SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 @ 6:00pm
Town Hall – 2nd Floor, East Conference Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

III. OLD BUSINESS

- **Comprehensive Plan** - Certification and recommendation of the new Comprehensive Plan document which shall update and supersede the Front Royal Comprehensive Plan, adopted March 23, 1998. Chapter 22, Article 3: §15.2-2223 through §15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia outlines the legal authority and requirement that all localities prepare, recommend, and adopt a Comprehensive Plan.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

FRONT ROYAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

May 19, 2023

Acknowledgments

Mayor
Lori Cockrell

Planning Commission
Darryl G. Merchant, Chairman
Daniel Wells, Vice Chairman
Connie Marshner
Michael Williams
Glenn Wood

Town Council
Robert Wayne Sealock, Vice Mayor
Joshua Ingram
Amber Morris
Harold "Bruce" Rappaport
Duane "Skip" Rogers

Town Staff
Joe Waltz, Town Manager
Lauren Kopishke, Director of Planning and Zoning
Carol Buffa, Planning Technician
Monica McClure, Code Enforcement & Property Maintenance Official
Connie Potter, Board Clerk
John Ware, Deputy Zoning Administrator & Planner

Special Thanks to
Chris Holloway, Douglas Jones, Gary Gillespie, Joseph McFadden, Kathleen Leidich, Letasha Thompson, William Gordon, Steven Hicks, Edward Scott Lloyd, Zack Jackson, Front Royal Economic Development Association, Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, Board of Architectural Review

Prepared by Summit Design and Engineering

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Front Royal mural, Main Street.

Executive Summary

This document updates and supersedes the Front Royal Comprehensive Plan, adopted March 23, 1998. It provides a framework for the Town, development community, business owners, and residents to shape the growth of Front Royal. The document allows for a strategic approach to planning for the future. Additionally, the plan seeks to incorporate the best practices in planning and design to ensure that a high quality of life results from development. Four "big ideas" are suggested to help to achieve the Town's desired vision.

A. Preserve our history and create more of the charm we love.
B. Lifelong Living.
C. Affordable Housing.
D. Environmental Access.

These are explained in more depth in the body of this document, both in easily understood and in more nuanced ways depending on the amount of time one wishes to spend with the document. Through the public input process, the community made its voice heard. While giving guidance on certain principles that seek to create safety and comfort for pedestrians or improve the quality of development, the Plan also understands that it does not cover every great idea or need the Town may have.

The plan encourages both the Town and its community members to stay engaged, test "pilot projects," temporary events, or other design interventions. This will allow the community to take a more active role in continuing to make the Town an increasingly wonderful place to live. The plan is organized around specific goals and objectives including:

"Small town character"
High Quality Development
Transportation
Economic Sustainability
Environmental Sustainability
Housing Sustainability
Tourism
Public Health & Safety
Responsive & Accountable Governance
Reliable Utilities & Services

These help the community see where they can get involved, help decision-makers evaluate development proposals, and provide the Town with various projects to initiate including the amending of the Zoning Ordinance.

Finally, the Plan incorporates **Development Policies, Future Land Use,** and **Transportation** planning recommendations that act as a tool for the Town to steer growth.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a long range guiding policy document for Front Royal to use in its decision-making about land use, transportation, and a variety of other "comprehensive" topics related to public interests in the built environment and quality of life in the community over the next approximately twenty years. Before the adoption of this plan, it had been many years since Front Royal adopted its last full Comprehensive Plan in 1998 with limited updates since. Much had happened in the Town and the surrounding region over that time. Lots of work through the Envision Front Royal and "Envision 2.0" Downtown Revitalization Plan along with various studies that have guided the restoration of the Town's main street. This work has been a success and many people report satisfaction with the renovated buildings, new restaurants, and shops. In contrast, the Comprehensive Plan is concerned with the entire Town, including the downtown. The Plan is a result of community input, local government comments, and consultant recommendations to achieve a common vision for the future, shaping development, planning improvements, and setting expectations. However, this document is not set in stone once adopted. The Plan is to be reviewed every five years to determine if it needs updating, making it a "living" document that is subject to change over time depending on shifts, new trends, or desired changes in goals and strategies.

The Planning Process

Simply stated, the comprehensive planning process defines where the Town is, determines where the Town wants to be, and then plans the steps it will take to get there. The creation of this Comprehensive Plan took place over the course of a year, beginning with meetings between Town staff and the consultant, and a presentation to the Town Council and Planning Commission. The planning team then gathered a great deal of data from the United States Census and the American Community Survey as well as ESRI's Business Analyst, to create an Existing Conditions analysis, which forms the factual basis for the Plan. The planning team published a summary of each step of the process, posting each on the Plan website: the Existing Conditions Report, the Survey Results Summary, and the Draft Plan.

Legal Authority

Chapter 22, Article 3: §15.2-2223 through §15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia outlines the legal authority and requirement that all localities prepare, recommend, and adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan "shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities." The Comprehensive Plan is a living document, meaning it can be actively changed to meet needs. The Code of Virginia requires that the Planning Commission review an adopted plan and determine if any changes are needed. At the review it is advised to evaluate how the existing plan is being implemented and if the stated goals are being met. The Planning Commission may determine that no changes are needed and no further action is required or they may determine that specific amendments are needed, or that the entire plan needs to be rewritten. To show ongoing implementation is being achieved, Town staff should report, at minimum, annually to the Town Council and Planning Commission on progress. This can also provide a designated time to capture any points of clarification or changes that need to be made to improve the Plan as well as ensure consistency across documents. Upon the plan's adoption by Town Council, it will supersede the previous Comprehensive Plan and become the governing document. Many ideas have been borrowed and updated for contemporary times from the previous planning documents and studies. Previous plans should be archived for tracking the trajectory of trends and effectiveness of planning processes in the Town, although only the active plan will be referenced as the guiding document for the Town.

Relationship to Other Documents

The Comprehensive Plan works in conjunction with other Front Royal plans and ordinances, including the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance, and the Capital Improvement Plan.

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are two sections of Front Royal's municipal code that provide direct regulations for the location, form, and character of private development. The Comprehensive Plan gives guidance and ultimately should influence updates to these ordinances to ensure that the goals in the Plan get implemented in a timely manner. This allows the Town Council or the Planning Commission to review a project for compliance with regulatory standards and meets the vision embodied by the Comprehensive Plan.

Capital Improvement Plans are fiscal management tools used to plan for the location, timing, and financing of a community's capital improvements over time. Capital Improvements are major, non-recurring physical infrastructure or equipment that requires funding. Virginia's Code §15.2-2239 states that the Town Council may direct the local Planning Commission to prepare and update a Capital Improvement Plan every 5 years that reflects the community's needs. The Comprehensive Plan can help guide the Capital Improvement Plan and make sure the Town's vision and priorities are aligned.

Front Royal is part of the regional Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, features roads maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, and is affected by other agencies that plan in relation to the Town. This Plan should be utilized in ensuring that Front Royal's vision is aligned with any regional or state plan that may affect the locality. There are also many plans and further studies mentioned within this Comprehensive Plan, these will need to be undertaken and aligned with the Plan to ensure its implementation and achieve its goals.

Front Royal Wine & Craft Festival.

Who uses the Comprehensive Plan?

Town Staff, Commissions, & Elected Officials

- Identify areas well-suited for growth.
- Strengthen, grow, and redevelop neighborhoods and nodes.
- Determine how to maximize return on public investment.
- Manage capital funds and projects.
- Develop budgets.
- Pursue federal, state, and other grants.
- Advance priorities for community wealth building.

Developers, Designers, & Builders

- Purchase real estate.
- Decide whether or not it is appropriate to reuse or construct new buildings in a given location.
- Identify likely hot spots for development.
- Understand the Town's priorities.
- Align design / development ideas with the Town's goals.

Residents, Non-profits, & Business Owners

- Expand, start, or relocate a business.
- Purchase real estate.
- Renovate an existing building.
- Improve a local park.
- Find a suitable location for a community garden.
- Attract a new business or service to a neighborhood.

Past Comprehensive Plans

The Town's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1958. It was prepared by a private planning firm from the City of Richmond. This early plan included general recommendations for the Town, including the redevelopment of Main Street and other downtown areas. The Town boundaries at that time reflected the Corporate Limits of 1948, consisting of approximately 2,912 acres, or 4.5 square miles.

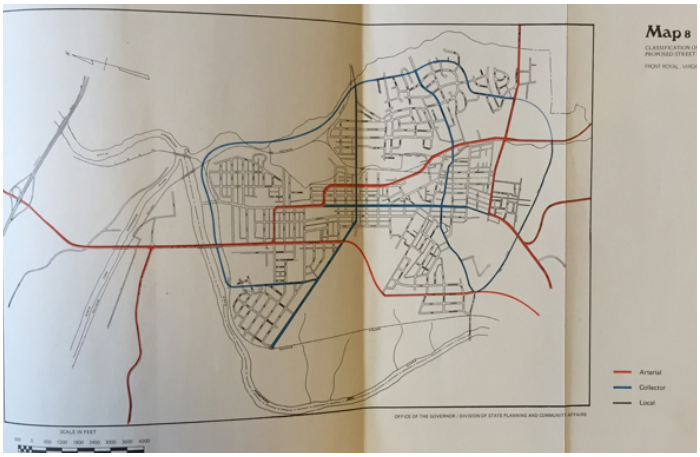
The next Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1970, and was prepared by the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs. It included the Town's first transportation plan, referred to at that time as the Major Thoroughfares Plan (See Illustration 1). The 1970 Comprehensive Plan also included an early future land use map.

Old post card of Main Street.

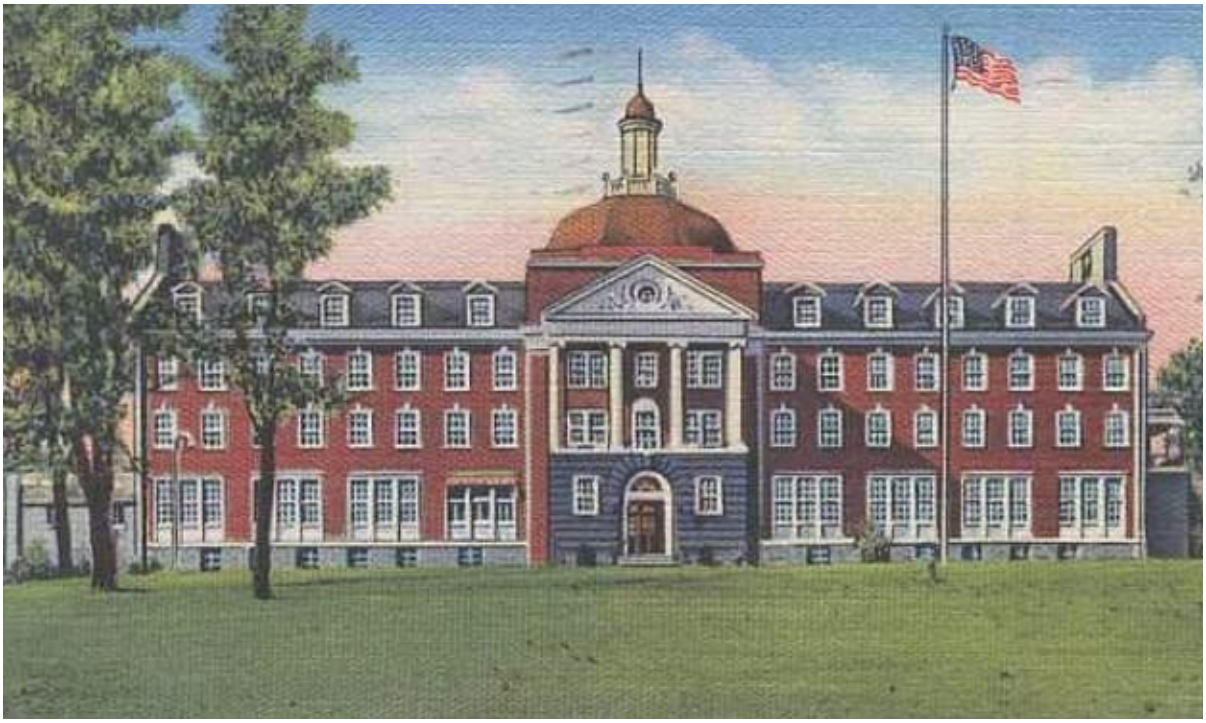
In 1979, the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission prepared a comprehensive plan of the Town with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It reflected the annexations to the Town that occurred in 1977 and 1978, which increased the Town boundaries to approximately 5,795 acres, or nearly 9.1 square miles.

In 1988, private consultants prepared an update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. It was adopted by the town in 1989. This Comprehensive Plan carried over many of the principles used in the earlier comprehensive plans, but also established individual planning areas for the Town. The 1989 Comprehensive Plan was amended in 1991 to include agricultural and open space recommendations.

In 1998 the Town updated its Comprehensive Plan again. This plan recognized new policies that called attention to developing the Rt. 522 Corridor for industrial uses. It also expanded the land use section by including more detailed plans for each of the individual planning areas of the Town. Later updates to the 1998 Plan were adopted by the Town, including an update of the Happy Creek, North East, and Leach Run Planning Areas in 2008, and the establishment of an Urban Development Area (UDA) in 2011.



1970 Comprehensive Plan.



Post card of Randolph Macon Academy.

Old Postcard of South Fork Bridge.

CONTEXT

Front Royal Town Square gazebo decorated for Fall.

Character, Past, and Future Growth

This section explains the Town's current demographic and development trends, and places them in a regional context. The Town of Front Royal is historic and charming, located next to the confluence of the North and South forks of the Shenandoah River. Preserved historical buildings and neighborhoods from various generations of the Town's history along with interesting bends and turns in the street network, are present reminders of the generations that have called the community their home.

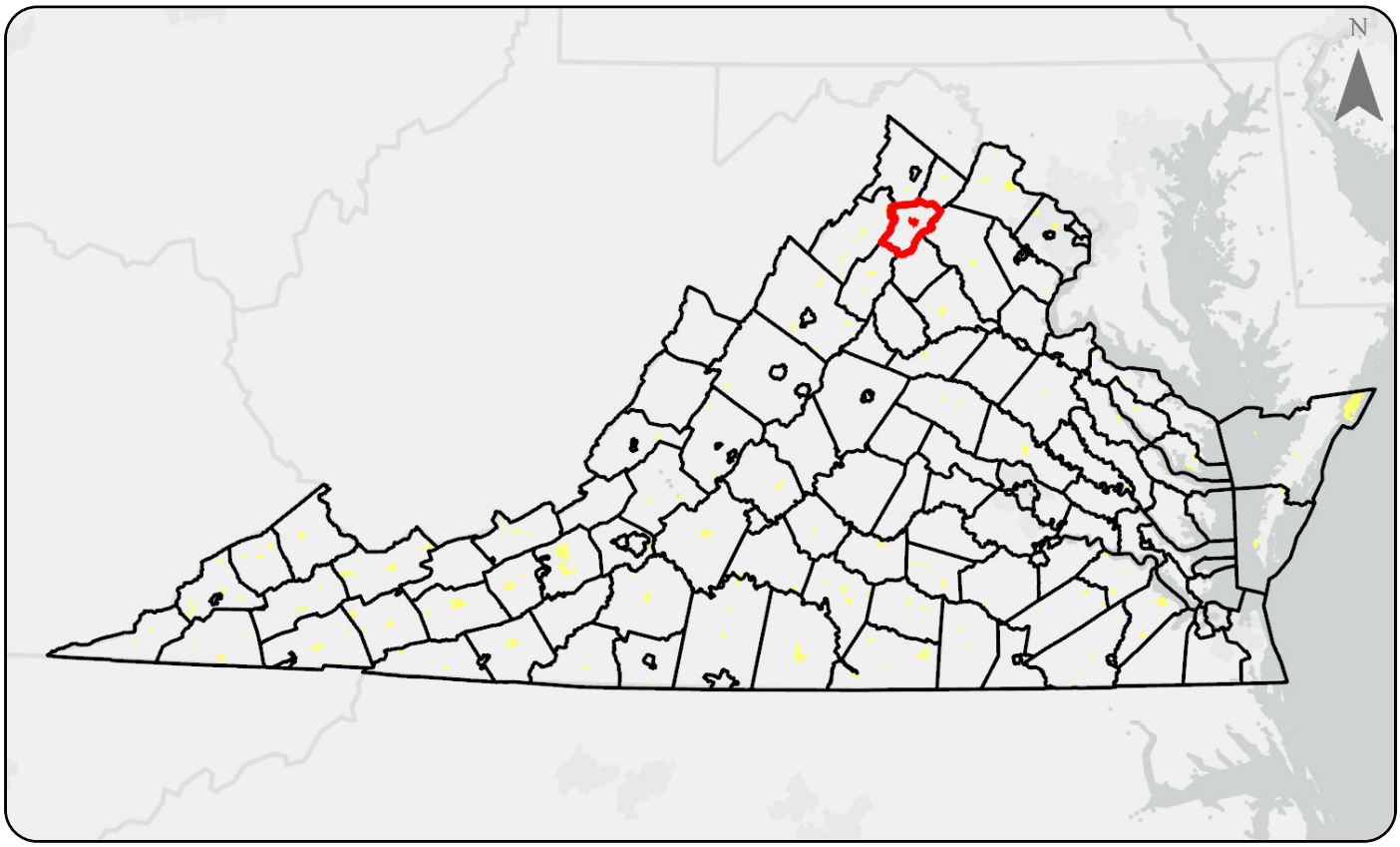
Front Royal's center is a historic and lively downtown with a mixed use Main street that includes shops, offices, restaurants, the Town Hall, local artists, and more. The area is welcoming, pleasant, and pedestrian friendly. There are surrounding neighborhoods of varying ages and other commercial corridors throughout the north and to the south of Main Street along the roads leading to Interstate 66 or south towards Skyline Drive. The Town's riverfront properties are mostly undeveloped with a large portion taken up by the former Avtex site which features ongoing remediation for soil pollution.

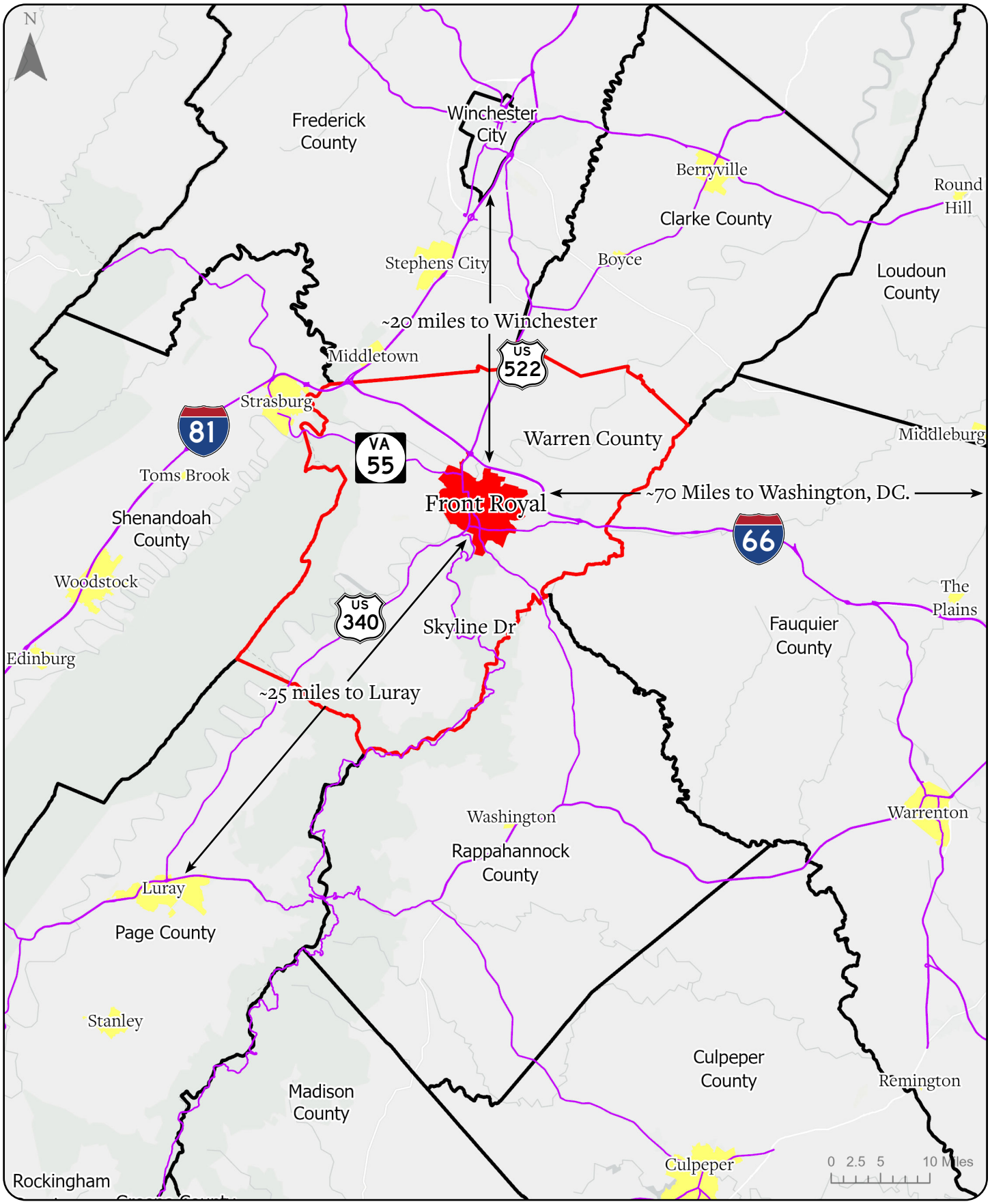
Front Royal features a multitude of access to historical, cultural, and recreational quality-of-life amenities as well as vibrant and successful festivals and events. The "gateway" to Skyline Drive's North Entrance "Mile 0" and a regional center of commerce for the surrounding area, there is always an ongoing bustle of life through Town. Fantastic restaurants, local artists, interesting shops, brewers, and other hardworking local businesses make the Town a great place to live.

The public input process revealed that people want more access to the water, they enjoy the qualities of Main Street, and that new development should be of high quality aesthetics and form. The recommendations in this plan attempt to mitigate the potential negative impacts of development while achieving the amenities and character desired by the community. Future growth in the Town should qualitatively contribute to how enjoyable it is to live or spend time in Front Royal.

Regional Context

It is important to understand Front Royal's population shifts, as with all other demographic trends in the Town, in a regional context. Front Royal offers a high quality of life, good schools, and relatively accessible housing prices within commuting distance of various employment opportunities in the northern Virginia area. It is also an attractive location for retirees. Front Royal is about 18 miles from Winchester to the north and 60 miles from Washington D.C. to the northeast.



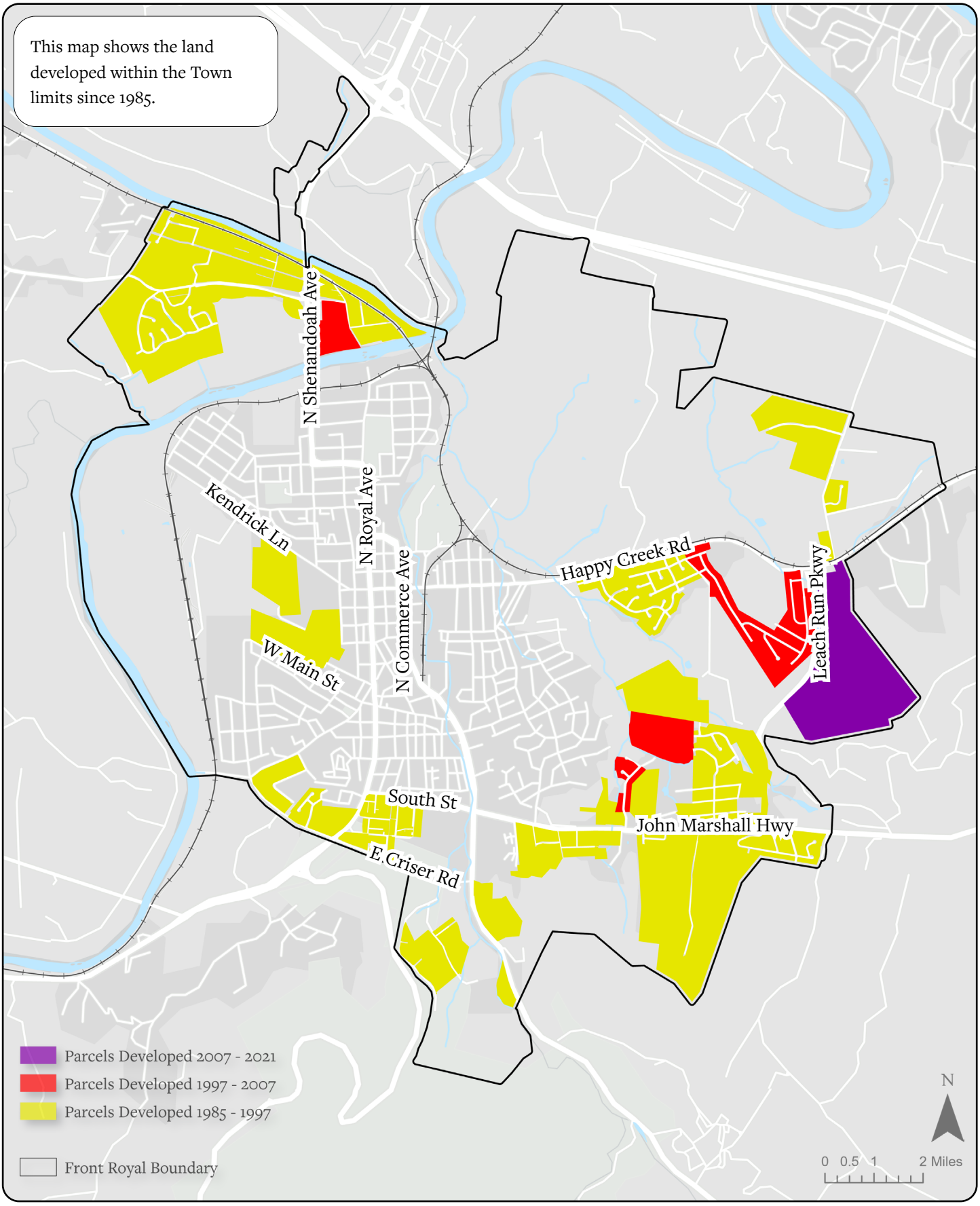

N
Frederick County
Winchester City
Berryville
Round Hill
Clarke County
Stephens City
Boyce
Loudoun County
~20 miles to Winchester
US 522
Middletown
Strasburg
81
VA 55
Warren County
Middleburg
Toms Brook
Front Royal
~70 Miles to Washington, DC.
Shenandoah County
66
Woodstock
US 340
Skyline Dr
The Plains
Fauquier County
Edinburg
~25 miles to Luray
Washington
Rappahannock County
Warrenton
Luray
Page County
Stanley
Culpeper County
Madison County
Remington
Culpeper
Rockingham
0 2.5 5 10 Miles

Land Developed over the Past Three Decades

While the Town has definitely made significant development since its incorporation, there has been very little major growth in the past 3 decades. Most growth was between 1985 and 1997 where approximately 1,142.39 acres were developed throughout the town for multiple uses, but primarily residential neighborhoods. In the time frame of 1997 to 2007, there were approximately 152 acres developed and between 2007 and 2021 there were about 169 acres developed on the east side of town.

Overall, this growth accounts for 21% of the total land area within the Town having been developed since 1985. The map on the following page illustrates the areas with development over the last 30 years. While there are still vacant parcels that have not built out, the Town is generally building out to its borders.

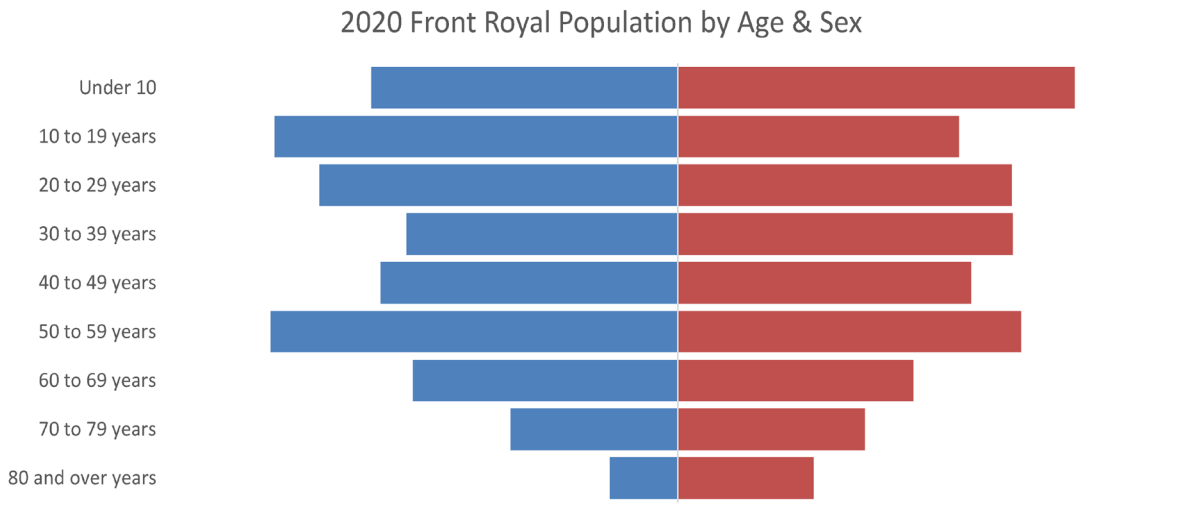
The following map was created using Google Earth historic imagery.


This map shows the land developed within the Town limits since 1985.
N Shenandoah Ave
N Royal Ave
N Commerce Ave
Kendrick Ln
W Main St
South St
E Criser Rd
Happy Creek Rd
Leach Run Pkwy
John Marshall Hwy
Parcels Developed 2007 - 2021
Parcels Developed 1997 - 2007
Parcels Developed 1985 - 1997
Front Royal Boundary
N
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Population and Age

In 2020, there were an estimated 15,011 people living in the Town of Front Royal. Nearly 18 % of the population is under 10 years old, and approximately 8% is over 80 years old.

The below diagram shows the distribution of sex by age in Front Royal in 2020.



	80 and over years	70 to 79 years	60 to 69 years	50 to 59 years	40 to 49 years	30 to 39 years	20 to 29 years	10 to 19 years	Under 10
Male %	2.67%	6.58%	10.41%	16.01%	11.68%	10.67%	14.09%	15.85%	12.05%
Female %	5.34%	7.35%	9.26%	13.50%	11.54%	13.19%	13.14%	11.06%	15.61%

Figure 2: 2021 Front Royal Population by Age & Sex
Source: American Community Survey 2020

A Note about Census Data

The United States Census has two major sources of demographic information. The decennial census, required by the Constitution and conducted every ten years since 1790, is a short survey of every household in the country. The American Community Survey (ACS) is a longer form containing more questions, taken throughout all years, and its most reliable dataset is published yearly as rolling five-year estimates. The decennial census has a smaller number of data points, like population, sex and race, with a lower margin of error. The ACS has a much larger number of data points (like social, economic and housing characteristics) and a wider margin of error. A mix of decennial census and ACS data is used to form the empirical basis for the comprehensive plan, to make up as accurate a picture of a community as possible.

This plan uses a combination of 2020 Decennial Census data and 2019 ACS data, which is the most recently available data as of the collection of this document.

Age Group Comparison

Front Royal's population is very similar to the US and Virginia in the ages of its residents.

Figure 3 below shows a comparison between Front Royal's population by age to that of Virginia and the United States. It is evident from this comparison that Front Royal has very slightly more children under 10 years old than the state and the county, as well as very slightly more people in the 70 to 79 and 80 years and above cohorts. These differences in relative population numbers may be because of the availability of quality education opportunities and because Front Royal is an attractive place to retire.

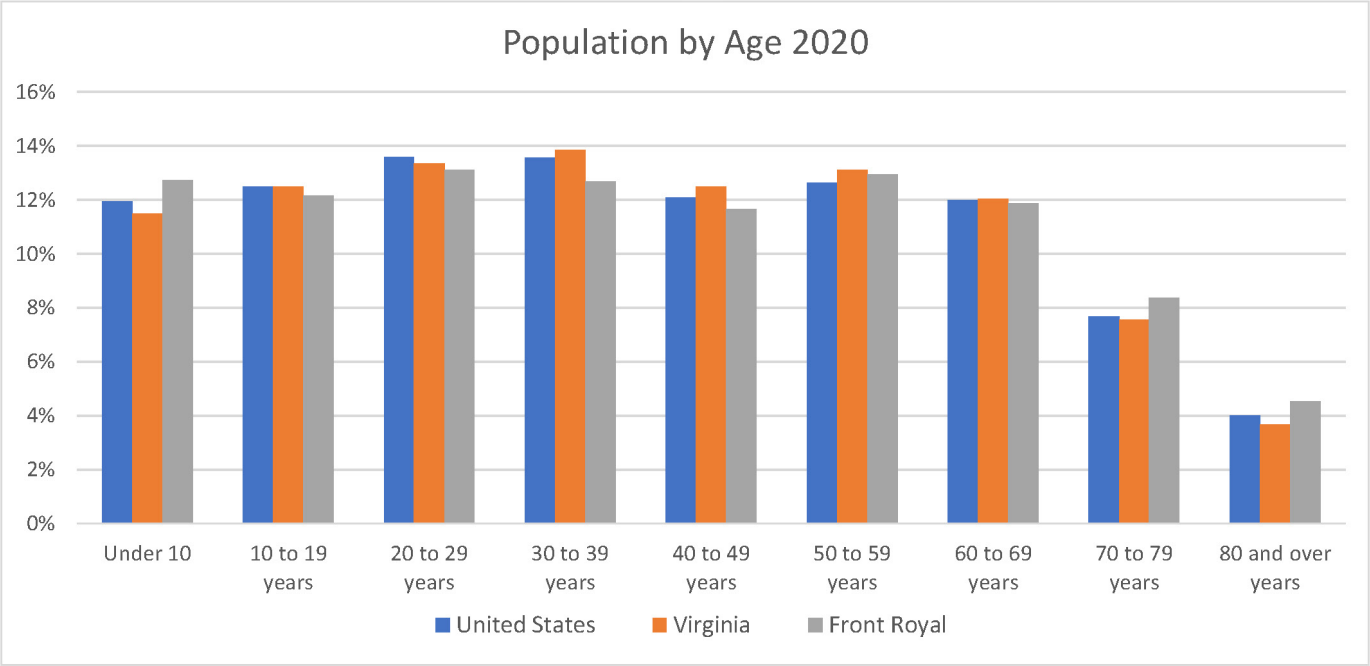


Figure 3: US / Virginia / Front Royal Age Cohorts
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Population Projections

The University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center publishes population projections by county and by large towns in Virginia. From current population of 40,727 in 2020 based on US Census, Weldon Cooper predicts that the county's population will grow 8.4% to 44,053 in 2030, followed by an additional 8.7% increase in growth to 47,305 in 2040. In looking at historical census data, the population increased 8.2% from 37,439 in 2010 to 40,727 in 2020. This shows that the trend for population growth is in line with the Weldon Cooper predictions.

According to the US Census, the Town's population in 2020 was 15,392, which was a 6.2% increase over 2010. Weldon Cooper predicts that the Town of Front Royal will grow to 16,368 by 2030 and 17,625 by 2040. This means that in the next two decades, there will be an 12% increase in the town's population and will need sufficient housing to accommodate an estimated 2,233 people.

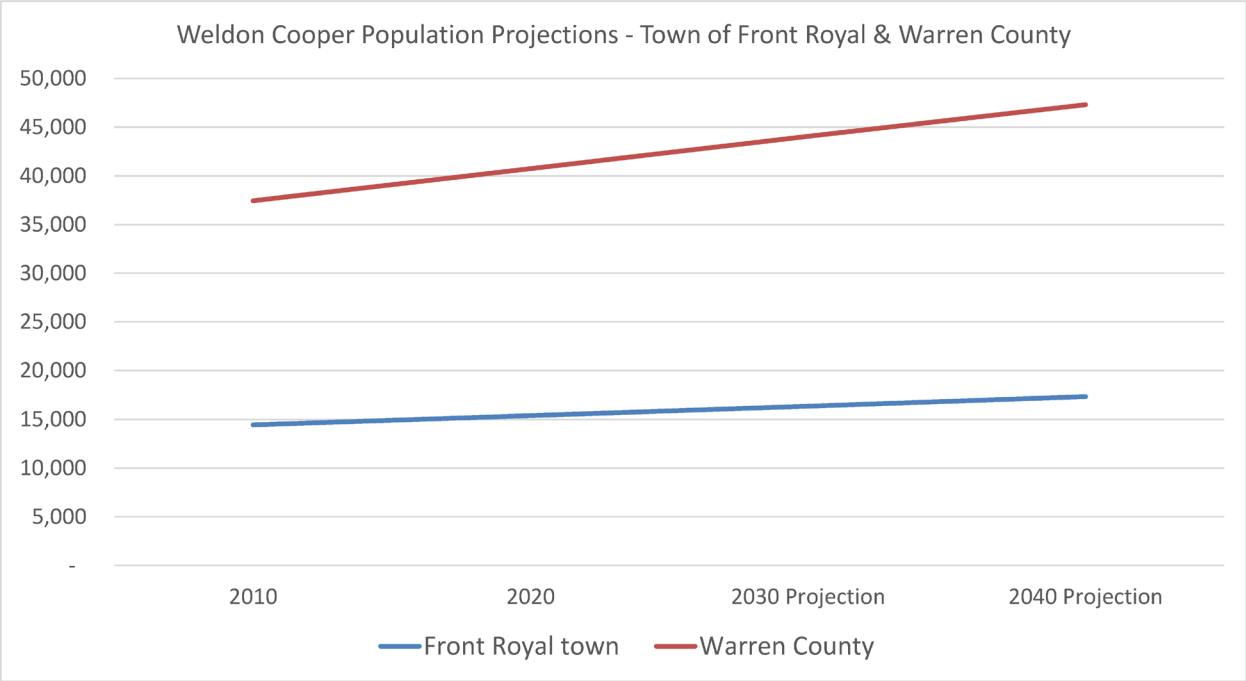


Figure 5: Population Projections
Source: Weldon Cooper Center 2020
2020 US Census

According to population projections, in the next two decades, the Town will need sufficient housing to accommodate an estimated 2,233 people.

Race

An estimated 79% of Front Royal's population is white, 8% is Black or African American, 8% are two or more races, 1% is of Asian descent, 1% is American Indian or Alaska Native, and 3% are of another race not displayed in the Census data.(P1,PL 94-171)

The Census reports Hispanic/Latino heritage separately from race. An estimated 7% of Front Royal's residents are Hispanic or Latino. (P2, PL 94-171)

Citizenship Status

In 2019, approximately 95% of Front Royal residents were born in the US. Of those not born in the US, 1.5% were naturalized US citizens, and 3.8% were not citizens. (ACS 2019 B05001)

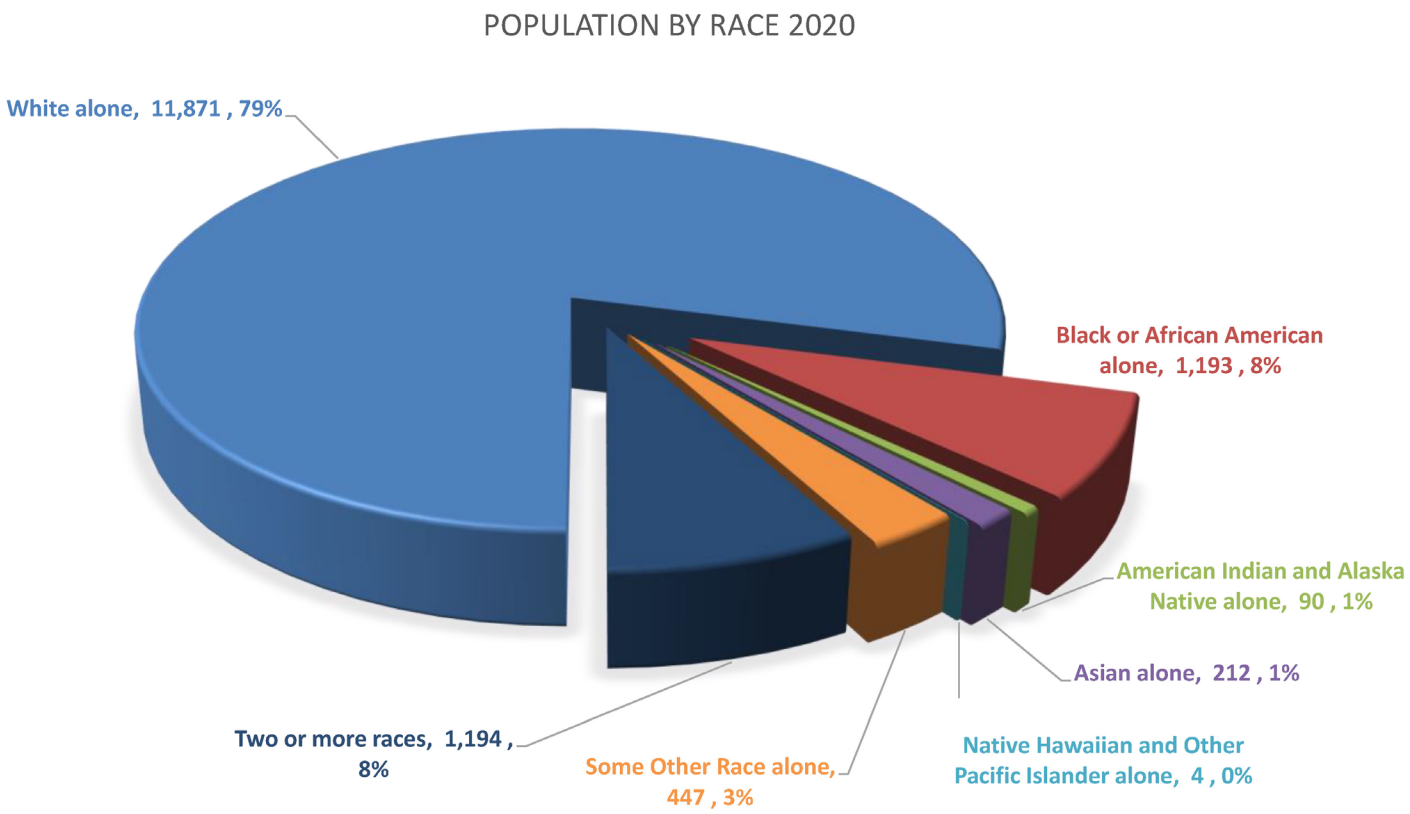


Figure 6: Population by Race
Source: Decennial Census 2020 (PL 94-171)

History Timeline

Indigenous Populations (Before 1600s)

The land that comprises the Town of Front Royal was historically populated by various indigenous groups over thousands of years. The Warren County area features some of North America's most important Paleo-Indian sites. By the 1600s, the land was populated by Haudenosaunee, Shawnee, and Cherokee nations utilizing the rich natural resources of the Shenandoah Valley.

Colonial Settlement (1700s-1800s)

The area was surveyed in the late 1720s and settlers began arriving. When the Treaty of Lancaster was signed in 1744, the Haudenosaunee renounced their claims to the area. Colonists began to flow in greater numbers westward towards the Ohio territory. The Town was founded in 1754 and chartered by the Virginia General Assembly in 1788. During this time the original name of "Helltown" gave way to "Front Royal."

