. These purposes were to:

- Connect Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks by way of a 'national rural parkway' - a recreational, destination-oriented motor road traveling through a variety of scenic ridge, mountainside, and pastoral farm landscape
- Conserve the scenery and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Parkway's designed and natural areas.
- Provide for public enjoyment and understanding of the natural resources and cultural heritage of the central and southern Appalachian Mountains.
- Provide opportunities for high quality scenic and recreational experiences along the Blue Ridge Parkway and within the corridor through which it passes.



Designed as a national, scenic, linear park, the Blue Ridge Parkway is a significant social, cultural, and recreational resource eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. The Parkway is also a significant economic resource for communities. Approximately twenty-one million travelers per year use the Parkway and contribute to local economies along its route.

Conservation of the Parkway's scenic environment benefits from partnerships between the National Park Service (NPS), which manages the park, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, and localities (such as Amherst County) through which the Parkway passes. Amherst County can assist with the conservation of the Parkway's scenic environment through local policy action in three areas:

1. Evaluate the visual impact of new development that is proposed within the Parkway's viewsheds. Although the Parkway in Amherst County lies primarily within the National Forest, the County should be cognizant that certain private development, regardless of proximity, (such as communication towers) can have an adverse visual/scenic effect on the Parkway. Such development should be evaluated with consideration of these visual impacts. In addition, Blue Ridge Parkway staff should be consulted on such development proposals to obtain their opinion on the proposal's impact on the Parkway's scenic quality.

Amherst County should encourage the developers of property within Parkway viewsheds to minimize visual impacts on the Parkway. Impacts can potentially be minimized through changes in site or building design, including grading, building locations, building height, building and roof colors, street locations, lighting, landscaping, and buffering.

2. Protect the "gateways" to the Parkway. Route 60 and Route 130 are the gateways to the Parkway in Amherst County. Parkway visitors develop first impressions of the County based upon the scale and character of development

along these routes. The County's current zoning regulations should be evaluated to determine whether or not they are sufficient in scope to require that development along these critical gateways be compatible with the rural and scenic nature of the Parkway's environs. If not, the County should consider adopting zoning amendments to create scenic corridor overlays that would manage the scale and character of new developments along these corridors.

3. Monitor and participate in the development of resource management plans for the George Washington National Forest. This national forest provides a significant buffer for the Parkway and protects the Parkway from the visual impacts of rural and suburban development; however, recent federal proposals to return some of the forest in Virginia to private ownership demonstrates that communities along the Parkway must be vigilant if they wish to be proactive in ensuring that the Parkway remain a major environmental and scenic asset.

Amherst County Natural Heritage Resources

Natural heritage resources as defined by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of Natural Heritage (DCR) are the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, unique or exemplary natural communities, and significant geologic formations such as caves and karst features. Amherst County is currently home to 38 distinct types of natural heritage resources with 49 total occurrences throughout the County (Table 29: Natural Heritage Resources). In addition, DCR has identified 18 terrestrial and aquatic conservation sites as areas necessary for their survival. (Table 30: Conservation Sites)

DCR identifies and protects natural heritage resources statewide and maintains a comprehensive database of all documented occurrences of natural heritage resources in Virginia. DCR has developed conservation sites that contain known populations of natural heritage resources and include adjacent or surrounding habitat vital for their protection. Conservation sites do not represent protected lands. They are recommended for protection and stewardship

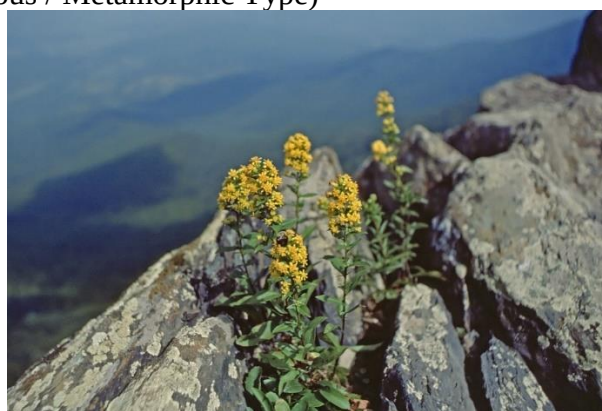
because of the natural heritage resources and habitat they support, but are not currently under any official protection designation. Conservation sites are polygons built around one or more rare plant, animal, or natural community designed to include the element and, where possible, its associated habitat, and buffer or other adjacent land thought necessary for the element's conservation. Conservation sites can be used to screen development projects for potential impacts to natural heritage resources, aid local and regional planning, identify targets for acquisitions and easements and guide priorities for restoration activities.

An example of a conservation site in Amherst County is Mount Pleasant Conservation Site. In addition to multiple rare species and habitat types found here, the site/ecosystem are critically important because of the geographic location. Conservation sites are given a biodiversity significance ranking based on the rarity, quality, and number of element occurrences they contain; on a scale of 1-5, 1 being most significant. Mount Pleasant Conservation Site has been given a biodiversity significance ranking of B1, which represents a site of outstanding significance. The natural heritage resources associated with this conservation site are:

Rand's Goldenrod
High Elevation Outcrop Barrens
(Black Chokeberry Igneous / Metamorphic Type)

Solidago randii

G4/S2S3/NL/NL
G1?/S1/NL/NL



Rand's Goldenrod. (*Solidago randii*, G4/S2S3/NL/NL)

Rand's Goldenrod (*Solidago randii*, G5T4/S2S3/NL/NL) is a perennial, rhizomatous goldenrod that grows to 8 eight decimeters tall. Its round stem may be erect or reclining and its alternate, numerous leaves reduce in size up the stem. Like many goldenrods, the inflorescences form panicle-like arrays with racemiform clusters. The flowers occur bunched into involucre with 7-16 ray flowers (florets) and up to 30 disk florets. In Virginia, look for this goldenrod to bloom in the late summer and early fall on exposed outcrops of the Blue Ridge Mountains. As of 2014, 18 extant occurrences of this state rare plant were documented in Virginia. Often this species is threatened by trampling because it often occurs on exposed outcrops frequented by hikers. There is also some threat to this species from being out-competed by non-native invasive plant species.



High-Elevation Outcrop Barren, Mount Pleasant Conservation Site

The High-Elevation Outcrop Barren is known from scattered localities along nearly the full length of the Blue Ridge in Virginia. This vegetation type is associated with

medium- to high-elevation exposed outcrops of igneous and metamorphic rocks, including metabasalt (greenstone), porphyritic leucocharnockite, amphibolite, and rhyolite. The lower-elevation limit of these barrens is about 975 m (3,200 ft) in northern Virginia, increasing to about 1,200 m (4,000 ft) in the southern Blue Ridge. The habitats are wind-blasted and subject to severe winter temperatures and ice, while oligotrophic soils consist of very thin, local veneers of organic matter, gravel, or silt (Fleming, et. al. 2016). They are typically on strongly convex, upper slopes and rocky summits with west to northwest or flat aspects. Surface cover of bedrock and loose boulders in plot-sampled stands averages 80%, with mean lichen cover of 44% on these rocks. Soil development and moisture potential at these sites are minimal. The community is a patchwork of shrub thickets, small herbaceous mats, and exposed, lichen-covered rock surfaces. Threats include trampling and destruction of fragile vegetation mats and invasive introduced weeds such as flat-stemmed bluegrass ([*Poa compressa*](#)) and sheep-sorrel ([*Rumex acetosella*](#)). (NatureServe, 2015)

An example of a Stream Conservation Unit (SCU) in Amherst County is the Pedlar River – Pedlar Mills – Brown’s Creek SCU. SCUs identify stream reaches that contain aquatic natural heritage resources, including two miles upstream and one mile downstream of documented occurrences, and all tributaries within this reach. SCUs are also given a biodiversity significance ranking based on the rarity, quality, and number of element occurrences they contain. The Pedlar River - Pedlar Mills - Browns Creek SCU has been given a biodiversity ranking of B2, which represents a site of very high significance. The natural heritage resources associated with this site are:

Lasmigona subviridis
Pleurobema collina

Green floater
James spinymussel

G3/S2/NL/LT
G1/S1/LE/LE



Green floater



James spinymussel

The Green floater, a rare freshwater mussel, ranges from New York to North Carolina in the Atlantic Slope drainages, as well as the New and Kanawha River systems in Virginia and West Virginia. Throughout its range, the Green floater appears to prefer the pools and eddies with gravelly and sandy bottoms of smaller rivers and creeks or of smaller channels of large rivers (Ortman, 1919). According to Riddick (1973), in central Virginia, the Green floater prefers habitats with gravel or sand bottoms in small to medium-sized streams. Green floaters are small, usually reaching a length less than 55mm. The color on the shell varies from pale yellow to brownish green. There may be numerous narrow or wide green or blackish rays on the shell surface, mostly on juveniles (Kitchel, 1991). Please note that this species has been listed as state threatened by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF).

The James spinymussel is endemic to the James River watershed and occurs in a variety of substrata, ranging from sand and silt mixtures to gravel and sand mixed with rubble, and in a variety of flow regimes (Clarke & Neves, 1984; Hove & Neves, 1994). It is now restricted to small headwater streams of this watershed (Neves, 1991).

Threats to the James spinymussel include competition with the exotic clam (*Corbicula fluminea*), erosion and sedimentation from logging, road construction, and livestock grazing, sewage effluent, and water quality degradation (Neves, 1991). Please note that this species is currently classified as endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the VDGIF.

Considered good indicators of the health of aquatic ecosystems, freshwater mussels are dependent on good water quality, good physical habitat conditions, and an environment that will support populations of host fish species (Williams et al., 1993). Because mussels are sedentary organisms, they are sensitive to water quality degradation related to increased sedimentation and pollution. They are also sensitive to habitat destruction through dam construction, channelization, and dredging, and the invasion of exotic mollusk species.

Potential Threats to Natural Heritage Resources:

The threats to natural heritage resources in this area, especially aquatic resources, come from construction and extractive industries. Additionally, fragmentation of forests and

the introduction of invasives plants and animals—can have a direct effect on the survival of many native plants, and the animals that depend on them for survival. Threats to the Natural Communities are

incompatible development, and recreational activities, invasive species; incompatible agricultural and forestry practices.

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Definitions of Abbreviations Used on Natural Heritage Resource Lists of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Natural Heritage State Ranks

The following ranks are used by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to set protection priorities for natural heritage resources. Natural Heritage Resources, or "NHR's," are rare plant and animal species, rare and exemplary natural communities, and significant geologic features. The criterion for ranking NHR's is the number of populations or occurrences, i.e. the number of known distinct localities; the number of individuals in existence at each locality or, if a highly mobile organism (e.g., sea turtles, many birds, and butterflies), the total number of individuals; the quality of the occurrences, the number of protected occurrences; and threats.