The Railroads & Civil War (1800s)

The mid-1800s brought railroad connections to the Town, further linking the local economy of lumber, agricultural, manufacturing, and grain milling to ports. It also connected the Town's people in ways that would bring the Civil War to their doorstep. The Battle of Front Royal was fought in the northern part of town, with the Confederacy and Union forces looking to secure control of the Shenandoah Valley.

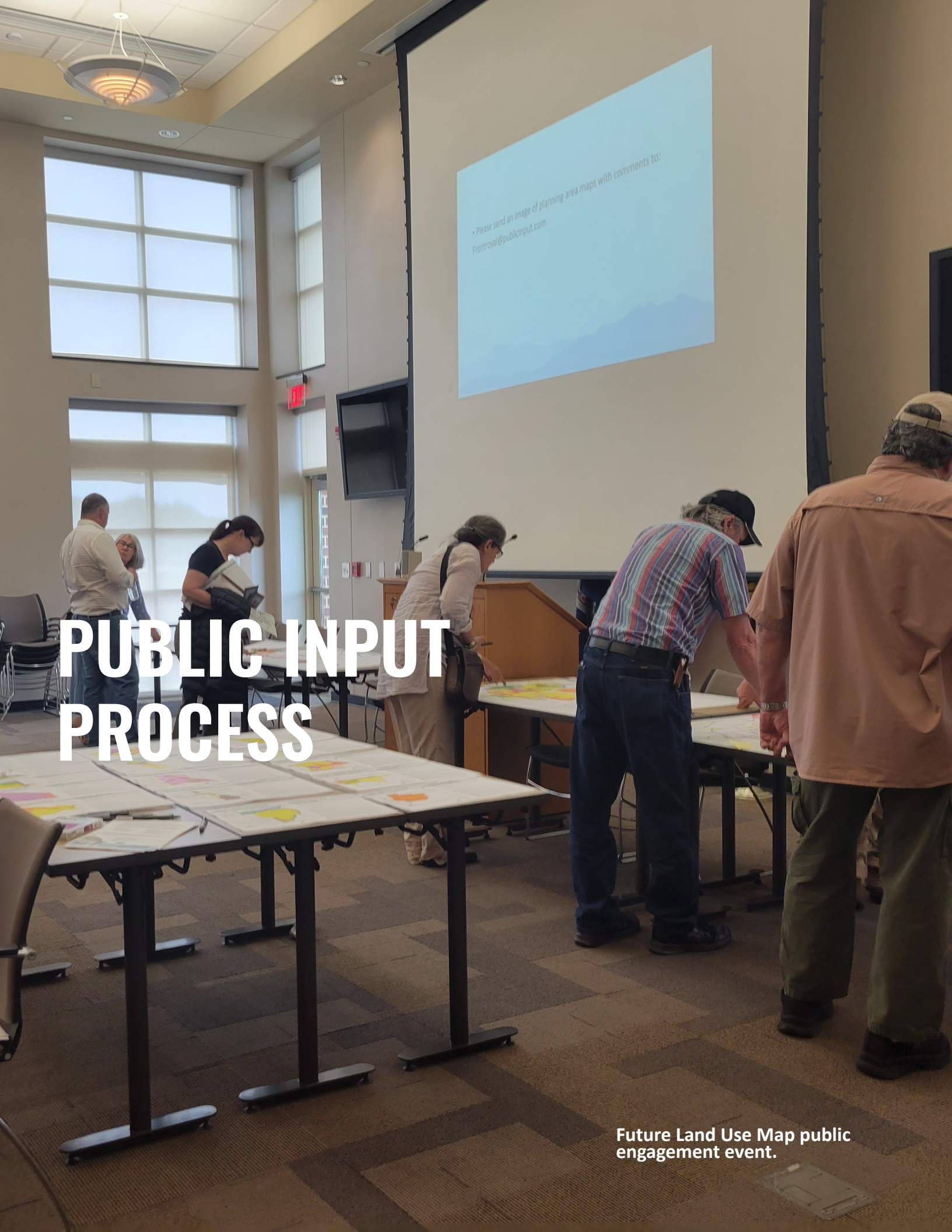
The Twentieth Century (1900s)

The Town's population began to grow rapidly, rising from 1,005 in 1900 to 13,589 by the end of the century. The growth of automobile use brought new roads, such as Skyline Drive in 1936 and Interstate 66 in the 1950s, that had a great influence on access to Front Royal as a tourist destination and new motels, fast food, and other shops developed along the north-south axis of town. The American Viscose Corporation / Avtex Fibers factory on the western side of Town operated from 1940-1989. It was one of the Town's largest employers, with many of the surrounding neighborhoods directly populated by its workers. However, the plant shut down as regulation and research caught up with the amount of pollution produced contaminating the soil and discharging into the Shenandoah River. Today, the site is being remediated and redevelopment is sought.

Modern Times (2000s)

Today, Front Royal is a thriving community of over 15,000 people. There are many locally owned restaurants and shops, and the historic main street is alive with activity. Visitors come to the area for access to nature and beautiful views, and community members from all walks and stages of life call the Town their home.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS



Future Land Use Map public engagement event.

Overview

Public participation is one of the most important parts of the comprehensive planning process. By soliciting the public's input, information is gathered on their thoughts, ideas, and needs that will be addressed by the plan. Good quality comprehensive plans show a direct link between what the citizens express and the planning objectives of the locality. This also assists decision-makers on the Town Council and Planning Commission with understanding the "will" and interests of the public.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing during the planning process, mixed public participation events were utilized to obtain input. Participation in the planning process was considered to be whether a participant filled out the survey, attended the public meetings, submitted their vision statement for the Town's future, or communicated individually with a member of the planning team.

The public participation process began in November 2021 with a survey of Town stakeholders asking varied questions about respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of life including Town services, housing affordability, transportation issues, and others. The survey results can be found in the appendix of this document.

There were also two initial kick off meetings at Front Royal's Town Square picnic pavilion where residents were offered coffee and donuts in exchange for their initial ideas and input about the comprehensive plan.

In May 2022, a public charrette for the Future Land Use and Transportation Map was held with an "open house" comment booth held in the Town Hall during the Front Royal Wine & Craft Festival.

This plan is built upon the basis of that public input. It makes many recommendations that are a direct result of citizen comments.

The community participated in the planning process by doing one or more of the following:

- **Attending a public meeting**
- **Contacting the planning team**
- **Filling out a survey**
- **Submitting a vision statement**

Kick-Off Meetings

At the beginning of the process, two events were held at mid-day (11:00 am to 1:00 pm) and in the evening (5:00 pm to 7:00 pm) on November 23, 2021. A space heater was set up, and participants were offered coffee and donuts for their time spent talking with the Planning team.

The events purpose was to inform the public of the launch of the planning process, solicit their input and initial thoughts about quality of life in Town, educate about the role of the comprehensive plan, and launch the public survey.

"Business cards" were printed for the plan, with the URL and a QR code that would take participants to the plan's website where all documents have been hosted as well as notice for future events. An interactive map was also posted on the website that allowed for comments.

While it was cold out, many community members came out at both sessions and took business cards with them to distribute to friends and family. Conversations were had about various issues and needs around the Town and local reporters were engaged to help get the word out into the media to increase participation.

Community Charrette and Open House

On May 20 and 21, following the progress on the draft comprehensive plan's Vision, Goals and Objectives, and the Future Land Use and Transportation Maps and Development Policies, the public was invited to a community charrette and an open house.

Community Charrette

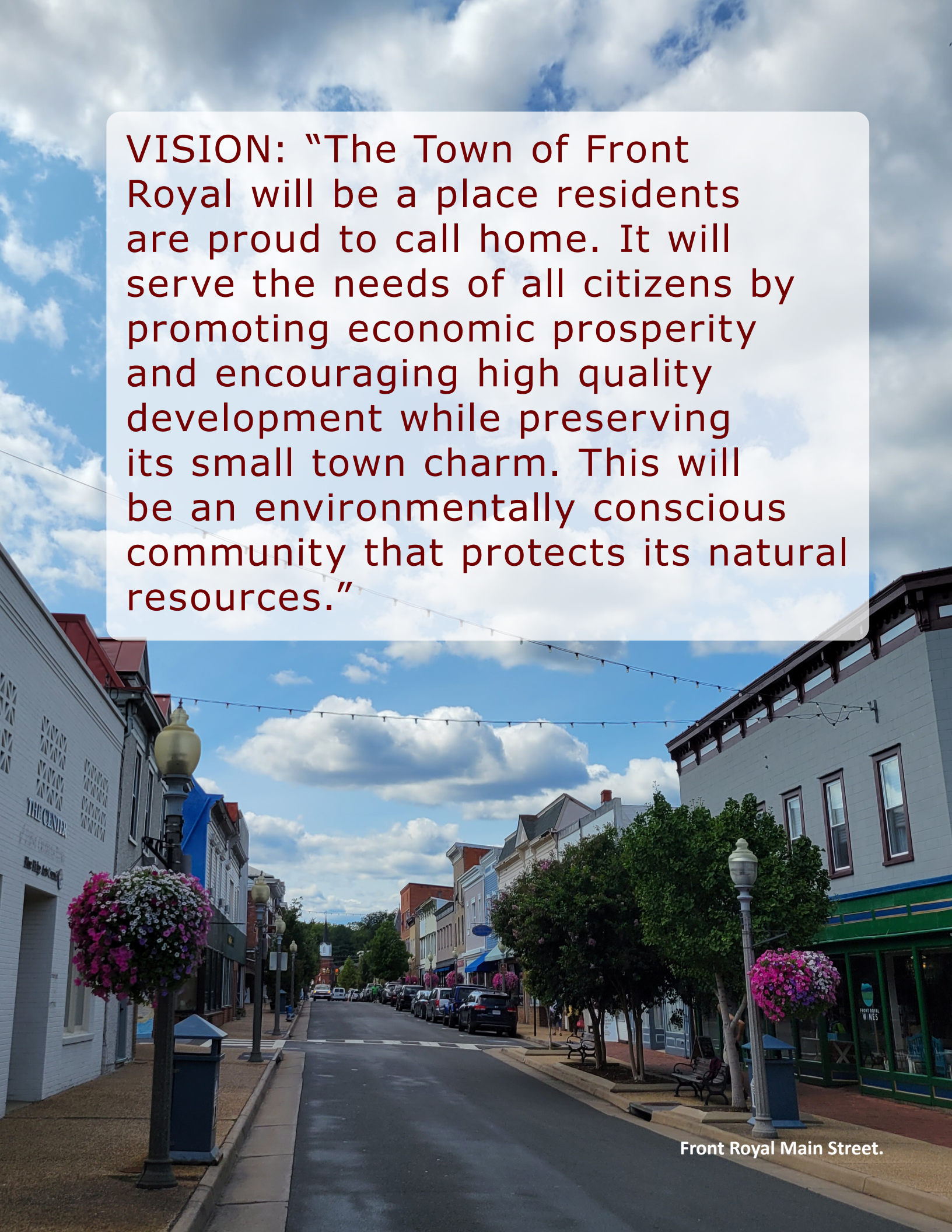
The Community Charrette took place in the Warren County Public Safety Building from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm and involved large print outs of the Future Land Use Map and Transportation Map, as well as the development policies and included prompts to help drive discussion about how the Future Land Use Map's categories can shape development in Town. Many participants arrived at the event, from Town Council members, Planning Commissioners, to citizens.

The discussion produced many comments that were incorporated into the draft documents, as the community members were able to identify many "on the ground" issues.

Open House

The following day, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, the Planning team set up at Front Royal's Town Hall with the same materials from the charrette. However, rather than being a brief presentation with conversations, the event was an "open house" where participants could stop by, have conversations, and leave their feedback on any of the maps through the use of sticky notes. The event was held at the same time as the Front Royal Wine & Craft Festival, which allowed for many people to stop by briefly while enjoying their time on Main Street.

VISION: “The Town of Front Royal will be a place residents are proud to call home. It will serve the needs of all citizens by promoting economic prosperity and encouraging high quality development while preserving its small town charm. This will be an environmentally conscious community that protects its natural resources.”



Front Royal Main Street.

VISION

What is a Vision Statement?

We have received a great response from the Front Royal community through the public survey. The report is available through the Survey Results document. The comments have been interesting to consider, providing valuable insight into what the community finds important. The Vision Statement is a key piece of the comprehensive plan. The statement sets the tone and direction of the plan, by identifying the high level aspirations that the Town seeks to achieve. This should be a clear message the Town has consensus around, that speaks to the goals expressed through the public input process.

Why Use These Words?

These sentences capture the community's future vision of Front Royal. The statement emphasizes the Town's commitment to its environmental resources, its "charm," and its pursuit of a robust and resilient economy. Through the public input process, the community has expressed their appreciation for the local businesses of the Town as well as the desire for more food or retail options. However, with growth comes the need to ensure there is adequate infrastructure or protection for natural resources. For example, ensuring that development is accessible by walking and biking and follows the example of main street rather than creating another strip mall, can both accommodate new growth while preserving "small town charm" and preventing increases in traffic congestion. While there is a lot of awareness of revitalization regarding the downtown area, the Comprehensive Plan covers and considers the entire Town, from boundary to boundary. This vision will guide the Town towards ensuring that the "cohesive fabric" of places to enjoy nature, seek employment, or patronize a restaurant, are all well connected and walkable. New development should make the community feel pleased and see a direct connection with an improvement in their quality of life. This is possible through careful planning that mitigates the undesirable impacts, such as traffic congestion, the closure of local businesses, or rising costs of living.

"Small Town Charm" Defined

The phrase "small town charm" appears in many public input responses and was expressed as a desirable trait about Front Royal by the Planning Commission and Town Council. However, how is "small town charm" defined? Front Royal's population is just over 15,000 people, which is considerably larger than many Virginia towns.

With deeper conversation around what this characteristic means, people tend to state their appreciation for small businesses, local spots where they are familiar with the staff, or stores where they see other community members. They also expressed appreciation of the quick access to nature through community parks or views of the surrounding mountains, that the Town is a place that it is not difficult to get a canoe to the river and start paddling, that it's not too expensive to live in Town, and there is not crushing traffic congestion that wastes valuable time. They appreciate seeing friends and neighbors out walking in Town. There is a lot to the phrase "small town charm," and it can be a difficult balance to maintain that which makes a place so loved by its community and visitors.

Front Royal is the seat of Warren County, its only incorporated Town, and has long acted as a "heart" of the area. Through the Existing Conditions document, and by living in town, one can see that the area has experienced increased growth that is expected to continue into the future. Without planning for this growth and guiding it towards ways that work to the community's benefit, there can be many negative impacts to quality of life. This Vision and the Comprehensive Plan will work to ensure that the "small town charm" of Front Royal is preserved, even in its growth, and strive to create shared prosperity in a beautiful natural setting. Thank you for reading and participating in this important step towards the Town's future!

BIG IDEAS

Plans are complex, lengthy documents. Although this plan is intentionally designed to be simple and accessible while still being effective, it helps to break the intent down into essential elements, or Big Ideas.

A. Preserve our history and Create More of What We Love

Front Royal residents, business owners, visitors, and decision-makers all agree that the historic downtown area is the jewel in Front Royal's crown, and it should be preserved and enhanced. This plan makes many recommendations which will, together, ensure that in the future the positive aspects of downtown will be preserved and expanded.

B. Lifelong Community

Front Royal will be a home for every stage of life. The Town will be a place where people can grow up as children, raise a family, or age in place.

C. Affordable Housing

The Town will take action to ensure that community members are not priced out and forced to move elsewhere.

D. Environmental Access

Front Royal has extraordinary access to natural resources. There are many significant opportunity to increase access and visibility to these beautiful assets.

BIG IDEAS

A. Preserve our History and Create More of What We Love

The Towns historic buildings will be restored for new uses, natural assets will be preserved, and the Town will be clean and attractive.

i. Front Royal has many civic, natural, and historical assets. This idea focuses on preserving and protecting our historic downtown, structures, and sites for residents and visitors. The downtown area is the jewel to Front Royals crown because it creates the small-town charm that draws people to a place. Throughout the public processes there was significant feedback from the community to keep and create more small-town charm, more of what makes Front Royal beautiful and special. Challenges identified include absentee ownership, or lack of maintenance and upkeep, which were issues not just with historic buildings but in some other areas of the Town. The community also asked for less of signage, and more code enforcement to mitigate blighted properties.

ii. Front Royal stands to benefit from its strategic location at the convergence of roads, rail, rivers, and historic events. It is a gateway to Shenandoah Valley, Skyline Drive, and Shenandoah National Park, with close access to the Appalachian trail and many other nearby state forests. Its strategic location resulted in a number of Civil War events. There is potential to enhance its destination appeal as a 'base camp' to these many natural and historic amenities. The proximity of the Northern Virginia and DC metropolitan markets presents tourism potential both from people visiting from the DC area, as well as people from elsewhere visiting DC and using Front Royal as a base. The popular destination vision theme aspires to build on these tourism related assets and opportunities to enhance and leverage the economic potential of Front Royal as a desirable destination. A well curated tourism destination will result in a more pleasant and attractive place to live for residents, with improved access points to these amenities. When one lives in a place that is a well known and popular destination it motivates pride, care, and a sense of ownership of the community's resources and reputation.

iii. This theme is further broken down into topics on Small Town character, Tourism, and high-quality development.

Stakeholders agree that Downtown is one of the best aspects of Front Royal.

B. Lifelong Community

Front Royal will be a popular place for people of all ages to live and work. Children will return to the community to raise their families because job and recreational opportunities are present, and the schools are excellent.

i. A Lifelong community instills pride in its citizens. Front Royal can be a place where children can grow up, attending excellent schools, then stay to raise their own families, because of the availability of meaningful and rewarding employment. It will be a place seniors want to retire to because they can easily access healthcare and a multimodal transportation system. Creating a lifelong community also means catering to all ages by providing options for walking, biking, accessing safe trails, active recreation areas and public space amenities.

ii. This theme is further broken down into economic sustainability, transportation, responsive governance reliable utilities & services, and public health & safety.

iii. Opportunities for rewarding and higher paying employment is another major component of building a lifelong community, and provides incentive for young adults to remain in and build their careers from Front Royal. A future Front Royal was envisioned that had a strong and diverse economy, providing a range of job opportunities for its citizens. It is recognized that the Washington, DC area employment centers will continue to be a draw for many living in Front Royal, but to the extent that new businesses and opportunities can be cultivated locally and regionally it would help achieve the theme of a lifelong community. Opportunities for business attraction include the redevelopment of the Avtex site and attracting businesses to or enhancing the downtown commercial areas. It was recognized that good schools are important to attract and retain young families, and workers for future businesses. Creating a quality place to live was recognized as an economic development activity. Businesses will want to locate where employees desire to live, recreate, and raise their children. Businesses desire places with high transportation access, lower energy costs, and land availability, which are all elements that Front Royal has. In summary, the theme of creating a lifelong community is a popular and well supported vision concept. It envisions a place with a high quality of life of all citizens of all ages, as measured by many interlocking elements such as quality schools and healthcare, attractive design, high public safety and security, connectivity, beauty and recreation, and access to higher wage local and regional jobs.

iv. Walkability is a key factor in making any downtown place vibrant, known as “place-making”. If people are not comfortable getting out of their cars, walking, being outside or mingling, then there will be little chance of having a vibrant downtown or main street district. High walkability requires street designs that are “pedestrian-friendly”, smaller blocks, sidewalks that are maintained and pleasing, landscaping and lighting. Trail connectivity, and bike facilities that link the downtown to popular destinations and neighborhoods are also important in place making. Walkable places are designed for human scale and comfort first, and cars second.

Front Royal Visitors Center in the old train station.

C. Affordable Housing

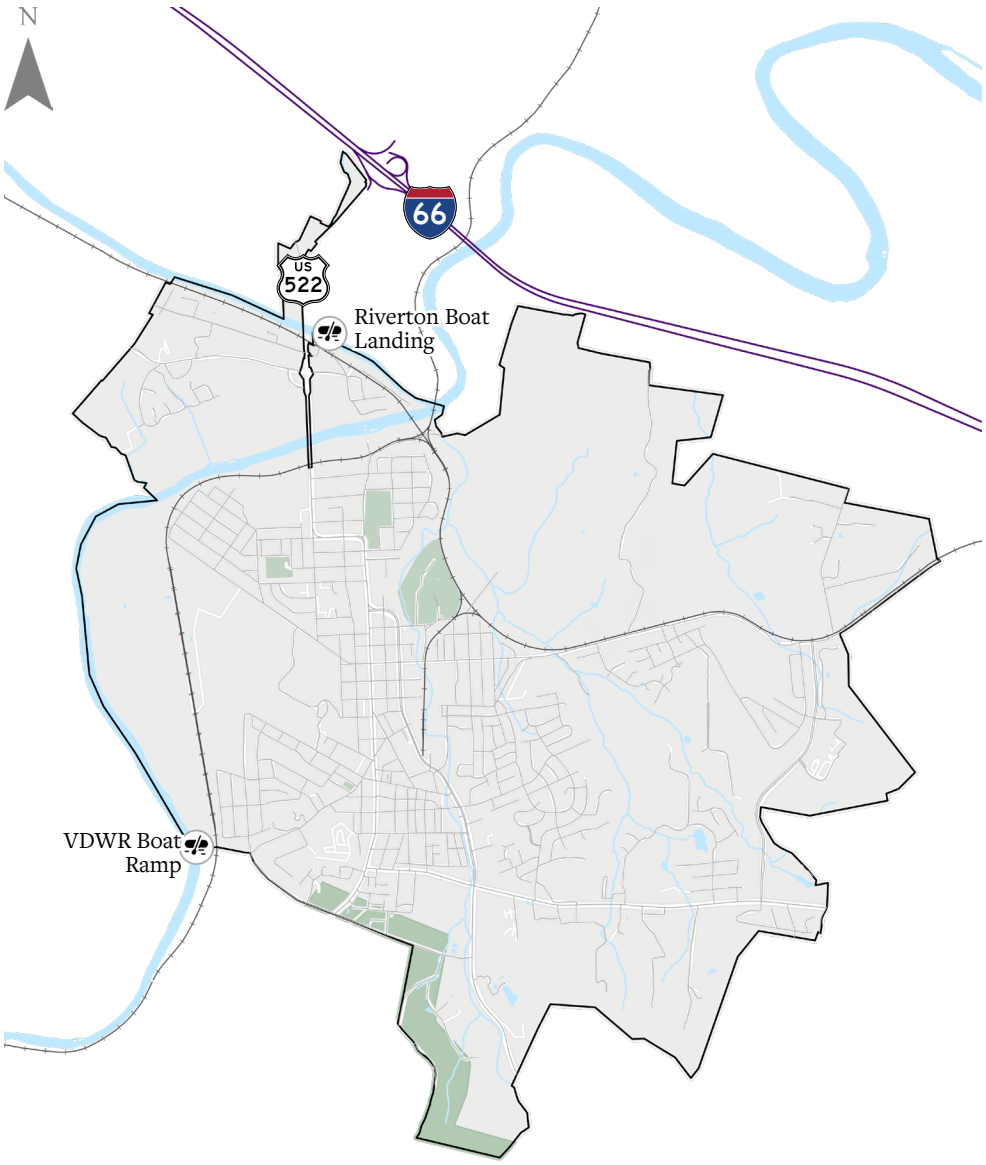
A wide range of housing options contributes to Front Royal's vision as a lifelong community where people of all ages and stages in life can meet their housing needs. The options should include a wide range of housing types from single-family homes to apartments above downtown stores.

i. Having more residential rooftops downtown, or near downtown is also desirable for vibrancy. A diversity of housing options, styles, and price ranges will help with both affordability and vitality. Attractive destinations present a variety of choices, retail, shopping, and services, so diversifying and attracting different types of businesses to the downtown core is important to cultivating a vibrant, active downtown for Front Royal. People involved in this visioning process recognized that Front Royal has been working and has had considerable success over the years in revitalization efforts downtown. This vision aims to build and increase those successes in the future. Regional cooperation with Warren County and with other nearby jurisdictions was identified as an important and necessary ingredient for improving the vitality of Front Royal as a regional hub and community.

Homes in Front Royal.

D. Environmental Access

The Town's natural assets were equally discussed as important for preservation and protection. Natural assets included such features as rivers, tree canopy, parks, open space, natural areas, wetlands and floodplains. The ideas of a river walk, increased access via trails and greenways to better access the natural assets were popular concepts during the process. The civic assets identified were the existing popular public spaces, community places such as libraries and parks, and ball fields.



South Fork Shenandoah River, as seen from Front Royal VDWR Boat Ramp

The valley as seen from the water treatment plant.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Setting Goals

Goal statements are aspirational targets for the Town to strive for in its decision making. Simply stated, decisions will be evaluated against the Comprehensive Plan's goals to determine whether or not a proposal is in line with where the Town plans to be in the future.

Defining Objectives

Objectives for each topic area are listed to allow for the evaluation of proposals for their adherence to the Comprehensive Plan and to give specific guidance on how the Town intends to move forward on each topic.

The topics addressed in the plan include:

"Small town character"
Transportation
Economic Sustainability
Environmental Sustainability
High Quality Development
Housing Sustainability
Tourism
Public Health & Safety
Responsive & Accountable Governance
Reliable Utilities & Services

These cover the Town's role "comprehensively" in promoting a high quality of life in Front Royal.

Please note that the recommendations of a Comprehensive Plan are not constrained by budget and can be prioritized by the Town as funding becomes available.

“SMALL TOWN CHARACTER”

Front Royal Wine & Craft Festival.

Goal Statement

“Preserve the sociable and attractive charm of our Town’s character by encouraging community participation, promoting local events, and preserving its stock of historic buildings.”

One of the most repeated things people enjoyed about Front Royal, during the community engagement process, was “small town charm.” With deeper conversation around what this means, people tend to state their appreciation for small businesses. Local spots where they are familiar with the staff, or stores where they see other community members. There’s also expressed appreciation of the quick access to nature, through community parks or views of the surrounding mountains, lack of major traffic congestion, historic architecture, and more. It’s clear that the phrase attempts to capture many aspects of quality of life under one name. The objectives and strategies in this section seek to enhance that feeling of character and charm by promoting cleanliness and aesthetics, historic preservation, local revitalization, and arts and culture. With these strategies, preserving “small town charm” can be forward-looking towards the future rather than being only concerned that new developments will erode the character of the Town.

Objectives & Strategies

Historic Preservation: Front Royal has a wealth of historic buildings but many are in a state of disrepair. When restored, these buildings can be a beautiful entrance to the town and downtown.

1. Continue to maintain standards for, and encourage, historic preservation of buildings throughout the Town. Review and amend Historic District Guidelines for consistency and clarity.
2. Restore and encourage the development of attractive buildings in town and entering town.
3. Expand the historic district to include Riverton Historic area.
4. The Town will pursue working with the State to become a Certified Local Government, this would allow the Town to receive funding for historic preservation efforts.

Downtown Revitalization: A vibrant downtown is active day and night. Front Royal can increase evening activity through more music events and venues, educational and cultural events, attractive and diverse restaurants, safe and well-lit streets, and more festivals.

1. Pursue the development of a community building downtown for dances or gatherings following the Gazebo Gatherings.
2. Explore making Main Street a pedestrian mall or shared street and enhancing downtown parking.
3. Expand the Main Street parking exemption to include portions of Chester St.
4. Encourage new housing development in the downtown area with an emphasis on more owner-occupied units.
5. Establish a Buy Local campaign that encourages residents to shop at locally owned restaurants and stores.
6. Recruit, attract, and support more local restaurants with diverse cuisines.
7. Attract a grocery store to the downtown area and/or on the north side of town.
8. Encourage businesses to remain open after 5:00 PM

Creativity and innovation can continue to make Front Royal a unique and interesting place!

Clean & Attractive:

1. Encourage community participation and volunteerism by creating and advertising events that work to beautify and improve quality of life in Town, such as litter removal or other public projects that could use help. Promote more community use projects that connect residents, such as community gardens and adult education programs.
2. Involve high school students in Town and County community development projects.
3. Initiate a program to organize volunteers that will help senior citizens with home maintenance and repairs.
4. Enforce prohibitions on the use of flashing signs and flags, work with property owners to consolidate their signage to conform to Town regulations.
5. Ensure vigorous code enforcement, especially for rental units and structures near natural resources.
6. Launch a "Clean Up Our Town" program to organize volunteer help.

Arts, Culture & Entertainment:

1. Develop more events for children and families, such as parades and festivals.
2. Organize holiday walking tours of historic homes.
3. Coordinate with local festival and event planners and encourage the creation of new events to ensure that the entire year has something to celebrate in Front Royal. Continue to update and maintain a calendar that promotes local events.
4. Identify and encourage new types of service-based or entertainment-based events that Front Royal may not have hosted before. These could take place in areas away from the downtown to help "activate" them.
5. Promote and maintain a seasonal farmers' market.
6. Promote local artists in the community's work through implementing public art, creating a public art market, or other arts related events.
7. Continue to seek funding opportunities for muralists to showcase their work on facades throughout Front Royal, including other areas of Town outside the downtown.
8. Promote local musicians in the community by studying the available events and practice spaces. Include local musicians from a variety of styles in event planning.

HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Overhead view of Main Street.

Goal Statement

"Create guidelines that ensure development results in a high quality built environment for the enjoyment and prosperity of the community."

People expressed a desire for new shops and restaurants during the community engagement process, however, there was also a strong desire to maintain "small town charm." These objectives and strategies work to ensure that when development is proposed in the Town, there is better guidance on how it can enhance the Town architecturally or as part of the streetscape. Particular emphasis is given to protecting entrance corridors that shape initial impressions of the Town, promoting Traditional Neighborhood Design to enhance walkability and mixed uses, and placemaking to encourage additional amenities for the community.

Objectives & Strategies

Improvement of Gateways: Attractive and beautiful entrance corridors send a message to visitors that Front Royal cares about community and takes good care of its assets. This is an important message for tourists, prospective employers, and employees. It also contributes to community pride among existing residents. Possible supporting actions or ideas include:

1. Encourage the retrofitting/redevelopment of older motels along the northern entrance to Town.
2. Prioritize improvement to the gateways from North Front Royal and the National Park (Route 340 and Route 522 and John Marshall Highway.
3. Extend the Entrance Corridor Overlay District to include John Marshall Hwy and South Street.
4. Increase the number of street trees in the entrance corridors.
5. Enforce prohibitions on the use of flashing signs and flags, work with property owners to consolidate their signage to conform to Town regulations.

Traditional Neighborhood Development: Front Royal desires new growth that is consistent with the characteristics of traditional neighborhoods, which include well connected streets, sidewalks, and the potential for mixed use. Possible supporting actions or ideas include:

1. Focus on where to place new housing and local/unique retail.
2. Continue to concentrate big box retail in existing locations. Big Box retailers and national chains can have a place in the Town, but the focus should be on locally owned businesses. The Town will not encourage the expansion of national retailers/big box entities.
3. Increase density in areas that are an easy walk or bike to downtown, creating a population that will demand services downtown. The Town and County can help implement this action through zoning ordinances.
4. Redevelop the Town in a manner that accommodates the population's changing needs. For example, the desire for older residents to "age in place" is an emerging concern.
5. Create design guidelines for creating shade, wind protection, and shelter from rain through the dimensions and design of buildings.
6. Amend applicable codes and Design Standards to ensure that new mixed-use development, including residential units associated with it, have at least a 12-foot-tall ground floor to allow for flexible use and adaptation over time.

7. Widen and maintain sidewalks where possible, particularly in the downtown area.

8. Design guidelines for storefronts should require transparency and accommodate large windows for visual interest.

9. Amend Design Standards for new mixed use and commercial development to provide more narrow storefronts along a street frontage to improve the vertical rhythm of the streetscape and increase density and diversity for new uses.

10. Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Design Standards to require high quality design that contributes to the Town's built environment.

11. Allow for the development of Accessory Commercial Units where possible.

12. Maintain high standards of landscaping across the Town with particular emphasis on the Entrance Corridor Overlay District.

13. Encourage new development to utilize innovative measures to handle stormwater.

14. Ensure that required landscaping is maintained from planting to maturity, replacing dead vegetation when necessary.

15. Set design standards that encourage walkable development.

Placemaking: Placemaking refers to the practice of implementing new uses, such as activities or seating areas, in a previously inactive space to increase the "sense of place." This increases community connections to its specific geographic location, rather than being "placeless" or indistinguishable from other places. New development can consider ways to add to placemaking by considering how their development interacts with the streetscape and the public realm.

1. Utilize placemaking strategies to build many different activities and reasons to be within places throughout the town, placemaking can include design interventions or event programming to "transform" a space into a different temporary use.

2. Encourage or require new development to implement public or semi-public amenities that enhance the public realm.

3. Implement unified wayfinding signage across the entire Town at the pedestrian scale, including areas outside of the downtown.

TOURISM

View of the Shenandoah River.

Goal Statement

“Develop Tourism and attractions to further elevate the Town’s image as an engaging destination for residents and visitors alike.”

Front Royal is already a hub for tourism. With great views of the mountains, changing seasonal foliage, and a vibrant main street, many people come to the Town to spend time. These objectives and strategies aim to link land use and transportation decisions with elevating the Town’s image and desirability for travel. Developing consistent branding, unique events, and investing in the necessary facilities such as community spaces or public restrooms will improve the image and material quality of life in Town. One particular area of growth for Tourism in Town is “eco-tourism.” Environmentally based tourism that captures mountain bikers or Appalachian Trail hikers is already growing in Town, but with promoting a new shelter or ensuring the bus connects hikers with the main street careful planning can lead to more memorable experiences. When people tell their friends about Front Royal, they will speak about what an enjoyable time they had.

Objectives & Strategies

Tourism: Tourism is another important element of Front Royal's economy. Increasing awareness, lodging and visitor's services will help sustain and grow the Town's tourism industry.

Develop a Tourism Master Plan

Utilize social media to raise awareness about events in Front Royal.

Develop a consistent message and brand for Front Royal. For example, "Base Camp for Shenandoah" or "Canoe Capital of Virginia". The Town and County may take the lead with support from local businesses that stand to benefit.

Market the Town's Civil War history. The Warren Historic Society are knowledgeable and can assist in this effort.

Identify a revenue source for marketing and tourism promotion efforts.

Provide clean, usable restrooms for visitors in the Town's public spaces.

Market a Skyline Drive/Shenandoah Valley Scenic Byway. Partner in the branding with National Park Service.

Develop a unique festival closely linked to the community's brand. This can help the town "get on the map."

Launch a year-round market downtown for farm products and crafts in a permanent space.

Encourage development of a hotel or other accommodation space in the downtown area.

Eco-Tourism: Environmentally based tourism is a strong asset that Front Royal can leverage in its effort to attract visitors. Whether to see the changing leaves, paddle along the Shenandoah, or enjoy a hike, many visitors already come to the area for the great access to nature. These strategies can assist the Town in growing this sector further.

1. Host more events, such as long-distance running and bike races. For example, the Town could host a triathlon with biking on Route 522, running in Town, and canoeing on the River. The Appalachian Trail Committee and a local outdoor retailer could take the lead on this event in the mid term, once construction of multi-use path on Route 522 is complete.

2. Market the Town's sustainability efforts as part of its overall "green tourism" strategy and "gateway to the outdoors" branding alongside implementation of sustainability projects.

3. Develop a hostel for international travelers, young travelers, and Appalachian Trail hikers.

4. Plan for a shelter at the trailhead of the Appalachian Trail in town. Encourage development of a hotel or other accommodation space in the downtown area.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Banner advertising dining in downtown.

Goal Statement

“The Town’s economy is prosperous, vibrant, and resilient with a diverse base of employers. There is a special emphasis on fostering local entrepreneurship and small business with every successful business adding to the community’s wealth to create a place where residents can live and work.”

Economic development is the process of creating wealth locally through jobs, income, and investment in the built environment. Front Royal will strive to be an excellent place to start a business, find work, or expand an existing business. The Town’s high quality of life will make it an attractive place for businesses to locate in the interest of their future employees. Most importantly, local businesses and entrepreneurship will be supported. Front Royal enjoys a vibrant main street with local artisans, stores, and restaurants which will continue to grow and expand into the future.

Employment Characteristics

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the percentage of all people of working age who are either working or actively seeking work (Employed + Unemployed). Front Royal's LFPR is 62.5%, which is on par with the national 2021 rate of 61.8% and slightly below the state average of 63%.

These rates incorporate the 16 to 19 years and both 65 to 74 years and 75 years and older, which bring down the average participation rate. Figure 16 shows labor force participation rates by age range. The LFPR of Front Royal residents between the ages of 20 to 64 years ranges from 67.6% to 84.3%.
Sixty five percent of Front Royal's population is in the labor force, with slightly more men than women participating. The rates at which Town residents participate in the labor force is roughly equivalent to those of the State, with the most marked difference being a higher rate of people between 55 and 74 still working in Front Royal.

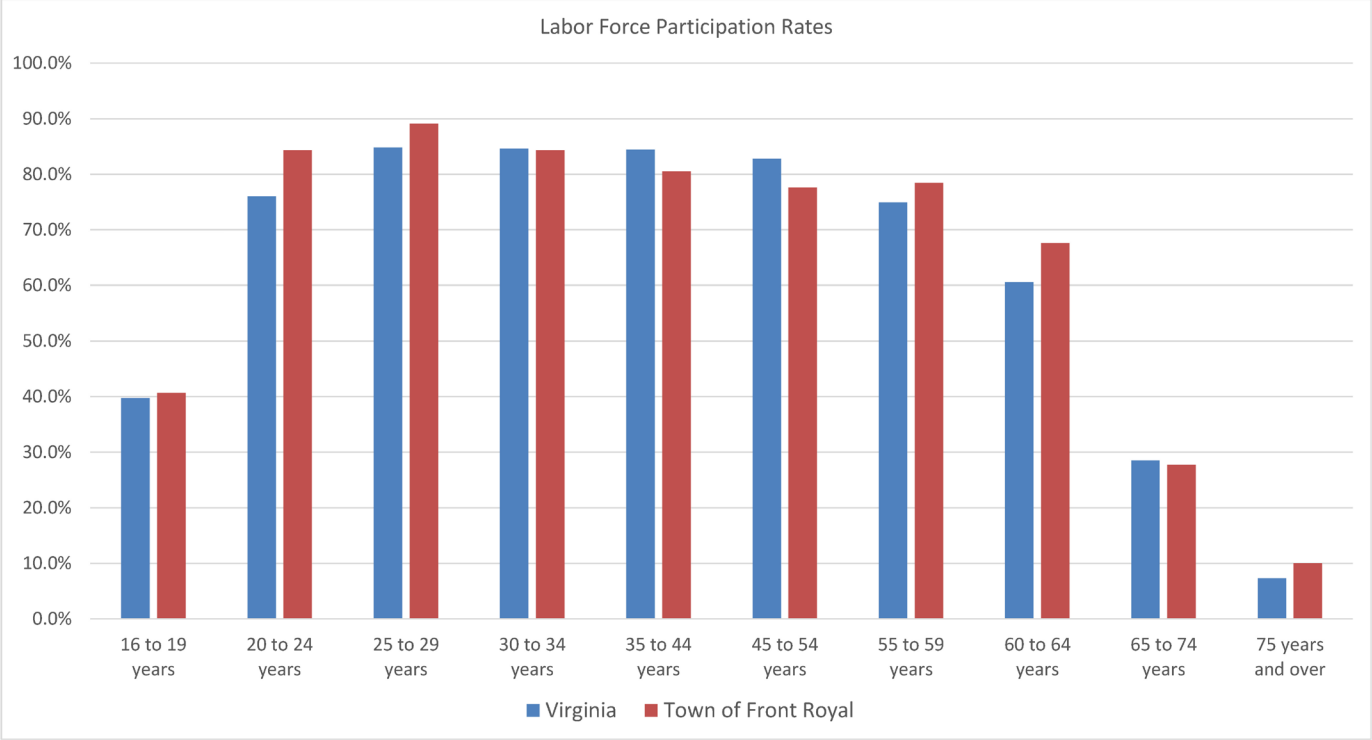


Figure 17: Labor Force Participation
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (S2301)

Unemployment Rate

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment in Warren County spiked dramatically in spring and summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In June of 2019 the unemployment rate was about 2.9%; in April of 2020 the rate rose to over 11%, and then fell over the course of the year to 4.3%. The last reported rate, October 2021, shows that unemployment is back to 2.6%, below pre-pandemic numbers and below Virginia's rate of 3% and the United States' rate of 4.2%.

Jobs by Industry

By far the largest industry in which Front Royal's workforce is employed is Educational, Health Care and Social Assistance services (23%), due to the large number of people employed by Valley Health and Warren County Public Schools.

The next largest employment sectors are Retail (13%), and a 3-way tie with Construction, Professional Services and Arts, Entertainment and Food Services (11%).

There is diversity in the Town's workforce, which is positive and will help the Town weather shifts in the economy, or an employer leaving.

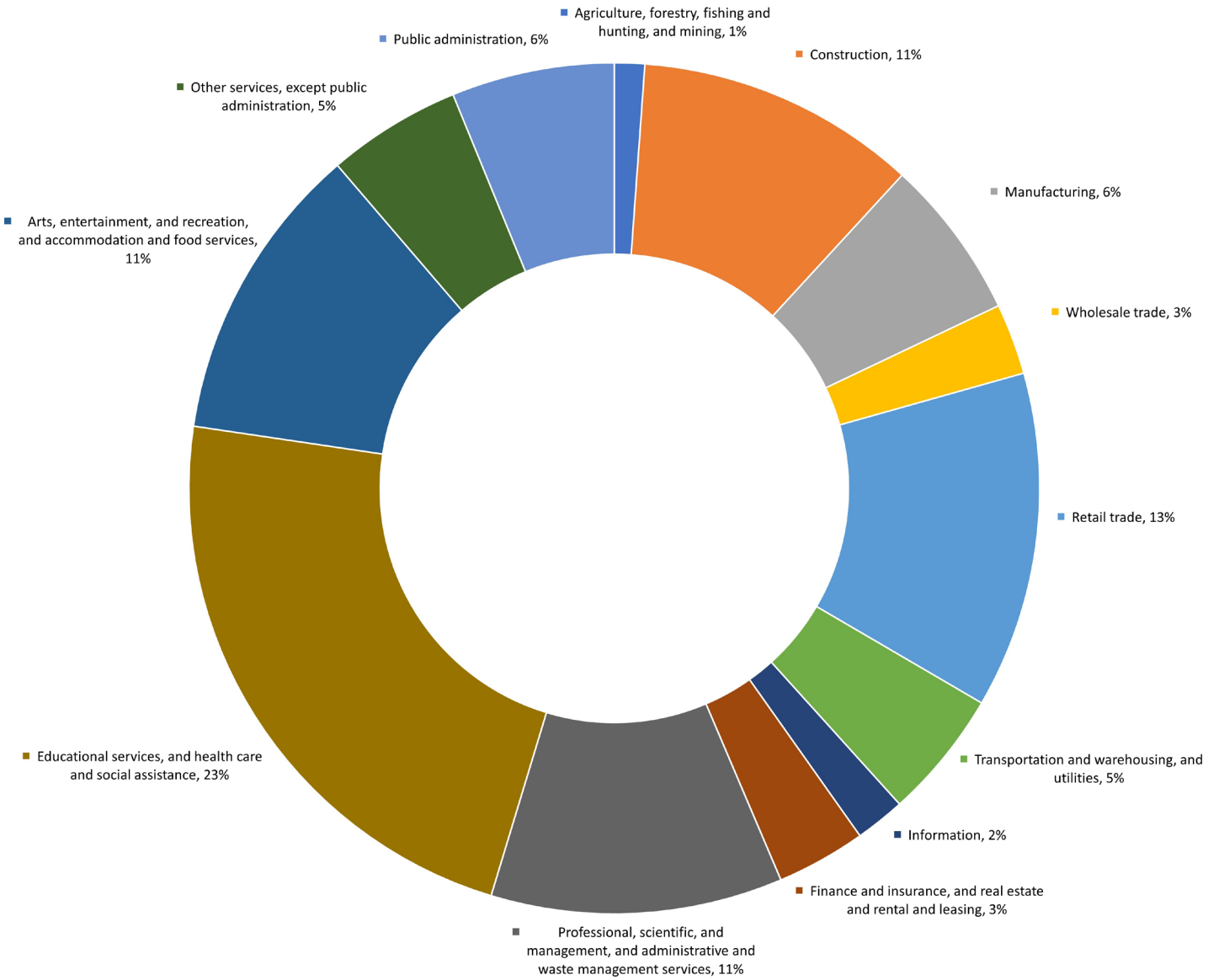


Figure 18: Jobs by Industry
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Major Employers

This list shows the largest Employers within Front Royal.

1. Warren County School Board
2. Valley Health System
3. Rural King
4. County of Warren
5. Jackson Furniture Company of Virginia
6. U.P.S.
7. Town of Front Royal
8. Moms In Motion, LLC
9. Seton Home Study School
10. Martin's Food Market
11. Randolph-Macon Academy
12. Northwest Community Mental Health and Retardation Services
13. CBM Mortgage LLC
14. Heritage Hall
15. Spelunker's LLC
16. The Melting Pot Corporation
17. The Southerlands
18. Postal Service
19. Via Satellite
20. Starbucks Coffee
21. Aire Serv of Bull Run
22. Shenandoah Operations Holdings, LLC
23. McDonald's
24. Warren County Department of Social Services
25. Front Royal Family Practice
26. Dominion Virginia Power

Figure 19: Major Employers
Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2022..

Location of Major Employers

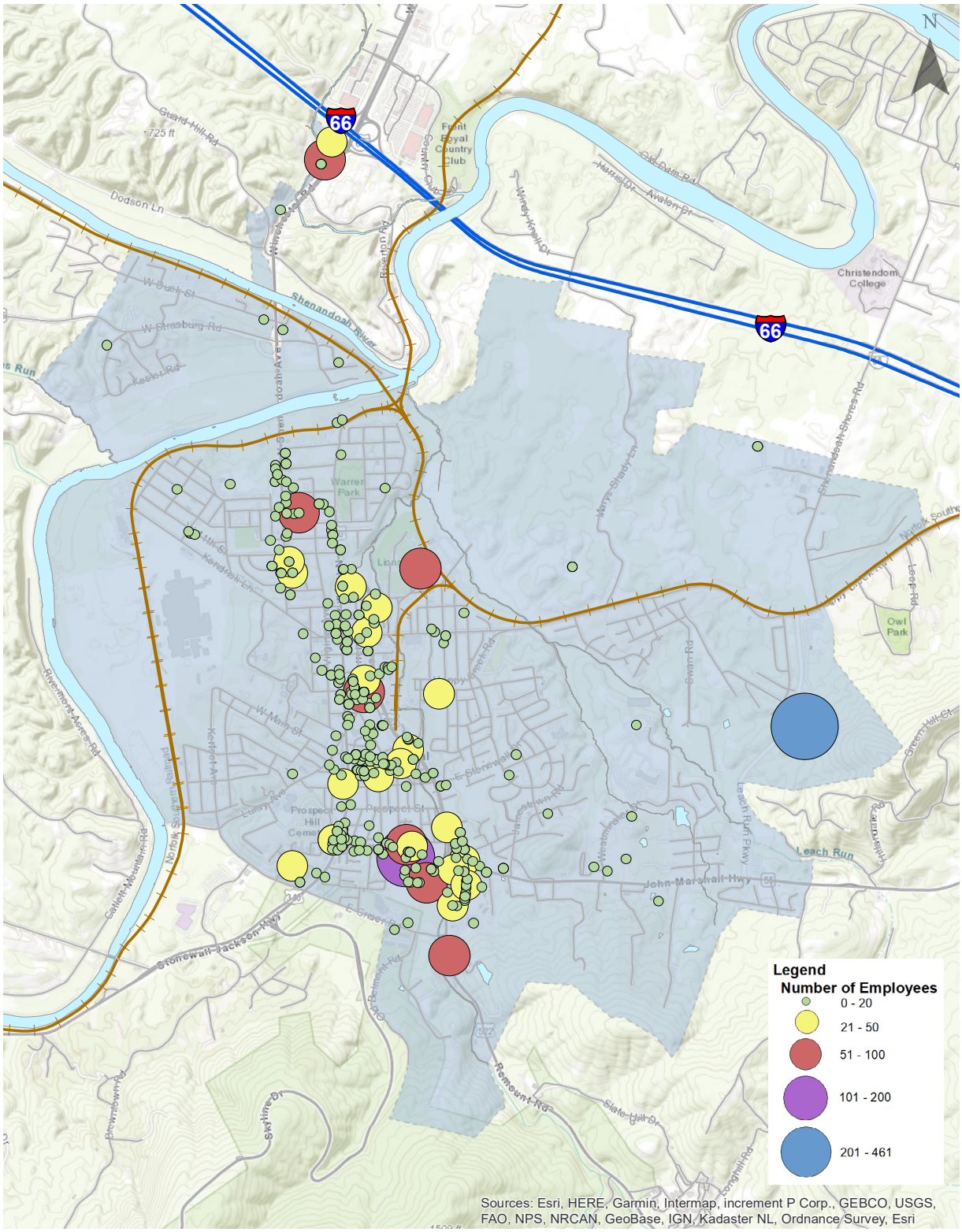


Figure 20: Map of Major Employers
Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Labor Force by Occupation

Below is a comparison of the labor force (persons employed or looking for work) by occupation for the Town of Front Royal, Virginia and the US. This shows that the highest percent of the labor force is in Management and Office/Admin for each location.

Compared to Virginia and the United States, Front Royal has lower levels of Management, Business/Financial, Computer/Math, and Legal. The Town shows relatively high levels of Education/Library, Health Practices, Construction/Extraction, and Transportation/Moving.

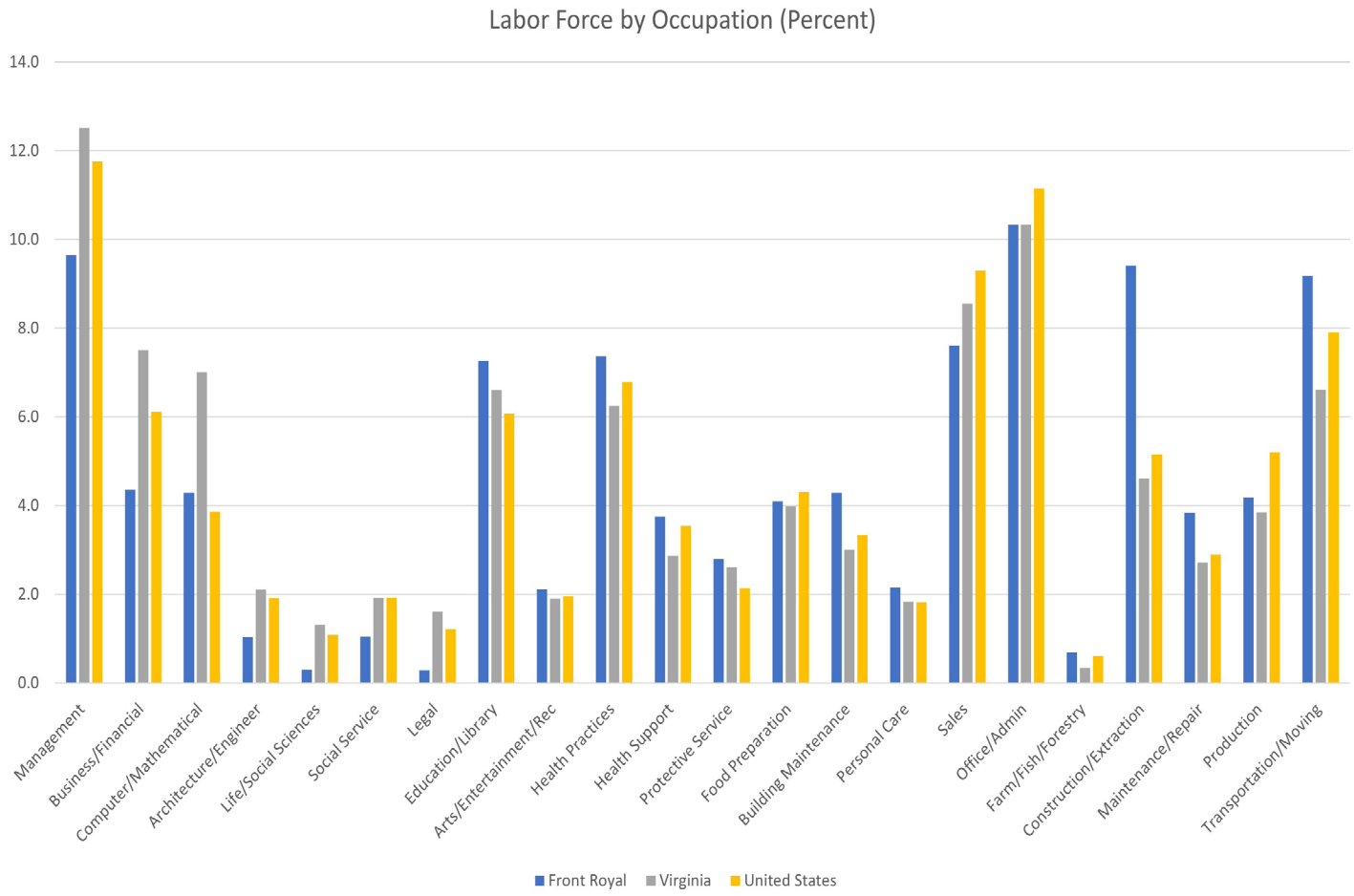


Figure 21: Labor Force by Occupation
Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Objectives & Strategies

Economic Sustainability: Adding professional jobs in Front Royal will support a strong economy by retaining young adults that leave in search of jobs, providing local employment options for people currently commuting to the Washington metropolitan area on Interstate 66, and increasing local spending.

1. Encourage and incentivize the redevelopment of the Avtex site into a productive use with jobs in clean energy, research and development, commercial uses or light industry.

2. Identify target sectors in an economic development plan, identify infrastructure needs that will support these sectors, and market Front Royal to them.

3. Create a vibrant arts and music scene and build new outdoor amenities to make Town attractive to new businesses and their employees.

4. Start a dialogue and conduct interviews with existing businesses about how to grow the local economy

5. Explore slowing speed limits around the downtown area to allow for comfort and safety, as well as increasing the likelihood patrons will stop and shop.

6. Attract businesses that support uses that are limited in Town, such as clothing stores or other shops that are not presently found in the market.

7. Review and update local zoning regulations to ensure areas such as the downtown are able to foster a vibrant nightlife.

8. Study the feasibility of a Town-sponsored "business incubator" space.

9. Encourage local businesses to facilitate apprenticeships to build community ties and share business acumen.

10. Partner with local educational and vocational resources to provide for a skilled labor force.

11. Continue marketing and branding efforts around Front Royal as a "gateway to the outdoors."

Regional coordination of Economic Development Activities: Actively work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation, Warren County, Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation, Norfolk Southern Corporation, and other entities to establish the Town as a regional transportation hub.

1. Continue to support the growth of the Inland Port as it relates to the Town.

2. Utilize the Comprehensive Plan to support and align decision making with Economic Development projects.

TRANSPORTATION

Driving South on N. Commerce Ave.

Goal Statement

"Front Royal is a community with a high level of mobility and access, traffic is calmed in neighborhoods, and there are safe, comfortable, and connected bicycle and pedestrian routes across the entire Town."

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, which states:

§ 15.2-2223.B.1. mandates that every locality develop a transportation plan "that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities and that support the planned development of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, and public transportation facilities. The plan shall recognize and differentiate among a hierarchy of roads such as expressways, arterials, and collectors. In developing the plan, the locality shall take into consideration how to align transportation infrastructure and facilities with affordable, accessible housing and community services that are located within the territory in order to facilitate community integration of the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Transportation shall, upon request provide localities with technical assistance in preparing such transportation plan."

§ 15.2-2223.B.2. specifies that the transportation plan for each locality "shall include a map that shall show road and transportation improvements, including the cost estimates of such road and transportation improvements from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated."

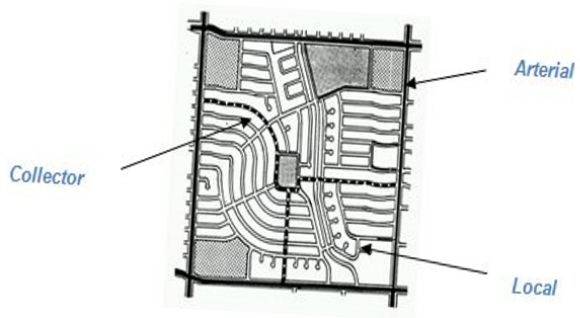
§ 15.2-2223.B.3 – 6, as well as Virginia Code § 15.2-2222.1.A., detail procedures for the Virginia Department of Transportation to review transportation plans to ensure that they are "consistent with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Statewide Transportation Plan."

Three core transportation planning concepts are recognized in this chapter as the basis for the Transportation Policies that are herein. Use of these concepts help ensure that future transportation projects in the town are implemented effectively and efficiently and address issues of critical importance, such as, but not limited to, public safety, traffic congestion, emergency response, accessibility, roadway efficiency, and quality of life. These three core transportation planning concepts include 1) Functional Classification System, 2) Complete Streets Policy, and 3) Connectivity.

Functional Classification System

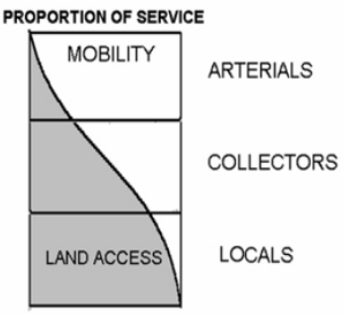
The Town of Front Royal uses a functional classification system to designate public streets. As defined by the Virginia Department of Transportation, a functional classification system is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Most travel occurs through a network of interdependent roadways, with each roadway segment moving traffic through the system towards destinations. The concept of functional classification defines the role that a particular roadway segment plays in serving this flow of traffic through the network. Roadways are assigned to one of several possible functional classifications within a hierarchy according to the character of travel service each roadway provides. The Town uses this hierarchy of roadways to channel transportation movements through a highway network efficiently and effectively.

The Town of Front Royal's Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance classifies local streets as streets that function to serve as direct access to adjacent land for relatively short distances. The Average Daily Trips for a local street is 2,000, except when appropriate to designate a Collector or Arterial Street based on the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Road Design Manual, and associated Appendixes. Collector streets are defined as streets that serve as a distributor to arterial streets for relatively medium distances. Whereas, Arterial Streets are intended to function as a main travel route between designations for relatively long distances. The Town uses the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Road Design Manual, and associated Appendixes, to determine when a road is classified as a Collector.



The basis of the functional usage of a roadway are mobility and accessibility. Mobility is measured in respect to the ability of traffic to pass through a defined area in a reasonable amount of time. Elements such as operating speed, level of service and riding comfort all have implications on mobility. Accessibility is measured in terms of the road system's capability to provide access to and between land use activities within a defined area. Travel relates to the roadways ability to access land and provide mobility through an area. The figure below shows the fundamental relationship between mobility and accessibility. Different roadway classifications offer different levels of mobility and accessibility. Local facilities emphasize the land-access function. On the contrary, arterial facilities emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement, while, collectors offer a compromise between access and mobility. Access should increase on local streets, and should be more limited on collector and arterials. Figure 2 below illustrates a typical functional classification model. If new developments, such as residential subdivisions or individual lots, only have access onto arterial roads then those local trips and turning movements place added congestion on the roads that were meant to move regional traffic. The additional access on these roads also creates safety issues, as there are more vehicles turning on and off the roadway, increasing the likelihood of accidents.

Front Royal's functional classification map is shown on page 76.



Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a strategy that goes beyond planning for only streets and automobiles. It is a holistic concept to transportation planning that places importance on other modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit, green infrastructure, and parking. Below is a graphic representation of these components from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Multimodal System Design Guidelines, pg. 20. While automobiles are given the highest emphasis, each mode of transportation is given consideration in the planning process.

Emphasis of multi-modal users of the transportation is the fundamental principle of a Complete Streets Policy. To the fullest extent practical, it is a goal of this transportation plan for the Town to consider all users in all aspects of the project development process for surface transportation projects. In addition, the following strategies are recognized as part of a Complete Street Policy.

Functionality. Match and balance roadway functions with user needs, both at the roadway segment level and as part of the larger transportation network.

Compatibility. Develop and maintain transportation infrastructure that exists in harmony with adjacent land uses.

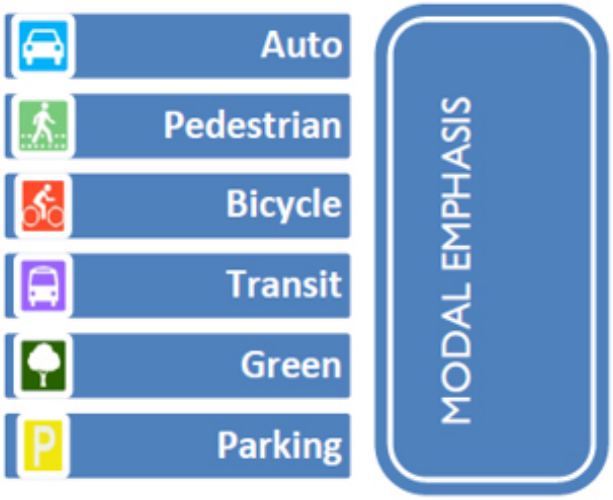
Sustainability. Develop and maintain a sustainable transportation system.

Healthy Lifestyle. Develop and maintain facilities that support public health by offering facilities that encourage healthy lifestyle options, reduce traffic, and decrease pollution.

Public Safety. Promote safety and reduce the number and intensity of accidents.

Economic Vitality. Increase the overall economic value of business districts and neighborhoods.

Placemaking. Develop and maintain facilities that are attractive and promote people's health, happiness and well-being. This includes the use of amenities and landscaping. Building frontage elements should also be encouraged to be integrated with the sidewalk area in urban settings, such as the Downtown Revitalization Area. Below is an illustration from the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation Multimodal System Design Guidelines, pg. 83, that shows a good example of the various components of a sidewalk area within an urban setting. In such cases, the sidewalk through element should meet minimum handicap accessibility requirements at a minimum.



Connectivity

The term connectivity is used to describe the layout of roadways and similar facilities, in terms of the number of routes or choices that are available for traveling between two points, an origin and a destination. In general, if an area has several direct and alternate routes, then there is a higher level of connectivity. Conversely, if most local and regional trips are forced onto fewer and indirect routes, then the transportation network has a lower level of connectivity. A road network with a low level of connectivity results in disjointed development patterns that often reduce or eliminate connections to surrounding destinations and adjacent roadways, limiting the movement of traffic to one outlet. These layouts can have a detrimental effect on the entire road network, but particularly major thoroughfares.

Developing streets that are well connected to the existing road network allows local trips without placing unnecessary burdens on major roadways. An example of this is illustrated under Figure 1 above that is used by the Virginia Department of Transportation to show the benefits of a connected street pattern. The interconnection of local streets disperses trips throughout the entire network, allowing each street to carry a well distributed portion of the area's traffic and preventing any residential streets from being overburdened. Dispersing these trips can help avoid the need for expensive road improvements, such as widening lanes or signalization. An interconnected network can also help facilitate multimodal trips, such as walking or biking, which reduces the burden placed on all roadways. Overall, connectivity can preserve the capacity and safety of thoroughfares, reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve emergency response times and provide a network that is better poised to respond to temporary detours and other emergency demands. Another benefit may be reducing the vehicle miles traveled for school buses and the overall cost of transporting students back and forth from school.

Commuting

The great majority (63%) of employed Front Royal residents work outside the Town as seen in Figure 22, and 37% work in town. Of that majority, approximately 63.4% work in Warren County, and 36.6% of residents work further afield than Warren County.

Just shy of 77% of workers drive to their place of work alone in a car, van or truck. Fourteen percent carpooled with one or more other people, while just under 4% worked from home.

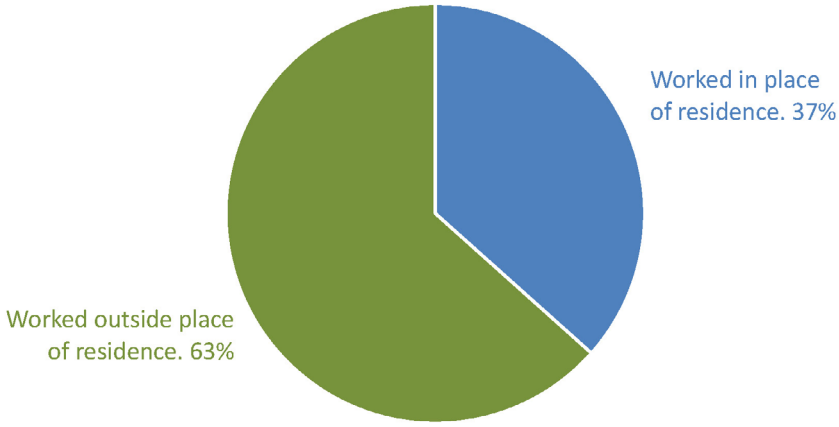


Figure 22: Working Outside Town
Source: American Community Survey 2018 (S0801)

A very small number of residents walk (3.5%), while no respondents reported bicycling or taking public transit.

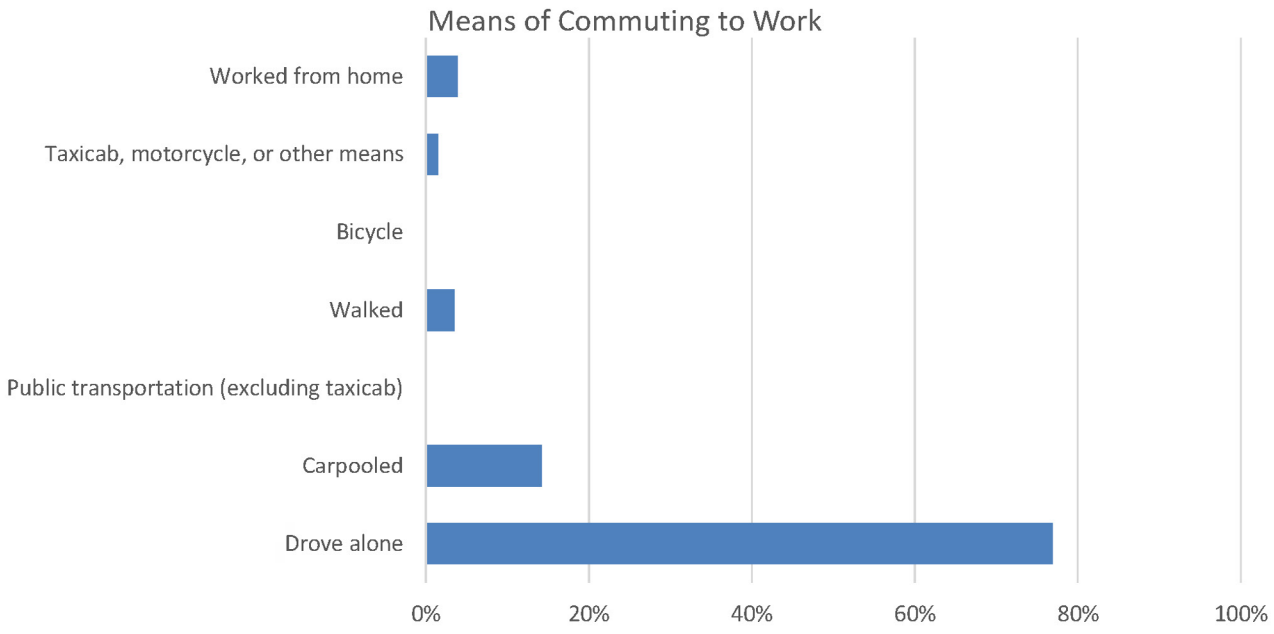


Figure 23: Means of Commuting to Work
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (S0801)

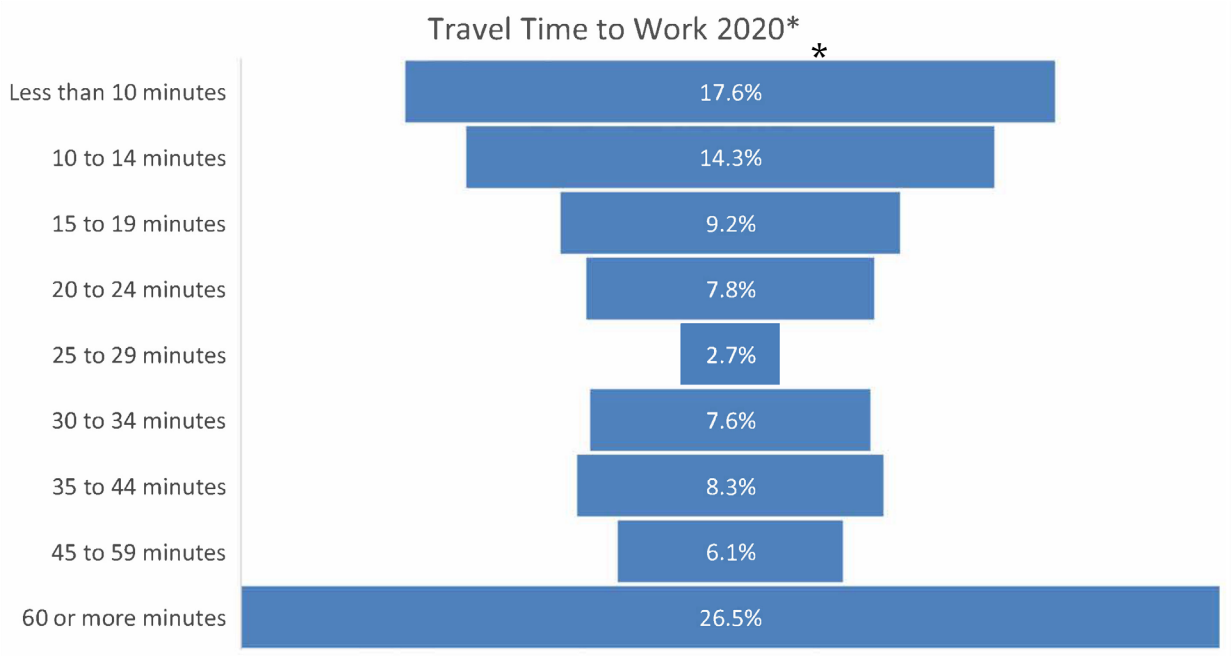


Figure 24: Travel Time to Work
Source: Decennial Census 2020 (S0801)

Transit

Front Royal has multiple options to get around town as well as commute from the Town to locations in the Shenandoah Valley and the New River Valley. The Valley Flyer from Virginia Breeze Bus Lines offers one northbound and one southbound trip every day, leaving from Blacksburg and Washington respectively, except in severe weather and other extenuating circumstances. Within the Town, the Royal Trolley has multiple loops around town with $.50 fares each way and then within Warren County, the Corridor Connector, with stops along Route 340/522 has a fare of $1.00 each way.

Travel Time to Work

The Census collects information about how long people commute to their jobs, which reveals how many people work in town or out of town. The majority (68%) of residents travel more than 15 minutes to reach their jobs, which means they are likely commuting out of Town. The highest percentage of resident, 26.5%, travel 60 minutes or more to reach their jobs.

Takeaways

The key takeaway from this information is that Front Royal is intrinsically connected to the larger Northern Virginia and Shenandoah Valley regions. That the majority of residents do not work in the Town tells us that people are choosing to live in Front Royal because of the quality of life and are willing to commute to be able to live there. It also tells us that the economic base could use some strengthening and diversifying.

Road Ownership and Maintenance

There are just under 100 miles of roadways in the Town. Of the 94% of the roads that are maintained by the Town, 79% are also owned by the Town and 15% are owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The remaining 6% of the roadways within the Town limits are privately owned and maintained. For roadways owned by VDOT but maintained by the Town, all public rights-of-way must meet a set of standards placing them under VDOT's Urban Maintenance Inventory System.

While Front Royal has a high degree of autonomy in the management of their streets and roads, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) retains oversight responsibilities and these municipalities must meet both State and federal requirements associated with the distribution and acceptance of State and federal highway funds. The Code of Virginia, the US Code, and the Code of Federal Regulations establish the minimum legislative State oversight requirements and municipality reporting responsibilities.*

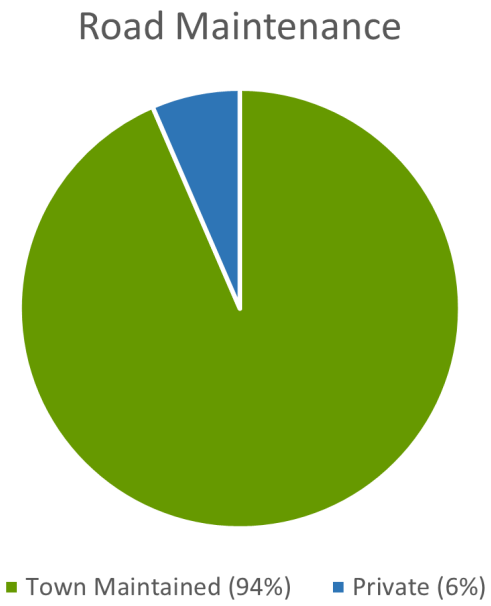
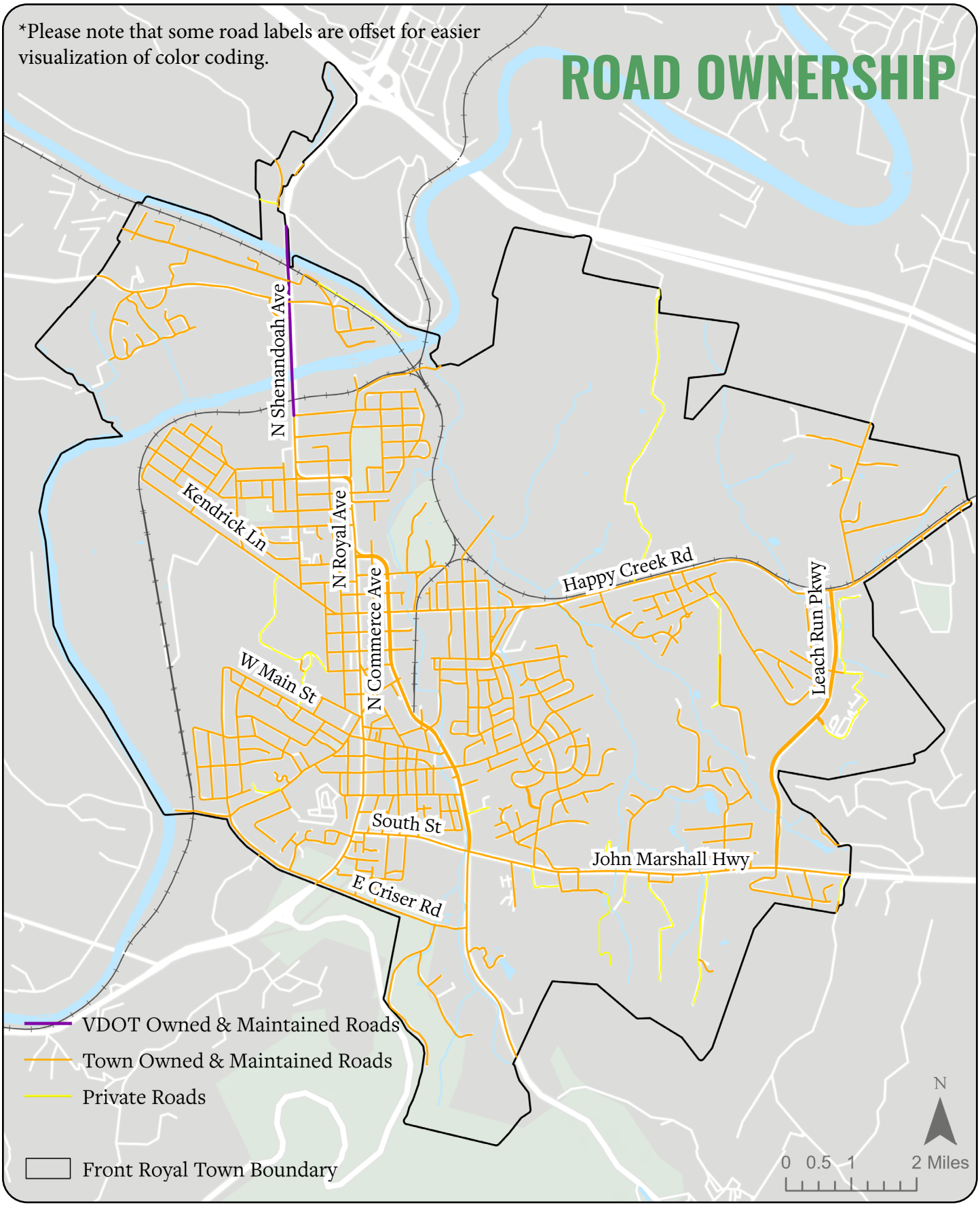
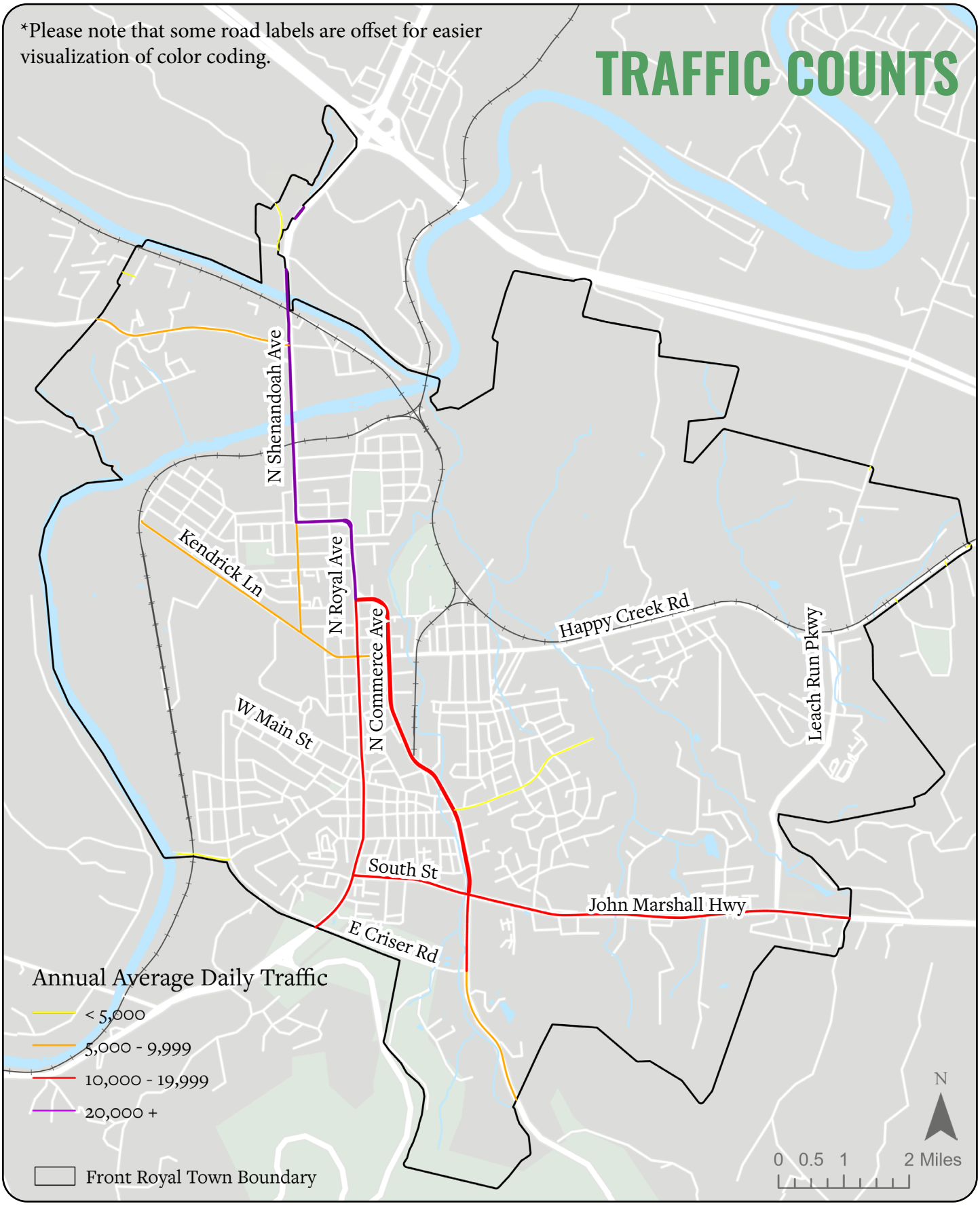


Figure 25: Road Maintenance
Source: Town of Front Royal DPW 2021

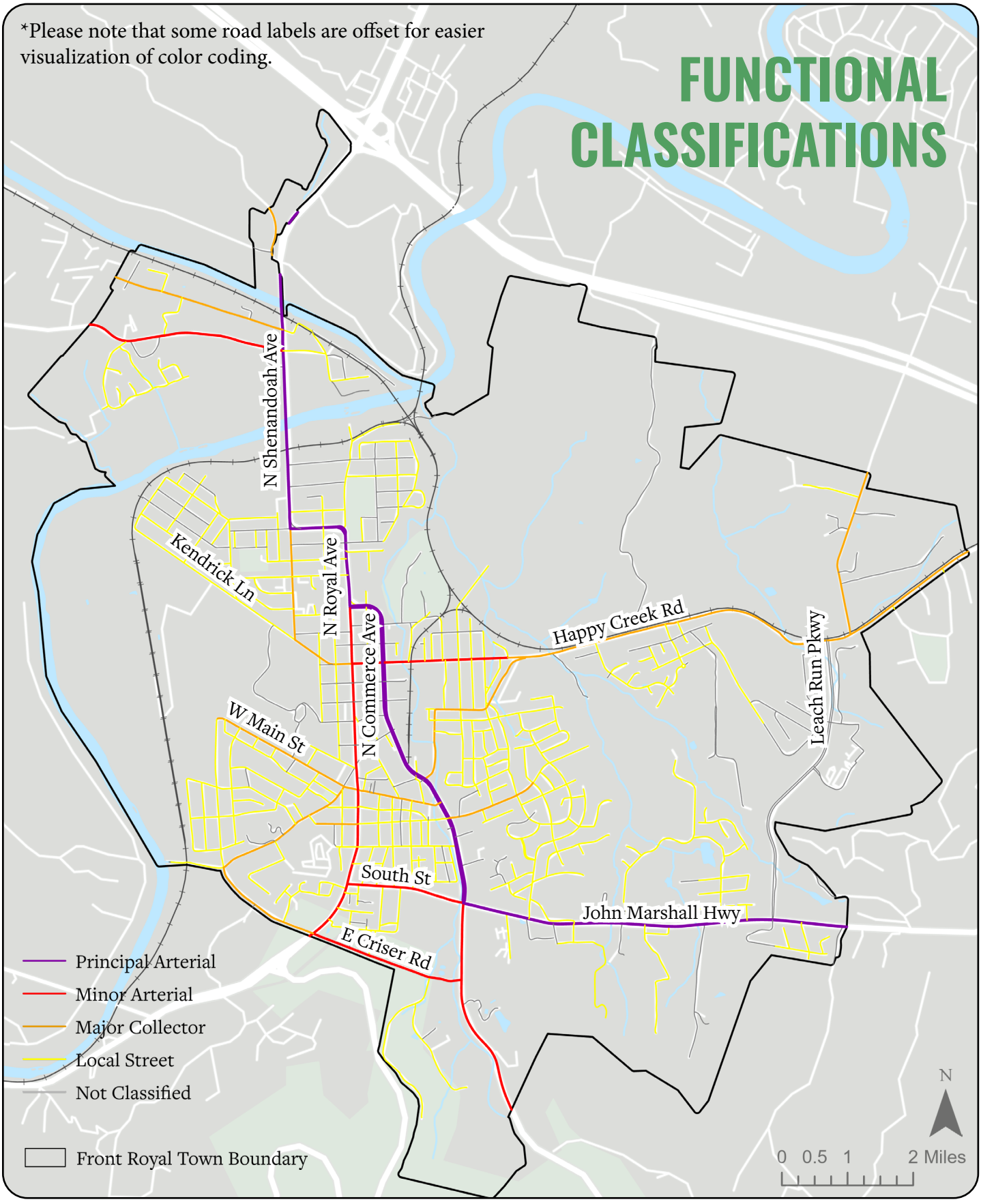
* *Excerpt from Urban Construction and Maintenance Program (Urban Manual) Policies and Guidelines August 2017*

ROAD OWNERSHIP

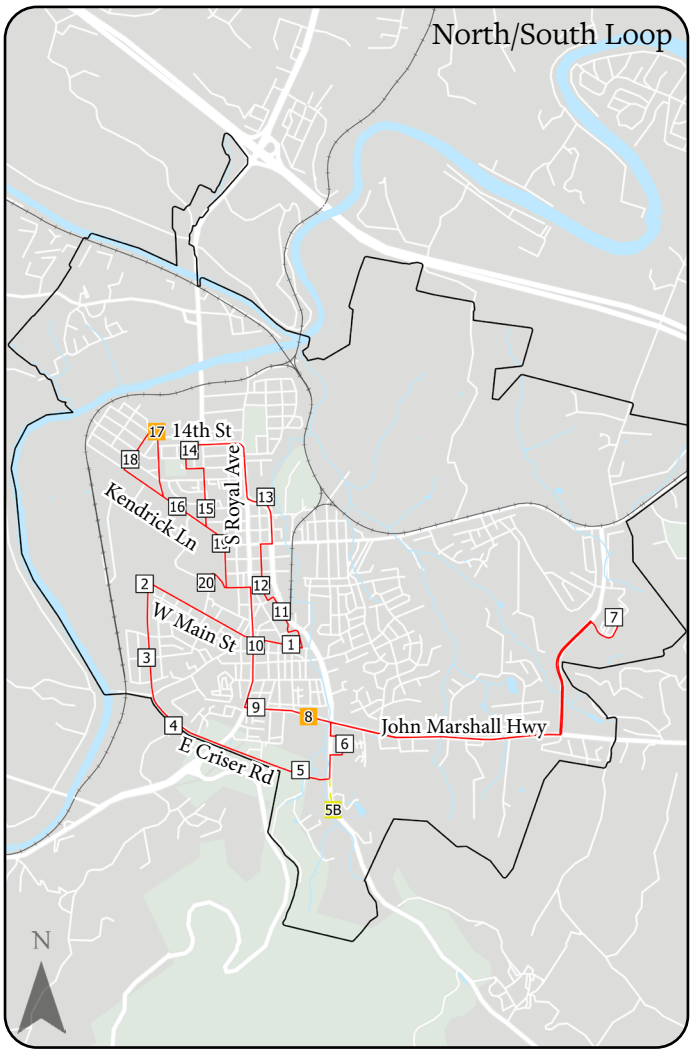


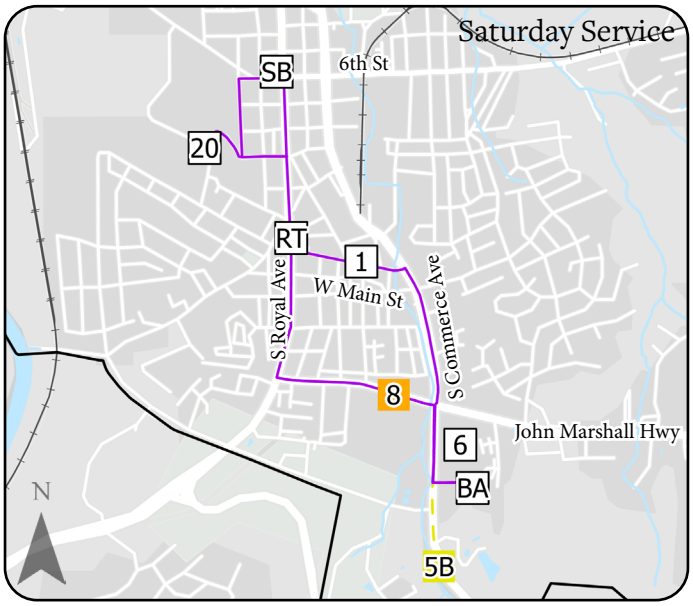

*Please note that some road labels are offset for easier visualization of color coding.
TRAFFIC COUNTS
N Shenandoah Ave
Kendrick Ln
N Royal Ave
N Commerce Ave
Happy Creek Rd
Leach Run Pkwy
W Main St
South St
John Marshall Hwy
E Criser Rd
Annual Average Daily Traffic
< 5,000
5,000 - 9,999
10,000 - 19,999
20,000 +
Front Royal Town Boundary
N
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

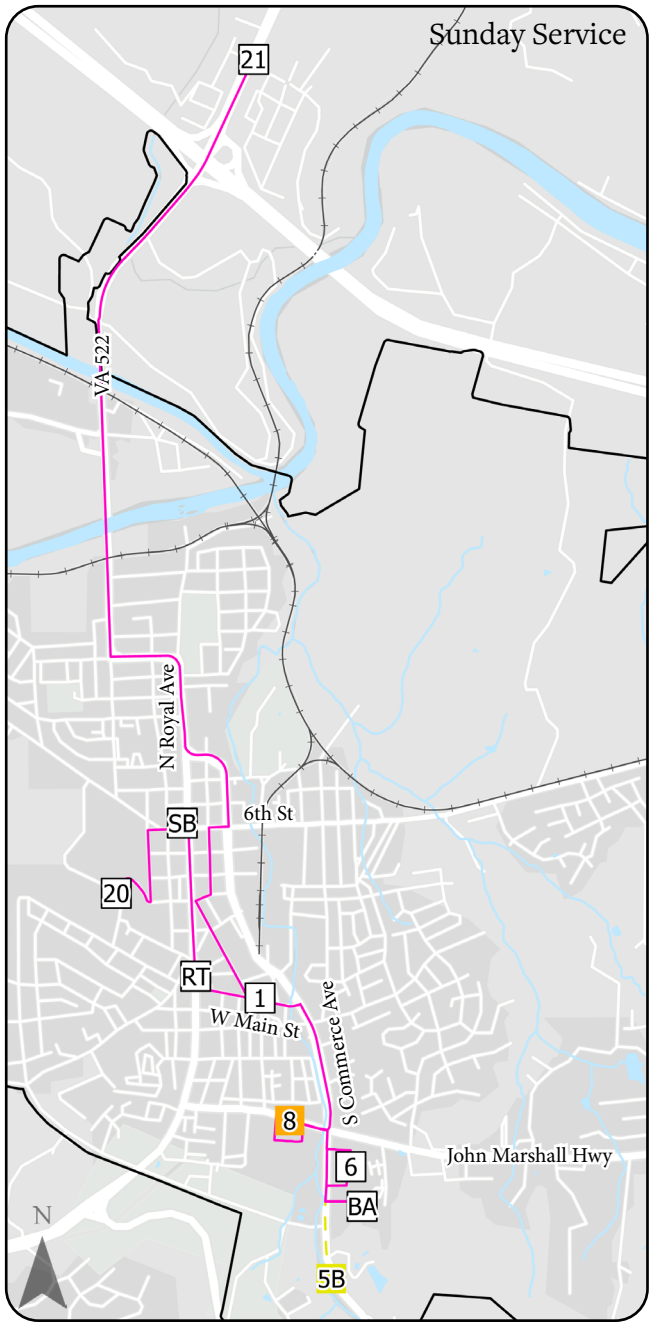
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS



ROYAL TROLLEY SERVICE







SB - Subway
RT - Royal Theatre
BA - Bowling Alley
1 - Visitor Center
2 - Skate Park
3 - Kerfoot & Brown Ave
4 - NW Community Services
5 - Samuels Public Library
5B - A.T. Crossing
6 - Gateway Plaza
7 - Warren Memorial Hospital
8 - Royal Plaza/Martins
9 - South St/Pine St
10 - Court House
11 - Valley Health
12 - Warren County Government Center
13 - Fantasyland
14 - Warren County Senior Center
15 - N Shenandoah Ave & W 9th St
16 - Skyline Vista Apartments
17 - Warren County Dept of Social Services
18 - Monroe & 11th St “Family Store”
19 - Warren County Community Center
20 - Randolph Macon Academy
21 - Target/Wal-Mart

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The maps and tables on the following pages show road improvements from three sources:

Transportation Improvements from the Comprehensive Planning Process

During the comprehensive planning process, Front Royal staff, the Planning Commission, and members of the public identified deficiencies in the town's transportation network and proposed interventions that would help improve safety and mobility for residents. These recommended improvements complement those outlined in the RLRTP to form an ideal future transportation system. Recommendations made during the Comprehensive Planning Process may be funded and implemented over the plan's 20-year time frame; however, it is not guaranteed.