S1 - Critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically five or fewer populations or occurrences, or very few remaining individuals (<1000).

S2 - Imperiled in the state because of rarity or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically six to 20 populations or occurrences or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000).

S3 - Vulnerable in the state either because rare and uncommon, or found only in a restricted range (even if abundant at some locations), or because of other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation. Typically having 21 to 100 populations or occurrences (1,000 to 3,000 individuals).

S4 - Apparently secure; Uncommon but not rare, and usually widespread in the state. Possible cause of long-term concern. Usually having >100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.

S5 - Secure; Common, widespread and abundant in the state. Essentially ineradicable under present conditions, typically having considerably more than 100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.

S#B - Breeding status of an animal within the state

S#N - Non-breeding status of animal within the state. Usually applied to winter resident species.

S#? - Inexact or uncertain numeric rank.

SH - Possibly extirpated (Historical). Historically known from the state, but not verified for an extended period, usually > 15 years; this rank is used primarily when inventory has been attempted recently.

S#S# - Range rank; A numeric range rank, (e.g. S2S3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty about the exact status of the element. Ranges cannot skip more than one rank.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

SU - Unrankable; Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.

SNR - Unranked; state rank not yet assessed.

SX - Presumed extirpated from the state. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.

SNA - A conservation status rank is not applicable because the element is not a suitable target for conservation activities.

Natural Heritage Global Ranks are similar, but refer to a species' rarity throughout its total range. Global ranks are denoted with a "G" followed by a character. Note GX means the element is presumed extinct throughout its range. A "Q" in a rank indicates that a taxonomic question concerning that species exists. Ranks for subspecies are denoted with a "T." The global and state ranks combined (e.g. G2/S1) give an instant grasp of a species' known rarity. These ranks should not be interpreted as legal designations.

FEDERAL LEGAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses the standard abbreviations for Federal endangerment developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Endangered Species and Habitat Conservation.

LE - Listed Endangered

LT - Listed Threatened

PE - Proposed Endangered

PT - Proposed Threatened

C - Candidate (formerly C1 - Candidate category 1)

E(S/A) - treat as endangered because of similarity of appearance

T(S/A) - treat as threatened because of similarity of appearance

SOC - Species of Concern species that merit special concern (not a regulatory category)

NL – no federal legal status

STATE LEGAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses similar abbreviations for State endangerment.

LE - Listed Endangered

PE - Proposed Endangered

SC - Special Concern - animals that merit special concern according to VDGIF (not a regulatory category)

LT - Listed Threatened

PT - Proposed Threatened

C - Candidate

NL - no state legal status

For information on the laws pertaining to threatened or endangered species, please contact:

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for all FEDERALLY listed species;
 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Plant Protection Bureau for STATE listed plants and insects
 Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for all other STATE listed animals

Conservation Sites Ranking

Brank is a rating of the significance of the conservation site based on presence and number of natural heritage resources; on a scale of 1-5, 1 being most significant. Sites are also coded to reflect the presence/absence of federally/state listed species:

Conservation Site Ranks

B1 – Outstanding significance
 B2 – Very High significance
 B3 – High significance
 B4 – Moderate significance
 B5 – Of general Biodiversity significance

Legal Status of Site

FL – Federally listed species present
 SL – State listed species present
 NL – No listed species present

Table 34: Amherst County Natural Heritage Resources

Group Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Last Observed	Global Rank	FWS Species of Concern	State Rank	Federal Status	State Status	SITENAME
Terrestrial Natural Community	Quercus rubra - Carya (ovalis, ovata) - Fraxinus americana / Actaea racemosa - Hydrophyllum virginianum Forest	Central Appalachian Montane Oak - Hickory Forest (Rich Type)	1999-07-20	G3G4		S3S4			COLE MOUNTAIN
Vascular Plant	Arnoglossum reniforme	Great Indian-plantain	2004-08-03	G4		S2			COLE MOUNTAIN
Terrestrial Natural Community	(Cephalanthus occidentalis) / Dulichium arundinaceum - (Persicaria hydropiperoides, Glyceria acutiflora, Proserpinaca palustris) Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation	Central Appalachian Mountain Pond (Threeway Sedge - Buttonbush Type)	2012-07-19	G1		S1			DANCING CREEK POND
Vascular Plant	Carex lupuliformis	False Hop Sedge	2012-07-19	G4		S1S2			DANCING CREEK POND
Vascular Plant	Polanisia dodecandra var. dodecandra	Common Clammy-weed	1993-07-20	G5T5?		S2			JAMES RIVER - BIG ISLAND SCU

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Invertebrate Animal	Elliptio lanceolata	Yellow Lance	1997-09-23	G2G3	SOC	S2S3			JAMES RIVER - BIG ISLAND SCU
Vascular Plant	Polanisia dodecandra var. dodecandra	Common Clammy-weed	1997-07-21	G5T5?		S2			JAMES RIVER - BLACKWATER CREEK SCU
Invertebrate Animal	Lasmigona subviridis	Green Floater	ND	G3		S2		LT	JAMES RIVER - BLACKWATER CREEK SCU
Vascular Plant	Polanisia dodecandra var. dodecandra	Common Clammy-weed	1993-09-02	G5T5?		S2			JAMES RIVER - MAURY RIVER SCU
Vascular Plant	Vicia americana var. americana	American vetch	1992-09-14	G5T5		S1			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Vascular Plant	Spartina pectinata	Freshwater Cordgrass	1993-09-02	G5		S2			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Vascular Plant	Iliamna remota	Kankakee mallow	1999-07-07	G1Q	SOC	S1			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Terrestrial Natural Community	Fraxinus pennsylvanica / Andropogon gerardii - Panicum virgatum - Baptisia australis Wooded Herbaceous Vegetation	Piedmont / Central Appalachian Bedrock Floodplain Prairie	1993-09-02	G3		S2			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Terrestrial Natural Community	Fraxinus pennsylvanica / Andropogon gerardii - Panicum virgatum - Baptisia australis Wooded Herbaceous Vegetation	Piedmont / Central Appalachian Bedrock Floodplain Prairie	1993-07-20	G3		S2			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Invertebrate Animal	Speyeria idalia	Regal Fritillary	1956-06-18	G3		S1			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Vascular Plant	Maianthemum stellatum	Starry Solomon's-plume	1992-09-14	G5		S1S2			JAMES RIVER GORGE
Terrestrial Natural Community	Aronia melanocarpa - Gaylussacia baccata / Carex pensylvanica Shrubland	High-Elevation Outcrop Barren (Black Chokeberry Igneous / Metamorphic Type)	2013-09-12	G1?		S1			MOUNT PLEASANT
Vascular Plant	Solidago randii	Rand's Goldenrod	2013-09-12	G5T4		S2			MOUNT PLEASANT
Vascular Plant	Poa paludigena	Bog Bluegrass	1999-06-22	G3		S2			NICHOLSON RUN

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Terrestrial Natural Community	Acer rubrum - Fraxinus americana - Fraxinus nigra - (Betula alleghaniensis) / Veratrum viride - Carex bromoides Forest	Central Appalachian Basic Seepage Swamp	1999-06-22	G3		S3			NICHOLSON RUN
Vascular Plant	Platanthera grandiflora	Large purple fringed orchid	1999-06-22	G5		S2			NICHOLSON RUN
Vascular Plant	Triphora trianthophora ssp. trianthophora	Three birds orchid	2006-09-07	G3G4T3T4		S1			NICHOLSON RUN
Invertebrate Animal	Pleurobema collina	James Spiny mussel	1989-08-24	G1		S1	LE	LE	PEDLAR RIVER - NICHOLSON RUN SCU
Invertebrate Animal	Lasmigona subviridis	Green Floater	1989-11-12	G3		S2		LT	PEDLAR RIVER - PEDLAR MILLS - BROWNS CREEK SCU
Invertebrate Animal	Lasmigona subviridis	Green Floater	1989-11-12	G3		S2		LT	PEDLAR RIVER - PEDLAR MILLS - BROWNS CREEK SCU
Invertebrate Animal	Lasmigona subviridis	Green Floater	2011-10-20	G3		S2		LT	PEDLAR RIVER - PEDLAR MILLS - BROWNS CREEK SCU
Invertebrate Animal	Pleurobema collina	James Spiny mussel	2013-05-16	G1		S1	LE	LE	PEDLAR RIVER - PEDLAR MILLS - BROWNS CREEK SCU
Vertebrate Animal	Ambystoma talpoideum	Mole Salamander	2001-	G5		S2			PINEY RIVER SWAMPS
Terrestrial Natural Community	Quercus phellos / Smilax rotundifolia / Carex (albolutescens, festucacea) Forest	Piedmont Upland Depression Swamp (Willow Oak Type)	2001-06-08	G2G3		S2			PINEY RIVER SWAMPS
Vertebrate Animal	Myotis septentrionalis	Northern long-eared Myotis	2012-07-17	G1G2		S1S3	LT	LT	PUNCHBOWL MOUNTAIN
Vascular Plant	Carex polymorpha	Variable Sedge	1994-07-20	G3		S2			PUNCHBOWL MOUNTAIN

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Terrestrial Natural Community	(Cephalanthus occidentalis) / Dulichium arundinaceum - (Persicaria hydropiperoides, Glyceria acutiflora, Proserpinaca palustris) Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation	Central Appalachian Mountain Pond (Threeway Sedge - Buttonbush Type)	2012-08-17	G1		S1			SHEWEY RIDGE PONDS
Terrestrial Natural Community	Pinus virginiana - Quercus stellata - Quercus marilandica / Schizachyrium scoparium Woodland	Piedmont Ultramafic Woodland	2000-10-10	G2		SU			SHRADER LAKE
Vascular Plant	Echinacea laevigata	Smooth Coneflower	2000-10-10	G2G3		S2	LE	LT	SHRADER LAKE
Terrestrial Natural Community	Fagus grandifolia - Quercus (alba, rubra) - Liriodendron tulipifera / (Ilex opaca) / Polystichum acrostichoides Forest	Northern Coastal Plain / Piedmont Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest	2000-07-06	G5		S5			SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE OLD GROWTH HARDWOOD FOREST
Invertebrate Animal	Lasmigona subviridis	Green Floater	2012-08-22	G3		S2		LT	TYE RIVER - JONES CREEK - BLACK CREEK SCU
Aquatic Natural Community	NP-Middle James- Buffalo Second Order Stream	NP-Middle James- Buffalo Second Order Stream	2011-01	G2G3		S2S3			WILLIAMS RUN OFF RT 10 SCU
Vascular Plant	Vicia americana var. americana	American vetch	1950-06-04	G5T5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Solidago uliginosa var. uliginosa	Bog Goldenrod	1967-08-18	G4G5T4T5		S2			
Vascular Plant	Rosa setigera	Climbing prairie rose	1988-04-22	G5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Goodyera repens	Dwarf Rattlesnake-plantain	1969-07-21	G5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Arnoglossum reniforme	Great Indian-plantain	1933-09-04	G4		S2			
Vascular Plant	Arnoglossum reniforme	Great Indian-plantain	2004-08-03	G4		S2			
Vascular Plant	Pseudognaphalium helleri	Heller's cudweed	1974-09-21	G4G5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Carex vesicaria	Inflated Sedge	1992-06-01	G5		S1S2			
Vascular Plant	Juncus brevicaudatus	Narrow-panicked Rush	1969-08-14	G5		S2			

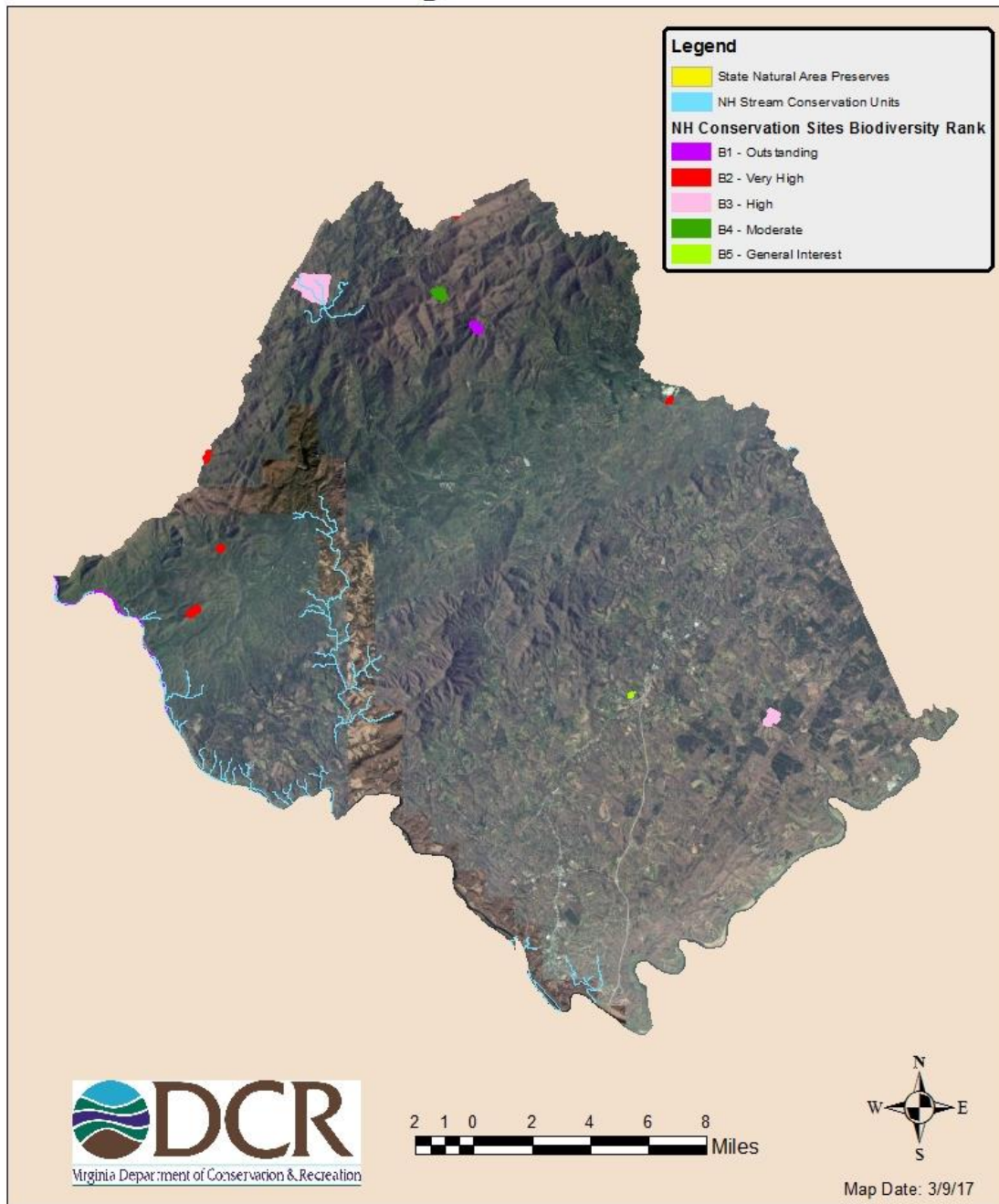
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Vascular Plant	Glyceria laxa	Northern Mannagrass	1967-06-14	G5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Eutrochium maculatum var. maculatum	Spotted Joe-pye-weed	1985-09-27	G5T5		S1			
Vascular Plant	Phlox buckleyi	Sword-leaf phlox	1980-05-13	G2	SOC	S2			

Table 35: Amherst County Conservation Sites

Conservation Site Name	Biodiversity Rank	Legal Status	Acres	Type of Site
Cole Mountain	B4	NL	135	Conservation site
Dancing Creek Pond	B2	NL	58	Conservation site
James River - Big Island SCU	B3	NL	92	Stream Conservation Unit
James River - Blackwater Creek SCU	B5	SL	17	Stream Conservation Unit
James River - Maury River SCU	B4	NL	18	Stream Conservation Unit
James River Gorge	B1	NL	5993	Conservation site
Mount Pleasant	B1	NL	109	Conservation site
Nicholson Run	B3	NL	663	Conservation site
Pedlar River - Nicholson Run SCU	B2	FL	14	Stream Conservation Unit
Pedlar River - Pedlar Mills - Brown's Creek SCU	B2	FL	54	Stream Conservation Unit
Piney River Swamps	B2	NL	44	Conservation site
Punchbowl Mountain	B2	FL	100	Conservation site
Rocky Mountain Glade	B2	NL	29	Conservation site
Shewey Ridge Ponds	B2	NL	103	Conservation site
Shrader Lake	B3	FL	181	Conservation site
Sweet Briar College Old Growth Hardwood Forest	B5	NL	34	Conservation site
Tye River - Jones Creek - Black Creek SCU	B2	FL	52	Stream Conservation Unit
Williams Run Off Rt 10 SCU	B3	NL	10	Stream Conservation Unit

Amherst County Natural Heritage Conservation Sites



Environment

For development proposals in environmentally sensitive areas, including higher elevation and steep-slope properties, the environmental impacts of the development and access roads should also be considered. It is important to maintain a balance between development and environmental objectives throughout the County. The following techniques are available for protecting the environment of the County.

Low Impact Development (LID)

LID is a stormwater management technique/philosophy designed to manage stormwater through replication of pre-development hydrologic conditions. Gaining popularity around the country, LID has six basic tenets:

- Minimize site disturbance/conserves open space;
- Reduce post-development impervious cover;
- Promote infiltration;
- Replicate pre-development flow patterns and times;
- Use decentralized practices; and
- Incorporate pollution control into site developments.

While many Virginia communities are exploring or have adopted voluntary LID programs, few have mandatory requirements. Although the benefits of LID techniques are applicable throughout all of Amherst County, they are particularly applicable in environmentally sensitive areas. Amherst County's adoption of LID as an optional or required approach to stormwater management would further the County's environmental and conservation objectives contained in this plan.



Riparian Easements

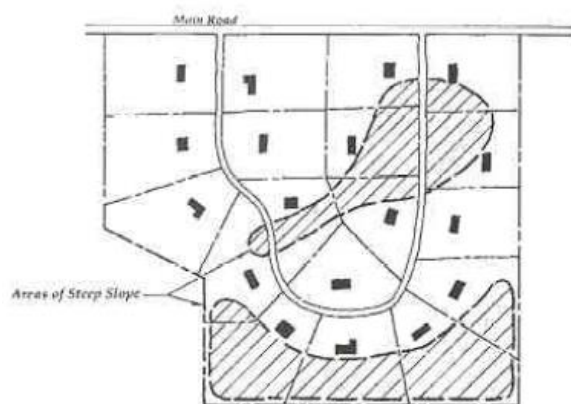
A riparian easement is a special type of conservation easement that applies only to a streamside or riparian zone mutually agreed upon by the landowner and the easement holder(s). Like all easements, a riparian easement is a legal agreement in which the landowner retains ownership and full control of the property, yet conveys certain specified rights to the easement holder(s).

Specifically, the landowner agrees to restrict uses that would harm the riparian zone and works with the easement holder to develop a management plan to ensure riparian zone protection. Typically, this is done by establishing and maintaining vegetation and limiting livestock access to the stream. Each easement is tailored to the property and the desires of the individual landowner. Again, depending upon the terms and timing of the riparian easement, significant tax savings can accrue to the property owner granting the easement.

Development on Ridge tops and Steep Slopes

Historically, the County has not regulated the placement of private roads, driveways or house sites. Due to the highly erodible nature of steep slopes and the potential difficulty of serving property accessed by steep driveways, it is prudent to establish

guidelines for this type of activity. As a mountainous county, there is ample opportunity for Amherst's ridge tops to be denuded and built upon. Housing can be constructed on hill sides and mountains in a way that is not adverse or intrusive to our beautiful natural landscape. Steps should be taken now to ensure our views of higher elevations are not compromised. The County may wish to research and consider mountain/ridgeline protection ordinances. The ordinances should be applied to all lands identified as containing key/critical slopes, ridgelines, ridge areas, and scenic viewsheds.



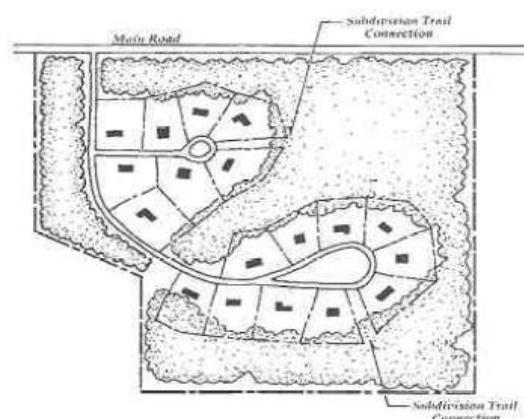
Typical subdivision design disregarding environmental constraints and steep slopes. Source: Rural by Design

Agricultural/Open Space Preservation

Existing County development regulations and incentives have allowed a land use pattern characterized by considerable residential development in the rural portions of the County. The County should consider all of the growth management tools available to Virginia localities and should adopt additional regulations, programs, and incentives to promote future development

consistent with this plan. The objective of these regulations and incentives is to encourage and promote environmentally sensitive development throughout the County and to encourage development within designated public facility areas, thus conserving the County's rural agricultural areas, open spaces, and forested areas.