2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission)

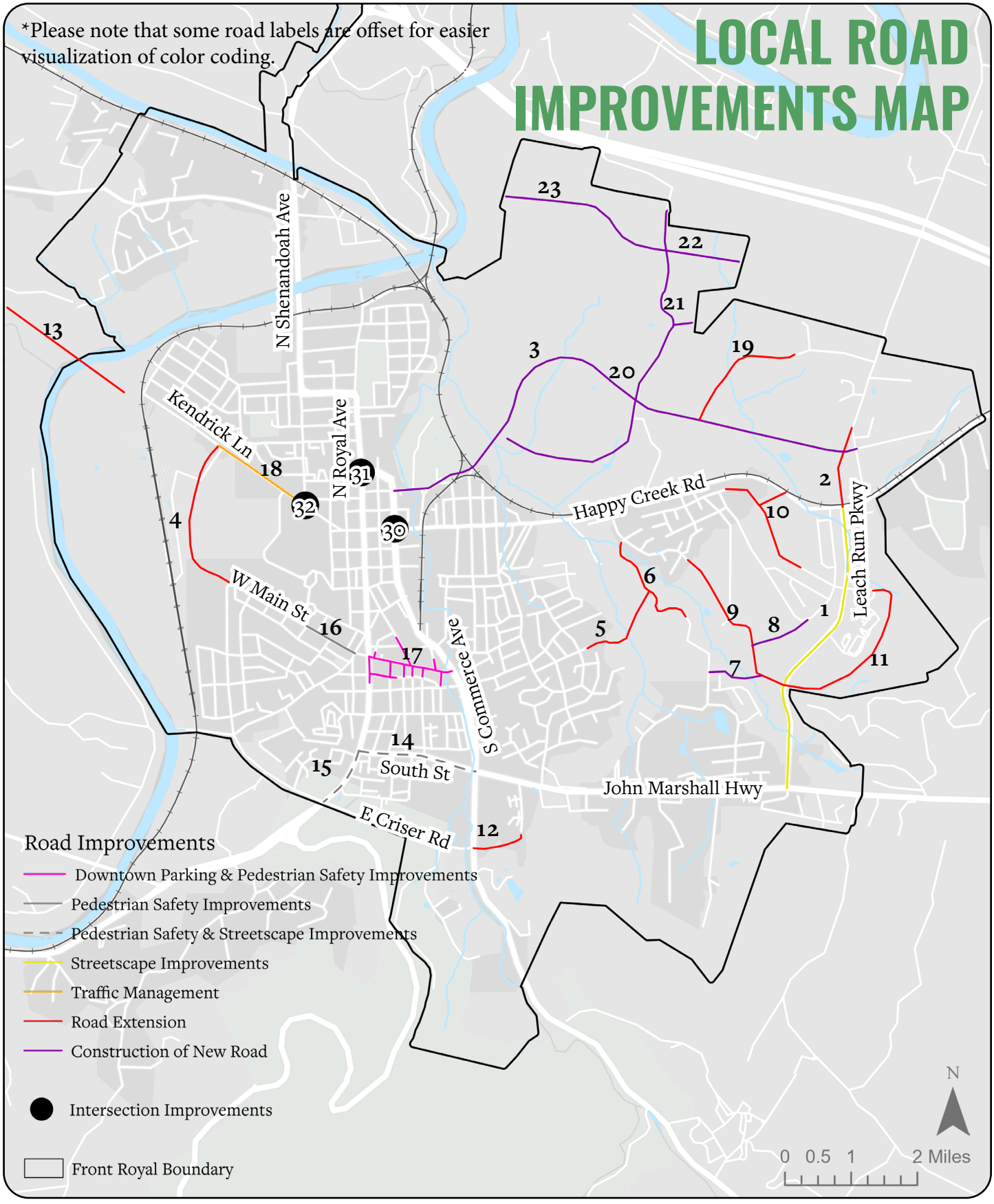
The Town of Front Royal is a member locality of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC), which is one of 21 Planning District Commissions (PDC's) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. NSVRC prepared the 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP), which was adopted in 2011, for the Counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren. This plan serves as a blueprint to address the needs of the transportation system, regardless of funding availability. Rather than a financially constrained transportation plan of projects that will be completed, the RLRTP serves as a "screening document" for projects that would address current needs and future growth if funding becomes available. Projects outlined to address transportation system deficiencies of the Town of Front Royal in the RLRTP are shown in the map on the Page 82.

Six-Year Improvement Program

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocates public funds to transportation projects over six fiscal years, making up the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Projects on the SYIP have been identified as deficiencies on transportation plans, including RLRTP's, and prioritized at the state level. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) oversees SYIP projects and maintains an online database of SYIP projects, including funding and progress. Each project is assigned a UPC number for reference. During the update of this Comprehensive Plan, three transportation projects in Front Royal are included in the SYIP, as shown in the table below.

UPC	Description	Status	Estimated Completion	Allocations
116862	N Shenandoah Ave Lighting	2023 Construction Start	2023	$265 K
119664	Smart Scale South St Improvements	Preliminary Engineering Underway	2025	$3.61 M
121153	8th St Bridge Replacement	2023 Preliminary Engineering Start	2025	$2.75 M

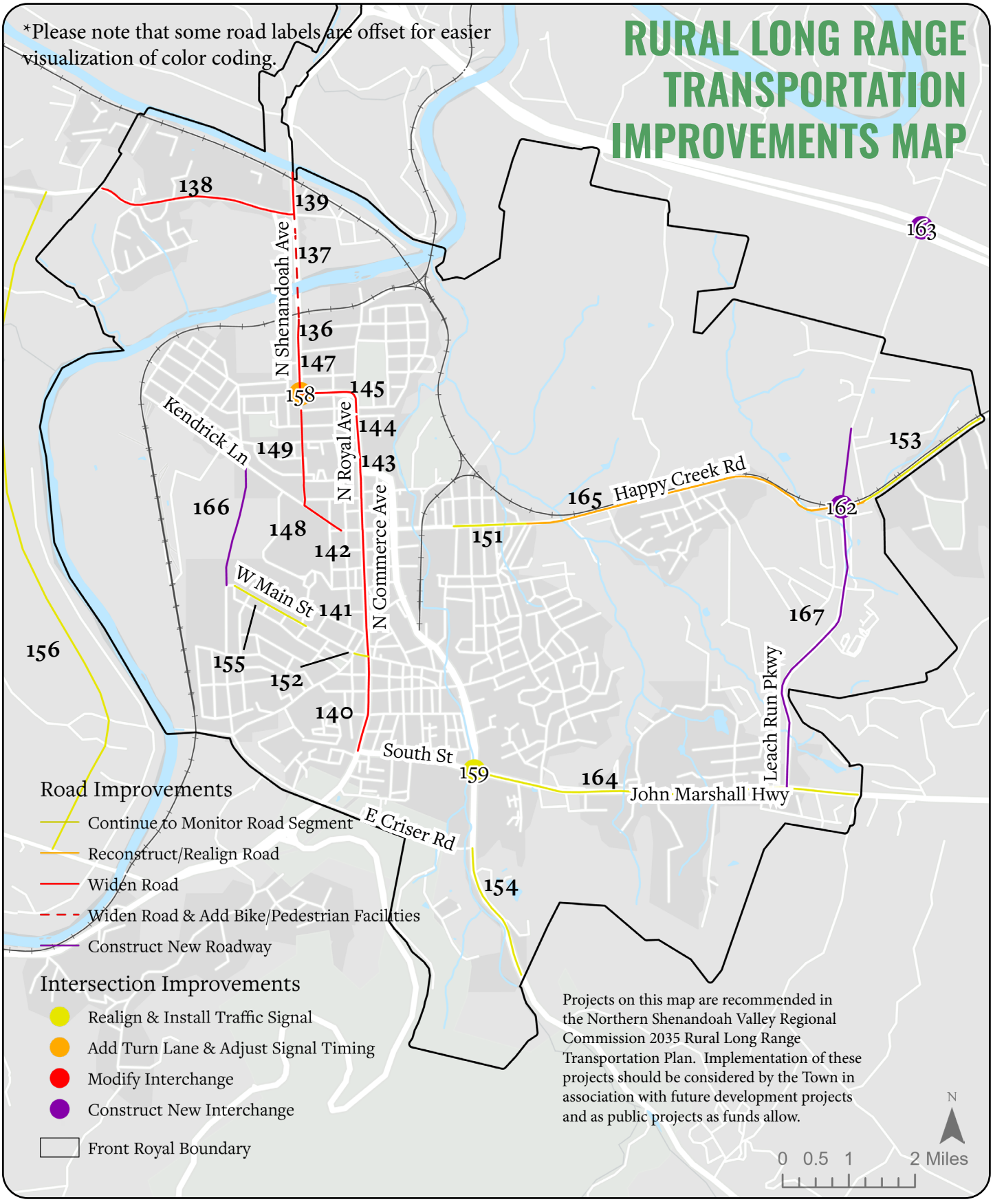
LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS MAP



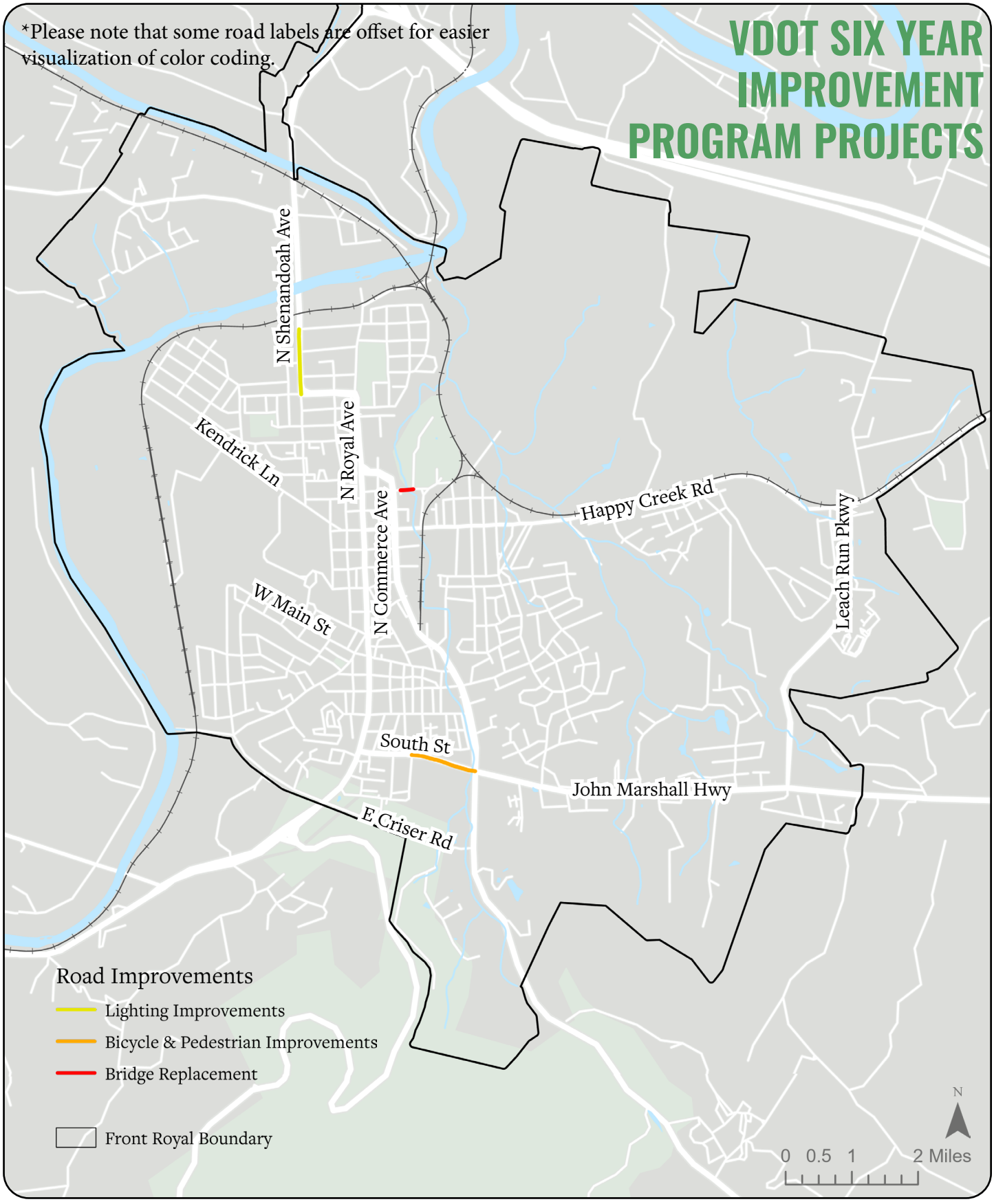
	Project Name	Description	Bike Lanes	Sidewalks	Curb/ Gutter	Traffic Calming	On-Street Parking	Limited Access	Type	Planning Level Cost Estimate
1	Leach Run Pkwy Phase 1	Phase 1 of Leach Run Parkway is constructed. Recommendations include working with UFAC to increase the canopy coverage along the new road.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Arterial	N/A
2	Leach Run Pkwy Phase 2	Extension of Leach Run Parkway north of Happy Creek Road to include a separated crossing over the railroad and realignment of Shenandoah Shores Road. In the long term, consider possibilities for an intersection to I-66 at Shenandoah Shores Road.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Arterial	$35 - 45 million
3	East-West Connector	A 4 lane roadway from Shenandoah Shores Road to 8th Street.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Collector	$48 - 54 million ($24 - 26 million for half section)
4	West Main St. Extension	Extension of West Main Street to Kendrick Lane.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Collector	$9 - 13 million
5	Williams Street Extension	Extension of Williams Street to connect with the planned Westminster Drive Extension (#6).	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	$4 - 7 million
6	Westminster Drive Extension	Extension of Westminster Drive to Lewis Street at the existing stub street across from Vista Ridge Court.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	$5.5 - 8.5 million
7	HEPTAD Connector West	Construction of a road to connect Westminster Drive to Lewis Street Extension (#9).	N	Y	Y	Y	TBD	N	Local	$2 - 4 million
8	HEPTAD Connector East	Construction of a road from happy Ridge Drive to the planned Lewis Street Extension (#9).	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	$3.5 - 8 million
9	Lewis Street Extension	Extension of Lewis Street to Leach Run Parkway, Phase 1 (#1).	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	$8 - 10 million
10	Stuart Drive - Oden Street Connector	Extension of Oden Street to Happy Creek Road with a connection to Stuart Drive.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	$6.5 - 9 million
11	Oden Street East Extension	Construction of a contiguous access road on the east side of Leach Parkway, beginning at the eastern stub of Oden Street to the planned intersection of the Lewis Street Extension (#9) and Leach Run Parkway (#1).	N	Y	Y	Y	TBD	N	Local	$10 - 14 million
12	Royal Lane Extension	Extension of Royal Lane to Remount Road to align with the intersection of East Criser Road / Remount Road.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Local	$3 - 4.5 million
13	Kendrick Lane West Extension	Extension of Kendrick Lane to ultimately cross the Shenandoah River to intersect with the planned Western By-Pass.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Collector	$34 - 40 million
14	South Street Streetscape Project	Improvements to South Street to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics while maintaining the road as a business corridor and truck route. Highest emphasis on safety. See South Street Corridor Study.	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Arterial	Funded project: $3.6 million

	Project Name	Description	Bike Lanes	Sidewalks	Curb/ Gutter	Traffic Calming	On-Street Parking	Limited Access	Type	Planning Level Cost Estimate
15	South Royal Avenue	Improvements to South Royal Avenue to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics while maintaining the road as a business corridor and truck route. Highest emphasis on aesthetics.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Arterial	Study: $50,000
16	West Main Street	Improvements to West Main Street to improve pedestrian safety.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Collector	Study: $50,000
17	Downtown	Improvements to South Street to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics while maintaining the road as a business corridor and truck route. Highest emphasis on safety. See South Street Corridor Study.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	All	Study: $100,000
18	Kendrick Lane	Improvements to South Royal Avenue to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics while maintaining the road as a business corridor and truck route. Highest emphasis on aesthetics.	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Collector	Study: $50,000
19	Progress Drive Extension	Extension of Progress Drive to connect with the planned East-West Connector Road (#3)	N	Y	TBD	TBD	TBD	N	Local	Subdivision Development Roadway
20	Mary's Shady Lane Collector	Construction of a north-south collector road in the Marshall Planning Area to accommodate future growth traffic and the existing traffic on Mary's Shady Lane.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	Subdivision Development Roadway
21	FRLP Connector #1	Connector between two separate future development projects to improve mobility.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	Subdivision Development Roadway
22	FRLP Connector #2	Connector between two separate future development projects to improve mobility.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	Subdivision Development Roadway
23	FRLP Connector #3	Connector between two separate future development projects to improve mobility.	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Local	Subdivision Development Roadway
24 - 29	Reserved	----								Reserved
30	Intersection of 6th St. / Commerce Ave.	Intersection Improvements.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Arterial	Study: $30,000
31	Intersection of N. Royal Ave. / Commerce Ave.	Intersection Improvements.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Arterial	Study: $30,000
32	Intersection of Shenandoah Ave. / Kendrick Ln.	Intersection Improvements.	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Arterial	Study: $30,000

RURAL LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS MAP



VDOT SIX YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS



Objectives & Strategies

Policy & Ordinance:

1. Review and update the Road Improvement Plan and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Plan at least every five years once adopted.

2. Prioritize the Bicycle Improvement Plan and Road Improvement Plan on an annual basis when updating the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Improve methods of prioritizing transportation projects to ensure that available public funds are used efficiently.

3. The Planning & Zoning Department should examine and update the Construction Standards & Specifications manual to better incorporate the other goals of this section and updates to Chapter 148 of the Town Code.

4. Identify sources of funding other than local tax revenue, including grants, private donations, public/private partnerships, and potential new operational revenue. Train Town staff and work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) so that grant applications are properly prepared to increase the likelihood of approval.

5. Require design features on roadways that improve the safety and comfort level of all users, including street trees, buffers between bicycle lanes and sidewalks from the automobile lanes, landscaped medians, street furniture and sidewalks that improve the safety and comfort level of all users.

6. Reduce local traffic congestion by reducing local vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and coordinate with Land Use strategies to plan and implement comfortable, accessible, and convenient multi-modal transportation options.

7. Review off-street parking requirements and amend or update to change to a “maximum parking” limit.

8. Encourage and implement shared parking agreements between local property owners.

9. Integrate innovative and sustainable stormwater infrastructure within the Town’s streets.

10. Share knowledge of policies and strategies with partnering organizations to develop green infrastructure alternatives as an integral part of the development process.

11. Continue performing regular maintenance on existing transportation facilities while noting opportunities to improve or identifying new projects.

12. Study the town’s one-way streets, with special attention to streets where drivers travel in the wrong direction.

13. Street lighting should be dark-sky compliant and direct light downwards, shielding it from the sky.

Multi-modal network: Prioritize increasing the number of pedestrian and bicyclists in Town.

1. Seek to expand and anticipate traffic calming measures throughout the Town in collaboration with neighborhood residents and as part of the development process.

2. Consistently apply Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards to facility design and ensure that accessible curb ramps exist at all pedestrian crossings where possible.

3. Continue to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodation in conjunction with the planning and design of new public or private road projects.

4. Explore and implement safe, convenient, and visually attractive crossing alternatives to enable pedestrians and bicyclists to cross collector and arterial streets.

5. Evaluate street parking needs for new development projects and consider the implementation of narrower streets where street parking is determined to be unnecessary.

6. Require bicycle parking at public facilities and explore opportunities to provide or promote bicycle parking across Town to support local businesses.

7. Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Downtown Parking Study and consider locations for future consolidated structured public parking facilities.

8. Continue to support park-and-ride lots and ride-sharing programs.

9. Evaluate the potential to convert E. Main Street to a pedestrian and bicycle street or limiting car access at certain times of day.

10. Create a river walk along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River between points on the southern and northern ends of Town.

11. Build sidewalks on residential streets where they are lacking.

12. Build a safe walking path on Criser Road. The Town may take the lead on this project with assistance and cooperation from the National Park Service, which abuts the road.

13. Build a shared use path from Front Royal to the Appalachian Trail via Route 522 to strengthen the bicycle and pedestrian connection to Shenandoah National Park and improve conditions for through-hikers that want to spend time in town. The Town and County governments may collaborate with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to build the path in the near term.

14. Add bike parking downtown and at shopping centers. The Town can implement this action through an ordinance and collaboration with businesses through an adopt-a-rack program.

15. Explore opportunities to add a trail or pathway connecting the Appalachian Trail to the Town's multi- use trail network, potentially on the west side of Happy Creek.

16. Allow bicycles on greenway trail with simple paint markings outlining separate travel lanes for cyclists and pedestrians.

17. Explore feasibility of adding greenways along all creeks.

18. Build a system of greenways in town extending out along major corridors and connecting destinations.

19. Work to install marked pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections.

20. Add pedestrian signals at all intersections in Front Royal.

21. Explore infrastructure improvements along bicycle and pedestrian routes, including lighting, hydration stations, bicycle work stands, and signage.

22. Improve access to the water and sidewalk / bicycle lane connections to the boat launch.

23. Utilize appropriate infrastructure to separate bicycle paths from car traffic, depending on the traffic speed and volume on the road.

24. Work with VDOT, the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR), and other localities in the region to develop and implement a plan for the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail.

Public Transportation: Continue to maintain and expand transit services offered by Royal Trolley. Coordinate with Warren County and other public transportation service providers to maximize transit services that are available to Town citizens.

1. Ensure that printed schedules are available at key transit stops.

2. Extend Virginia Railway Express commuter rail service to Front Royal in the long term (35 years plan).

3. Add a regional bus connector to the Washington metropolitan area

4. Require new development to be potentially accessible by public transit in the future, such as locating space for bus shelters.

5. Review transit stops to ensure that are connected with accessible sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes. Add shelters and lighting at stops and maintain them with unified signage and shelter design.

6. Work with Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and the Virginia Department of Transportation to collect data regarding regional travel patterns, car traffic counts, bicycle and pedestrian counts, and etcetera.

7. Explore the future demand and feasibility for passenger rail service for the Town and region.

8. Coordinate with Virginia Regional Transit to explore additional transit shelters, higher frequency routes, and additional connections. Support these efforts with local staff and funding, as available and appropriate.

9. Limit truck through traffic to main routes, restrict their movement into residential neighborhoods.

10. Explore creating an advertising campaign to promote taking public transit, bicycling, or walking to destinations that communicates the benefit of what individual action does for the community.

Parking: Study and address parking issues throughout the downtown area.

1. Re-introduce enforcement of the parking time limits in the downtown area to allow for more turnover of spaces.

2. Assess the feasibility of paid parking for the downtown area as a way to ensure turnover of spaces.

3. Plan for the location of a future public structured parking facility. This could be combined with other amenities, such as a rooftop viewing platform or playground.

4. Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Downtown Parking Study. Consider implementing "maximum parking" requirements rather than "minimum parking" requirements to enhance walkability. Encourage shared parking agreements. Locate parking to the rear of buildings and in ways that do not inhibit pedestrian and bicycle access.

Bicycle parking should be as convenient as car parking to encourage more people to bicycle.

The more people travel by car to make local trips, the greater the traffic congestion in Town. By encouraging local trips to be made by other modes of transportation, the overall traffic congestion will be relieved.

Exploring the main street as a pedestrian and bicycle street, even for a limited times or days, could create an even more attractive area.

Often bicycle lanes are designed too narrow to comfortable accommodate the elderly or children. Until safe and comfortable accommodations are provided for all users, bicycling will be dangerous for some groups.

RESPONSIVE & ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

Front Royal's town hall.

Goal Statement

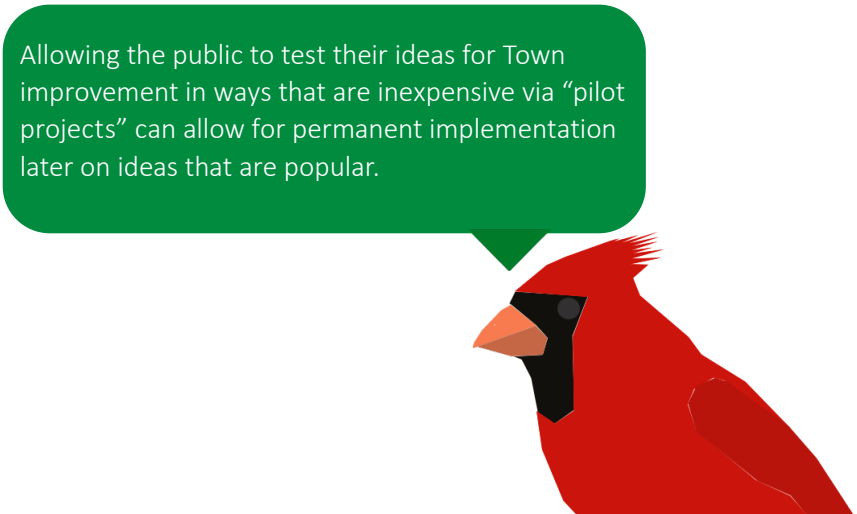
“Ensure that the Town government is clear and transparent in its decision making, responsive to requests for information, and utilizes its funds and resources wisely.”

To foster a high degree of trust with the community, the Town will ensure that all of its decisions are clear and transparent. By following the guidance found in the Comprehensive Plan, the community will be able to comment upon and follow why any given land use or transportation decision is being made as the Town develops. The Town will strive to achieve high levels of engagement, invite the community to comment regularly and attend meetings, and solicit suggestions to improve quality of life in Town. Higher levels of trust will allow the community to feel that everyone is “all in” on making their community a great place to be and although they may not agree on everything, know that they are making decisions with the community’s interests in mind.

Objectives & Strategies

Responsive & Accountable Governance:

1. The Town shall take a fiscally conservative stance to ensure its long-term fiscal strategies and plans support identified capital projects and needs.
2. The Town's staff will be accessible and responsive to the public.
3. The Town's decision-making process will be open and transparent.
4. High levels of public participation are encouraged in public board and commission meetings.
5. The Town will strive to cooperate with local and regional government partners.
6. The Comprehensive Plan will be consulted along with other guiding documents as the primary basis for decision-making regarding land use and transportation.
7. The Comprehensive Plan will be updated or reviewed every five years, per the Code of Virginia.
8. Consistent engagement with the community shall be maintained via town halls or surveys on resident satisfaction.
9. Allow citizens to test "pilot projects" for ideas on how to improve the Town.
10. Ensure that all voices are heard in the community when surveyed.
11. Ensure that revenues adequately support current and future service and infrastructure needs.
12. Support funding for increasing the number of staff available for code enforcement.
13. Upgrade the Town's fleet when feasible to electric vehicles, allow for electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Town.



FRANKS
FRONT ROYAL

RELIABLE UTILITIES & SERVICES

The Front Royal water treatment plant.

Goal Statement

“Front Royal residents and businesses will enjoy effective utilities and services.”

Although Front Royal’s school system is run by Warren County Public Schools and the Town’s park system is also run by Warren County Parks and Recreation, the Town will work collaboratively to ensure that its residents enjoy the highest quality facilities and services. The Town’s utility services will continue to be carefully administered for the benefit of the community.

School Enrollment

Front Royal's school aged populations are enrolled in school at similar rates to their counterparts across Virginia and the US based on ACS data except for the range of 3 to 4 year olds. Based on the numbers, there is a lower rate of enrollment in Front Royal than between Virginia and the US.

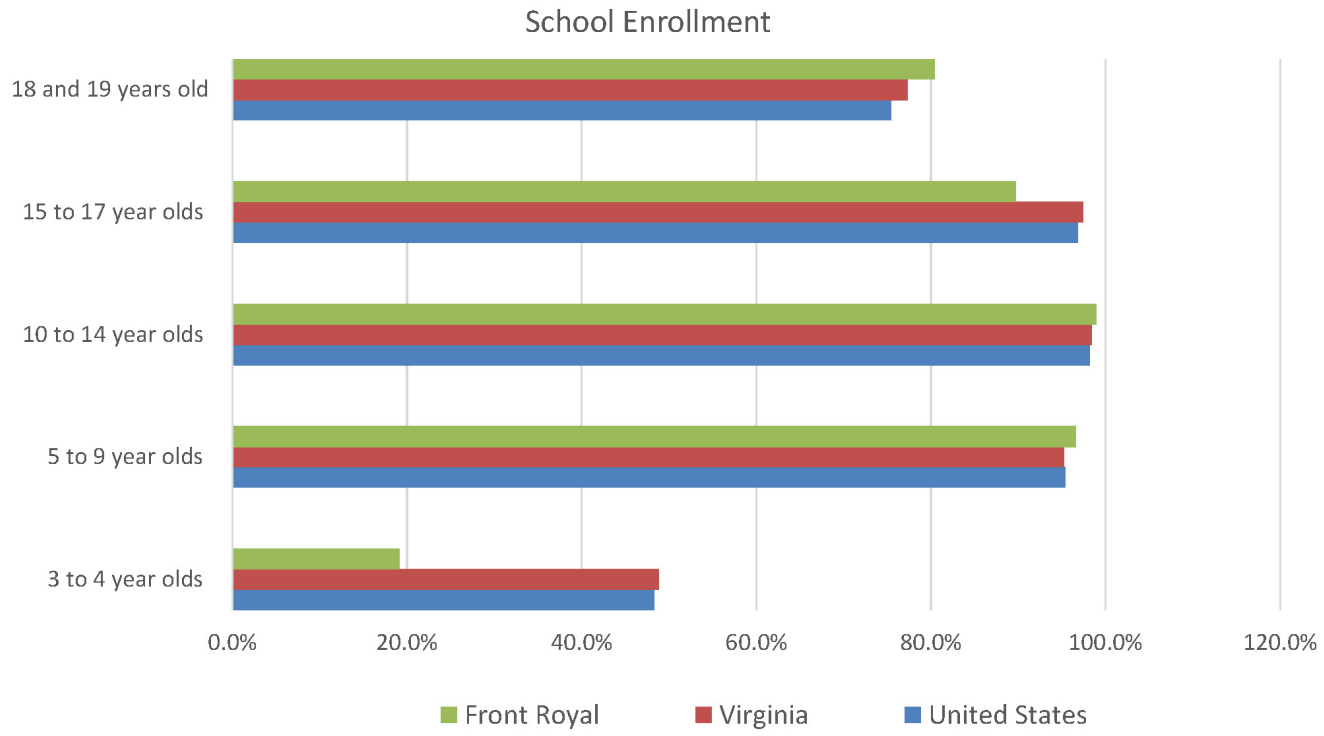


Figure 14: School Enrollment
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (S1401)

Nearly 80% of Front Royal residents 18 and 19 years old are enrolled in school, compared to 75.4% of the same age group nationwide. Additionally, nearly 19.1% of 3- to 4-year-olds are enrolled in school in Front Royal as compared to just over 48% nationwide. A lack of pre-kindergarten enrollment has been correlated to poor attendance, behavior problems and lower the chances of reading at grade level by 4th grade (Urban Child Institute).

Front Royal has lower levels of enrollment in private school than Virginia and the US. There are currently five private schools in Warren County to serve the school age students. which are located within the Town limits. Of the private

Public and Private Schools

	Public School	Private School
United States	83.7%	16.3%
Virginia	82.6%	17.4%
Front Royal	89.5%	10.5%

Figure 15: Public and Private School Enrollment
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (S1401)

schools in Warren County, 60% of them are religiously affiliated (most commonly Roman Catholic and Methodist).

Front Royal is served by Warren County Public Schools. There are approximately 5,400 students attending the public schools in Warren County's 10 public schools. There are a total of 5 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools, and the Mountain Vista Governor's School.

Educational Attainment

The majority (60.3%) of Front Royal residents have graduated from high school or attained a higher degree of education whereas 6.7% have an Associate's degree, 13% have a Bachelor's degree, and 6% have a Graduate or Professional degree.

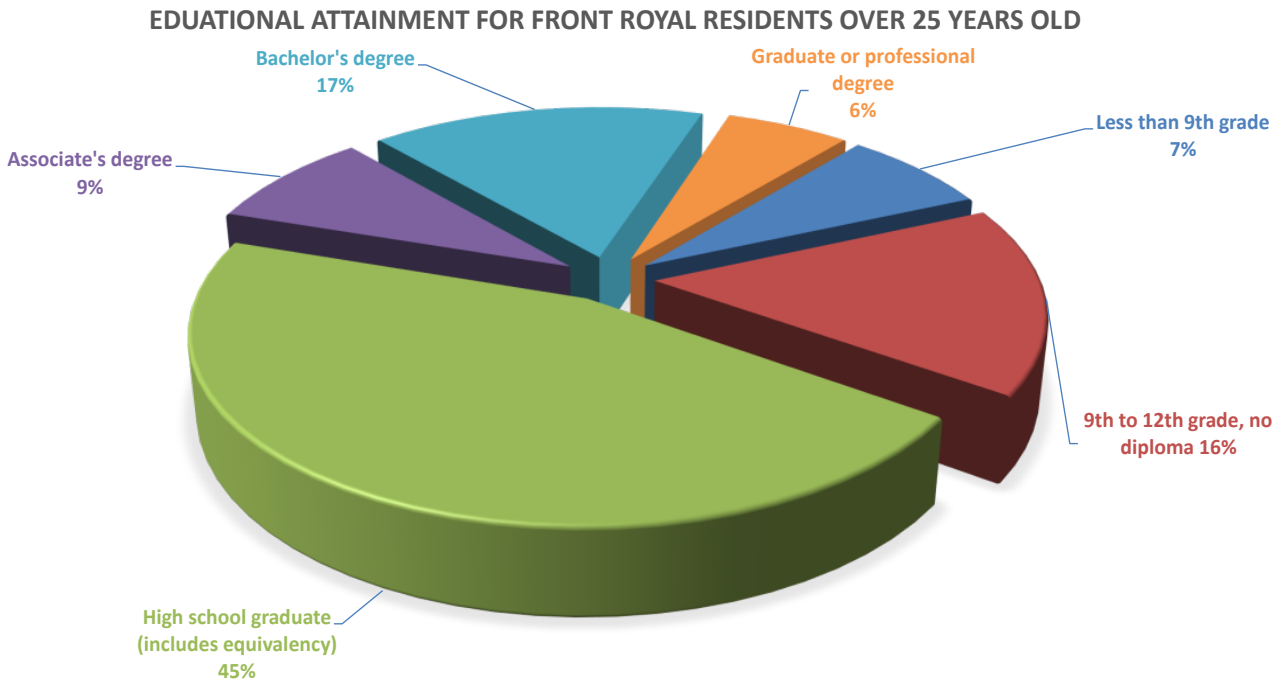


Figure 16: Educational Attainment
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (S1501)

Providers

According to the Federal Communications Commission (broadbandmap.fcc.gov), the majority of the Town is covered by three to four reliable internet providers offering service via cable, satellite and ADSL (telephone lines). Available speeds range from 15 to 940 Mbps download speed and 1 to 35 Mbps upload speed. The highest speed provider of internet service is Comcast, which covers most areas in town.

Broadband

Technology ADSL, Cable, Fiber, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, Other
Speed ≥ 25/3 Mbps
Date June 2020 *(latest public release)*

Provider	Tech	Down (Mbps)	Up (Mbps)
Comcast Corporation	Cable	987	35
ViaSat, Inc.	Satellite	100	3
CenturyLink, Inc.	ADSL	40	3
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	Satellite	25	3
VSAT Systems, LLC	Satellite	2	1.3

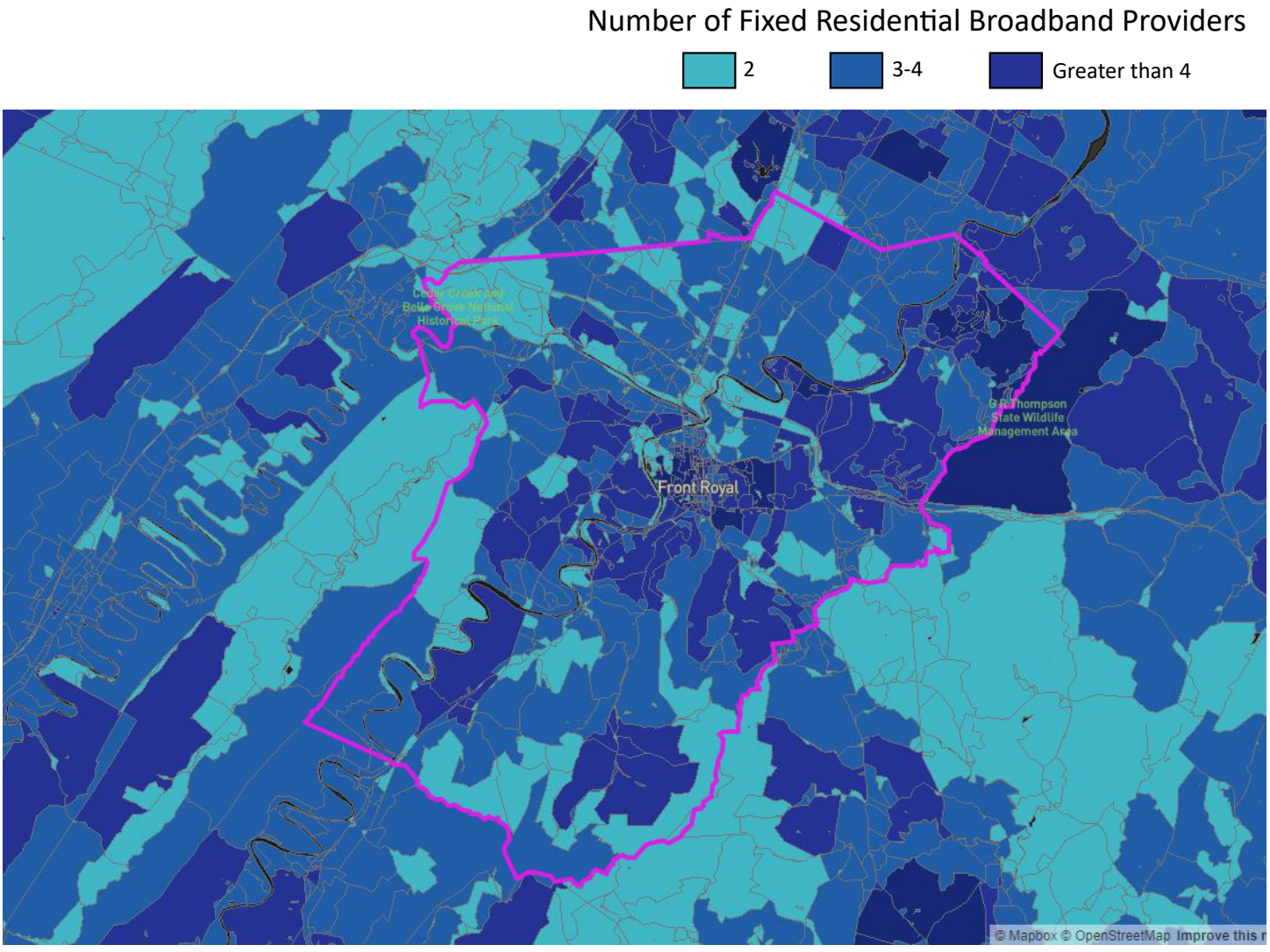


Figure 26: Map of Broadband Coverage
Source: Federal Communications Commission

Internet Subscriptions

Just under 84% of households in Front Royal have a computer and broadband access in their homes.