As Amherst County continues to experience residential, commercial and industrial growth, there will be continued pressure on the County's agricultural, open space, and forested areas to be developed for these uses. Of similar concern are inappropriate patterns of development on environmentally sensitive lands, including steep sloped properties located at higher mountain elevations within the western portions of the County.



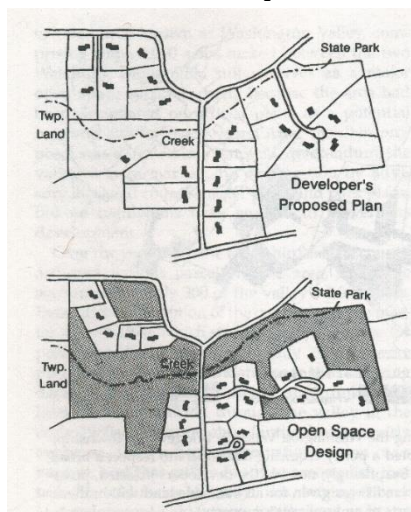
Subdivision with clustering provision which allows for open space and preservation of steep slopes, and ridgelines. Source: Rural by Design

The land use map shows clearly the pattern of scattered rural residential development that has historically occurred in the County. Much of this development has been "by-right"-consistent with zoning and subdivision laws in effect at the time of development.

An Agricultural¹⁴ district should delineate areas where production from the soil is the most important use of land. Like any production or industrial area, the noise level, odors, traffic patterns, and hours of operation are different than what is normal to a residential area. The Agricultural district should be structured to minimize the conflicts that occur between incompatible uses.

The future land use map and policies contained in this plan attempt to promote a compact development pattern that takes advantage of existing and proposed public facility areas - specifically those areas currently served by public water and sewer, or areas planned to be served by these facilities consistent with this plan and future updates to the Amherst County Service Authority Facility Plan. This future land use map should be used as a general guide for future County development patterns and as a general guide for the location of new water and sewer service areas.

As Amherst County continues to grow, there will be attendant requests to rezone



Source: Rural by Design

agricultural and forestal areas to other use classifications or to allow higher residential densities in these areas. When these development requests occur, the economic and quality of life benefits of agricultural and forested land uses should be considered, as well as the adequacy of public facilities and services in the area.

In developing this plan, the Planning Commission and CAC discussed the desirability of continuing the current patterns of unplanned rural residential development. It was the consensus of both groups that such development patterns should not be encouraged and should be discouraged through changes to the County's development guidelines and through the adoption of programs and incentives designed to promote the conservation of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

Zoning and subdivision standards, use value assessments and taxation, and public facility decisions are the tools now used by Amherst County to influence the timing and location of growth. Additional regulatory approaches are available to Amherst County, if it wishes for zoning and subdivision standards to play a larger role in shaping future land use patterns.

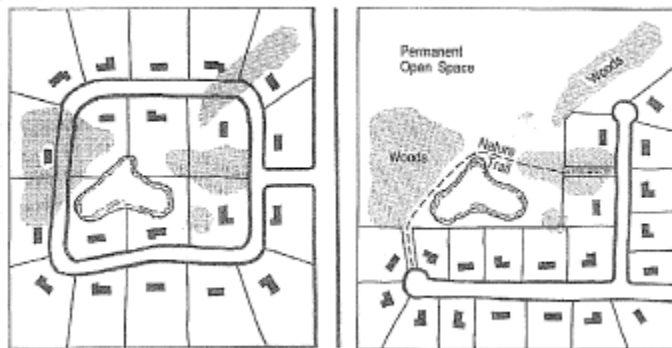
In addition, voluntary tools and programs are available to agricultural and rural property owners who wish to take steps to preserve their land holdings while obtaining a desired rate of return on their equity. These programs are voluntary and generally involve a partnership between the landowner and a governmental agency. Brief discussions of several regulatory approaches and voluntary programs are presented below.

¹⁴ Agriculture – The tilling of the soil, the raising of crops, horticulture, and gardening, including the keeping of animals and fowl, and including

agricultural industry or business, such as dairies and similar uses.

Rural Cluster Development

As the name implies, residential cluster developments “cluster” allowable residential units/densities into one portion of a



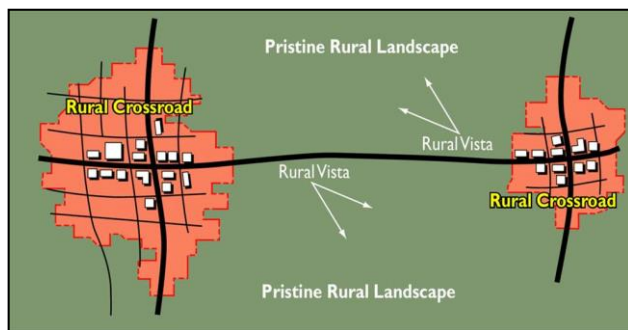
Source: Rural by Design

development site, thereby permanently preserving portions of the site as open space. Typically 30-50 percent of a cluster development site remains undeveloped. In a cluster development, the density allowed by the underlying zoning district is “transferred” to a portion of the site, allowing for a more compact development. In addition to environmental benefits, cluster development can also be a strategy to reduce development costs.

Cluster provisions can be added to a zoning ordinance as a development option or as a requirement for subdivision in some rural areas. Although mandatory provisions are more effective in preserving open space, voluntary options are more prevalent in Virginia jurisdictions.

Village Centers and Rural Commercial Nodes

Rural residents of the County benefit from having convenient access to commercial services. Some rural cross-road areas of Amherst County are appropriate locations for higher density housing and associated rural commercial development. These “Village



Clustering development together assist in preserving rural vistas and promotes an efficient development pattern. Source: Dover Kohl and Partners

Center” areas, if appropriately designed and served by adequate public facilities, can both contribute to meeting the County’s housing and commercial service needs. The County, through designation of village centers, can promote the development of village center areas and rural commercial nodes.

Certain areas within the rural portions of the County, as shown on the future land use map contained in this Chapter, may be suitable for small scale village center areas and associated rural oriented commercial uses. Commercial uses within these “nodes” would meet the commercial and service needs of residents in the immediate area, and would generally not provide goods and services to a larger Amherst or regional community.

The following principles are used as a guide to the development and application of such regulations:

- Village centers areas should be located in areas with adequate access and public facilities.
- Allowable densities should be compatible with existing surrounding communities and not place a burden on public services and/or facilities.

- Commercial developments that are small in scale and rural in character may be an appropriate component of a village center area and may be appropriate at certain rural commercial nodes as shown on the future land use map. Building sizes should be limited, as should the size of parking lots. Architectural designs should reflect the surrounding natural and rural environment.
- Such commercial uses should provide goods and services designed to meet the immediate needs of surrounding rural residents.
- Signage at such facilities should be minimal. National branding, through signage or building design, is discouraged as incompatible with the rural area. Signage should not be backlit.
- Rural commercial uses should contain significant landscaping and should have minimal lighting except for security purposes.

Access to rural commercial properties must be strictly controlled for safety and traffic flow purposes.

Time Release Subdivisions

Time release subdivisions are a mandatory tool used to slow down the rate of growth and the number of new residential building lots in the rural areas of a jurisdiction. Under this approach, rural property owners are limited in the number of new lot divisions that can be created from a parcel during a specified period of time. For example, a property

owner may only be allowed up to four divisions per parcel over a ten year period. This approach allows property owners some return on their land equity, limits development in rural areas, and channels a community's development demand to designated growth areas.

Agricultural and Forestal Districts

Agricultural/forestal districts are rural zones reserved for the production of agricultural and forestry products. At the request of a property owner, they are established by a local governing body according to state guidelines. In essence, a district constitutes a voluntary agreement between a landowner and the government that no new, nonagricultural uses will take place in the district. An agricultural/forestal district provides much stronger protection for farmers and farmland than does traditional zoning. Districts are established for a set period of time and can be renewed. During the life of a district, a landowner is prohibited from subdividing or developing the land for nonagricultural or forestal uses. Similarly, a local governing body is prohibited from rezoning land in a district to a nonagricultural classification or from making capital or community facility decisions that endanger the landowner's ability to maintain the land for agriculture or forestry use.

Amherst County's adoption of a local agricultural and forestal district enabling ordinance would set the stage for future district applications and would increase the County's ability to be proactive in its rural land preservation efforts.

Conservation Easements

Approximately 8,281¹⁵ acres of land in Amherst County are protected by conservation easements. A conservation

¹⁵ Virginia Outdoors Foundation, November 2017

easement is a legal agreement in which a landowner retains ownership of his/her property while conveying certain specified rights to the easement holder. Conservation easements are usually given to a non-profit, charitable land conservation organization or a public entity. Easements can be tailored to meet the owner's wishes regarding the future use of his/her land. They can be for a specific time period or can be granted in perpetuity. Typically, a conservation easement restricts development or uses that would destroy natural, scenic, or historic areas while at the same time allowing other traditional uses such as farming.

Depending upon the terms and timing of the easement, significant tax savings can accrue to the property owner granting the easement.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

This program is essentially the same as a conservation easement (previously described), except that the easement value (i.e. the development rights) are purchased from the landowner, rather than the landowner donating the easement and taking advantage of the tax benefits. Each landowner needs to determine whether selling an easement or donating one and taking advantage of the tax benefits better fits his/her financial situation.

This option has been used extensively in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and other states. Currently in Virginia, the City of Virginia Beach and Albemarle County have adopted local PDR programs. The funds for this program are typically generated by designating a small portion of an existing tax or by actual tax appropriation. The Commonwealth of Virginia has set aside

funds for this purpose and may in the future dedicate a source of funding for PDRs.

Sliding Scale Zoning

Sliding scale zoning limits the number of times that a parent parcel (a parcel existing on the date of ordinance adoption) can be split, based on its size, i.e., the larger the parcel the more splits that may occur, up to a maximum number established. A larger minimum parcel size is also established.

Unlike exclusive use zoning, sliding scale zoning allows some non-farm residential development without special land use or other reviews. Sliding scale zoning can be useful in agricultural areas where there are significant development pressures and land speculation. The use of sliding scale zoning is most effective in areas where a wide range of parcel sizes exist and non-farm residential development has already begun to occur.