There is a correlation between broadband access in the home and educational attainment; of the households holding a bachelor's degree or higher, 93.3% have broadband access. Of the households with less than high school degrees, just over 52% have broadband access. (ACS S2802 2019)

This data tells us that those residents who have the lowest levels of educational attainment are the most likely not to have broadband access, and that white residents are the most likely to have broadband access.

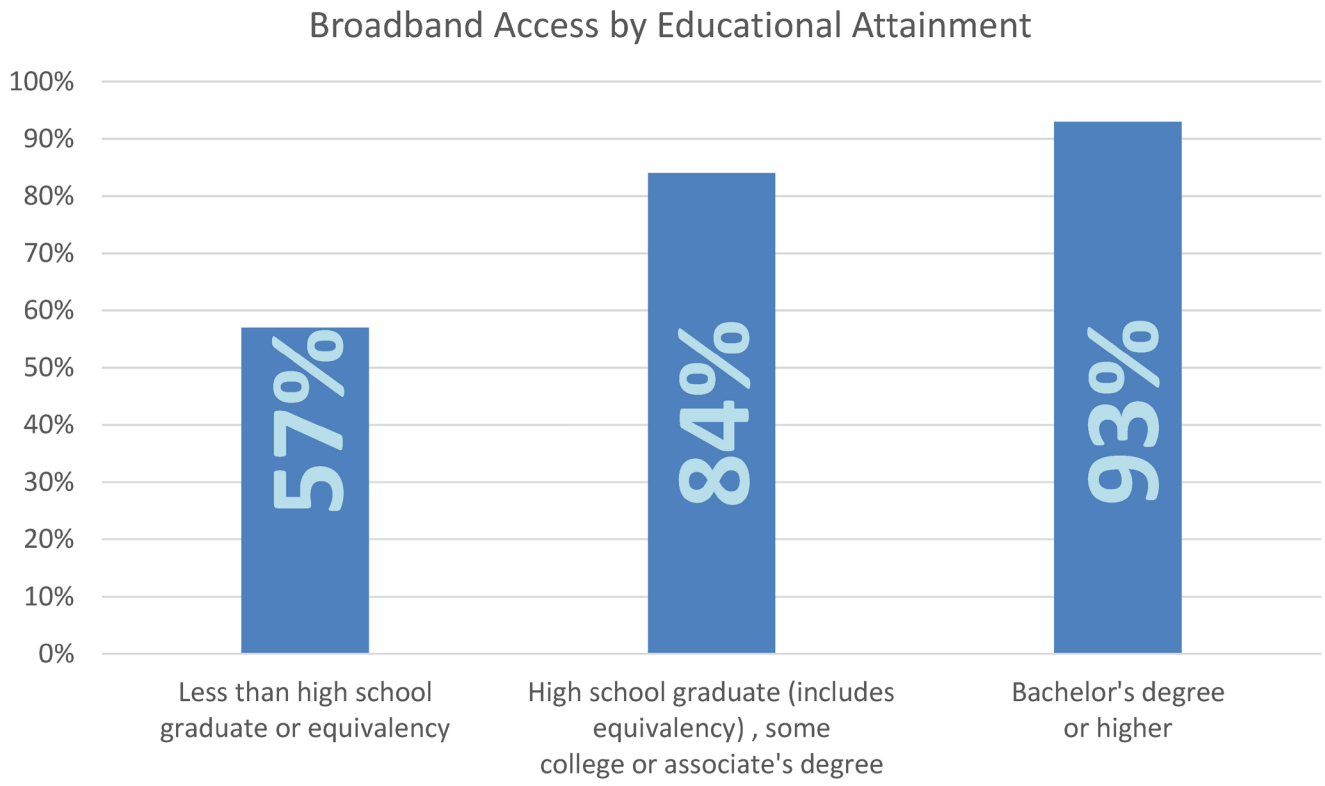
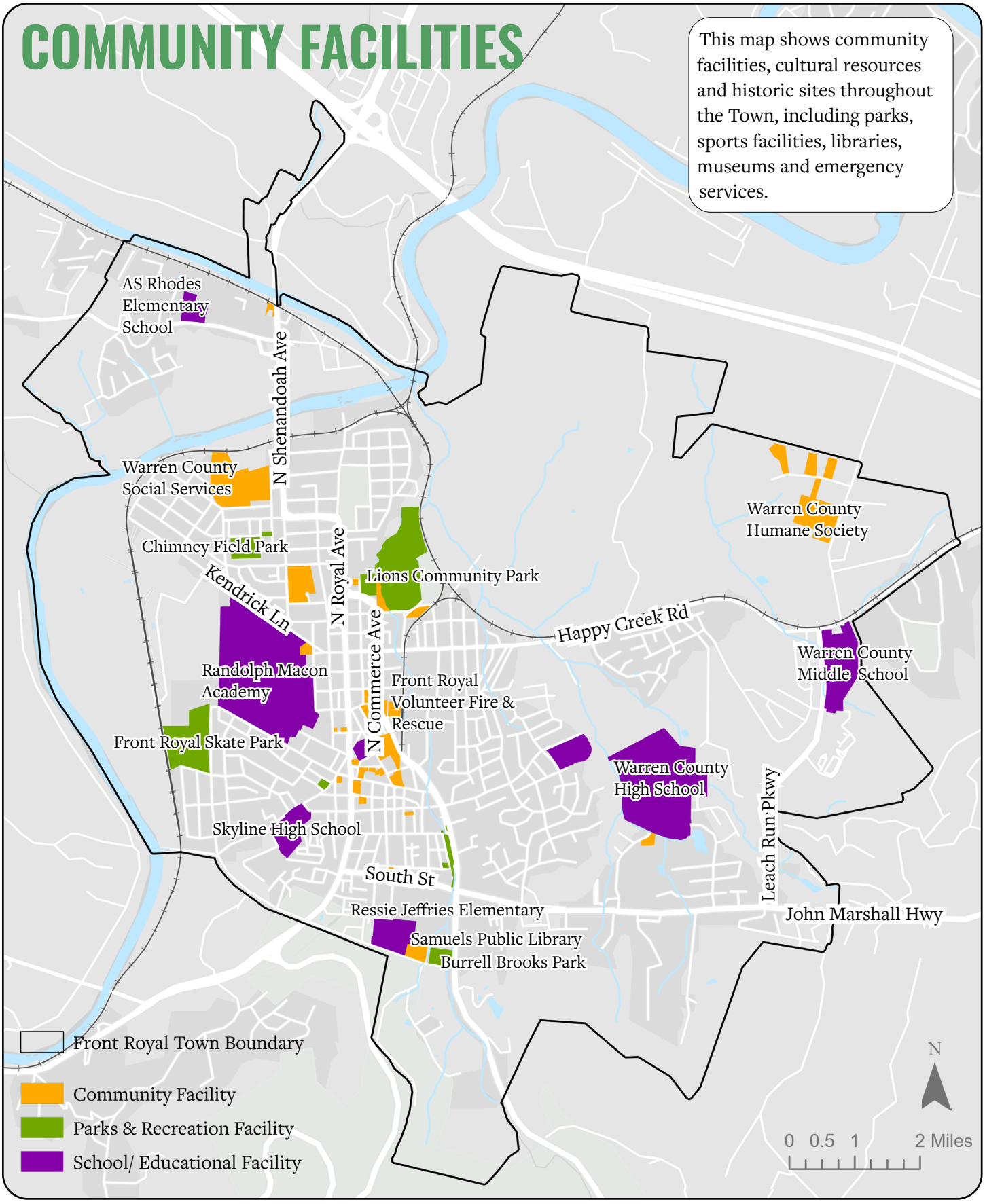


Figure 27: Broadband Access by Educational Attainment
Source: American Community Survey 2019 (B28006)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This map shows community facilities, cultural resources and historic sites throughout the Town, including parks, sports facilities, libraries, museums and emergency services.



Objectives & Strategies

Reliable Utilities & Services: Utility systems such as water and sewer will be continually modernized to meet local needs.

1. Improve energy efficiency in all town buildings and structures. The Town's Electrical Services Department can take the lead on this action in the near term.
2. Promote and facilitate high speed internet access for all residents.
3. Explore the provision of Town-wide public wireless internet (wifi) service or in parks.
4. Improve cellular service throughout the Town through co-located cellular towers or other facilities.
5. Street lighting should be dark-sky compliant and direct light downwards, shielding it from the sky.
6. Ensure the efficient delivery of services and utilities through increasing density rather than allowing sprawl development. Carefully plan towards future needs.
7. The Town's water quality will be continually safe and reliable as a result of the high standards of Front Royal's Public Works.
8. Communicate across governmental agencies to find efficiencies or innovation where possible.
9. Town roadways and trails will be well maintained and safe.
10. The Town's Department of Energy Services will continue to secure reliable power for the community.
11. Continue communicating and educating the public how the Town's services are provided.
12. The Town will ensure that services are provided equitably throughout the entire Town.
13. The Town will pursue opportunities in coordination with Warren County to increase the amount and quality of parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Valley Health's Warren Memorial Hospital.

Goal Statement

“Maintain and improve the public’s health and safety in Town.”

The health of the community will be enhanced through additionally programming and services. The Town will also examine the relationship between its development standards and ordinances to ensure that principles such as Crime Prevention Measures through Environmental Design (CEPTED) can be utilized to make the community safer. Land use policies will be examined to encourage beneficial uses, such as clinics or other support resources, and allow them to develop. Other objectives of the Plan include increasing walkability through safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, which will also assist in making a healthier community.

Objectives & Strategies

Public Health & Safety: Front Royal's residents value safety and family-friendly programs. Safety can be improved through better street design that slows traffic and makes walking and biking more attractive, and through actions to reduce drug use and drug-related crime.

1. Increase youth sports, arts, and service programs. Encourage all ages event programming to promote community health.

2. Emphasize drug law enforcement and support programs to reduce drug use.

3. Explore the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in creating Town Design Guidelines and Design Standards. CPTED provides researched examples of how buildings can be designed to prevent crime through avoiding entrapment areas or allowing for greater visibility.

4. Improve lighting around town and on major corridors into Town.

5. Establish a program to improve relationships between police officers and citizens, coffee with a cop is good example.

6. Invest in improving the schools and retaining good teachers.

7. Address problems caused by aggressive dogs and nuisance animals.

8. Work with the County to facilitate the addition of outdoor exercise equipment at local parks to improve community health.

9. Map and ensure all areas of the Town have quick access to fresh locally sourced food by mapping proximity of residential areas to grocery options.

10. Create a program for the implementation of "Victory Gardens," that can help supply local food banks.

11. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that physical and mental healthcare services are permitted by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts

12. Ensure that physical and mental healthcare services are easily accessible by multi-modal transportation.

13. Amend Zoning Ordinance to permit methadone clinics and other support resources for those suffering from addiction by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts.

14. Town Council should fund Code enforcement division to ensure vigorous code enforcement is able to protect residents from unsafe living conditions.

15. Coordinate with public schools and develop a Safe Route to School Travel Plan for every public school in the Town.

16. Take part in FEMA Community Rating System Program to help residents in the Town's floodplains.

Valley Health's Warren Memorial Hospital.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Historic housing in downtown Front Royal

Goal Statement

"Ensure the Town has a diversified stock of high quality, amenity-rich housing opportunities for all current and future residents of the community."

As the Town of Front Royal grows, it must consider how its population can afford housing. Without an increase of supply in housing and a diversity of unit types, many people who call Front Royal their home may be forced out into other localities. One of the reasons Front Royal is already a vibrant place is its stock of affordable housing that allows people of all income levels to find a place in Town. As mentioned later in this section, many of Front Royal's key personnel, such as Police Officers and Firefighters, have median incomes that may be too low to afford housing within the locality without an ongoing push for more affordable housing.

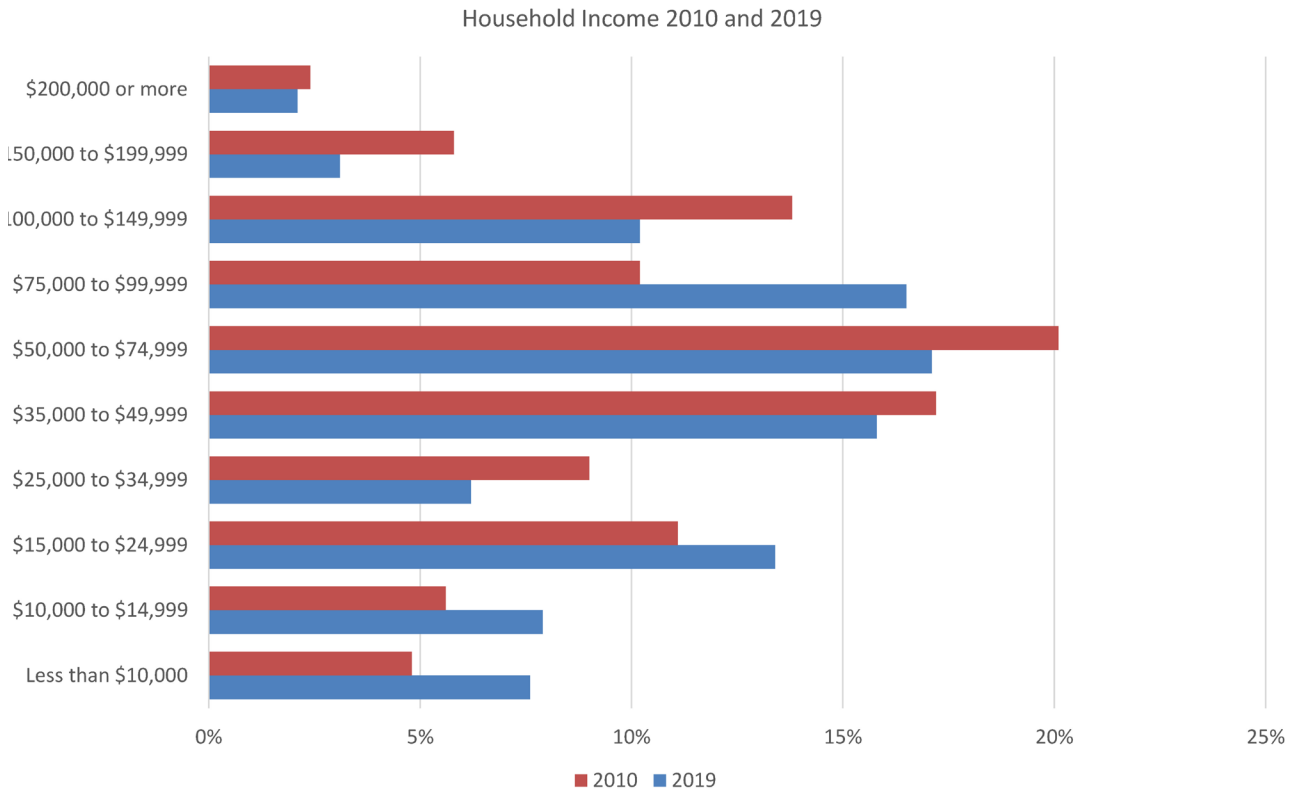
Household Size

Households are comprised of one or more people living together. This includes families related by birth, marriage, or adoption, as well as other combinations of people, such as roommates.

There are currently 6,532 households in Front Royal, with an average of 2.55 people per household. This is consistent with national and state averages.

Household Income

Median* household income for all households in 2019 was an estimated average of $51,871, up from an estimated average of $46,603 in 2010 (both numbers have been adjusted for inflation). This is an estimated 10.1% increase. Both Warren County and Virginia had increases in median household income as well, with Warren County at $69,116 for 2019, a 12.2% increase from 2010, and $74,222 for the State of Virginia, which is a 17.2% increase from the median income in 2010. Front Royal Household Incomes are shown in Figure 7 below comparing 2010 to 2019. (ACS S2503).



* Figure 1 and figure 7 differ because ESRI uses current data figures but US Census has not released current decennial data as of this publication

Figure 7: Household Income
Source: ACS 2010 and 2019

*__Median__ is determined by the middle of the list of housing values, as opposed to **mean** (average) which can be thrown off by outliers on either side of the spectrum.

Median Housing Value

Figure 8 shows median home values comparatively in Front Royal, Warren County, Virginia and the United States growth over 2019, 2021, and 2026 projections. The median home value (Business Analyst 2020) in Front Royal is $211,634. This is lower than the median home value in Virginia as a whole, which is about $273,100 and Warren County which is approximately $244,800. Overall, the U.S. and the Warren County Median Housing Values are higher than the median home values in the Town.

Housing Characteristics

The majority of homes in Front Royal are single-family detached (67%) or attached (12%). Apartments up to nine (9) units comprise twelve percent (12%) of housing, and 9% are apartments in buildings with ten (10) or more units.

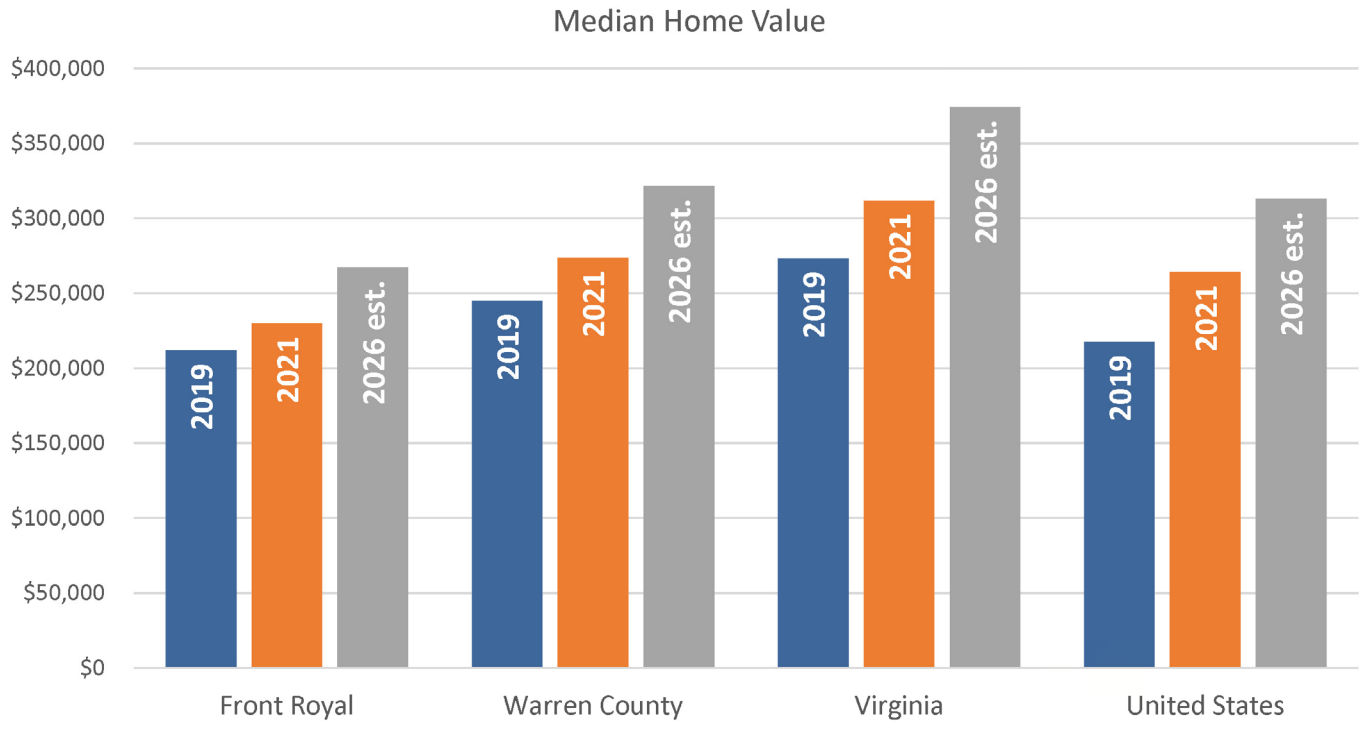


Figure 8: Median Home Value Comparison
Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Owners & Renters

In 2010, there were an estimated 5,848 housing units in the Town, with 59% owner-occupied and 41% renter-occupied.

In 2019, there were an estimated 5,635 housing units in the Town (ACS 2019 S2502), with 56.5% Owner-Occupied and 43.5% Renter-Occupied. Assuming this trend continues, Front Royal should continue to see an increase in renter-occupied housing units in the next several years, and an increase in demand for rental units.

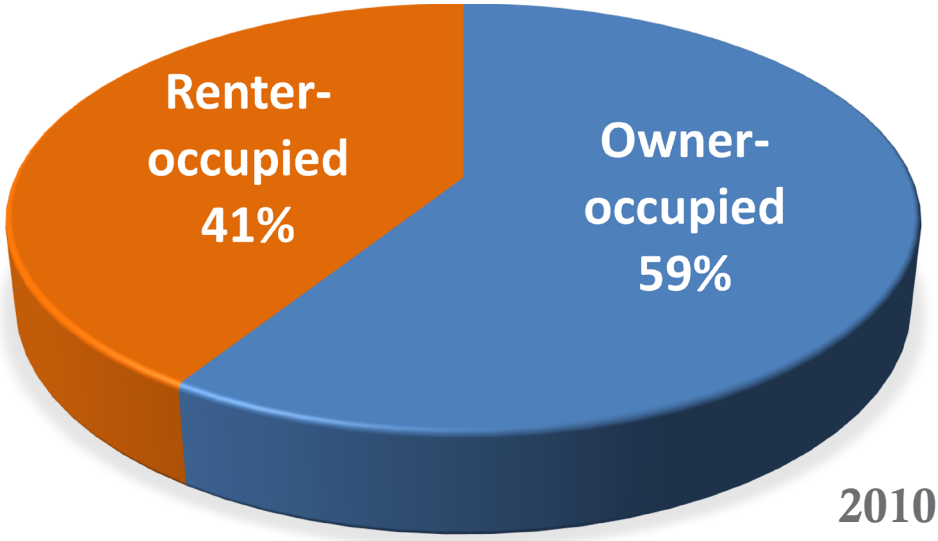


Figure 9: 2010 Tenure
Source: American Community Survey 2010

The charts to the right show that between 2010 and 2019 there has been a national increase in the number of households who rent, with much of it driven by preference; both the US and Virginia had a 3% increase in renters in the same time period. The increase in Front Royal may be a result of increased home prices and lack of affordability.

Since 2010 there has been a steady increase in the median gross rent overall in the United States, Virginia and the Town of Front Royal. In 2010, the median gross rent was $823.00 but in 2019 it rose to $973.00 which is a 15.4% increase.
Similarly, the United States saw a 16.7% increase while Virginia saw a 21.4%
increase over that almost 10 year period.

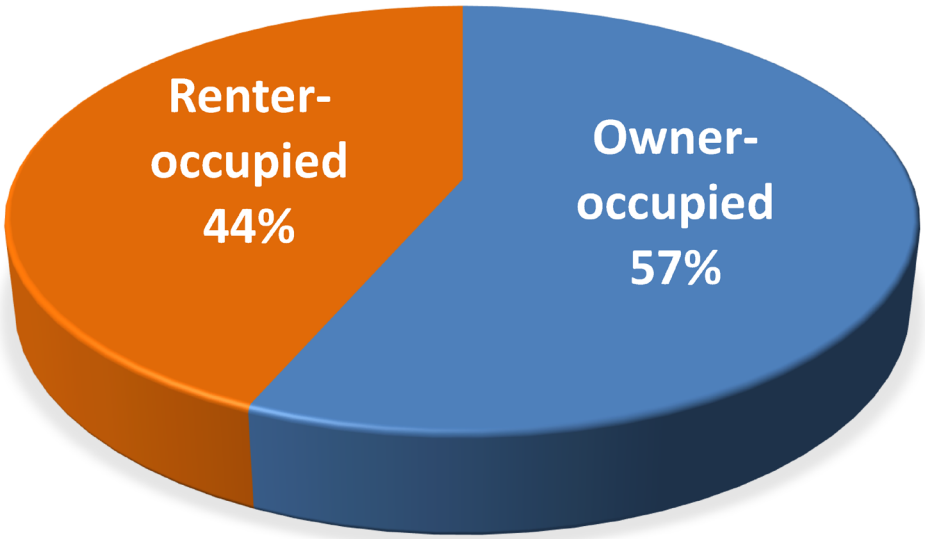


Figure 10: 2019 Tenure
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Poverty Rate

Front Royal has a higher percentage of residents below the poverty level than Virginia or the US. In Front Royal, 16.5% percent of the residents fall below the poverty level, compared to just above 10.6% of Virginia residents, and just over 13.4% of US residents.

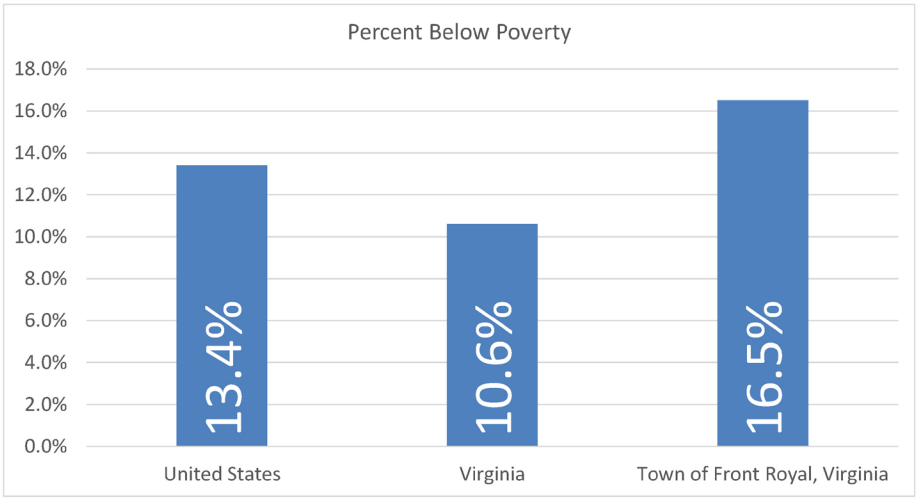


Figure 11: Percent Below Poverty Level
Source: American Community Survey 2019

In 2012, an estimated 13.6% of Front Royal residents were reported to have incomes that fall under the poverty line; the number of residents who fall under the poverty line has increased by three percentage points between 2012 and 2019.

Across the United States, Black residents are more likely to fall below the poverty line, and that trend is also seen Front Royal. In Virginia, 8.5% of White residents and 17.6% of Black residents are in poverty across the US 11.1% of White residents and 23% of Black residents live in poverty.

However, in the Town, 15.8% of White residents and 18.6% of Black residents fall below the poverty line representing a much greater percentage of White residents living in poverty than both the United States and Virginia averages while Black residents in poverty are below the national average. (ACS 2019 S1701)

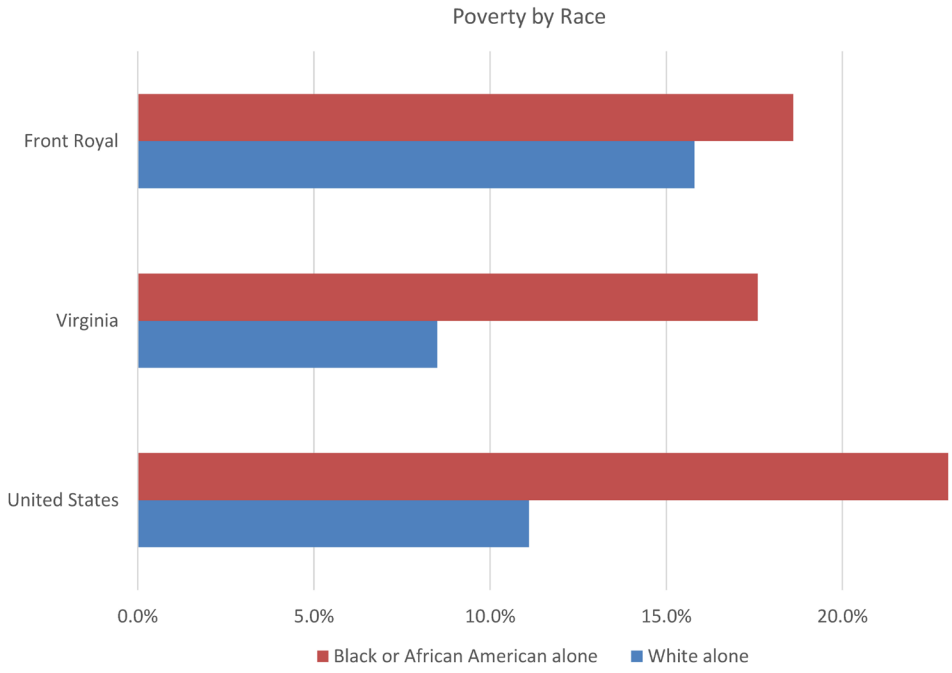


Figure 12: Poverty by Race
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Housing by Year Built

Though Front Royal is known for its historic homes in the downtown area, only 18% of housing in the Town was built before 1939. The majority of housing in the Town was built between 1939 and 1999.

After consistent building over past decades, there has been a decline in the number of housing units built between 2000 and 2009 and an even more significant decrease after 2010.

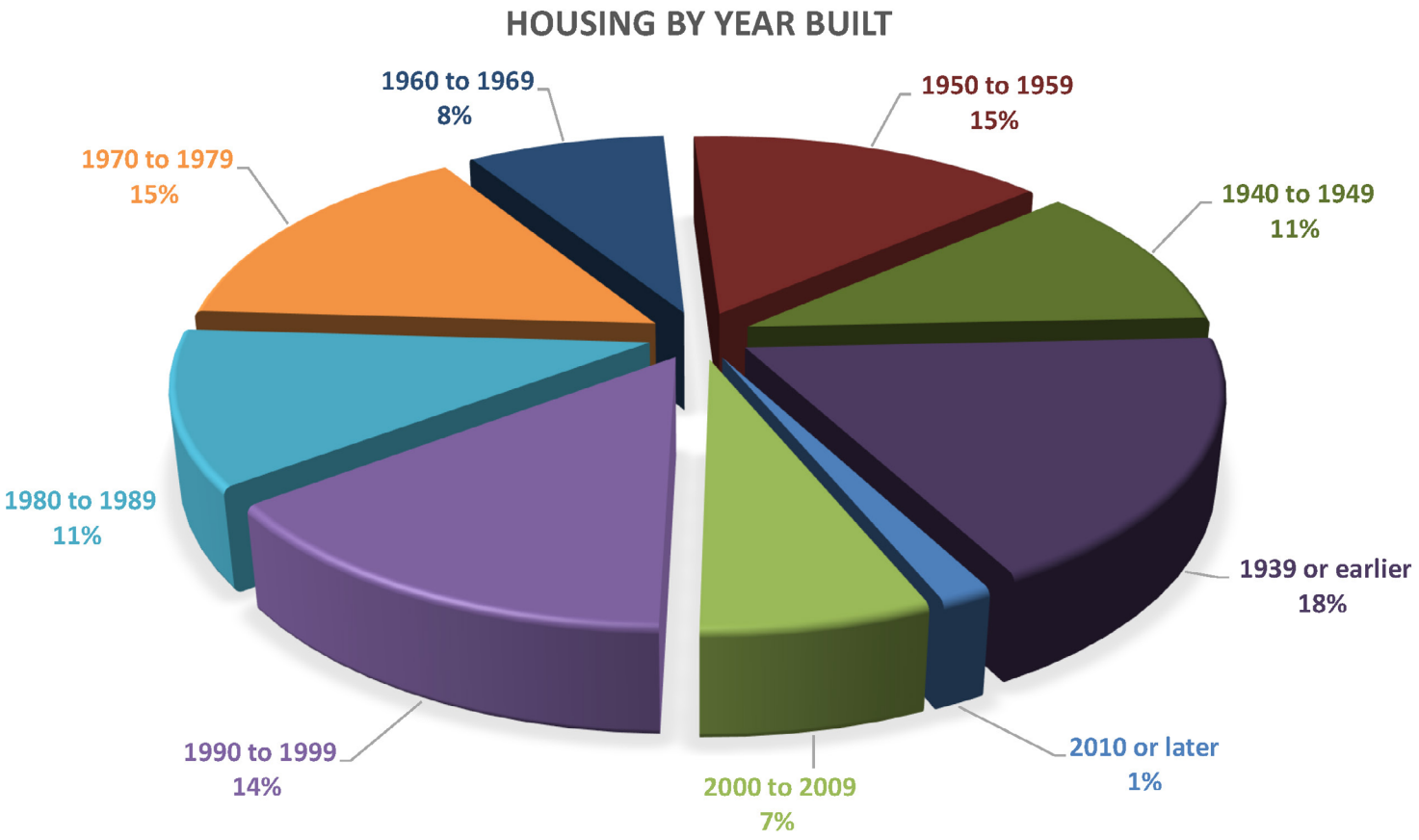


Figure 13: Housing by Year Built
Source: American Community Survey 2019

Projected Housing Demand

As noted, population projections show the Town growing by approximately 2,233 people by 2040. Other factors, such as housing cost, availability and presence of other amenities will affect this number either positively or negatively.

If the median household size of 2.5 persons remains consistent over the next decades, this growth in population will mean that Front Royal will need approximately 900 housing units to accommodate the new residents.

Housing Affordability

Affordable housing is defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development as "housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities."

The Code of Virginia requires localities to address affordable housing in their comprehensive plans, and defines "Affordable Housing" as the following:

> "Affordable housing" means, as a guideline, housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities. For the purpose of administering affordable dwelling unit ordinances authorized by this chapter, local governments may establish individual definitions of affordable housing and affordable dwelling units including determination of the appropriate percent of area median income and percent of gross income. (Sec. 15.2-2201)

Section 15.2-2223 (D) reads as follows:

> "The comprehensive plan shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated."

Home Ownership

There is no standard for determining whether housing is "affordable" or "not affordable" in a locality, but the data shows that housing in Front Royal is becoming less and less affordable for some sectors of the population. The predominant unit type is owner-occupied single family detached, with a median home value of $211,634, which is theoretically affordable for the median household income of $51,871.

As an example, assume that the estimated monthly take-home pay (after taxes, with no retirement contributions) for the median Front Royal household is $3,200 a month. The estimated payment on a 30 year mortgage for a $211,000 house with a 6% down payment (average down payment in the US), assuming 4.5% interest over 30 years, the payment would be $947/month.

If $200 total for utilities are included, that would bring housing costs for that household to approximately $1,147/month. That is 35.8% of $3,200.

This means that the average home is likely just barely affordable to the average household, making no retirement contributions. It also means that households with above average incomes would perceive Front Royal as an affordable place to live, while those below the median income level may have a harder time affording housing.

Housing values are increasing and will continue to increase as more and more people move to Front Royal. Housing affordability currently affects those community members with the lowest incomes, but housing affordability will become more and more of an issue as demand increases for all income brackets over time.

Rents

In 2019, 39% of renters in Front Royal spent more than 35% of their income on rent. In other words, nearly 40% of people who rent in Front Royal are spending an amount that is "unaffordable" on their housing. (B25070).

If no new multi-family units are built or a diversity of unit types is not achieved, not only will this make housing less and less affordable, it will mean that people who rent will continue to live in older units with fewer amenities.

If Front Royal continues to be an attractive place for people to retire and to commute to jobs with higher income elsewhere, housing affordability will become a greater issue and ultimately price out all but the highest earners. It is important that the Town take steps now to provide a mix of housing options to protect the vibrancy and vitality of the community.

Who Needs Affordable Housing?

A functioning locality needs a range of different types of workers who make a range of salaries, from servers and dishwashers to teachers and firefighters, to doctors and lawyers.

Here are some examples of average salaries:

Water Treatment Plant Operator: $40K/year

Public School Teacher: $58K/year

Firefighter: $40K/year

Directly or indirectly, housing affordability affects all residents of Front Royal!

Objectives & Strategies

Affordable Housing: A wide range of housing options contributes to Front Royal's vision as a lifelong community where people of all ages and stages in life can meet their housing needs. The options should include a wide range of housing types from single-family homes to apartments above downtown stores.

1. Monitor the mix of available housing types in Town to ensure that the stock remains varied and diverse for different housing needs.
2. Implement and continue research on methods for increasing the amount of affordable workforce housing.
3. Support housing where it exists with services and other amenities equitably throughout the Town.
4. Amend appropriate Zoning Districts to allow for development of multi-family buildings.
5. Ensure that all housing is supported locally by a mix of neighborhood commercial uses.
6. Allow for the development of Accessory Dwelling Units, additional dwelling units on any given parcel that are "accessory" to the principal use of another residency. An example of this would be a carriage house or in-law suite.
7. In accordance with the Code of Virginia Sec. 15.2- 2223.5, ensure that manufactured homes remain a source of affordable housing by preserving existing manufactured housing communities or providing for the creation of new manufactured home communities.
8. Preserve and maintain historic residential architecture.
9. Enforce maintenance standards for rental properties.
10. Promote new housing types that are attractive to seniors, making it possible for them to age in place rather than leaving Front Royal.
11. Encourage development of age restricted communities, especially near Town Trolley stops.
12. Encourage the return of old houses from business use to housing use.
13. Increase single-family housing in the greater downtown area.
14. Encourage energy efficient rental housing development.
15. Encourage construction of more affordable apartments.

Homes in Front Royal.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Old rail bridge over the Shenandoah south fork.

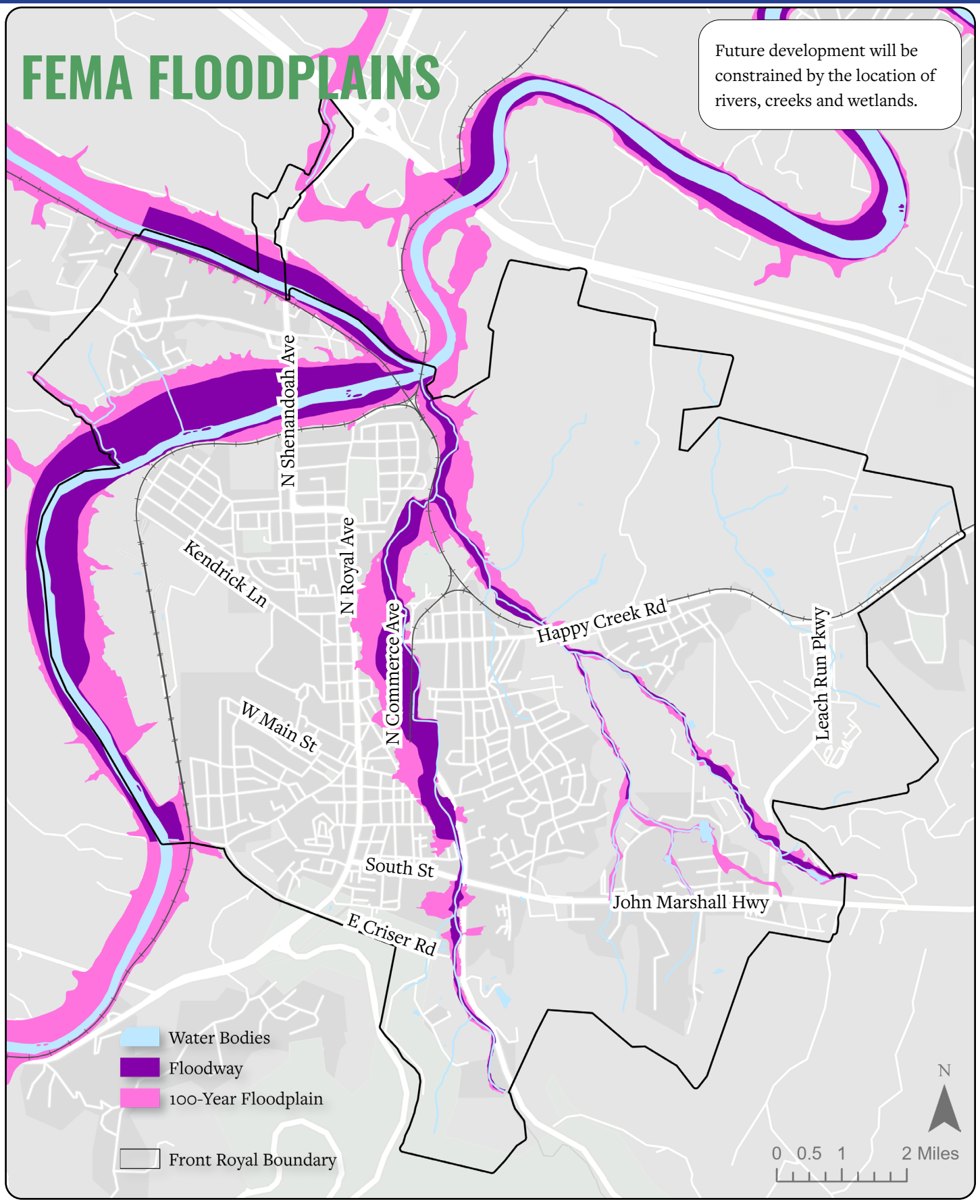
Goal Statement

"The community will protect its natural environment through innovative development techniques and technologies, preserved open spaces and critical features, and policies that protect water and air quality."

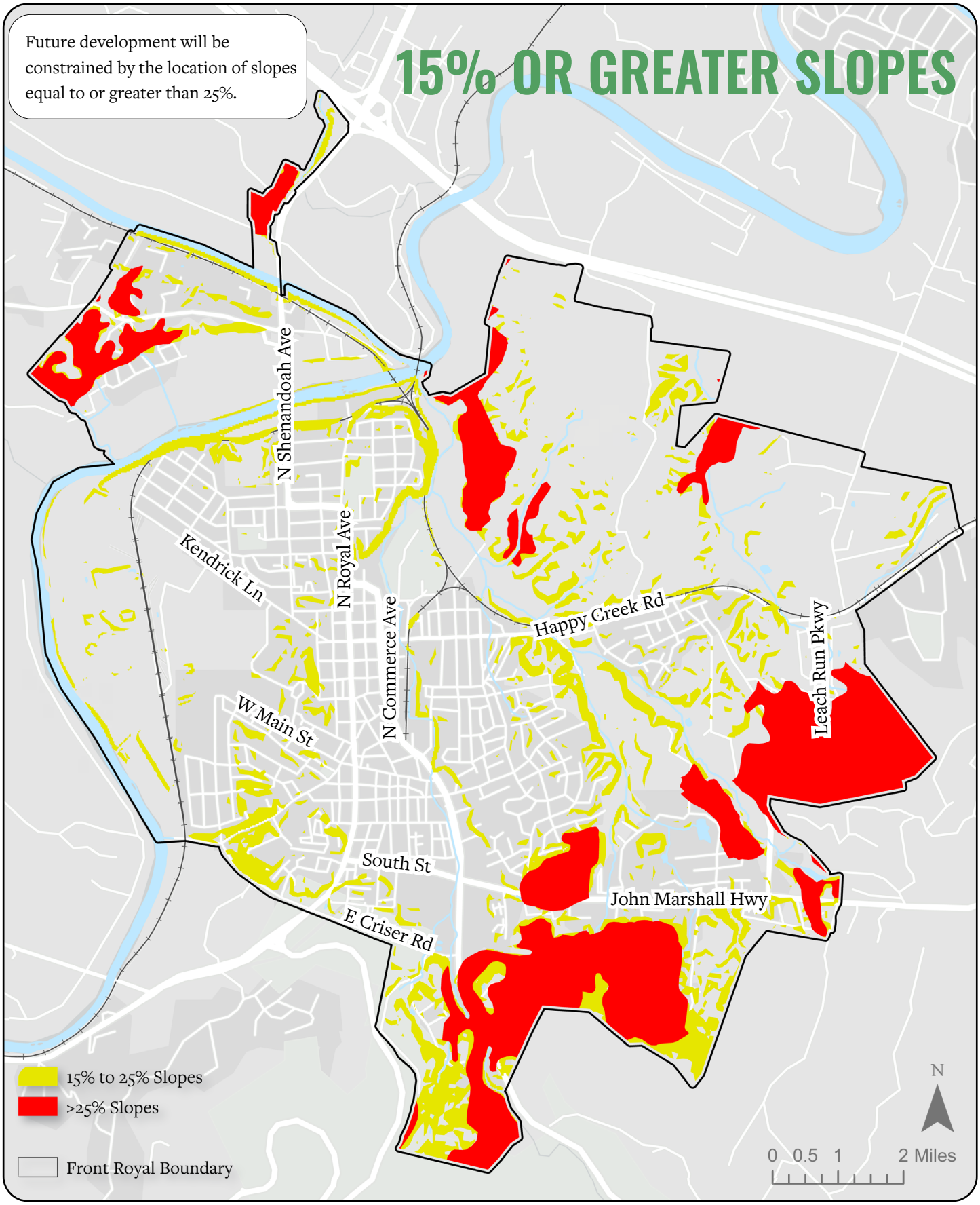
This section details information about Front Royal's floodplains, soils, and steep slopes. The objectives and strategies seek to enhance the Town's ability to protect its environmental resources. Urbanized areas, such as Front Royal, experience issues with storm water management, erosion, or light pollution among others. It is important to review the Town's policies to ensure that amenities such as the Shenandoah River or Happy Creek remain protected. There is also the opportunity to be proactive in improving environmental conditions, for instance, providing pollinator gardens or rain gardens and bioswales on the grounds of public facilities can be a use of "leftover" space. With every small action, these steps will make Front Royal more "green," they also provide great marketing material for the Town's eco-tourism efforts.

FEMA FLOODPLAINS

Future development will be constrained by the location of rivers, creeks and wetlands.

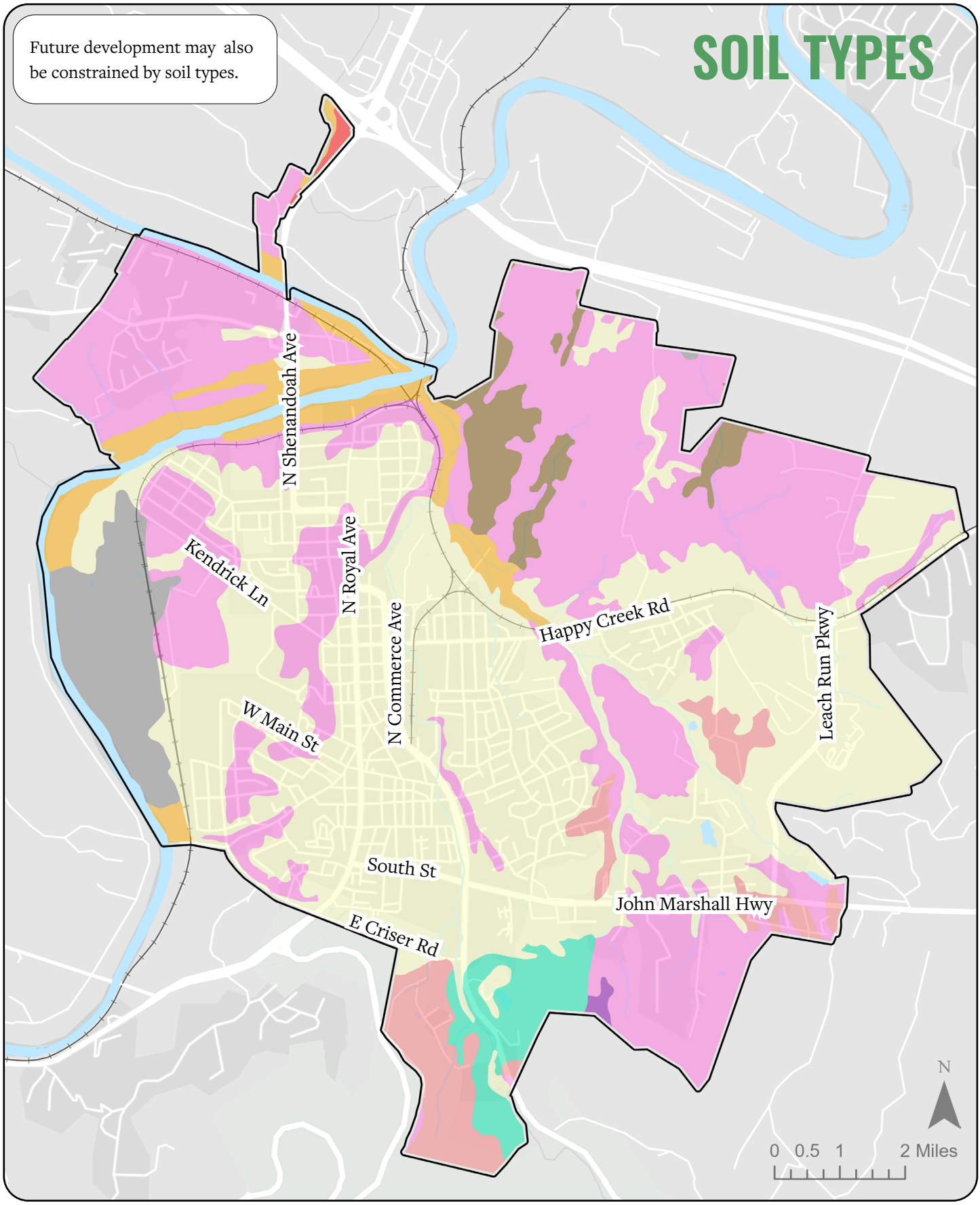


15% OR GREATER SLOPES



SOIL TYPES

Future development may also be constrained by soil types.



Soil Category

- Loam
- Sandy Loam
- Silt Loam
- Silty Clay Loam
- Chester-Manor Complex
- Lodi-Rock Outcrop Complex
- Myersville and Montalto
- Rigley-Weikert-Berks Complex
- Pits
- Water

- Front Royal Boundary

Objectives & Strategies

Water Quality: A clean Shenandoah River supports healthy people, fish, and wildlife and outdoor recreation. The Town can clean the river through cooperation with other towns, the state, and residents. Public education is also an important element.

1. Update zoning to protect riparian buffers, promote permeable pavements, and other strategies that protect rivers. The Town and County can make these changes in collaboration with upstream communities.

2. Work with surrounding communities to limit pollution runoff into the River from stormwater and agriculture into the River. The Town, soil and water conservation boards, and land owners are all key stakeholders that will need to work together.

3. Recruit groups that promote clean rivers, such as Potomac Watershed Alliance, to locate in Front Royal.

4. Invite scientists involved in clean water to hold conferences in Front Royal.

5. Explore implementing permeable pavement for public parking lots and other public facilities, encourage or amend Design Standards to require less impervious surfaces.

6. Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be utilized to manage stormwater on newly developed sites.

7. Bioswales, rain gardens, or other innovative techniques to trap and slow stormwater should be implemented throughout the Town to improve water quality and prevent flooding.

Protecting the Environment: Front Royal can act through a multitude of ways to protect its natural assets.

1. Construct a second boat launch and exit. An ideal location is near the VFW because it would allow one-way trips through town. This action would require cooperation among the Town, VFW, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Shenandoah River Keeper. The project could be completed in the near term.

2. Development should avoid steep slopes and other critical environmental features.

3. Clear-cutting trees should be avoided for new subdivisions, and areas where trees can be preserved should be clearly identified.

4. Preserve mature trees throughout the Town, collect data about the tree canopy cover and promote more plantings to grow and expand.

5. Study the sustainability of Town facilities and fleet, explore improvements where possible.

6. Support the work of organizations, such as the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC), to maintain the Tree City USA designation and health of Front Royal's trees.

7. Set minimum environmental standards for public buildings within the Town, particularly for the development of new buildings.

8. Require native and pollinator-friendly species in landscaping for all Town maintained projects.

9. Consider strategies to mitigate the urban heat island effect, such as increasing the number of shade trees, using alternatives to asphalt where possible, and decreasing the amount of impervious surfaces overall.

10. Remove regulatory barriers to installing rooftop solar panels on residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. Explore opportunities to assist in the installation of 2-way electric meters to sell excess electricity to utility providers.

11. Ensure that development along Happy Creek and other environmentally sensitive areas addresses conservation easements and follows best practices to prevent and/or mitigate impacts.

EXISTING LAND USE

Front Royal Main Street.

What is "Future Land Use?"

Future Land Use is a designation that describes how an area will look and feel over the next 20 years as this plan is implemented. The maps on the following pages show Existing Land Use, the uses for each parcel currently, and Future Land Use, the envisioned uses for each parcel or area in the future.

The Future Land Use is based off the existing land use trends in the Town along with planning best practices to determine what scenario will allow for a high quality of life in the Town by balancing infrastructure, environmental, social, and economic needs with future growth.

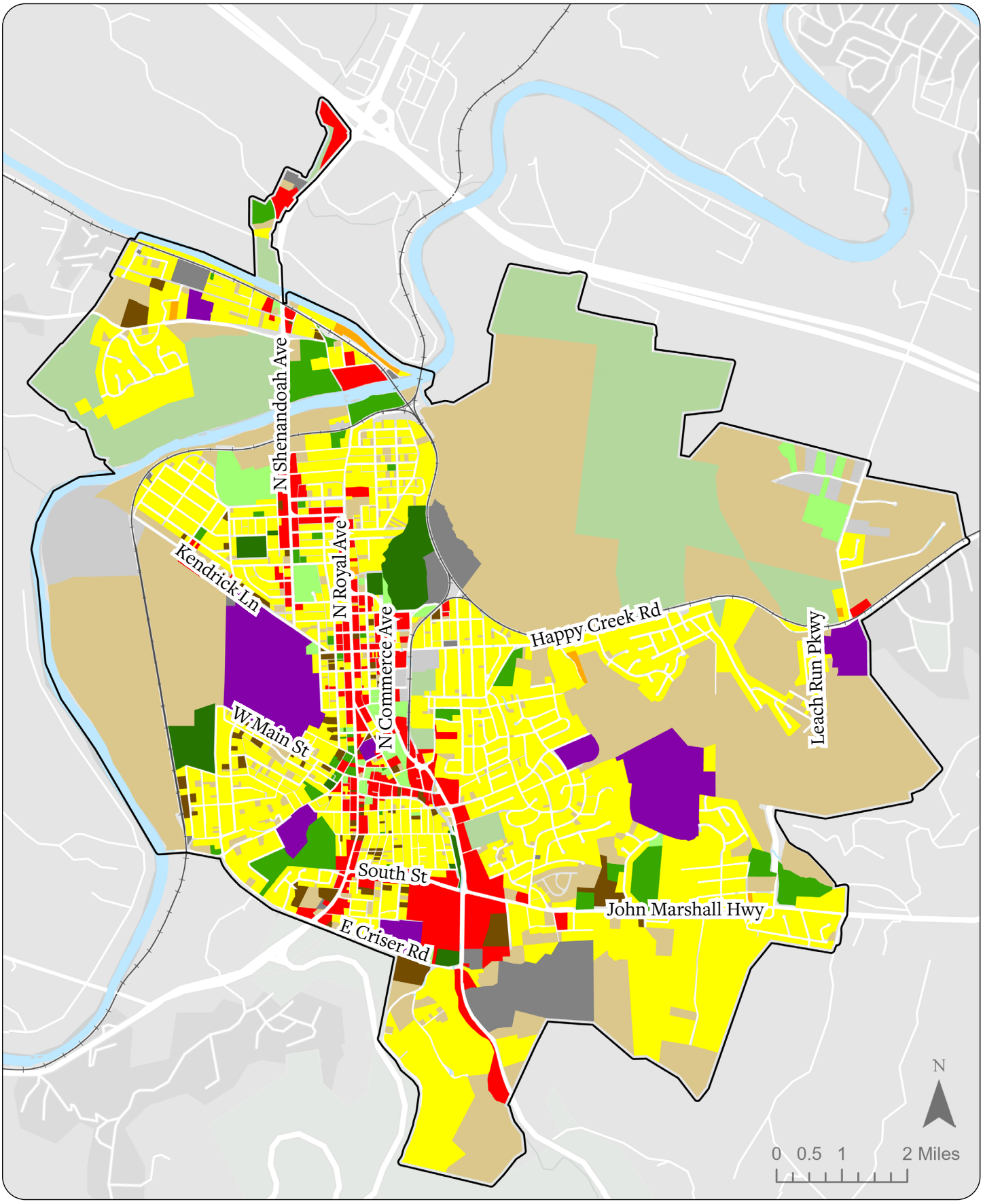
What is a Future Land Use Category?

Future Land Use categories, such as "Mixed Use Medium Density" or "Neighborhood Residential," are important tools in aiding communities to guide what development they want in the future. However, they are broad categories that do not get into all of the specifics of how buildings, streets, or other public spaces will be built and designed. Categories are written and mapped with varying characteristics that guide the intent, style (look and feel), and associated mobility improvements.

How is the Future Land Use Map Used?

The Future Land Use map is a tool for decision-makers on the Planning Commission and Town Council regarding development in the Town. It acts as a visual guide to future planning. The Future Land Use Map is the Town's stated intent for the land under its jurisdiction. Planners will reference the Future Land Use Map to make recommendations on development applications to the Planning Commission and Town Council. The public or prospective land developers can view the Future Land Use Map to understand the expectations for development in an area. Over time, land use decisions begin to achieve the Town's intent for each designated Future Land Use category.

EXISTING LAND USE



Existing Land Use

The map on the opposite page shows how land is currently being used in Front Royal. As there is a limited amount of undeveloped land within the Town limits, it is important to study how land is being used to ensure that the Town's services and infrastructure costs are covered. Although a parcel of land may be shown to be completely covered by its use, its important to remember that the use actually takes up a limited amount of space on the parcel. Additionally, parcels that are undeveloped may have significant geological or environmental constraints that prevent their development.

The map was created using GIS information from Front Royal and Warren County and updated using aerial photography. The Land Use Classifications are those that the Town currently uses.

Front Royal Town Boundary

Land Use Classifications

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Community Facility
- Industrial/ Business Park
- Parks - Recreation
- Residential - Mobile Home
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Residential - Single-Family
- School/ Educational Facility
- Utility
- Undeveloped

Alley mural off Main St.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Goal Statement

"Protect environmentally sensitive areas, while efficiently co-locating density with diverse uses oriented to connected, walkable, and central nodes."

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to improve the public health, safety, and general welfare of Town residents and visitors by protecting and enhancing both the natural and built environments. The Land Use Policies established by this Chapter will guide the Town in making decisions regarding land use and development. Land Use Policies are categorized as described below.

General Policies.
The General Policies listed below shall apply to all planning areas. The Town shall consider new infrastructure projects and review new development applications with consideration of these principles.

Action Strategies.
The Action Strategies selected for the individual planning areas shall assist with making future land use decisions within each respective planning area. Action Strategies are listed at the end of each planning area section within this chapter.

Town Codes.
The Town shall utilize Town Codes to regulate future land use projects within the Town of Front Royal. This shall include, but is not limited to, the Zoning Ordinance (Town Code, Chapter 175), the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (Town Code, Chapter 148), and the Urban Forestry Ordinance (Town Code, Chapter 156). Such codes shall be reviewed and/or amended by the Town as determined necessary to better implement the goals of the community. Similarly, the Town shall consider individual petitions for code amendment changes and make necessary changes when such decisions are determined to be in the best interest of the Town as a whole.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. Encourage highly productive, efficient, diverse, and varied use of land.

2. Encourage the clustering of uses to increase the amount of reasons people will venture to different areas of the Town.

3. Encourage the development of new uses in large areas of singular use, for example:

- Allowing for new uses, such as a sidewalk cafe or other neighborhood supporting use, can improve the walkability and sociability of areas that are single use dominant.
- In commercial areas, new residential use of land should be encouraged to support the commercial uses and improve the walkability.

4. Develop small area plans for each of the future Land Use map's planning areas. These are plans that will provide detail at the neighborhood scale for improvements to the streetscape as well as potentially locally supported changes to the Future Land Use map.

5. Amend and update the Zoning Ordinance to allow for mixed uses in more zoning districts and move away from traditional Euclidean zoning.

6. Ensure that use of the land avoids critical environmental assets, such as floodplains, riparian buffers, woodlands, steep slopes, viewsheds, wildlife corridors, endangered species habitats, and natural waterways or drainage channels. The Town will coordinate with other local agencies if a natural feature is shared.

The downtown is reflective of a time when uses were legally able to be mixed in an area. However, over time uses were separated, making it harder to access different uses by any other mode of transportation besides an automobile. Allowing more varied uses in the same area allow people to choose their mode of transportation.

For example, corner grocery stores are a great example of where a commercial use can support walkability.

Much of Front Royal's identity is tied to the natural environment; the Town could be a national model for environmental protection and promoting outdoor activities.

7. Eliminate and reduce requirements for buffer yards and setbacks that increase the amount of distance between varying uses, except where needed to mitigate nuisances or in existing residential neighborhoods.

8. "Activate" the grounds of public facilities with pop-up uses where possible, such as with additional seating, or a temporary stand for local artists.

9. Allow and encourage remaining space on parcels to be used for auxiliary seating areas or other amenities that build shared value, particularly in the downtown area.

10. Allow for corner commercial mixed use buildings by conditional approval to support neighborhoods.

11. Study various "chains of activity" for how residents and visitors might spend an entire day in the Town to identify gaps for attraction of new land uses.

12. Review and update the language from all Zoning Districts and the Town's Design Standards to encourage walkable development.

13. Amend and reduce the requirement for a 12,000 square foot lot for an Accessory Dwelling Unit. Add language to allow for Accessory Commercial Units, particularly in areas such as downtown.

14. Create and implement Design Guidelines that promote architectural quality and enhance the community's walkability.

15. Ensure that the Zoning and Future Land Use Maps are aligned for desired development patterns.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many Towns and cities quickly converted parking spaces to outdoor dining. This allowed them to continue serving, but also showed that many people enjoy outdoor dining and that it can contribute to lively streets.

"Chains of activity" show where someone might get breakfast or lunch, go to a museum, then get dinner. By examining how many combinations of each type of use are possible, the Town can begin to see where it could improve.

16. Encourage new residential subdivisions to utilize the Town's cluster Design Standards to preserve open space.

17. Encourage planned developments for large developments and subdivisions. Consider revisions to the requirements for planned developments.

18. Discourage linear "strip" commercial development. Encourage and require higher standards for uses within the Entrance Corridor Overlay Districts.

19. Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow age-restricted affordable housing in more areas, especially parts of town that are more walkable.

20. Invite or incentivize landowners and developers to dedicate park space where the land is suitable to meet identified recreational or open space needs for the community, particularly where land can create a through-trail connection.

21. Allow farm related uses in agricultural lands which are zoned for low density residential use. Allow limited agricultural uses that are more intensive than regular gardening, such as backyard chickens and gardens in residential areas, subject to permitting and performance standards.

22. Encourage new industrial uses within approved industrial parks.

23. Future sites for industrial parks should be directly accessible to major thoroughfares for truck access. Industrial development should be reviewed and analyzed for slopes and soil suitability.

24. Industrial sites should provide extensive buffering and screening to mitigate any impacts to residential areas.

"Accessory Dwelling/Commercial Units" are additional businesses or residencies on parcels that are smaller than the primary, or "principal" use of the property. By adding more per parcel, this creates more density of uses.

25. The Town will coordinate with Warren County as needed to plan for any industrial expansion and its burden on local infrastructure.

26. Encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial centers with residential development, public open spaces, public restrooms, and other amenities, particularly around South Street.

27. Support development on vacant properties or redevelopment of properties that have fallen into disrepair, especially along the Main Street corridor.

28. Plan for ways to activate and connect Front Royal's waterfront to the Town.

29. Continue implementing the recommendations of Envision Front Royal and Envision 2.0.

30. Viewsheds of the surrounding mountains or Shenandoah river should be utilized in site design. It is discouraged for any development to disrupt existing viewsheds of adjacent properties.

31. Utility scale solar projects should be evaluated carefully and mitigate all impacts on adjacent properties including, but not limited to: noise, views, and stormwater runoff.

32. Data center development should be evaluated carefully to mitigate all impacts on adjacent properties including, but not limited to: noise, views, and stormwater runoff.

33. As permissible by State Law, ensure that all new development projects that require rezoning

Anywhere "through trails" can be established to make bicycling or walking through Town easier and more connected will help decrease automobile traffic and increase pedestrians and bicyclists.

approval are adequately evaluated to ensure that the proposed development pays for its fair and appropriate level of contribution for new infrastructure necessary for the new development and for impacts that the new development will have on public services, such as fire and rescue, schools, and law enforcement. For all new development that does not require rezoning, ensure that the development complies with the Town Code, including Chapter 175 (Zoning), 148 (Subdivision and Land Development, 156 (Urban Forestry), and any other applicable Town Code ordinances.

34. Update the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to reflect infrastructure investments where necessary.

35. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit methadone clinics and other support resources for those suffering from drug addiction by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts to assist with drug addiction issues among residents.

36. Remove barriers to installing solar panels on residential, commercial, and institutional buildings.

37. Amend Subdivision Ordinance to require additional open space provisions and "clustering" of homes with smaller setbacks.

38. Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for alternative commercial uses and accessory commercial uses in large single-family homes, as appropriate.

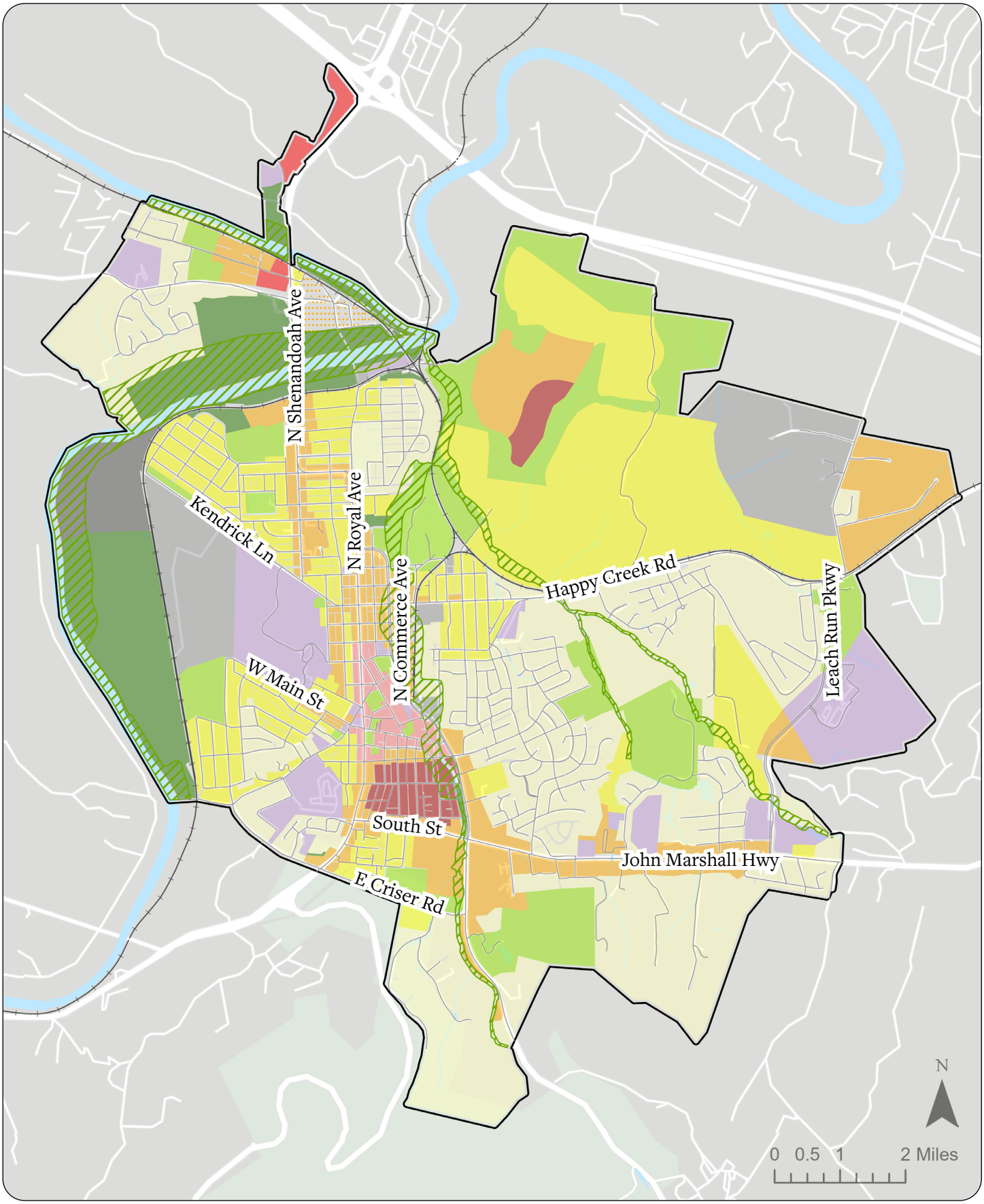
In Virginia, developers may offer voluntary contributions to offset their impacts to local services. These contributions are called proffers.

Front Royal's extensive riverfront is generally unused with the exception of the boat ramp at Eastham Park.

Previous Planning studies are full of great recommendations that have been carried forward with this plan.

Many Virginia communities have created Solar Ordinances to regulate the location and development of solar energy projects.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Conservation. Intended for very limited future development for the purpose of preservation of a cultural, historic, or environmental asset.

Conservation Overlay. Depicts areas of town within the floodway intended for very limited future development for the purpose of a cultural, historic, or environmental asset.

Industrial. Intended for industrial uses not suitable for adjacency to residential or commercial areas, including heavy truck traffic, noxious fumes or chemicals, noisy or dangerous uses. These are intended for manufacturing and production, which could feature processing, research and development, or distribution.

Mixed Use Industrial. Intended for industrial uses suitable for adjacency to commercial and residential areas, including a mix of uses ranging from warehousing, live/work studios, breweries, office space, data centers, call centers, and commercial uses. These uses do not include manufacturing or the transformation of raw materials into something else.

Institutional. Intended for private institutional facilities, such as, but not limited to, private grade schools, churches, cemetaries, colleges, foundations, hospitals, and nursing homes.

Public/Open Space. Intended for public or quasi-public ownership and/or control. Includes public schools, parks, government administrative facilities and service facilities.

Mixed Use, Riverton Village. Intended for a mixture of uses that emulate a small historic village.

Mixed Use Commercial. Intended to include a mix of uses integrated both horizontally and vertically (different uses next to one another on the same parcel and different uses in the same building, usually commercial on the ground floor and residential or office above). Hotels and automobile service stations are suitable in this district. Heights range from two to four stories. This category includes multi-family residential units.

Neighborhood Residential (Medium Density). Single-family detached, single-family attached, and two-family attached homes. Infill development will match the character of existing neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units (internal to the home and external to the home) are permitted by right.

Single-Family Residential (Medium density). One or more single-family dwellings with an overall density more than three (3) dwelling units per acres, and a maximum of six (6) dwelling units per acre.

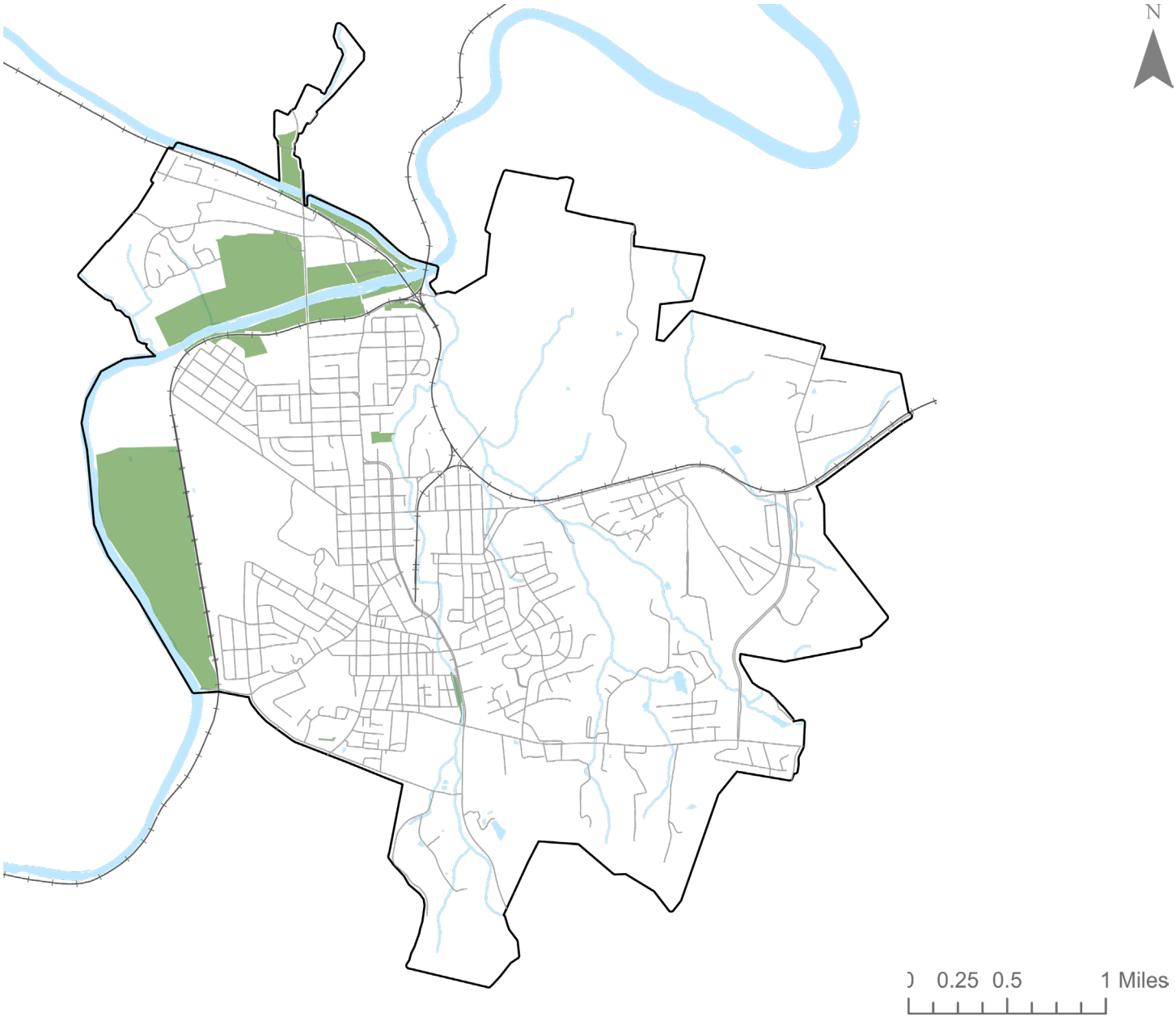
Commercial. Intended to accommodate commercial uses that are customarily auto-oriented, including vehicle service stations, fuel stations, hotels, banks, with limited multi-family resiential, and, with a higher height limit than elsewhere in town.

Neighborhood Commercial. Intended for small commercial businesses that provide services to neighboring residential uses and have minimum negative impacts on transportation, light, air, and noise. Not intended for large scale, or big-box, commercial uses.

Downtown Mixed Use. Intended to accommodate a mixture of residential and commercial uses in a main street atmosphere. Also intended to expand the historic downtown area by encouraging infill and new development that is built with the same characteristics as existing urban fabric.

CONSERVATION.

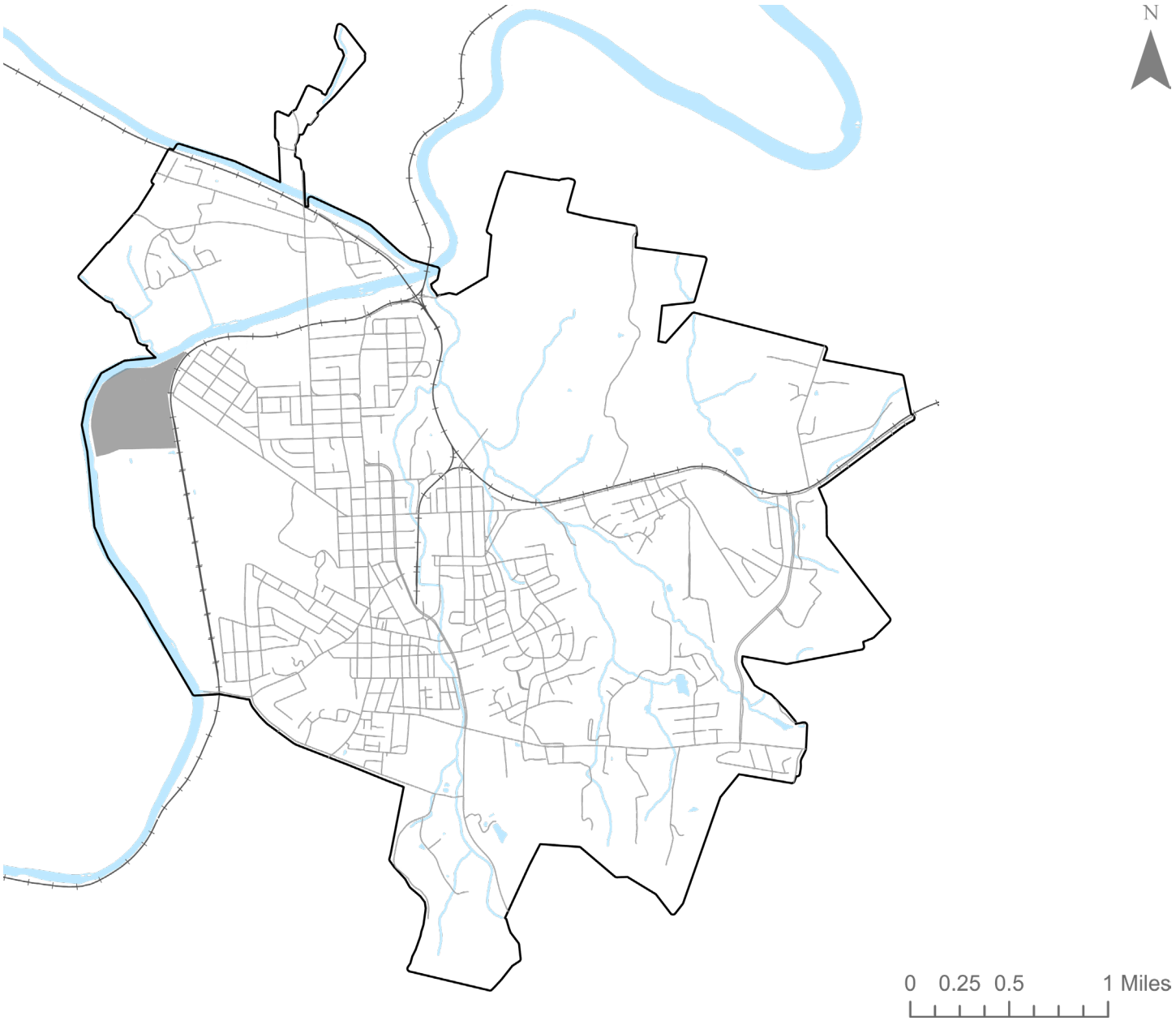
Intended for very limited future development for the purpose of preservation of a cultural, historic, or environmental asset.



Uses	Primary	Conservation (no development)
	Secondary	-
Character	Design Principles	Stormwater management (limited impervious surfaces, bioswales, rain gardens, etc.), environmentally conscious design (wood material used whenever possible), native tree and vegetation plantings.
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Bicycle parking, lighting (as appropriate), public water access.
	Special Considerations	Avoid the most environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, utilize views or connection to the waterfront in site design, limit building footprint as much as possible.

INDUSTRIAL.

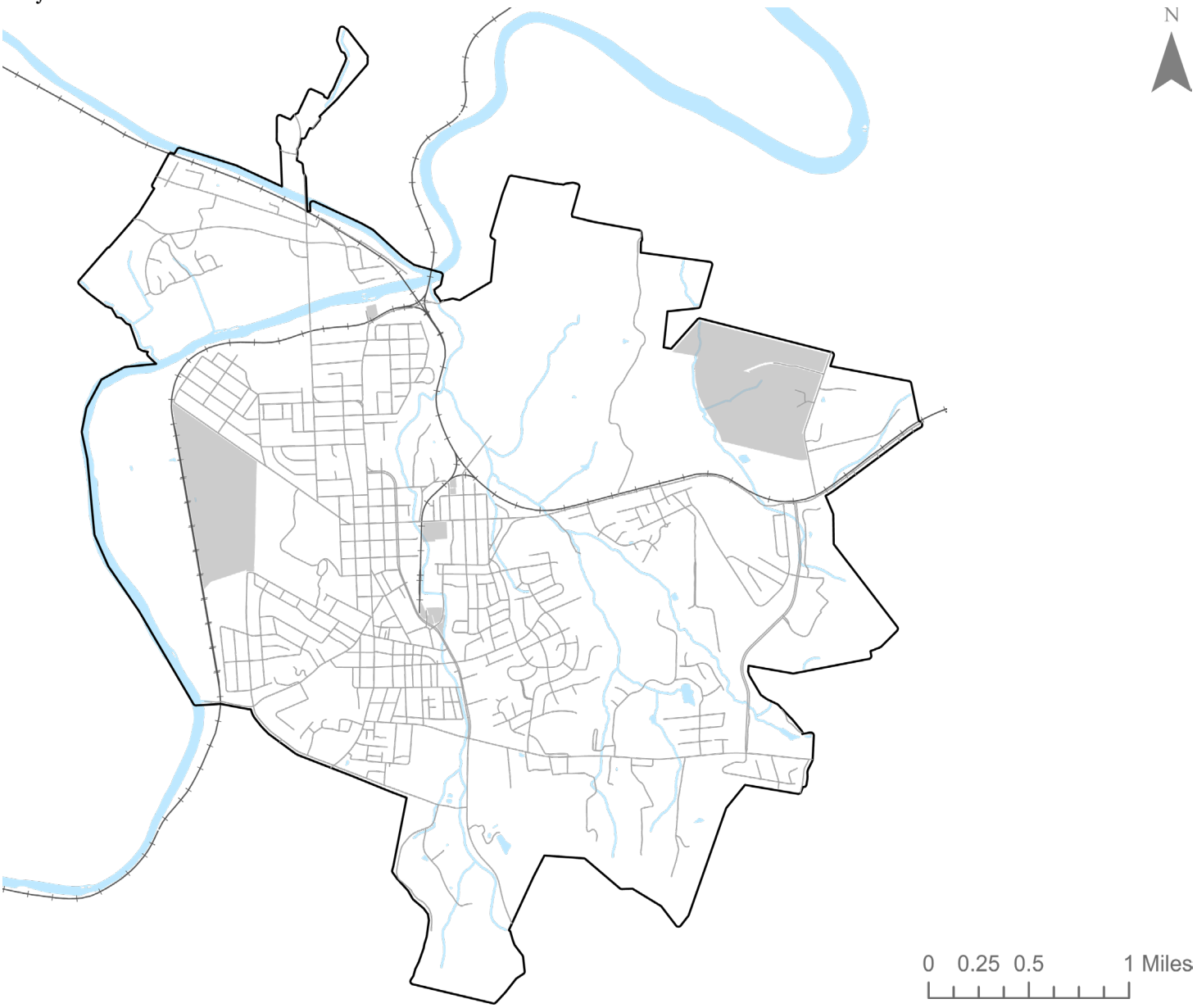
Intended for industrial uses not suitable for adjacency to residential or commercial areas, including heavy truck traffic, noxious fumes or chemicals, noisy or dangerous uses.

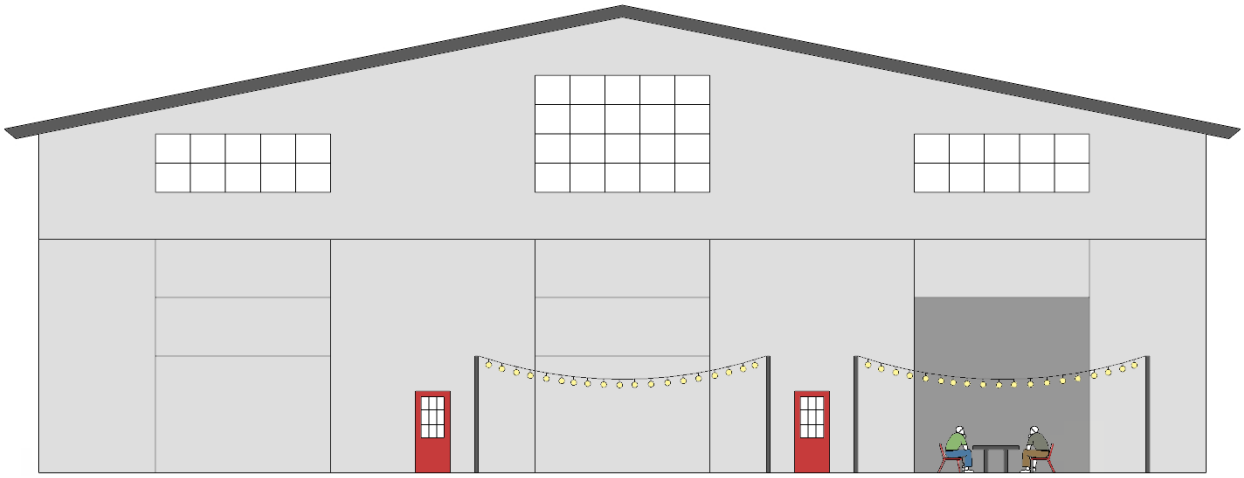


Uses	Primary	Manufacturing, lumber milling, machining, parts recycling
	Secondary	
Character	Design Principles	Appropriate buffering from other parcels, circulation for incoming and outgoing trucks
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Lighting, public water and sewer.
	Special Considerations	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, utilize visual screening and/or sound dampening.

MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL.

Intended for a mix of uses ranging from warehousing, live/work studios, breweries, and other commercial uses, provided they are not grossly incompatible with adjacent uses.