Minimum and maximum building lot sizes can be used to encourage the location of non-farm development on less productive farmland and/or in areas where development is more concentrated to direct growth onto already fragmented land. The use of buffer areas is highly recommended to avoid land use conflicts between new residential development and agricultural uses. Since this method does permit some use of land for non-agricultural uses, it allows communities to avoid a claim that land has been "taken" without compensation¹⁶ more effectively.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The program is administered by the United States' Department of Agriculture's (USDA)

¹⁶ Sliding Scale Information from: Kalkaska County, MI. Website

Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) through the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Established in 1985, the CRP encourages farmers to voluntarily plant permanent areas of grass and trees on land that needs protection from erosion, acts as windbreaks, improves water quality or provides food and habitat for wildlife. The farmers must enter into contracts with the CCC lasting between 10 and 15 years. In return, they receive annual rental payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share assistance to establish this protective vegetation.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP is a voluntary initiative using state, federal, and nongovernmental funding to help solve environmental problems. The objective is to share costs and resources to address specific local environmental problems in designated target areas.

Specific financial incentives encourage farmers to enroll land in targeted areas in CREP contracts for designated environmental practices such as riparian buffers, grass filter strips, or wildlife habitat. Incentives can include cost-share assistance for establishing the designated practices, special rental rates, or one-time payments. A landowner may establish both a CREP contract and a riparian easement on his/her property, reaping the benefits of both programs.

Infill Development

One important objective of the proposed utility boundary is to encourage more compact infill development, which would allow the County to provide public utilities

and services more efficiently. Other benefits of compact development include:

- Protection of productive agricultural land and open space;
- Greater opportunity for higher densities, mixed use developments;
- Redevelopment of existing commercial properties;
- Development of vacant and underutilized property; and
- Increased opportunity to accommodate affordable housing and provide diversity of housing types and choices.

There are two primary ways to foster more compact infill development. The first is to reinvest in existing neighborhoods in order to make them attractive places to live by introducing those amenities that are missing. The County must also become more proactive in code enforcement in deteriorating neighborhoods to prevent further decline. Attracting people back to the County's older neighborhoods will help to take some of the development pressure off undeveloped and rural land.

A second method to promote a more efficient development pattern is to encourage development within the proposed designated growth area that is predominantly around the Madison Heights and Town of Amherst area. A wide range of development models are available to encourage such development, such as cluster development, greenbelt, and traditional neighborhood development (TND). Cluster or open space development may be more appropriate in areas where there are sensitive environmental concerns such as floodplains, sinkholes, and steep slopes.

Brownfield Sites

Brownfield sites also provide an opportunity for redevelopment. A brownfield site by definition is “developed real estate, generally



Abandoned site in Madison Heights

in an urban setting, which is contaminated to some degree by years of use.” These previously developed properties are generally within previously developed areas and have access to utilities. A brownfield site could be as small as the vacant corner gas station that once held underground storage tanks or as large as a manufacturing facility that may have dumped wastes on its property.

There are, however, some challenges to redeveloping brownfield sites. Brownfield sites often include abandoned or dilapidated buildings on sites where the soils are contaminated or are perceived to be contaminated. The cost to clean up contaminated property can often be exorbitant a fact that might deter many investors from attempting to redevelop these properties. The properties then remain vacant, often become rundown, and become a detriment to the surrounding neighborhood.

There are many incentives programs offered by the federal government. For example, the Brownfield’s Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) is a competitive grant program that Housing and Urban Development administers to stimulate and promote economic and community

development. BEDI is designed to assist communities with the redevelopment of abandoned, idled, and underused industrial and commercial facilities. BEDI grant funds are primarily targeted for use with a particular emphasis upon the redevelopment of brownfield sites in economic development projects and the increase of economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons. The purposes of the BEDI program are to spur the return of brownfields to productive economic use through financial assistance to public entities in the redevelopment of brownfields and to improve the viability of a project financed with the Section 108 guaranteed loan authority.

In summary, Amherst County has significant opportunities to be more proactive in the realm of agricultural, open space, and rural land preservation. Specifically:

- The Planning Commission should annually monitor rural and mountain development patterns to determine the location of new development and the rates of growth in these areas.
- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, through the recommendation and adoption of this plan, should state their commitment to preservation objectives.
- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors should use the future land use map contained in this plan as a general guide for determining the desired location of new development.
- In evaluating development proposals, the Planning Commission and Board should consider the adequacy of existing or planned public services and facilities in the area and the

impact the development will have on these services and facilities. If necessary facilities are planned, the timing of the planned new service or facility must be considered.

- The County should adopt voluntary or mandatory rural cluster provisions and consider subdivision ordinance amendments limiting the number of rural lots that can be created during a specified time period. The adoption of an exclusive agricultural zoning district should also be explored.
- The County should consider adopting sliding scale zoning to preserve open space, provide a method with greater flexibility than large lot zoning and reduce the density of development in the A-1 Agricultural Residential District.
- Commercial and/or industrial developments that are approved in the rural portions of the County should be small in scale and of a design character that is consistent with a rural environment.
- The County should research the other preservation tools presented in this plan and be willing to provide information and administrative support to property owners who wish to pursue a particular preservation strategy. In this regard, the County should also explore issues associated with adopting a local PDR program, including possible sources of funding for such a program.
- The County should support the activities of local land trusts and the environmental organizations in their efforts to voluntarily preserve critical agricultural and open space areas in the County.
- The County should work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Virginia Department of Forestry to insure that private timbering operations in the County are undertaken using approved techniques in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map serves as a general guide for the future development of Amherst County. Both public and private sector decision makers may use this map. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors can use this future land use map as one source of information when planning public facilities or evaluating land use requests. The map may also serve as a general guide for private investment, indicating the location and type of future desired development.

This map presents a generalized overview of desired land use locations within the County. The map is not intended to be parcel-specific. Zoning categories are to be based on the general profiles developed on the map. The specific location of future land uses will be determined by the zoning ordinance and, when required by the zoning ordinance, Commission and Board review of specific land use requests. Such review will consider the compatibility and benefits of the use and the land use impacts of a specific use on the surrounding neighborhood and larger community.

Eleven future land use categories are shown on this map they are:

Public/National Forest

This category designates National Forest lands and public lands owned by the federal, state, and County government as being distinct from non-public properties.

Conservation/100 Year Floodplains

This category includes steeply sloped lands (>25 percent), land protected with known conservation easements and floodplain areas. Future development in these areas should be prohibited or extremely limited.

Institutional

This category designates the location of major institutional sites in the County such as Sweet Briar College, Old Dominion Job Corps, and the Central Virginia Training Center.

Agricultural Limited

This category includes land areas in the rural portions of the County where agricultural¹⁷ and forestry uses are the dominant land use. Large lot single-family development may exist within some of these areas.

Family divisions within the Agricultural Limited district shall be in accordance with the Code of Virginia guidelines for land divisions.

The conflicts between farming and rural non-farm development (residential) should be minimized as the needs of farming are acknowledged and non-farm development is accommodated as a subordinate use. When nonagricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas, farms often become the subject of nuisance suits. As a result, farmers are sometimes forced to cease operations. Many others are discouraged from making investments in farm improvements. In recognition of the farmer's "right to farm" without being restricted by neighboring residential areas, hours of operation of farm equipment restrictions on odor-producing fertilizers and other restrictions designed to limit the perceived negative impacts

and gardening, including the keeping of animals and fowl, and including agricultural industry or business, such as dairies and similar uses.

¹⁷ Definition of Agriculture (according to the Amherst County Zoning Ordinance, 2007) – The tilling of the soil, the raising of crops, horticulture,

associated with reasonable farming practices should not be imposed on farming activities within the Agricultural District. The general intent of the Agricultural District is to encourage farming and maintain rural qualities in areas so designated in the County.

The Agricultural District as a component of the Comprehensive Plan is not limited to traditional farming; it extends to all aspects of the County's rural character. Agricultural land refers not only to tilled fields, but it refers also to open fields, pastures, and woodlands which are either prospects for additional farm acreage or are valuable for their many contributions to the environment and for their appearance. Agriculture-related or support industries (farm implement dealers, supply services, storage and processing facilities, etc.) should be permitted within this district in recognition of the support they provide to the farming community.

Future development of these should consider the following factors:

- Larger tracts should be considered;
- Large subdivisions should require a traffic impact analysis per VDOT guidelines provided by the developer; and
- Divisions served by a private road not meeting VDOT requirements should be limited by the number of lots and number of acres per lot.

Low Density Residential

This category includes areas where larger lot residential development is encouraged as a transition between the County's agricultural and medium density residential areas. These development areas generally have public water and lack public sewer; however, water lines should be encouraged to be extended within the designated growth boundary.

Medium Density Residential

This category includes areas where suburban patterns of residential development have occurred and are encouraged to occur in the future. Although single-family homes are the predominant land use in this category, higher density residential development such as duplexes and apartments may also be suitable. Allowable future densities in these areas should be based upon the availability and adequacy of public services and facilities and the compatibility of the proposed land use with surrounding properties. Public water and/or sewer typically serve or are planned for these areas. Most of these areas will be located in the southern portions of the County.

Medium Density Residential areas consist of three sub-districts based on different types of structures and population densities designed to stabilize and protect the essential character of the sub-district. These districts should be developed as follows:

Future developments within the Medium Density Residential units should consider the following factors:

- Multi-family dwellings of five or more units must be supplied with public water and sewer;
- All developments consisting of five or more housing units should require access roads built to VDOT standards; and
- Developments may require a traffic impact analysis per VDOT guidelines.

High Density Residential

This category includes areas where densities are increased with the availability of public water and sewer services. Single-family,

multi-family, planned unit development, and townhouses are all permitted uses in this district. High density residential uses should be developed along roads that can handle adequately an increase in traffic and can accommodate more intensive uses. High density residential uses should also be encouraged to locate near public transit routes (e.g., Greater Lynchburg Transit Company).

Future developments within the High Density Residential units should consider the following factors:

- All high density residential should be served with both water and sewer;
- All roads should be built to VDOT standards;
- Developments may require a traffic impact analysis per VDOT guidelines;
- All developments should provide for improved pedestrian accessibility; and
- Access to mass transit should be provided for all developments.

Residential Mixed Use

This category designates areas that are densely populated with traditional neighborhood grid-like streets, where less intensive commercial activities can co-exist with surrounding residential uses. The intention of these areas is to allow development of mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, activity centers containing a variety of uses, including residential, supporting commercial, cultural, educational, and other public and private uses, while encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment in residential and supporting commercial areas. These areas are served by public sewer and water, and its design standards encourage the

use and implementation of sidewalks, good lighting practices, and underground utilities.

Future developments within Residential Mixed Use areas should consider the following factors:

- Developments may require a traffic impact analysis per VDOT guidelines;
- All developments should provide for improved pedestrian accessibility;
- Access to mass transit when available, should be provided for all developments;
- All new developments or expansions that increase the floor area by twenty (20) percent or greater must provide sidewalks that parallel the public street;
- Commercial developments will not be permitted to have any outdoor storage;
- Commercial developments will be subject to lighting standards.