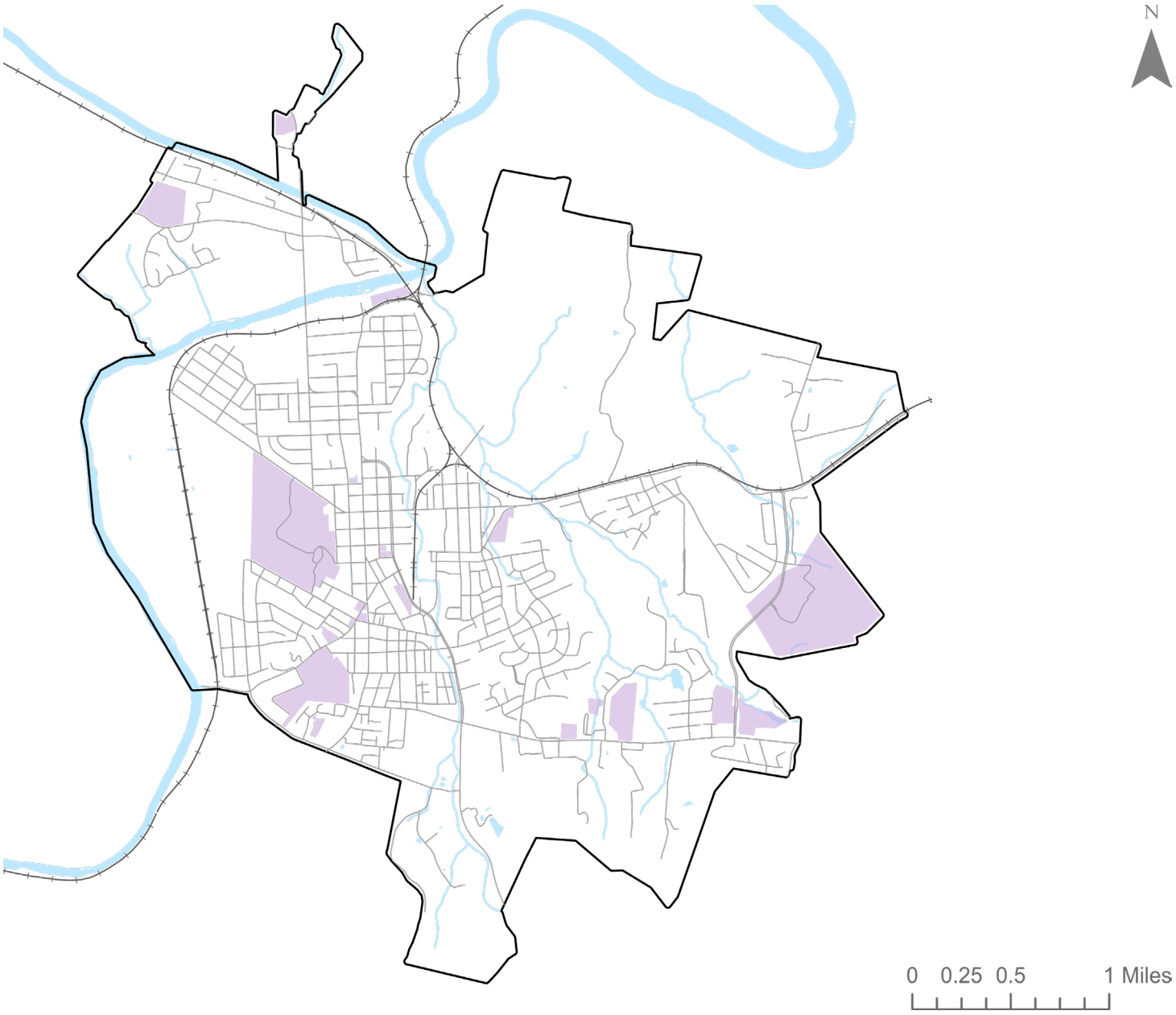


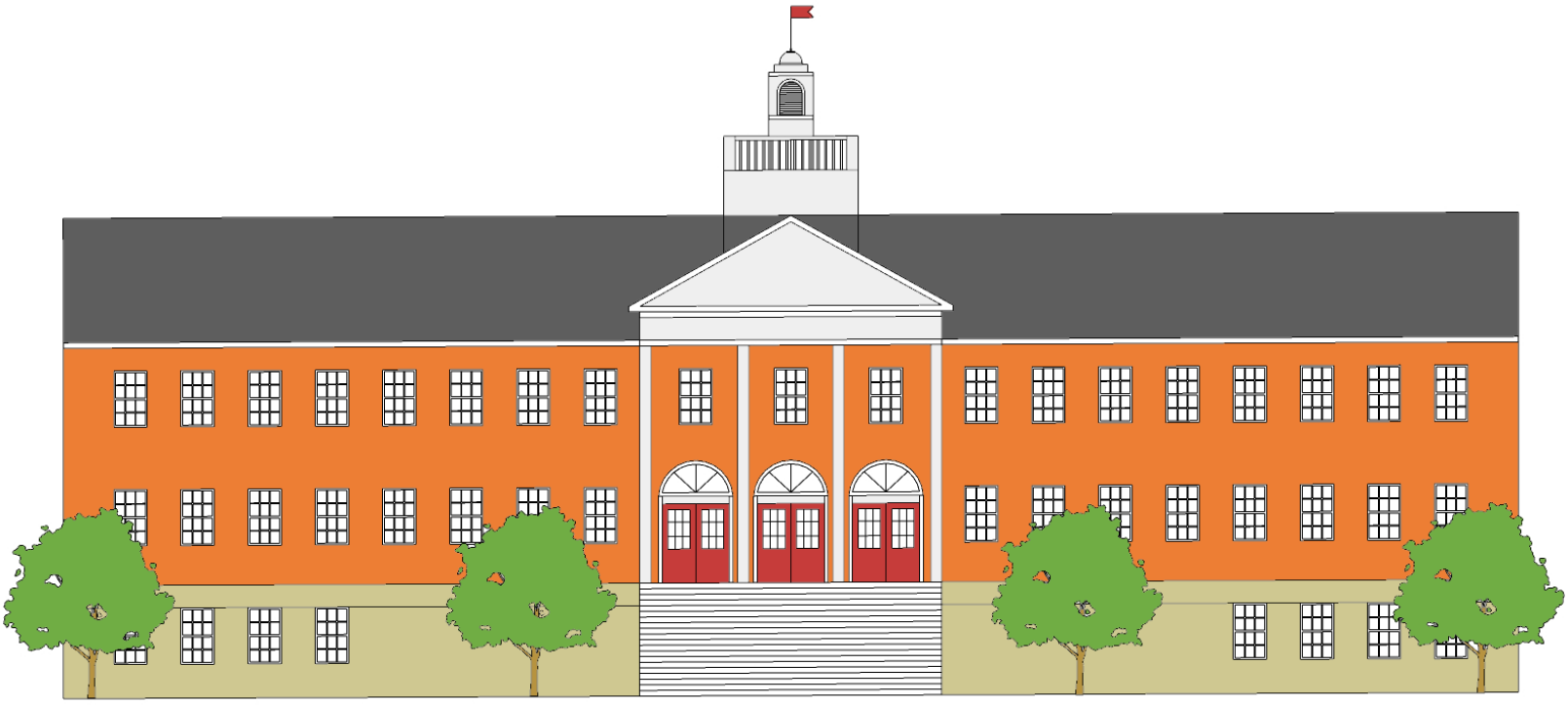


Uses	Primary	Warehousing, breweries, live/ work space, light manufacturing
	Secondary	Office, retail, other commercial
Character	Design Principles	Circulation for the safe mixing of commercial and personal vehicles, visual screening and sound dampening as appropriate.
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Street lighting, commercial vehicle parking, public water and sewer
	Special Considerations	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, transition from higher-intensity industrial uses to lower-intensity retail, commercial, etc. as approaching residential areas.

INSTITUTIONAL.

Intended for private institutional facilities, such as, but not limited to, private grade schools, churches, colleges, foundations, hospitals, and nursing homes.

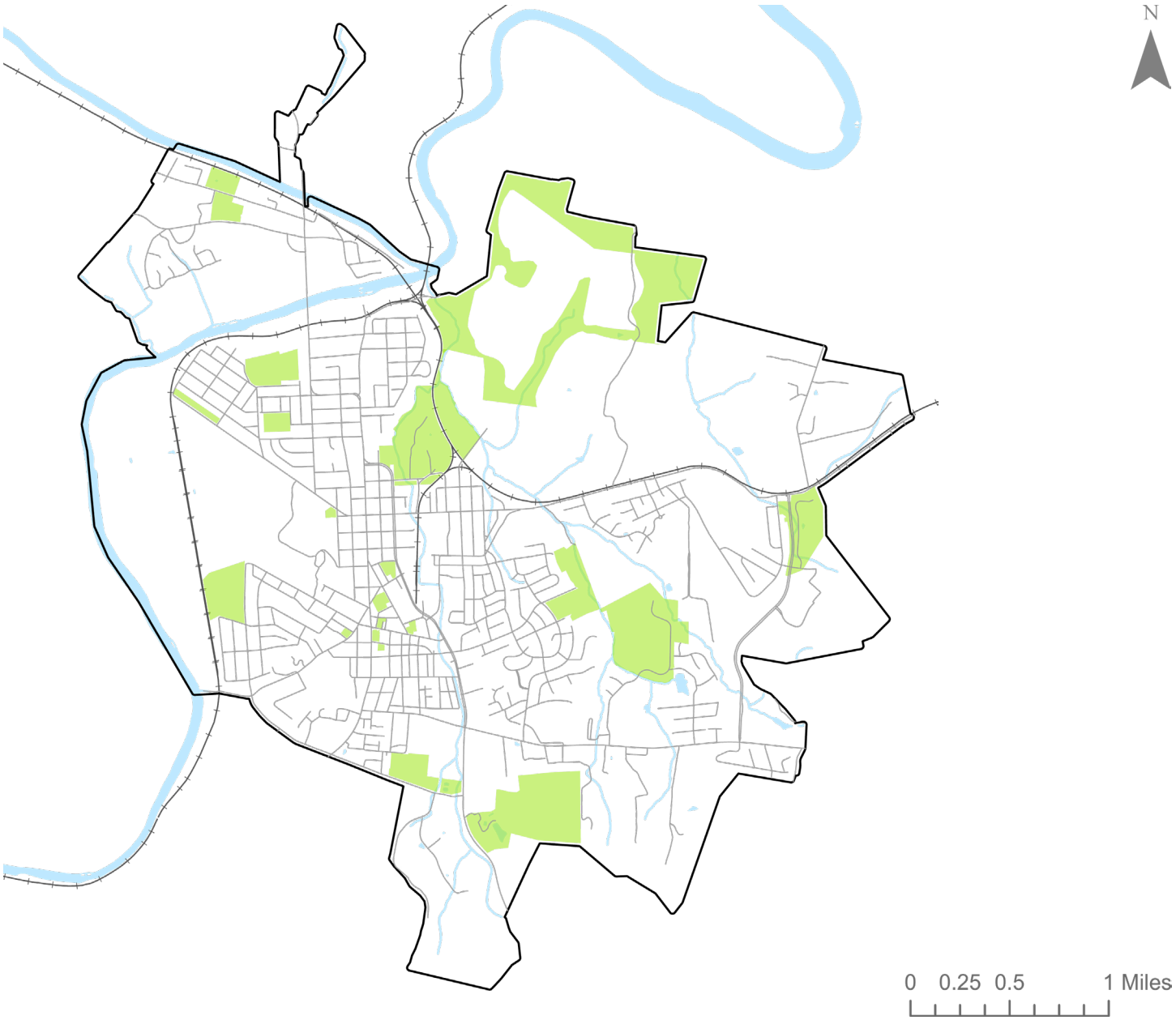




Uses	Primary	Institutional - Schools, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes
	Secondary	
Character	Design Principles	Distinctive architectural features as appropriate - steeples, bell towers, columns, pediments, etc. Native vegetation surrounding buildings.
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Bicycle parking, sidewalks, street lighting, crosswalks.
	Special Considerations	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, maintain easy access for pedestrians (including those with different levels of personal mobility), bicycles, and cars.

PUBLIC/OPEN SPACE.

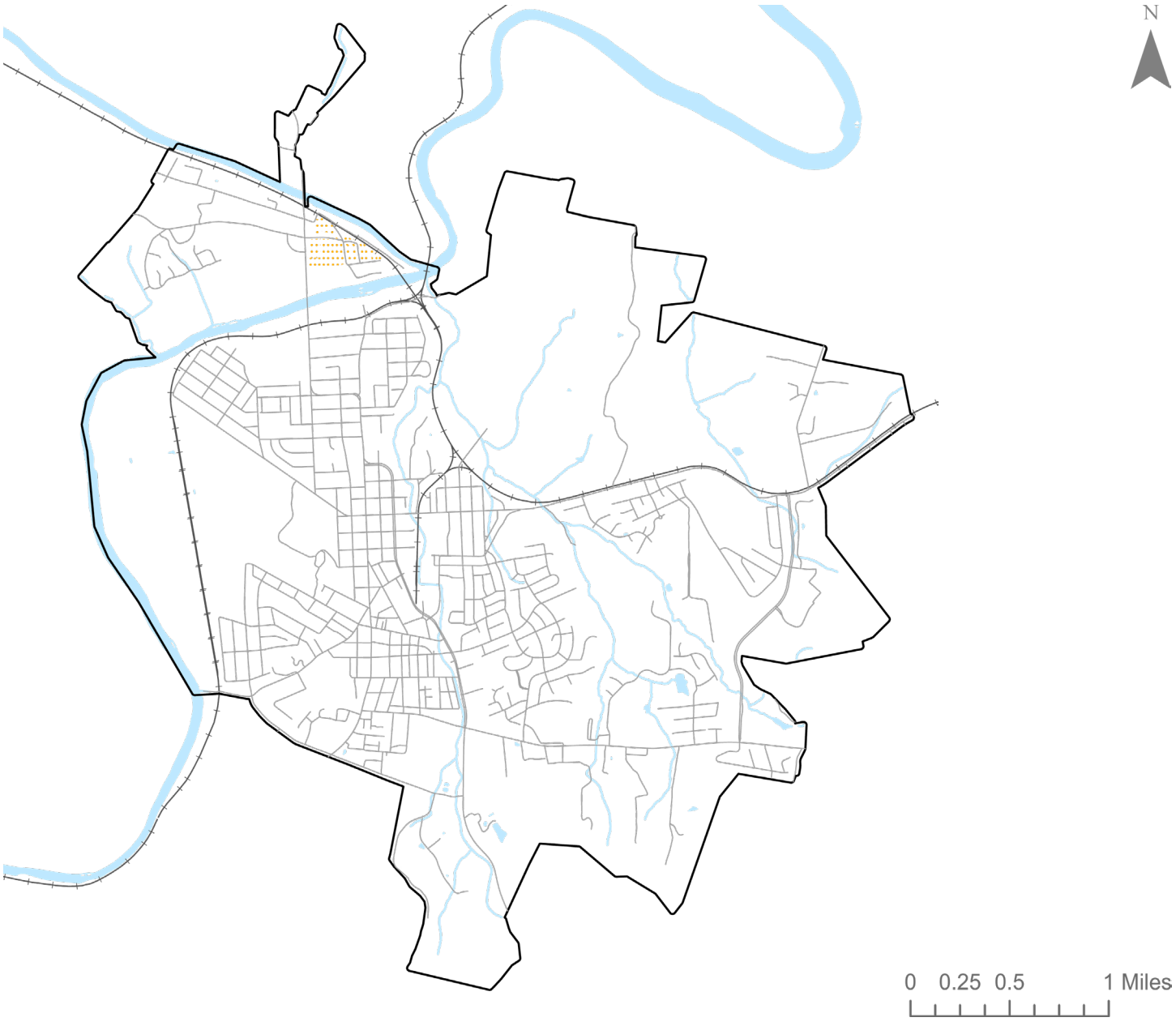
Intended for public ownership and/or control. Includes public schools, parks, government administrative facilities and service facilities. However, the Town of Front Royal's parks and school system are maintained in collaboration with Warren County.



Uses	Primary	Parks, Town- and County-Owned Facilities, Public Gathering Spaces
	Secondary	Event Programming, Seasonal Commercial Vending
Character	Design Principles	Playscape / playgrounds, seating areas, boat launches, community gardens, bicycle repair stations, wayfinding signage, sidewalks, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, ADA accessible entrances.
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Bicycle parking, public art, sidewalks, path lighting, crosswalks, public bathrooms.
	Special Considerations	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, maintain public access, utilize elements that connect to the Town's identity and branding.

MIXED USE, RIVERTON VILLAGE.

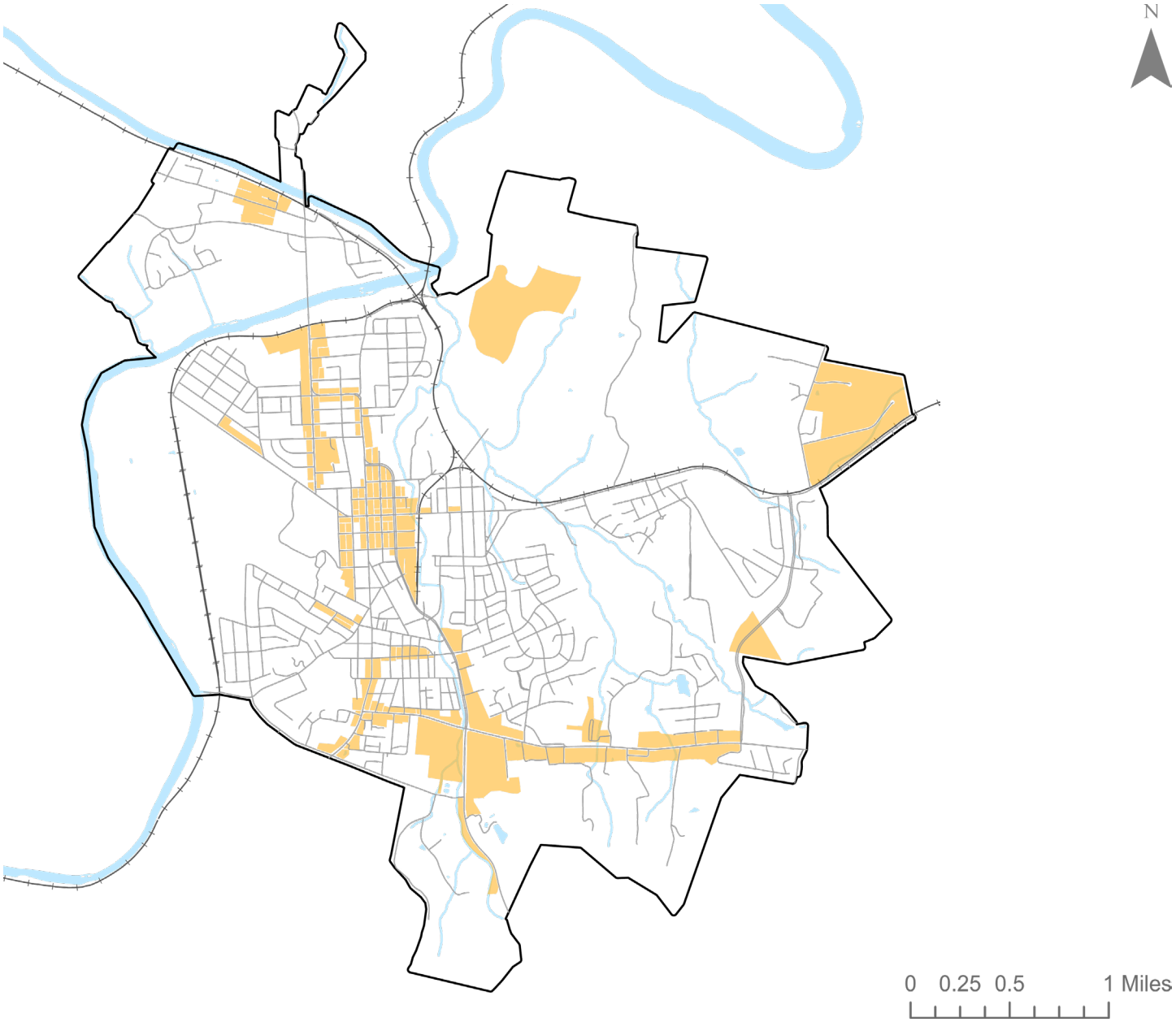
Intended for a mixture of uses that emulate a small historic village.



Uses	Primary	Single-Family Residential, Retail, Lodging
	Secondary	Office
Character	Design Principles	Architectural features that reflect the historic nature of the area, including columns, large porches, and masonry.
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Street lighting, public water and sewer.
	Special Considerations	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, preserve mature trees, complete repairs and/or modification within the guidelines of the historic district.

MIXED USE COMMERCIAL.

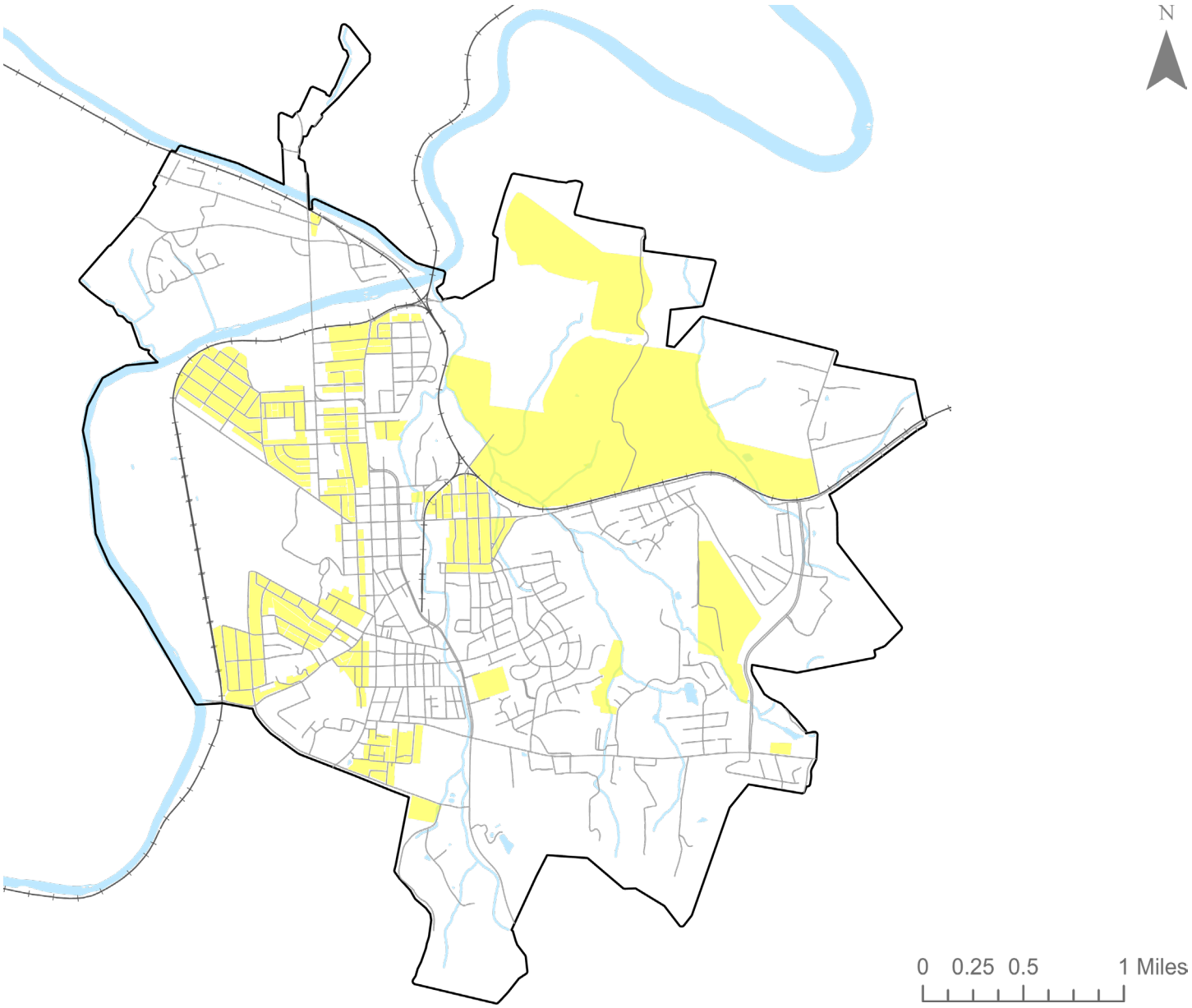
Intended to include a mix of uses integrated both horizontally and vertically (different uses next to one another and different uses in the same building, usually commercial on the ground floor and residential or office above). Heights range from two to four stories. This category includes multi-family residential units.

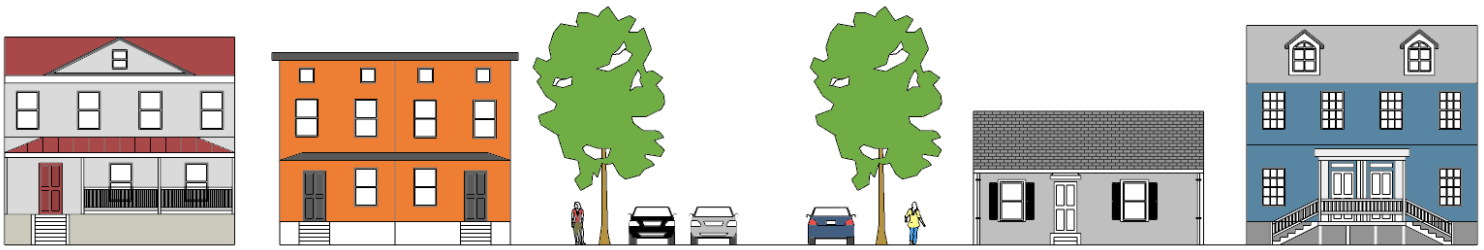


Uses	Primary	Office, commercial, residential, hotels
	Secondary	
Character	Design Principles	Buildings up to four stories, parking in rear of building, screened services and parking, buildings built to ROW, wide sidewalks
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Street lighting, public water and sewer, shared parking, bicycle parking
	Special Considerations	

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL (MEDIUM DENSITY).

Single-family detached, single-family attached, and two-family attached homes. Infill development will match the character of existing neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units (internal to the home and external to the home) are permitted by right.

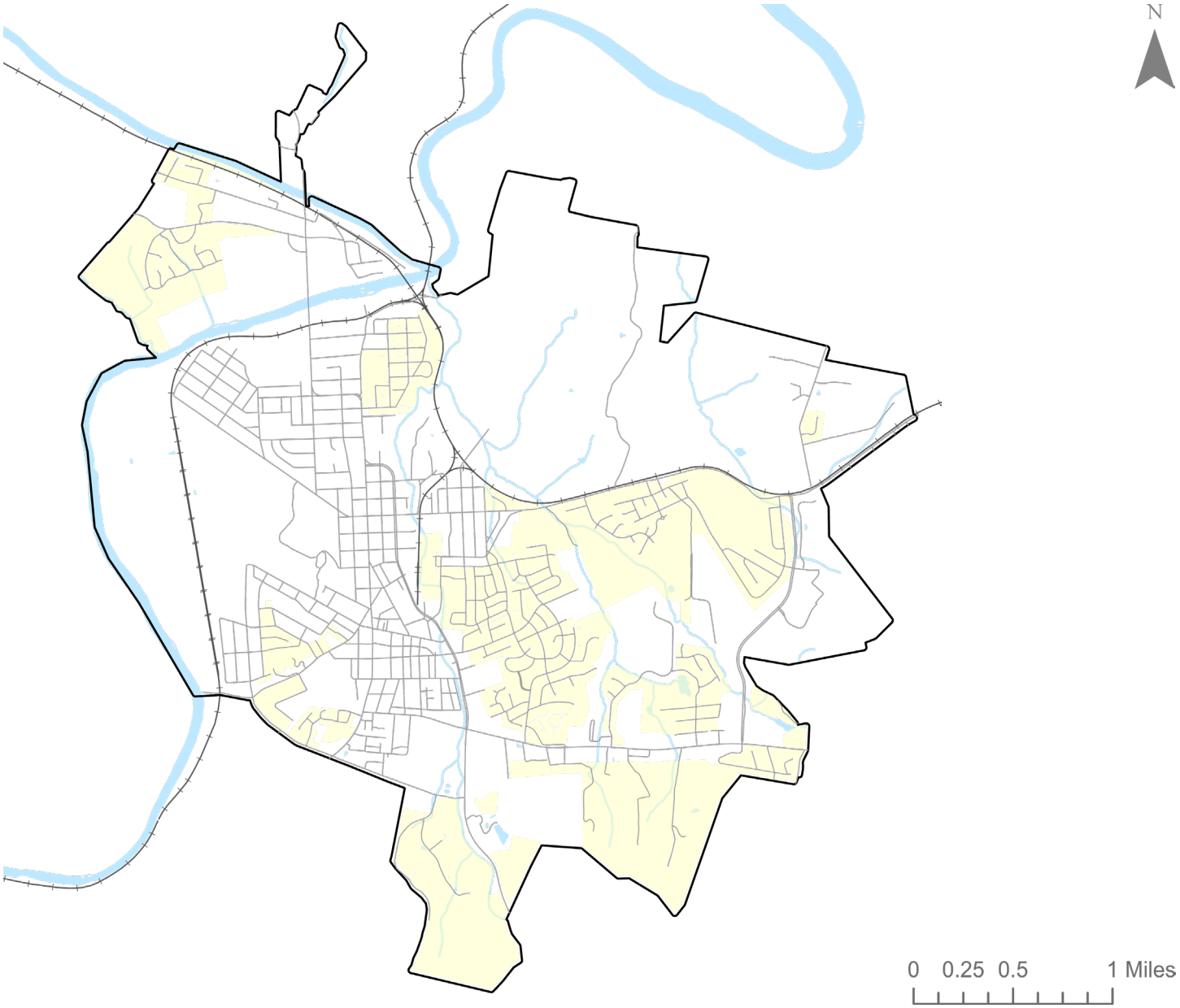


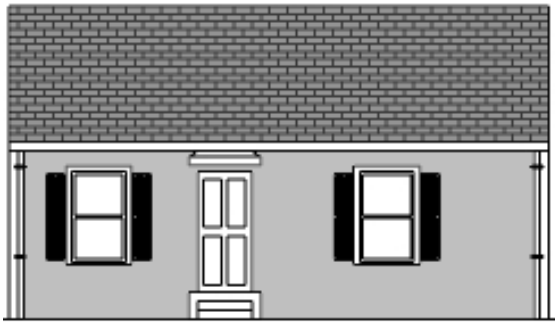


Uses	Primary	Single-family attached and detached
	Secondary	-
Character	Design Principles	Traditional neighborhood design, infill to match existing historic lotting pattern
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Public water and sewer, sidewalks, bike lanes
	Special Considerations	

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (MEDIUM DENSITY).

One or more single-family dwellings with an overall density more than three (3) dwelling units per acres, and a maximum of six (6) dwelling units per acre. Includes single-family attached and single-family detached.

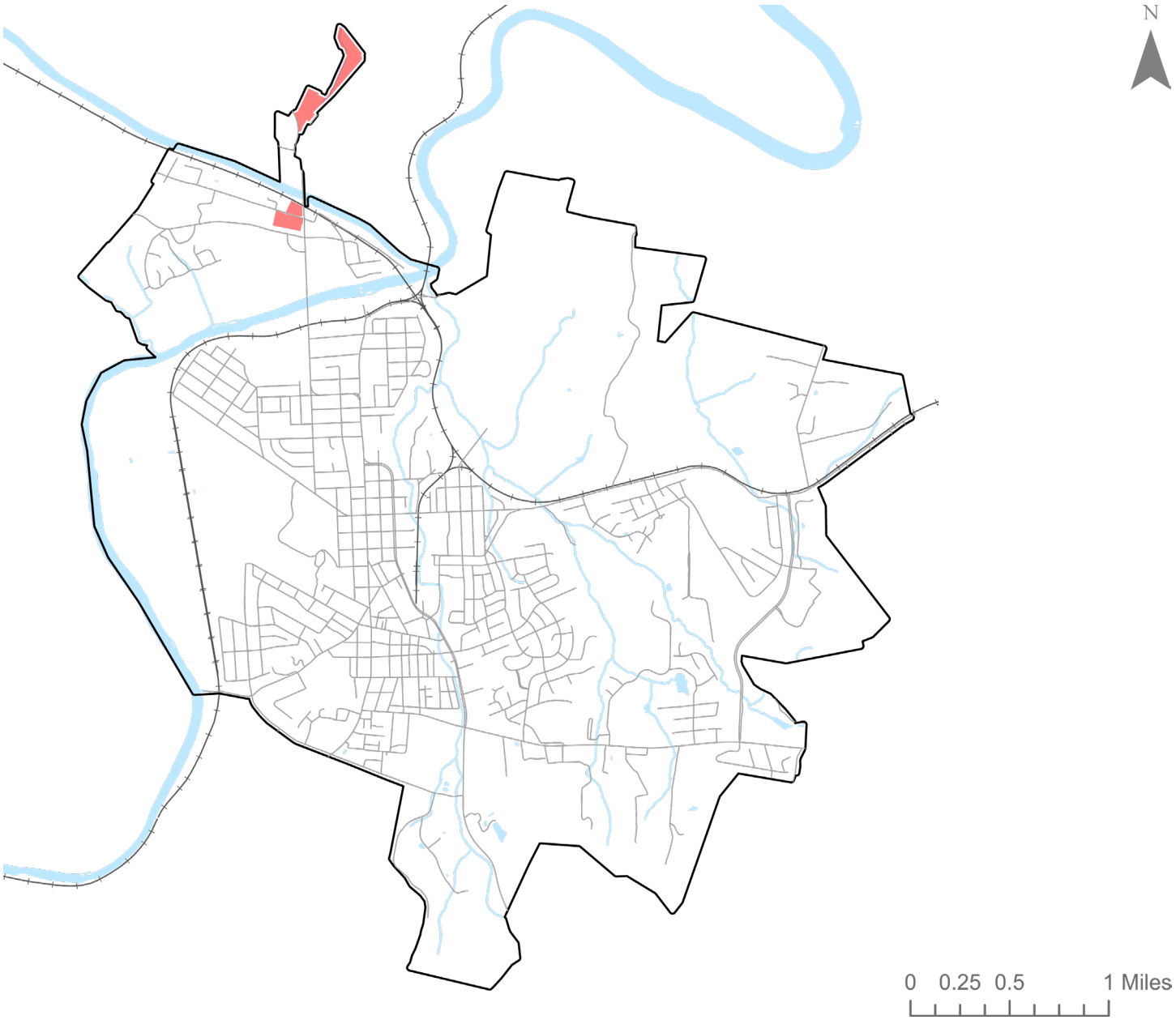


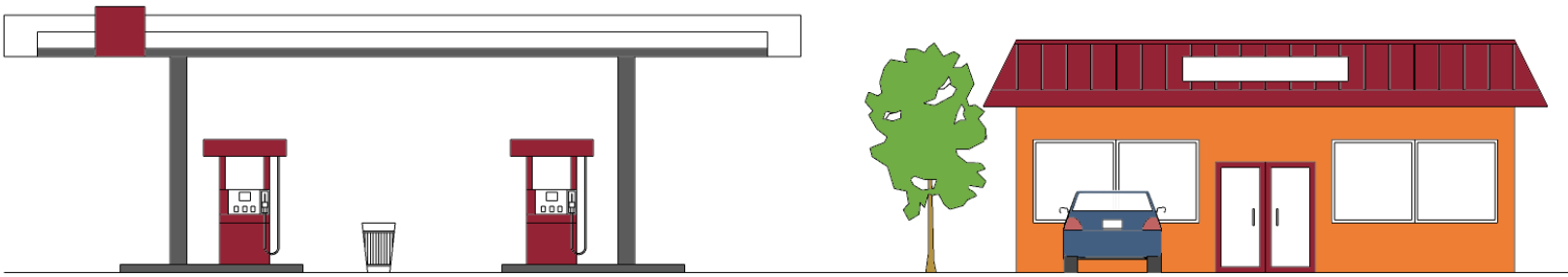


Uses	Primary	Single-family detached homes
	Secondary	-
Character	Design Principles	
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Public water and sewer, sidewalks, bike lanes
	Special Considerations	

COMMERCIAL.

Intended to accommodate uses that are customary commercial uses, including hotels, banks, multi-family residential, and auto-oriented uses, with a higher height limit than elsewhere in Town.

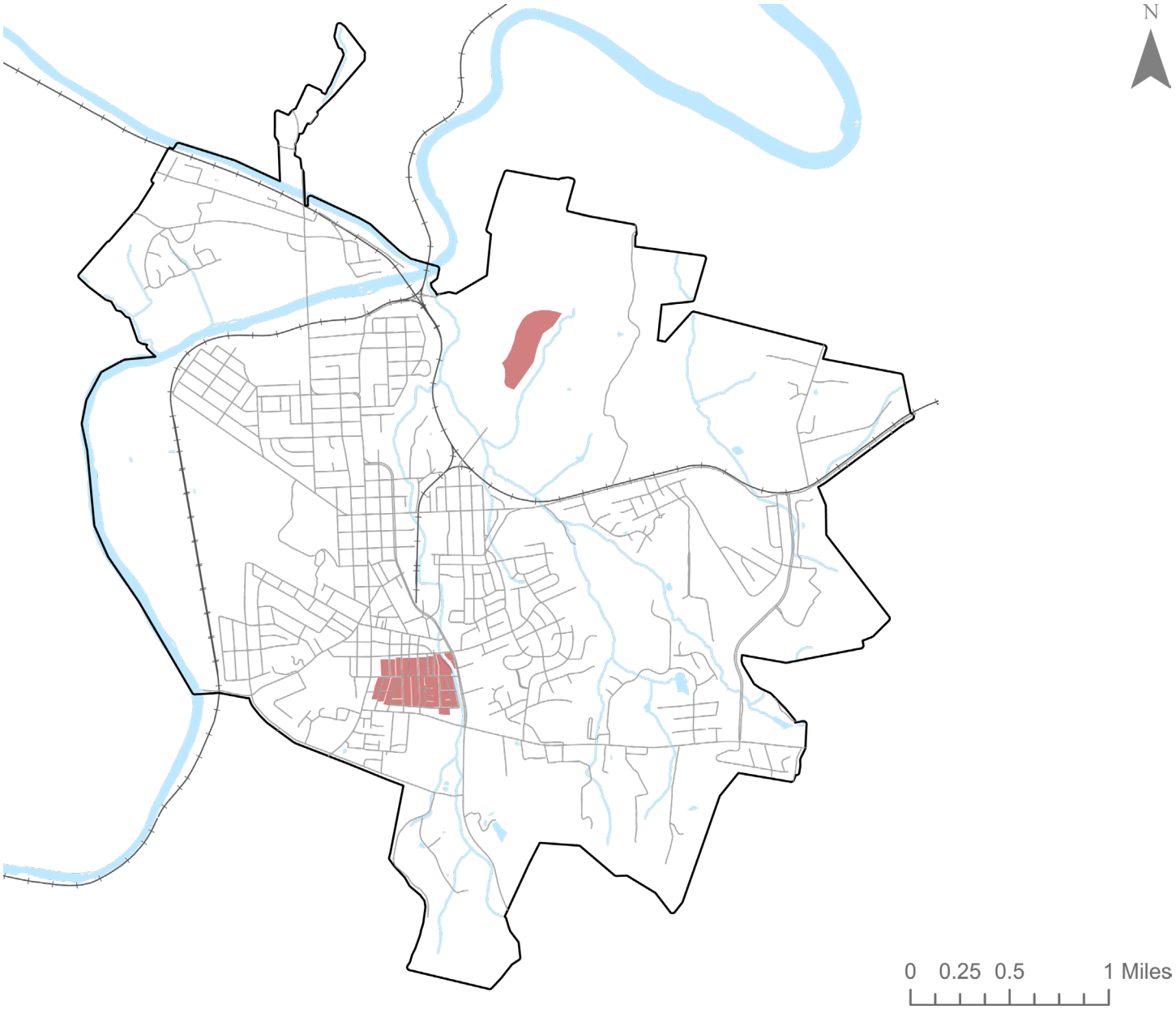




Uses	Primary	Retail, hotels, gas stations, recreational uses
	Secondary	
Character	Design Principles	
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Public Water and Sewer
	Special Considerations	

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL.

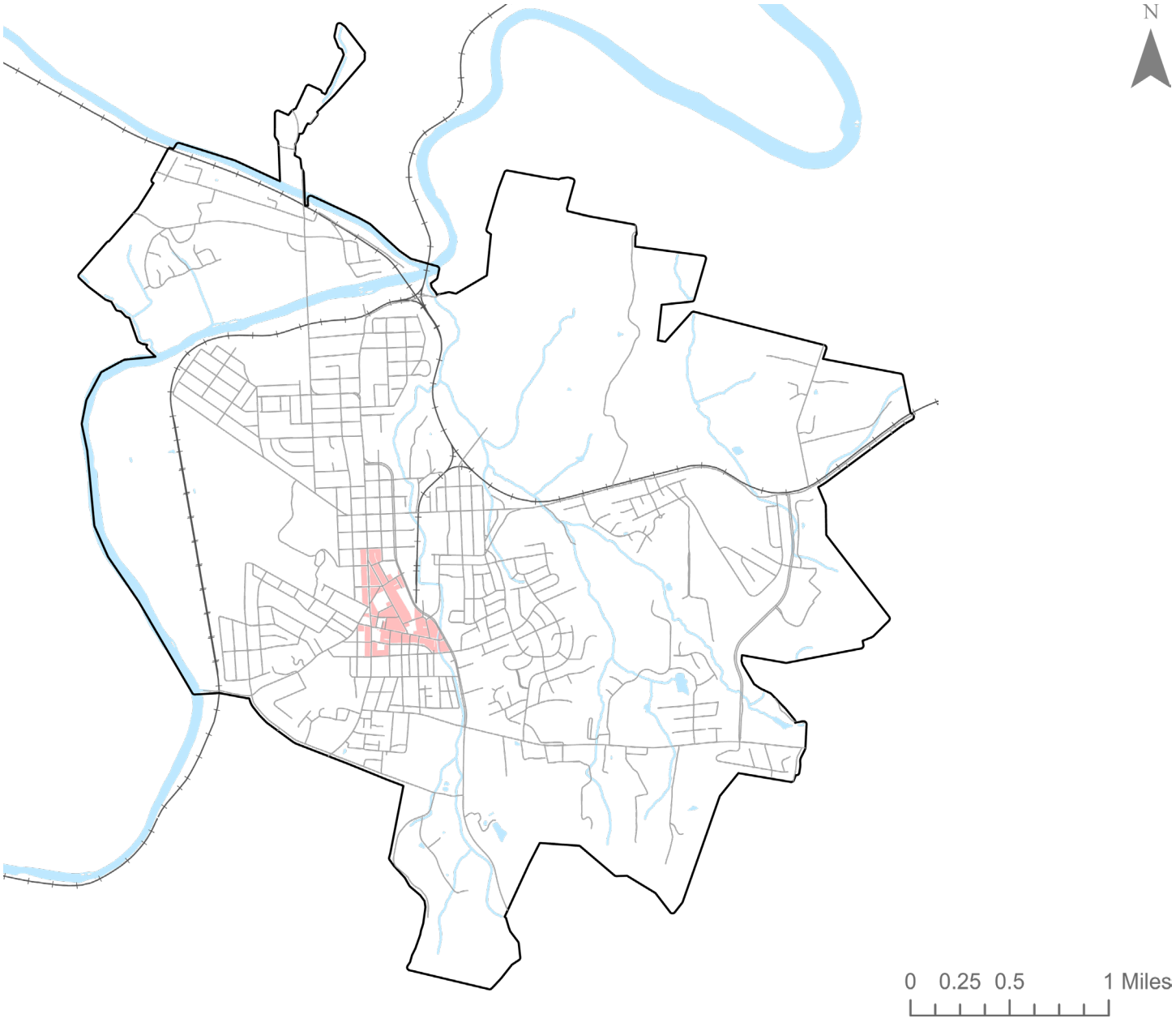
Intended for small commercial businesses that provide services to neighboring residential uses and have minimum negative impacts on transportation, light, air, and noise. Not intended for large scale, or big-box, commercial uses.