The Residential Mixed Use District (RMU-1) comprises the land that is commonly referred to as “Old Town” Madison Heights which overlooks onto downtown Lynchburg, and its associated surrounding boundaries are: Route 163 to the west, Route 210 to the north, U.S. Route 29 Business to the east and the James River to the south.

Mixed Use / Traditional Neighborhood Development

This category designates areas that are located within County’s designated Urban Development Area(s) (UDA), at least 40 acres in area, and served by public sewer and water, where projects feature a mix of land uses and building types closely linked by a network of streets, sidewalks, formal and informal open spaces, and trails. Projects and

development will reflect the following characteristics:

1. Compact development with defined edges and a distinct neighborhood center.
2. Buildings and streets that are pedestrian- and public transit-oriented.
3. A mix of residential, commercial, civic, and open space uses located close to one another to reduce traffic congestion, travel demand and dependence on automobiles.
4. A mix of housing styles, types, and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
5. A system of narrow, interconnected streets with sidewalks and bikeways.
6. Public transit as a viable alternative to the automobile by organizing appropriate building densities.
7. Preservation of significant environmental features and incorporation of such features into the design of new neighborhoods.
8. Design and development consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Additional information relating to Mixed Use / Traditional Neighborhood Development area(s) is given in: "Chapter VII: Urban Development Areas: Back to the Future."

Village

This category designates areas that have minimal concentrations of commercial activity and residential-type development. The intention of these areas is to encourage cluster development of residential, commercial and public uses. In doing this, random scattering of these uses in

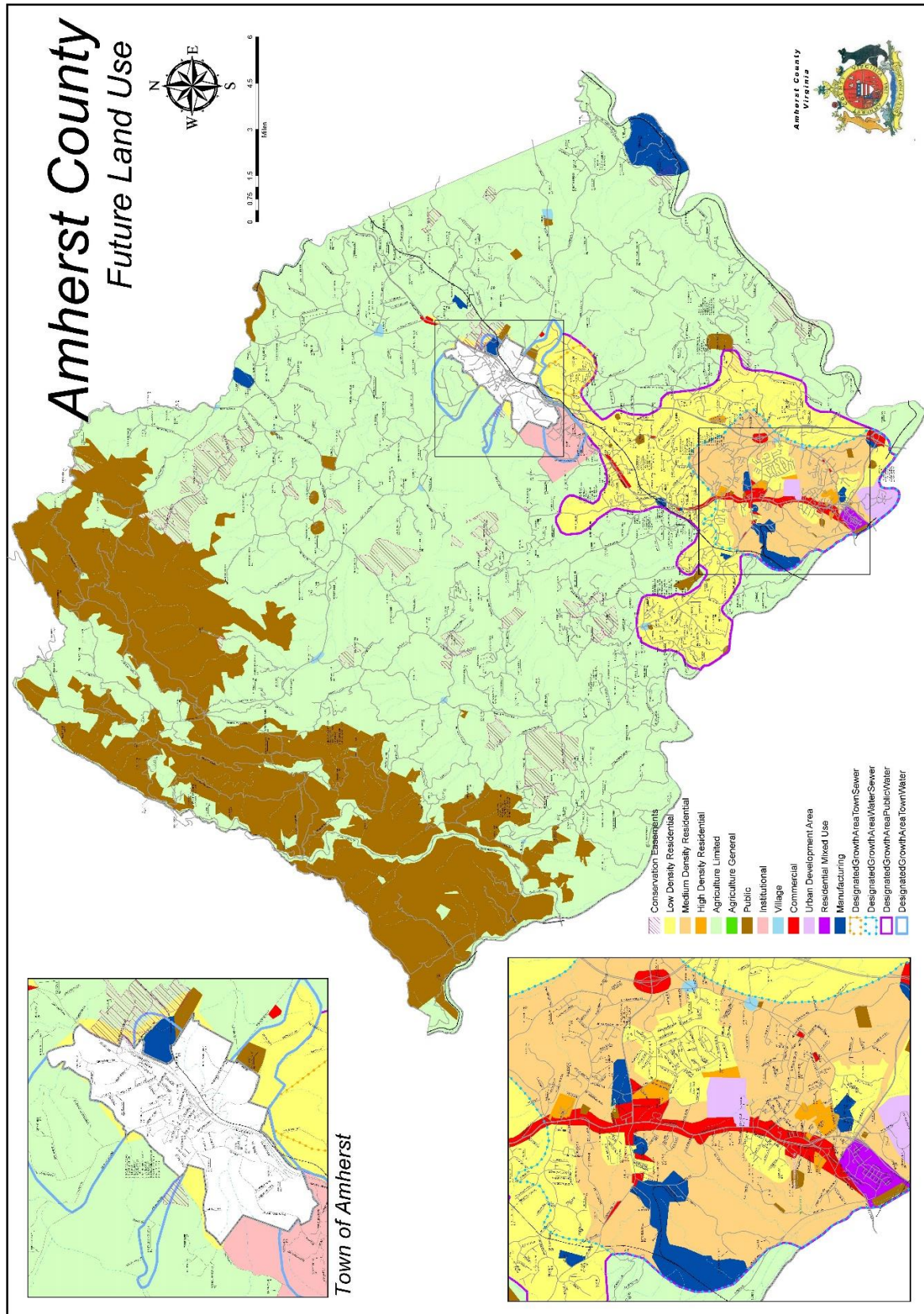
agricultural and residential areas is discouraged. Therefore, retail activity is greatly limited to neighborhood convenience sales and services and tourists-oriented specialties. To this end, protecting these areas against the encroachment of general commercial or other similar uses that are likely to generate noise, light, odors, smoke or other obnoxious influences is important to the integrity of the village designation.

Commercial

This category designates areas where commercial developments have occurred and where future urban suburban commercial developments have been encouraged. Commercial developments should be grouped in areas where extended business hours and high traffic volumes can be accommodated. Consideration should be given to limiting dark sky lighting effects, stormwater runoff, and the number of entrances and exits to state highways. Efforts should be made to maintain as much of the natural topography as possible thereby limiting grading and fill requirements. Public water and sewer should be supplied for these areas wherever possible.

Industrial

The industrial land use category is designated to show those areas where major industrial activities exist and/or are planned. Industrial developments should be grouped in areas served by adequate highways and public utilities, when practical. In general, industrial structures (buildings, parking areas, etc.) should be separated from residential areas and schools by setbacks of a minimum of 200 feet. Structure heights should be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Consideration should be given to limiting dark sky lighting effects, stormwater runoff, noise, and maintenance of natural topography.



**LAND USE
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

To accommodate future population growth in a planned manner.

Objective #1

Adopt zoning and subdivision ordinance incentives and regulations necessary to implement the growth management policies contained in this plan.

Strategies:

Adopt regulations that encourage development in the designated growth areas (areas served by public water and sewer) of the County.

Support tourism and agritourism-related businesses and planned unit developments that are complimentary to agricultural land in the County to capitalize on the growth of tourism and agritourism businesses and developments in the region.

Evaluate all current zoning and subdivision ordinance standards and procedures and study the impact of such developments in the rural portions of the County.

Continue to support the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances that requires the extension of public water and wastewater facilities to serve large developments if the new development is within 1,000 feet of existing water and wastewater facilities and is within the County's and ACSA's designated water or wastewater growth area, as shown in this plan.

Support amending the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances to include provisions for residential mixed use areas support new traditional neighborhood developments that are not located within designated Urban Development Areas.

Develop regulations that require properties that develop/re-develop to locate power lines underground along the Route 29 Business corridor.

Promote the expansion of short-term tourist rentals in appropriate locations in Amherst County.

Promote solar generation facilities that are located East of Route 29 Business and are in areas that do not have a negative impact on adjoining property or Amherst County residents.

Support the extension of broadband services, specifically locating fiber in areas that are unserved and underserved in Amherst County. Ensure land use regulations allow for the expansion of fiber in Amherst County.

Promote energy storage facilities in the M-1, Industrial District and in areas that do not have a negative impact on adjoining property, natural resources, or Amherst County residents.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Objective #2

If funds are available, the County should develop an updated water and sewer master plan following each revision of the comprehensive plan.

Strategies:

Request that the public service authority retain consultant services to prepare an updated water and sewer master plan for Amherst County consistent with the growth objectives contained in this plan.

Objective #3

Allow and encourage appropriately scaled residential and commercial development to locate in Amherst County's "Village Center" communities.

Strategies:

Support amendments to the County's official zoning ordinance that include standards for the development of the County's Village Center areas.

Objective #4

Plan, fund, and/or approve public capital improvements that are consistent with this plan.

Strategies:

On an annual basis, evaluate the County's six-year secondary road plan to ensure that all planned projects are consistent with this comprehensive plan.

Continue to prepare/update a five year capital improvement plan each year to identify and fund public capital improvement projects that are consistent with this plan.

Goal #2

To promote the preservation and use of open space and encourage viable agricultural and forest land uses to protect the County's natural beauty, rural character, wildlife habitats and water resources.

Objective #1

Identify key open spaces within the County.

Strategies:

Prepare an open space master plan based on the County's GIS conservation mapping system.

Determine criteria of attributes for desired open space such as minimum acreage, visibility, and aesthetic value.

Objective #2

Enhance public land access where funding may be available.

Strategies:

Develop more County lake recreational access points, through grant funding and user fees.

Expand James River access points.

Continue expansion of Riveredge Park Trail, Virginia Heritage Trail and Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail.

Study the feasibility of developing the old Southern Railway bed along Harris Creek into a hiking/biking trail.

Encourage volunteer effort coordination with National Forest Service for maintenance of trails and picnic areas.

Objective #3

Provide and/or support economic incentives to encourage the preservation of open space, agricultural, and forestal lands.

Strategies:

Continue the use of the Use Value Assessment (land use tax) program in Amherst County.

Support agricultural and forestal district programs in Amherst County and promote its use to agricultural and forestall land owners.

Support the conservation initiatives, such as the acquisition of conservation easements, of local conservation organizations.

Increase awareness of the Land Use Program and promote its use as a land preservation tool.

To be cost effective, work with the Central Virginia Land Trust and the Virginia Outdoor Foundation due to their ability to leverage grant funding with modest local contributions.

Objective #4

Increase available funding for open space and agricultural land conservation initiatives.

Strategies:

Request that the General Assembly continue the land conservation fund and increase the funding for this program.

Objective #5

Initiate/support public education programs on conservation and low impact development techniques.

Strategies:

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Support agencies such as the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and Central Virginia Land Conservancy to design and offer conservation seminars on topics such as best management practices, conservation easements, and low impact site design.

Objective #6

Enhance existing and explore new conservation programs.

Strategies:

Place additional emphasis on obtaining private, state, and federal grants for conservation efforts.

Objective #7

Promote retention of agricultural and forest land use in the County.

Strategies:

Maintain support for the Extension Service.

Encourage and promote existing rural entrepreneurial businesses.

Maintain agricultural education as part of the high school curriculum.

Encourage and establish programs for the mentoring of next generation farmers.

Goal #3

Minimize the negative environmental impacts of new and existing residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Objective #1

Promote environmentally sensitive stormwater management through the use of BMP's, low impact development, and other techniques.

Strategies:

Consider requiring the use of low impact development techniques in the County's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

Continue to support low impact development standards for the County's Watershed Protection Districts and other environmentally sensitive areas. Also establish zoning and subdivision ordinance incentives for the use of these techniques in other portions of the County.

Adopt available models to design a low impact manual for Amherst County use.

Objective #2

Ensure that all new development not served by public water and sewer has adequate potable water and wastewater facilities.

Strategies:

Maintain County's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance requiring all new private septic systems have a suitable, reserve drain-field space. Ensure that both are shown on the subdivision plat.

Continue to support efforts to require that private wells in new development be permitted, constructed, and approved by the Department of Health prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Consider requiring all subdivisions to meet the same soil evaluation standards for on-site wastewater systems and requirements of the watershed protection ordinance when located within those overlay districts.

Objective #3

Protect the County's water and air resources from degradation.

Strategies:

Locate new industries on the basis of the impact of their waste discharge and storm runoff on local waterways.

Consider a County riparian buffer program for waterways.

Cooperate with the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District in a voluntary riparian buffer easement program.

Rely upon and support the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's ambient air quality standards.

Prohibit development in river and stream corridors, especially floodplains (100 year) and wetlands.

Encourage agricultural compliance with Chesapeake Bay protection guidelines by extending or expanding financial incentives.

Goal #4

To protect our scenic view sheds.

Objective #1

Reduce light pollution.

Strategies:

Work with local electric companies to begin installing neighbor-friendly, shielded fixtures and retrofit existing fixtures with shields.

Amherst County Comprehensive Plan

Consider the adoption of zoning ordinance standards that limit the impact of site lighting for new or expanded construction.

Objective #2

Preserve and enhance scenic corridors.

Strategies:

Identify gateways to the County and scenic corridors, and apply special zoning and littering controls including increased fines for littering.

Provide and enforce regulations limiting placement of abandoned vehicles, household items, etc. in view of public rights-of-way.

Objective #3

Encourage the protection of steep slopes and ridgelines.

Strategies:

The County may wish to research and consider establishing a mountain/ridgeline protection ordinance and enforce guidelines for building lots and access roads to new developments.

Goal #5

To support development and redevelopment of sites with higher density potential.

Objective #1

Facilitate Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and mixed use communities.

Strategies:

Work with the Service Authority and Health Department to identify best practices to be considered within PUDs.

Support development of retirement communities within Amherst County.

Work with government agencies and private entities to help facilitate and redevelop the Training Center in accordance with the Central Virginia Training School Master Plan developed by HDR (See Appendix A).

Objective #2

Work with various properties and agencies to support the redevelopment of existing or upcoming vacant structures.

Strategies:

Work with General Assembly to identify and demolish derelict buildings.

Work with regional and state agencies to assist with the redevelopment of the Central Virginia Training School in with accordance of the CVTC Master Plan (See Appendix A).

Work with the Virginia Department of General Services and Economic Development Authority (EDA) to attract appropriate proposals for redevelopment of the CVTC property in accordance with the CVTC Master Plan.

Assess and market properties for their highest and best use.

CHAPTER VII: URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS: BACK TO THE FUTURE

One legacy of the planning and zoning practice across much of the United States Post-World War II has been to promote a segregation of land uses into discrete and uniform residential, commercial, and industrial categories. The initial intent, to protect public health and welfare by removing noxious influences from residential areas, was valid. However, the result has been to segregate uses in suburban areas to such an extent as to create a total reliance on automobile travel for activities which formerly were located within convenient walking distance in older, more mixed-use urban settings. Such settings remain in cities and towns across Virginia, their familiar development patterns should be encouraged in suburban areas as well, by promoting mixed use forms. As Amherst County moves into the 21st Century, four forms of mixed-use are encouraged and recommended as follows:

- The first type includes single buildings, or clusters of connected buildings, which incorporate two or more complimentary uses, as in the placement of offices or apartments above ground-floor retail businesses, a pattern common in many Virginia downtowns.
- The second type comprises areas where one well established use predominates, but where well placed complimentary uses are appropriate. Examples include residential areas within which neighborhood churches, schools, and corner stores can all be accommodated.

- The third type consists of centers with mixes of uses and activities that act as multi-purpose destinations. These centers are characterized by shared parking and strong pedestrian linkages, where a variety of activities such as shopping, dining and entertainment can be accommodated by a single trip. The introduction of housing into such mixed use centers has become a common feature in many parts of Virginia.
- The fourth type comprises large scale planned developments designed to integrate a variety of complimentary uses. Examples include traditional neighborhood developments (“TNDs”) which simulate urban settings with a compact, walkable mix of varied housing types, as well as neighborhood shops, services, and other amenities. Likewise, office parks and employment centers incorporating complementary activities such as restaurants, recreation, health clubs, day care and other services to meet daily needs of workers and visitors are included in the category of planned mixed-use developments.

All of these forms represent substantial opportunities to promote a more diversified, sustainable pattern of land uses and activities in Amherst County. They are suitable both in urban areas in need of reinvestment and in suburban or fringe areas, where they provide a sustainable alternative and antidote to sprawl. Mixed use development, when properly planned and located, can help reduce auto trips, promote a more walkable environment and help expand the supply of higher density, affordable housing near employment and activity centers.

Designated Growth Areas

As noted in Chapter V of this Plan, when a community decides to reduce the amount of development that can occur in areas that are desired to remain rural, it is prudent to balance that with areas intended to accept development. Chapter V recommends Designated Growth Areas consisting of existing and planned public utilities, services and facilities within Amherst County. The Plan anticipates directing future growth toward these areas in an effort to create population and service hubs for the County, providing attractive places to live and work. By the same token, directing growth toward Designated Growth Areas will retain a majority of the County as primarily rural, offering alternative lifestyles and maintaining agriculture and forestry as a way of life.

Within the Designated Growth Areas, it is anticipated that all public spaces in residential areas become increasingly pedestrian friendly through a variety of measures promoted by Amherst County and in collaboration with other governmental agencies and the private sector. These may include the construction, improvement and maintenance of public squares, parks and pedestrian connections, and the attention to street design details such as landscaping, lighting, and provision of attractive street furniture. Residential, office, civic, and commercial areas in the Designated Growth Areas should have convenient access by foot and bicycle. Additional effort should be expended to ensure that mixed-use development is featured as the preferred land use pattern in the Designated Growth Areas.

Incentives are the primary mechanism for directing growth toward the Designated Growth Areas. Incentives can include place-making amenities such as street lighting,

landscaping, street furniture, sidewalks, and trails that are provided at public expense within these areas alone. Such amenities would be in addition to the provision of community facilities and services such as water and sewer, schools and libraries. In addition to the provision of place-making amenities, Amherst County will continue to provide timely review of development applications within the Designated Growth Areas, including both the Residential Mixed Use District (RMU-1) and the Urban Development Area (UDA).

Urban Development Area Generally

In 2007 the Virginia General Assembly embraced the philosophy of balancing urban and rural areas by adding Section 15.2-2223.1 to the Code of Virginia requiring high growth counties (localities with a population at least 20,000 and a growth rate of 5 percent or more between the most recent decennial censuses), including Amherst County at the time, to designate Urban Development Areas in their comprehensive plans by July 1, 2011. As defined by the Code of Virginia, Urban Development Area means an area that is (i) appropriate for higher density development due to its proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or a developed area and (ii) to the extent feasible, to be used for redevelopment or infill development.

When 2010 census data became available, Amherst County determined that it was no longer required to comply with the statute due to a drop in its growth rate; however, the appointed and elected officials of the County recognize that positive benefits can be realized by encouraging a more compact growth pattern and by permitting innovative planning and zoning techniques within certain areas. Therefore, the County has

elected to designate an Urban Development Area within the already defined Designated Growth Area that provides for the following:

1. Development of up to four single-family residences, or six townhouses, or 12 apartments or condominium units per developable acre, and a floor area ratio of up to 0.4 per developable acre for commercial development, or any proportional combination thereof.
2. An area sufficient in size to meet projected residential and commercial growth for at least 10 but not more than 20 years; development may be phased over the 20-year period.
3. Development that promotes the principles of traditional neighborhood design principles, including but not 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) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, with affordable housing to meet projected family income distributions of future residential growth, (vi) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (vii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections is encouraged within the UDA, in accordance with the zoning ordinance.
4. Direction of federal, state and local transportation, housing, water and sewer facility, economic development, and other public infrastructure funding for new and expanded facilities to the UDA, to the extent possible.
5. Reexamination and, if necessary, revision of the size and boundaries of the UDA every five years, in conjunction with the review of this Comprehensive Plan and in accordance with the most recent available population growth estimates and projections.
6. Continued cooperation and consultation between Amherst County and Region 2000 partner localities to promote orderly and efficient development within the region.

The area designated as a UDA consists of vacant land fronting on Route 29 Business, as shown on the County's future land use map. The area is located within the County's Designated Growth Area, in proximity to major transportation corridors and has access to public water, sewer and line electric utilities. Financial and other incentives for development within the UDA are outlined in the Plan and provided as part of Amherst County's timely review of development applications within Designated Growth Areas.

UDA Policies

Amherst County has elected to designate an Urban Development Area (UDA) to serve as a focal point for growth over the next 10-20 years. Development within the UDA is encouraged to be compact and designed to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. It is anticipated that traditional neighborhood design and conservation design principles will be featured along with

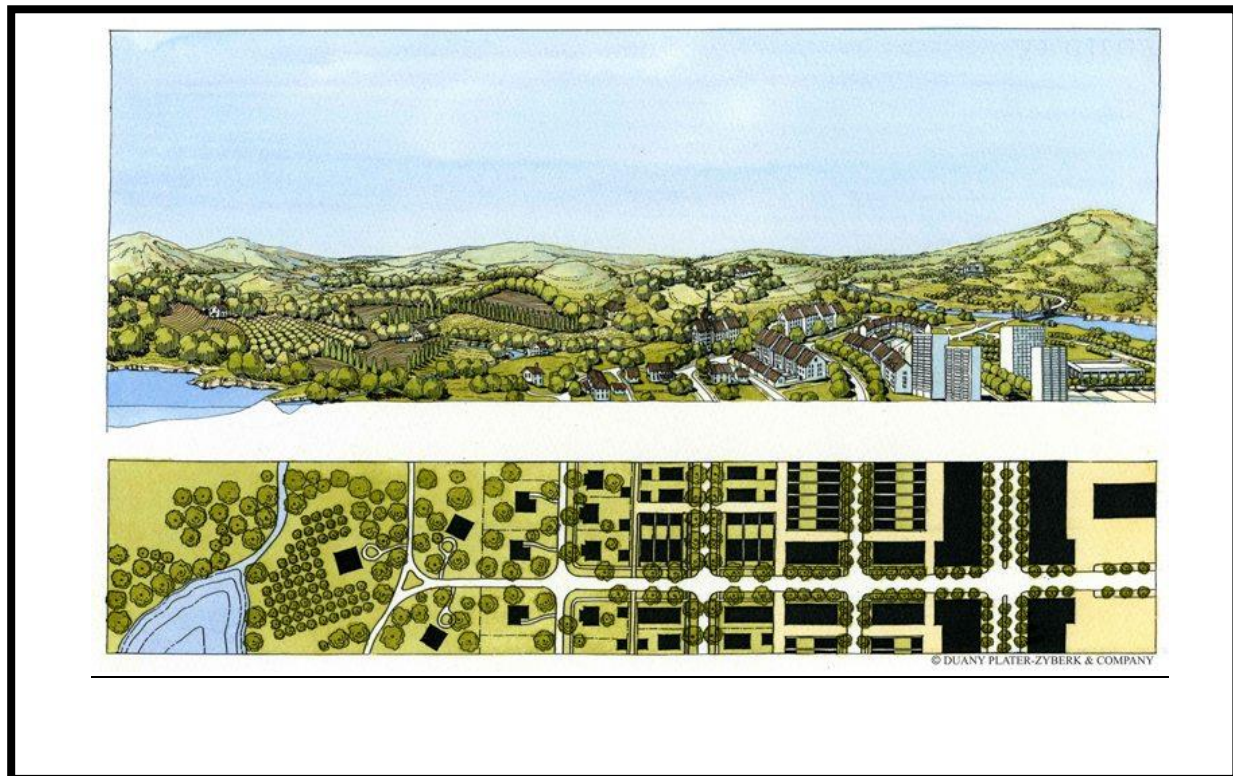
a full complement of services and amenities. Provision for transit facilities or stops is also anticipated as density increases. The corresponding UDA land use category is expected to accommodate the following densities: up to four single-family residences, or six townhouses, or 12 apartments or condominium units per developable acre, and a floor area ratio of up to 0.4 per developable acre for commercial development, or any proportional combination thereof. Within the

UDA, design standards incorporating the principles of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood development are encouraged

through the use of the corresponding TND zoning district. Other applicable UDA policies are as follows:

1. Development within the UDA should function as a mixed use activity center with medium scale office, retail, service and civic uses, with higher density housing in the core. Development within the UDA should generally consist of a minimum of two-story and a maximum of three-story buildings with minimal views of parking areas from the street.
2. Overall densities in the UDA should be village-like in terms of scale and intensity, with a mixture of high density mixed use development ranging from single family attached and multi-family residential units and 0.4 commercial floor area ratio (FAR) at the core, or most intense portion of the development, and single family detached to small lot single family detached residential units and 0.25 commercial FAR at the edges. The sought-after effect being one of a “transect” illustrated below, or a transition away from the taller, denser core area toward a lower density development pattern at the fringe that is compatible with surrounding development.

Figure 11: The Transect

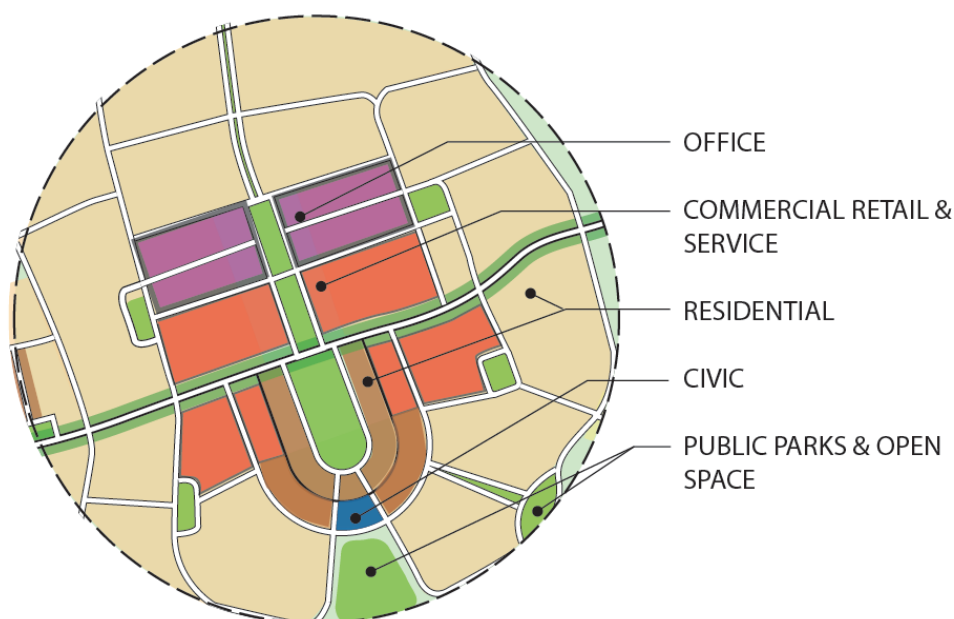


3. Development within the Urban Development Area is intended to be efficient, compact, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented with a range of residential densities, providing active, passive, and natural open space that is fully integrated into the County’s rural areas through a network of connected trails and walkways.

4. The Urban Development Area will provide for a mix of land uses including dwellings, commercial and office uses, personal and household service establishments, institutional uses, public facilities, parks, playgrounds and other similar uses meeting the needs of the adjoining neighborhoods.
5. The land use mix (measured as a percentage of the land area) in the Urban Development Area should generally reflect the ratios described in the table and illustration below:

Table 36: Land Use Type	Minimum	Maximum
a. Residential	25%	40%
b. Commercial Retail & Services	20%	45%
c. Office	10%	25%
d. Civic Uses	10%	No Maximum
e. Public Parks & Open Spaces	10%	No Maximum

Figure 12: Land Use Type Illustration



Example of Mixed Uses in a UDA

The development of Urban Development Areas should be phased to achieve acceptable levels of transportation service through the available mix of transportation modes. An overall concept plan should be developed so the interrelationship of its parts (residential, commercial, office, civic, public open space, and transportation network) can be evaluated.

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

Goal #1

Concentrate housing, commerce and public facilities in a mixed-use pattern within designated urban development areas.

Objective #1

Encourage higher density and alternative housing types with Urban Development Areas.

Strategies:

Consider designating other areas within the County's designated growth area as UDAs.

Develop a new zoning district for the UDA featuring traditional neighborhood design principles that will allow:

- a. Mixed-use neighborhoods including mixed housing types and values accommodating all residents and workers in the County;
- b. Integration of residential, retail, office and commercial development with public spaces and open spaces;
- c. A built environment that encourages and accommodates people living, shopping, visiting, and enjoying time in the UDA;
- d. Development densities that improve rates of walking, bicycling and transit use;
- e. Proximity to public infrastructure including utilities, services, parks and similar facilities;
- f. Bicycle and pedestrian-friendly street and road design;
- g. Interconnection of new streets with existing local streets and roads in a logical network;
- h. Design features that accommodate and prepare for an aging population within the County;
- i. Preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas;
- j. Opportunities to redevelop existing underutilized and previously developed land;
- k. Satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management through the use of low impact techniques such as bioretention areas, rain gardens, gravel wetlands, and pervious pavements;
- l. Vehicular parking accommodated without dominating the streetscape or landscape;
- m. Reduced front and side yard building setbacks; and,
- n. Narrowed street widths and shorter turning radii at street intersections, in accordance with VDOT Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements (SSAR) standards.

Objective #2

Encourage a mixture of uses within the UDA in a pedestrian-oriented and pedestrian-friendly manner.

Strategies:

Develop a small area plan for the UDA that focuses on design, arrangement, and infrastructure while maximizing flexibility of uses.

Develop a mixed use zoning classification which incorporates flexible land use guidelines, allowing residential densities of 4 dwelling units per acre or greater and commercial floor area ratios up to 0.4 per acre, with specific performance standards in the areas of:

- a. Access management
- b. Shared parking
- c. Landscaping
- d. Architecture and Urban Design
- e. Pedestrian and bicycle access
- f. Low impact stormwater management

Ensure the UDA promotes pedestrian activity by:

- a. Making automobile related uses compatible with pedestrian activity
- b. Creating on-street parking
- c. Placing structures such that parking areas are located to the rear of structures
- d. Providing accommodations so that the area between buildings and the street be used for outdoor dining for cafes and restaurants and other, similar pedestrian and public oriented uses

Within all or along access ways of significance, allow any combination of residential, office, and retail structures and use within the same structure, provided the structure meets design and building code requirements.

Objective #3

Arrange land use designations so that the UDA witnesses distinct and discernable boundaries and creates a sense of place.

Strategies:

Use the existing transportation network and landforms as the basis for developing the UDA boundary.

Promote infill development, including higher density development, within the UDA.

Encourage the reuse of existing structures where appropriate.

Objective #4

Manage transportation impacts from development in the UDA by controlling the number and location of entrances onto primary roadways and incorporating multi-modal transportation elements in the planning of new development in the UDA.

Strategies:

Work with VDOT and potential developers in the UDA to develop an access management plan and policies for the business portion of US 29 through the UDA to ensure the proper spacing of entrances, traffic signals and median openings.

Encourage shared access and entries to reduce the number of entries onto primary roadways and improve safety in the area.

Encourage the development of a connected network of local streets to distribute trips and separate local from through traffic in the area.

Promote interconnectivity and vehicular and pedestrian circulation between adjoining properties.

Support access to other transportation networks outside of the UDA.

Locate entrances a safe distance from traffic signals and encourage the multiple use of traffic signals by adjoining properties and businesses.

Properly evaluate rezoning and site plan proposals to analyze and mitigate the impacts of transportation in the area.

Review subdivision plats to ensure that potential businesses can have sufficient separation and meet sight distance requirements when fronting on highways.

Encourage the provision of facilities that allow multi-modal options for travelers, such as bike lanes, sidewalks and trails and transit stops.

Require, when feasible, traffic impact analyses from developers proposing new development in the UDA.

Periodically review these strategies in light of new development and changing traffic conditions to ensure they are effective.

Appendix A

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