Uses	Primary	Single Family Residential
	Secondary	Commercial, principal or accessory
Character	Design Principles	New buildings should be appropriate scale to existing neighborhood
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Public water and sewer, sidewalks, bike lanes
	Special Considerations	

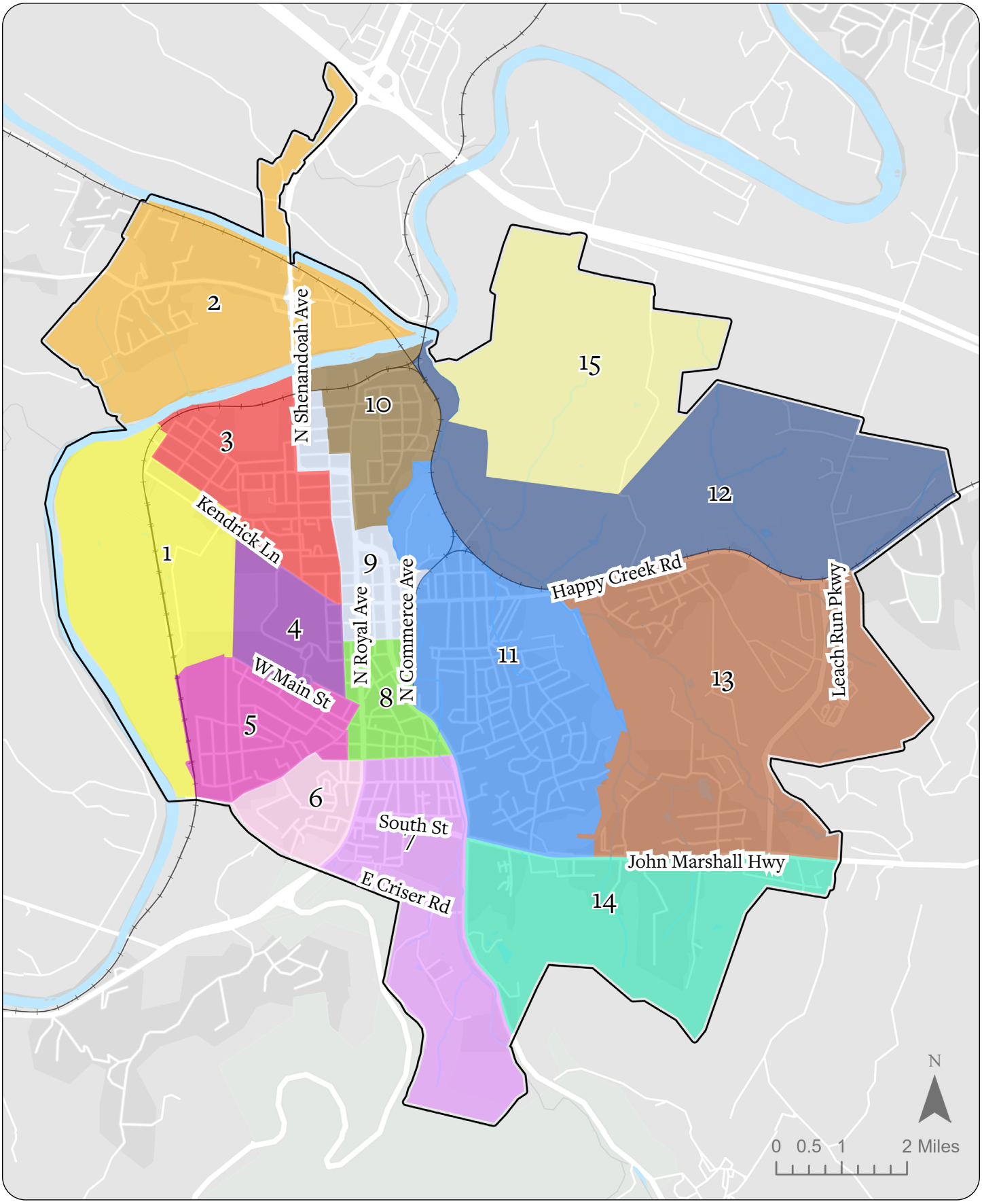
DOWNTOWN MIXED USE.

Intended to accommodate a mixture of residential and commercial uses in a main street atmosphere. Also intended to expand the historic downtown area by encouraging infill and new development that is built with the same characteristics as existing urban fabric.



Uses	Primary	Offices, restaurants, retail, government services
	Secondary	Surface or structured parking, second floor offices or apartments
Character	Design Principles	Traditional architecture, infill is appropriate in scale and character to existing buildings
Other	Facilities & Utilities	Bicycle parking, public art, sidewalks, path lighting, crosswalks, public bathrooms.
	Special Considerations	

PLANNING AREAS



Planning Areas

1. Royal Phoenix
2. Riverton
3. Shenandoah
4. Randolph Macon
5. Viscose City
6. Prospect Hill
7. South
8. Old Town
9. Royal
10. Warren Park
11. Happy Creek
12. North East
13. Leach Run
14. South East
15. Marshall

1. ROYAL PHOENIX

Area Description

The Royal Phoenix Planning area consists of 546.4 acres located in the western portion of the Town. The planning area includes the properties of the former Avtex Fibers, more recently referred to as Royal Phoenix. The former Old Virginia Apple Products facility, the former Allied Chemical facility, and Tharpe's salvage yard are also located within the planning area, as well as some residential uses in the northern section. The existing residential uses are located along W. 11th Street and then southwestern end of Adams Avenue. The Norfolk Southern Railroad traverses through the center of the planning area, dividing the site of the former Avtex Fibers industrial complex. The South Fork of the Shenandoah River and Town limits are located along the western boundary of the planning area. Primary access to the planning area is from Kendrick Lane.

Opportunities

- The areas designated for redevelopment within the Royal Phoenix Planning Area have adequate utility and transportation infrastructure to accommodate additional development.
- Rail access is available.
- Broadband and telecommunication infrastructure exists in the area.
- The removal of the former Avtex Fibers buildings, and the cleanup of the soil, provides shovel ready vacant sites that are attractive for redevelopment.
- The Town has invested in the area with the construction of a new state-of-the-art police department.
- The South Fork of the Shenandoah River, flat topography, open space, and scenic views.
- I-66 is accessible via major arterial roads, such as Rt. 340, Rt. 522, and Rt. 55.

Challenges

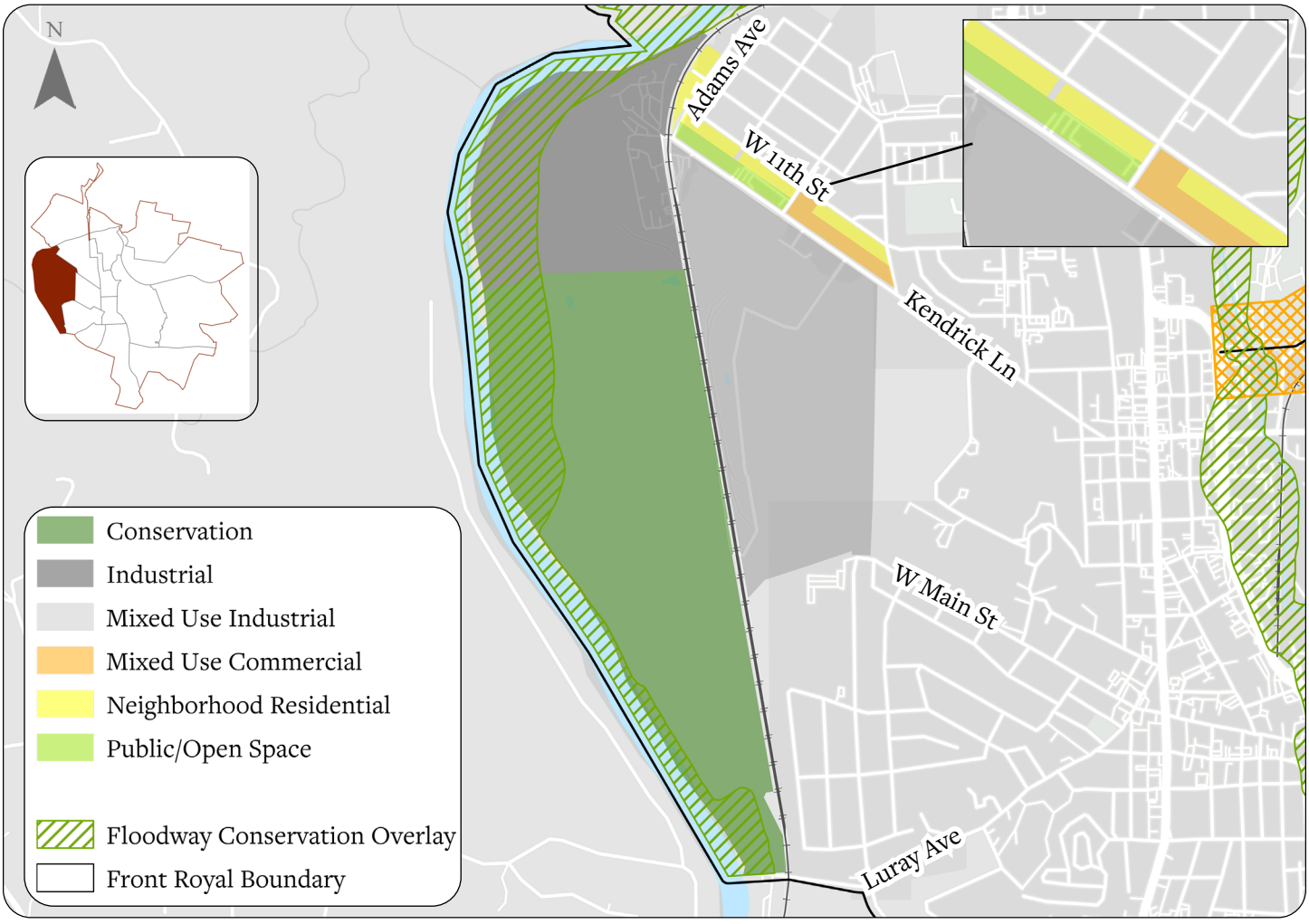
- Although utility infrastructure is adequate at present, some infrastructure is aged and in need of maintenance.
- Utility infrastructure may need upgrading to accommodate the full potential of redevelopment.
- Transportation infrastructure may need upgrades to accommodate the full potential of redevelopment.
- New access roads to the area are needed to better integrate the area with the central part of Town.
- The EPA easement restrictions on the property have limitations, including, but not limited to, no residential uses on the Avtex Fibers site.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are presently absent.

Action Strategies

- Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use properties located within the Royal Phoenix Redevelopment should be designated within the Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ).
- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over a 5-year time period.
- Extend W. Main Street to Kendrick Lane.
- Encourage redevelopment of higher density mixed uses.
- Establish streetscape design standards along Kendrick Lane and W. Main Street.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Enhance the northeast corner of Kendrick/Monroe & Monroe/W.11th St. with neighborhood commercial uses.
- Pursue a passive park with trails on the Avtex Fibers property west of the railroad and possibly along the river. New trails should be connected to existing trails.
- Explore options for additional public river access, potentially at the Avtex Fibers property where new development is not possible due to soil remediation.
- Include protected or separated bicycle lanes and sidewalks on Kendrick Lane and W. Main Street.
- Encourage high quality development of businesses that create jobs, expand the tax base, promote tourism, preserve valuable historic assets, establish needed recreational facilities, conserve environmentally sensitive areas, and beautify the community through architectural design and walkability.
- Site design should feature generous public/semi-public space as well as promote walkability.
- Encourage implementation of a water trail or other leisure amenities on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River to promote tourism and recreation. An example of one specific strategy for implementation of a water trail would be to work with a canoeing company to provide canoe trips on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River around the Town of Front Royal.
- Explore adding connecting road between Kendrick Lane and West Main Street.



2. RIVERTON

Area Description

The Riverton Planning Area consists of 599.6 acres in the northern portion of the Town. Route 340/522 is the primary entrance into the Town and traverses the Riverton Planning Area in a north-south orientation. To the west of Route 340/522, the planning area is bound on its western border by the town limits at Punches Run. A narrow strip of land on the west side of Route 340/522 also extends to I-66 in the far northern portion of the Town. The Riverton Historic District is located in the eastern portion of the Riverton Planning Area, east of Route 340/522. Route 55 (Strasburg Road) runs through the center of the planning area; and the Norfolk Southern Railroad runs along the bank of the North Fork of the Shenandoah from the Riverton Historic District in the east to just beyond Cedar Drive in the west. The frontage of Route 340/522 is part of the entrance corridor. Route 340/522 itself was de-annexed in 1996 and is outside of the Town limits from the South Fork Bridge northward.

Opportunities

- The Riverton Planning Area has adequate utility and transportation infrastructure.
- Rail access is available.
- Broadband and telecom infrastructure exists.
- The North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River, flat topography, open space, and scenic views.
- Close proximity to I-66 and major arterial roads, such as Rt. 340, Rt. 522, and Rt. 55.
- Close proximity to the Warren County Rt. 522 corridor.
- South Fork Bridge and W. Strasburg Road improvements.
- High traffic counts are attractive for new commercial uses.

Challenges

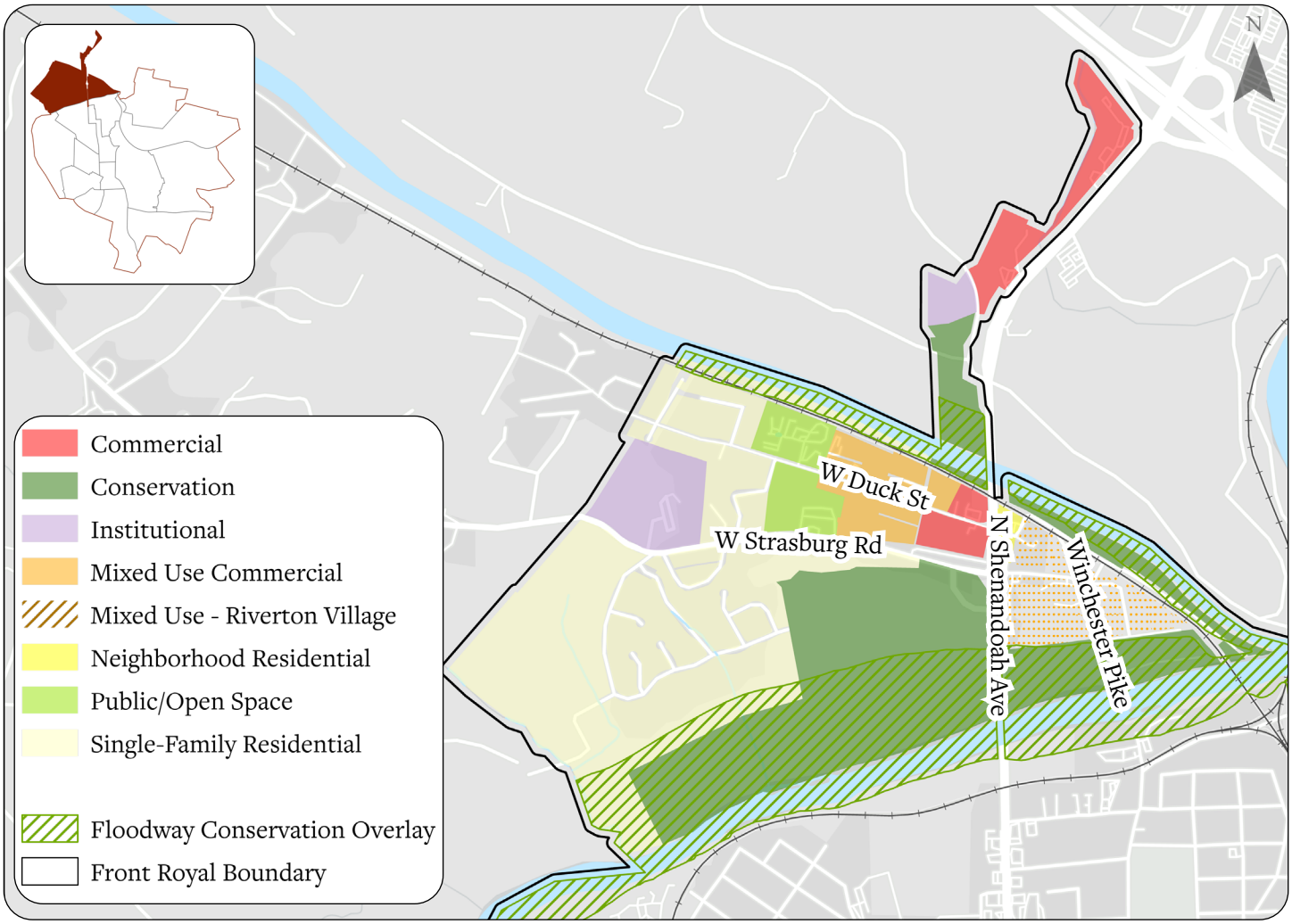
- High traffic counts with peak hour congestion.
- Limited developable land outside of steep slopes and floodplains.
- Commercial redevelopment potential is limited by multiple owners of existing commercial properties.
- Few pedestrian and bicycle facilities are present.
- Relative isolation from the rest of the Town in terms of accessibility.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Consider the impact of long term projects that may provide a secondary entrance in the future to the Town. An interchange at Shenandoah Shores Road and/or a connection via Warren County's planned western by-pass are two long-term possibilities. Explore a bicycle or pedestrian connection over the river to the Town.
- Enhance entrance corridor design standards for the N. Shenandoah Avenue streetscape that encourage a more pedestrian friendly environment. Provide prominent wayfinding signage that promote the Town.
- Expand pedestrian facilities and connect them with the South Fork Bridge sidewalks and bicycle lanes.
- Include bicycle lanes along N. Shenandoah Avenue.
- Large footprint retail stores should be avoided in the Riverton Planning Area.
- Preserve all floodplains and promote riparian buffers along the river's edge.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- New development should protect and utilize scenic views coming into Town.
- Carefully evaluate opportunities for annexation beyond the Town boundaries.
- Encourage development that will enhance the historic character of the Riverton Historic District.
- Encourage existing commercially zoned properties to redevelop for tourism related uses. Uses such as a hotel or outdoor recreation business are desirable uses and should be promoted.
- Development in the Riverton Historic District should be similar in scale, height and form to enhance the overall village character. Higher densities can be considered along E. Strasburg road and on Old Winchester Pike near the intersection with E. Strasburg Road if they adhere to the scale and form of the historic village.
- Encourage implementation of a water trail or linear park on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River to promote tourism and recreation. Providing a public water access to the South Fork of the Shenandoah River in the northern area of Town is recommended.
- Expand Town historic district to include appropriate areas of Riverton Village.
- Study traffic flow from the South Fork Bridge (N Shenandoah Ave) and make improvements, as appropriate, to improve safety and traffic flow.
- Make infrastructure and land use improvements to increase walkability and mobility via different travel modes.



3. SHENANDOAH

Area Description

The Shenandoah Planning Area consists of 284.9 acres bordered by the South Fork of the Shenandoah River on the north, Kendrick Lane environs on the south/west, and the Route 340-522 corridor on the east. Norfolk Southern Railroad traverses the planning area adjacent to the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The Planning area extends to Virginia Avenue from 14th Street to 6th Street.

Opportunities

- The Shenandoah Planning Area has adequate utility and transportation capacity, but many of the streets need improvements with curb and gutter and sidewalks.
- Broadband and telecom infrastructure exists.
- The South Fork of the Shenandoah River is an environmental and recreational asset.
- Valley Health facilities provide support for local small businesses.
- Close access to I-66 via Rt. 340/Shenandoah Avenue.
- South Fork Bridge and W. Strasburg Road improvements.
- High traffic counts are attractive for new commercial uses.
- Affordable housing with redevelopment potential for higher density residential use.
- Close proximity to the Royal Phoenix Redevelopment Area.

Challenges

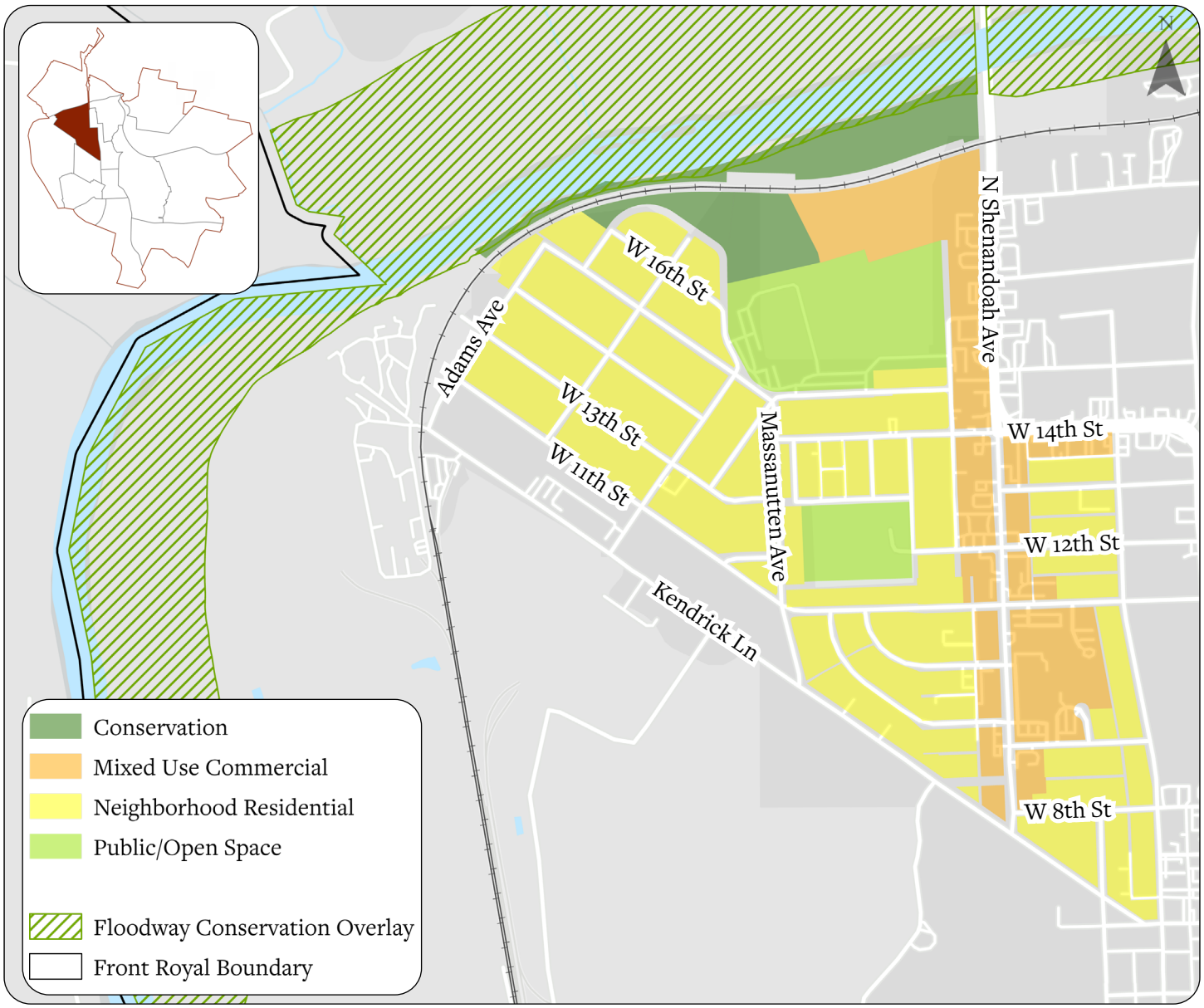
- High traffic counts, with peak hour congestion on Rt. 340/N. Shenandoah Avenue.
- Reliance on Rt. 340/N. Shenandoah Avenue for access to the planning area.
- Limited access to vacant land that is suitable for development.
- Few pedestrian and bicycle facilities are present.
- Poorly maintained motels being used as temporary housing.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Carefully evaluate future reuse of the hospital after it is relocated to Leach Run Parkway. Ensure that future use of the current hospital's property complements the Town. Uses such as a nursing home, professional offices and/or quality apartments may be suitable uses.
- Improvements to the intersection of N. Shenandoah Avenue and Kendrick Lane are needed to address future projected traffic volume as well as needed accessibility and pedestrian mobility improvements.
- Bike lanes, sidewalks and curb & gutter are recommended along N. Shenandoah Ave. and Kendrick Ln.
- Sidewalk facilities are needed along many existing local streets. 12th Street, 14th Street, Massanutten Avenue, and Monroe Avenue are recommended priorities.
- Evaluate new commercial development along N. Shenandoah Avenue (Rt. 340 section) for compatibility with the entrance corridor standards.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Consider adding more pedestrian crosswalks across Rt. 340 to improve safety conditions for pedestrians.
- Encourage redevelopment of existing residential areas to accommodate higher density residential uses or mixed-use land uses within existing R-2 and R-3 Zoning Districts.
- Conserve all floodplains and promote riparian buffers along the river's edge. Evaluate a riverside trail.
- Encourage new development to utilize or enhance the scenic views coming into Town.
- Encourage new mixed use development along N. Shenandoah Ave. to promote walkability through rear sited parking, transparent storefronts, limited setbacks, provision of bicycle parking, benches, or other amenities.



4. RANDOLPH MACON

Area Description

The Randolph Macon Planning Area consists of 164 acres bordered to the north by Kendrick Lane; to the south by W. Main Street and W. 1st Street; to the east by Virginia Avenue; and to the west by the Royal Phoenix.

Opportunities

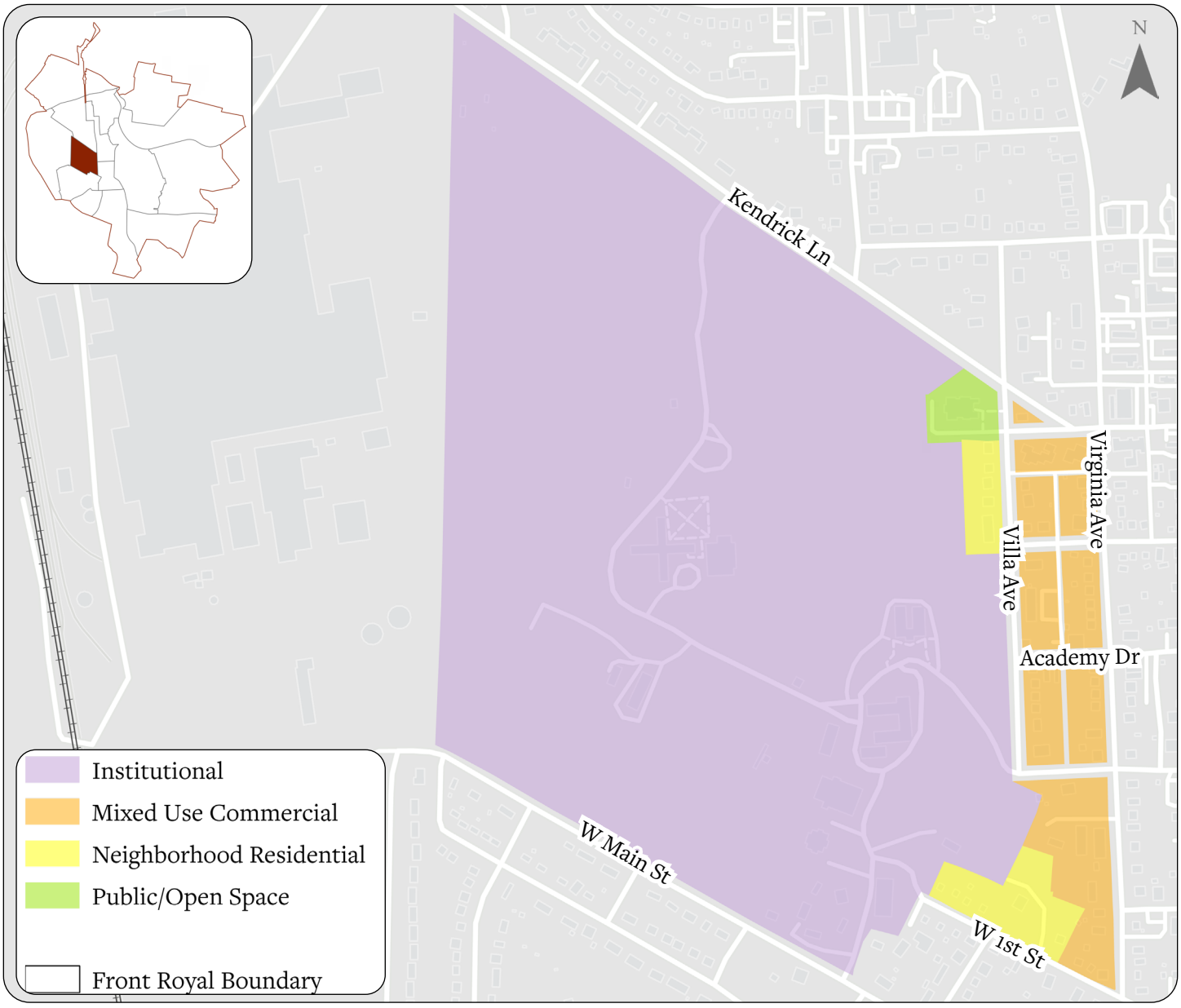
- The Randolph Macon Planning Area has adequate utility and transportation capacity, but some of the side streets and Kendrick Lane need improvements with curb and gutter and sidewalks.
- Large wooded areas within the Randolph Macon Planning Area are an environmental asset, providing a natural habitat for birds and other wildlife in the Town. The wooded areas also benefit nearby uses by providing buffering between different uses, filtering and holding stormwater, and giving aesthetic beauty to the area.
- Large open space areas that are part of Randolph Macon Academy's campus provide many of the same benefits of the large wooded areas.
- Randolph Macon Academy contributes to the community as an institution that participates in local activities and adds to the Town's historic character as an aesthetic asset and focal point, and is a destination point in the Town that brings recognition and enhances tourism.

Challenges

- Existing streets have a patchwork of sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities.
- Potential development impacts associated with the development of a mostly wooded 40-acre parcel, currently owned by Randolph Macon Academy.
- Increased traffic counts on bordering streets brings cut-through traffic along residential streets.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Improvements to the intersection of N. Shenandoah Avenue and Kendrick Lane are needed to address future projected traffic volume, as well as needed accessibility and pedestrian mobility improvements.
- Sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along Villa Avenue and side streets to Virginia Avenue.
- Bicycle, sidewalk and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along Kendrick Lane and W. Main Street.
- Encourage the retention of wooded areas to maintain the Town's overall canopy coverage.
- Implement traffic calming measures in future and existing roads in the planning area and surroundings.


N
Kendrick Ln
Virginia Ave
Villa Ave
Academy Dr
W Main St
W 1st St
Institutional
Mixed Use Commercial
Neighborhood Residential
Public/Open Space
Front Royal Boundary

5. VISCOSE CITY

Area Description

The Viscose City Planning Area consists of 234.7 acres bordered to the north by W. Main Street and W. 1st Street; to the east by Union Street and Lee Street; to the south by Luray Avenue; to the west by Norfolk Southern Railroad.

Opportunities

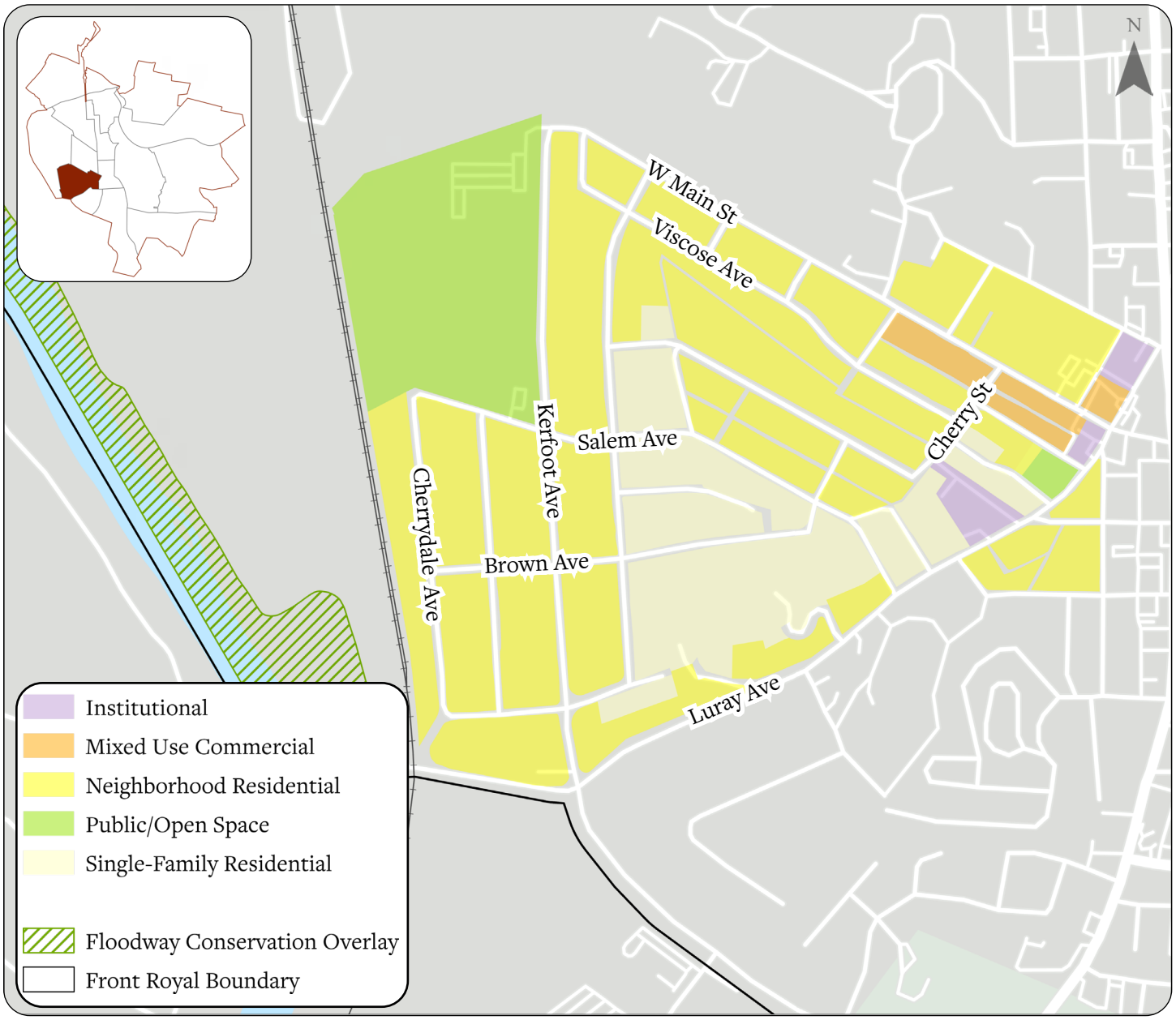
- The Viscose City Planning Area has adequate utility and transportation capacity, but many of the streets need improvements with curb and gutter and sidewalks.
- Recreational facilities and natural resources at the Skyline Soccerplex, Eastham Park and Bowman Park.
- Open space within and adjacent to the Warren County park facilities.
- Close proximity to Royal Phoenix and Downtown.
- Redevelopment potential.
- Curb & gutter exists along most streets.
- Several major churches along Luray Avenue and Union Street.

Challenges

- Existing streets have a patchwork of sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities.
- Many of the citizens comment on the poor cell phone reception in the western portion of the area.
- Extension of W. Main Street to Kendrick Lane could have negative impacts to the residential uses along Kerfoot Avenue without careful consideration of road design.
- No sidewalks exist on most streets.
- Steep terrain along portions of Luray Avenue.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along existing streets. Sidewalks along W. Main Street are a priority to enhance connection with Royal Phoenix and Downtown.
- Bicycle, sidewalk and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along Kerfoot Avenue and Luray Avenue.
- Implement traffic calming measures in future road projects in the planning area and surrounding areas.
- Maintain the existing large oak trees within Bowman Park, and encourage preservation of other wooded areas through ordinances and supporting efforts by the Tree Stewards and UFAC.
- Promote the adaptive reuse of the former police station at the corner of W. Main Street and Luray Avenue.
- Encourage the development of a corner neighborhood commercial node to support walkability within the planning area.


N
W Main St
Viscose Ave
Cherry St
Salem Ave
Kerfoot Ave
Cherrydale Ave
Brown Ave
Luray Ave
Institutional
Mixed Use Commercial
Neighborhood Residential
Public/Open Space
Single-Family Residential
Floodway Conservation Overlay
Front Royal Boundary

6. PROSPECT HILL

Area Description

Prospect Hill Planning Area consists of 126.4 acres. It is bordered to the north by W. Stonewall Drive and Luray Avenue; to the east by W. Criser Road; to the south and west by South Royal Avenue.

Opportunities

- Prospect Hill Planning Area has adequate utility and transportation capacity, but many of the streets need improvements with curb and gutter and the lack of sidewalks.
- Large stands of wooded areas exist throughout much of the Prospect Hill Planning Area, particularly along Luray Avenue.
- The southern entrance to the Town (Rt. 340) is located adjacent to the planning area and has the potential for redevelopment of commercial uses. The area is particularly suited to tourism related businesses with the Skyline Drive, Skyline Caverns, Canoe companies, the airport, and other destination points that are located just south of the Town limits.
- Prospect Hill Cemetery is a historic landmark and open space asset for the Town.
- Ay-View, Commonwealth Assisted Living (Southerlands) and other relatively newer residential uses have built-out throughout much of the planning area.
- Criser Road is an access point to Eastham Park and other County facilities to the south of Town that are additional destination points for the community.
- The commercial uses along South Royal Avenue (Route 340) are located within the recently established Tourism Zone, offering incentives for new businesses and expansion of existing businesses.

Challenges

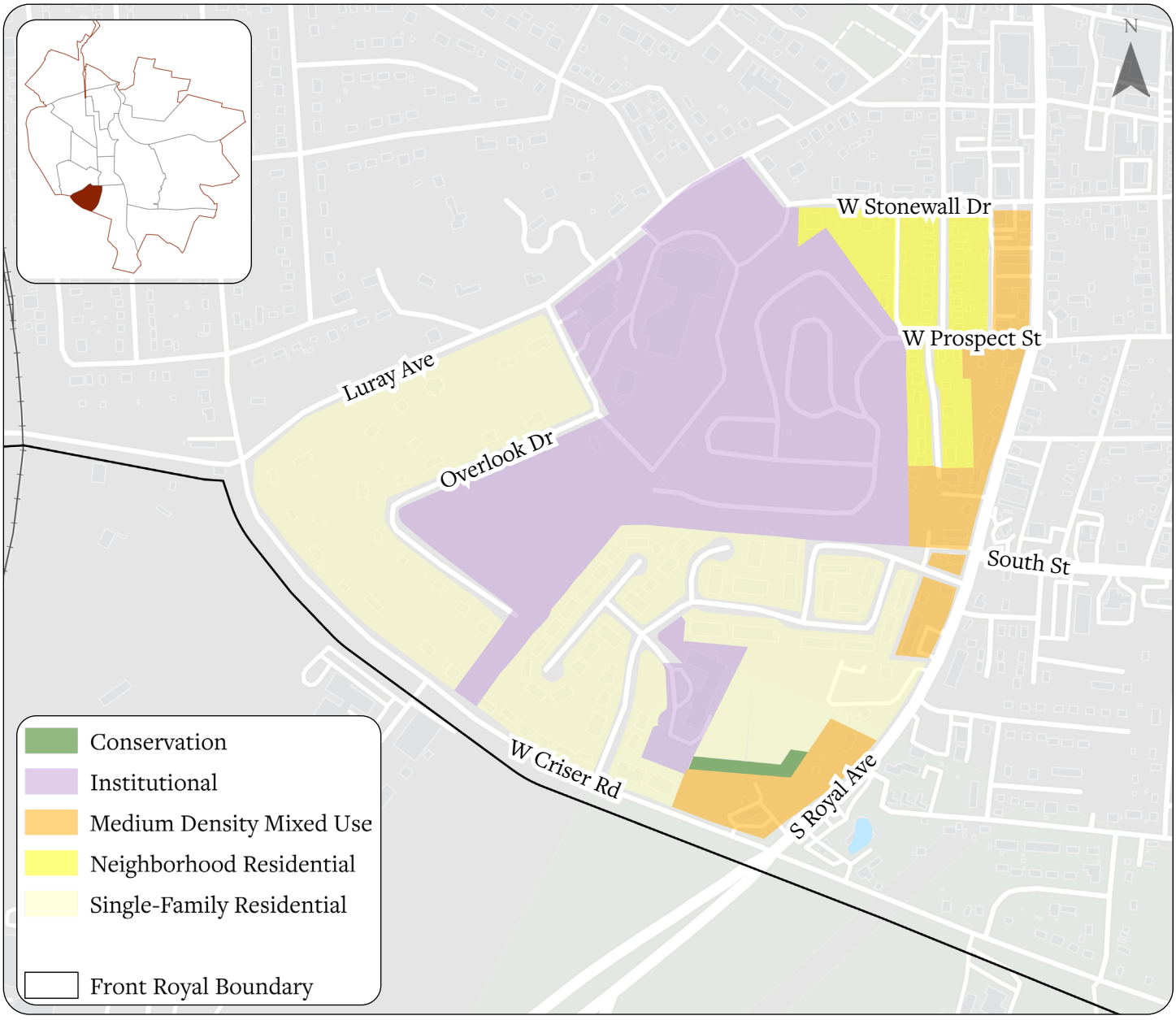
- Sidewalks and curb and gutter are absent in many of the streets in the planning area.
- Steeper slopes exist in the planning area, creating development challenges and an increased importance of proactive stormwater control and mitigation.
- Several blighted commercial buildings exist along Route 340. These uses are currently detracting from the aesthetics and walkability of an important southern corridor of the Town.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along existing streets.
- Redevelopment is encouraged along South Royal Avenue (Route 340). Tourism related uses, such as, but not limited to, hotels, restaurants, commercial recreation and entertainment, and retail uses should be encouraged in the corridor.
- Enhancements to the South Royal Avenue are recommended. These improvements should improve safety and make the streetscape more inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Enhance wayfinding and directional signage.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Landscaping enhancement and preservation of wooded areas is recommended for new development activities and redevelopment of existing sites.
- Explore adding a greenway along West Criser Road between South Royal Avenue (Route 340) and Luray Avenue to enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Study intersection of Royal Ave, Tourist St, South St, and Ay-View Dr and implement changes to improve traffic flow and safety.



7. SOUTH

Area Description

The South Planning consists of 469.9 acres. It is bordered to the north by E. Stonewall Drive; to east by Commerce Avenue (Rt. 522) and Remount Road (Rt. 522); to the south by Town limits; and to the east by S. Royal Avenue.

Opportunities

- Two segments of the Royal Shenandoah Greenway are located within the planning area. Happy Creek Trail connects E. Main Street to Criser Road, providing scenic views of Happy Creek along the way. Criser Road Trail continues the Royal Shenandoah Greenway to Eastham Park in Warren County, with several destinations, including a public library, elementary school, and national park.
- Samuels Library, Ressie Jeffries Elementary School, Royal Plaza, and Gateway Plaza are significant local resources and destinations for citizens. Other commercial uses, primarily along South Royal Avenue and South Street are also significant resources to the local economy.
- Wooded areas in the South Planning Area are significant and are valuable resources that provide beautification and environmental benefits. Shenandoah National Park borders the planning area to the south.
- The primary access to many County destinations is through the South Planning Area. These important routes include South Royal Avenue, South Commerce Avenue, Criser Road, South Street, and Remount Road.
- The existing commercial areas within the South Planning Area are located within the Town's recently established Tourism Zone.

Challenges

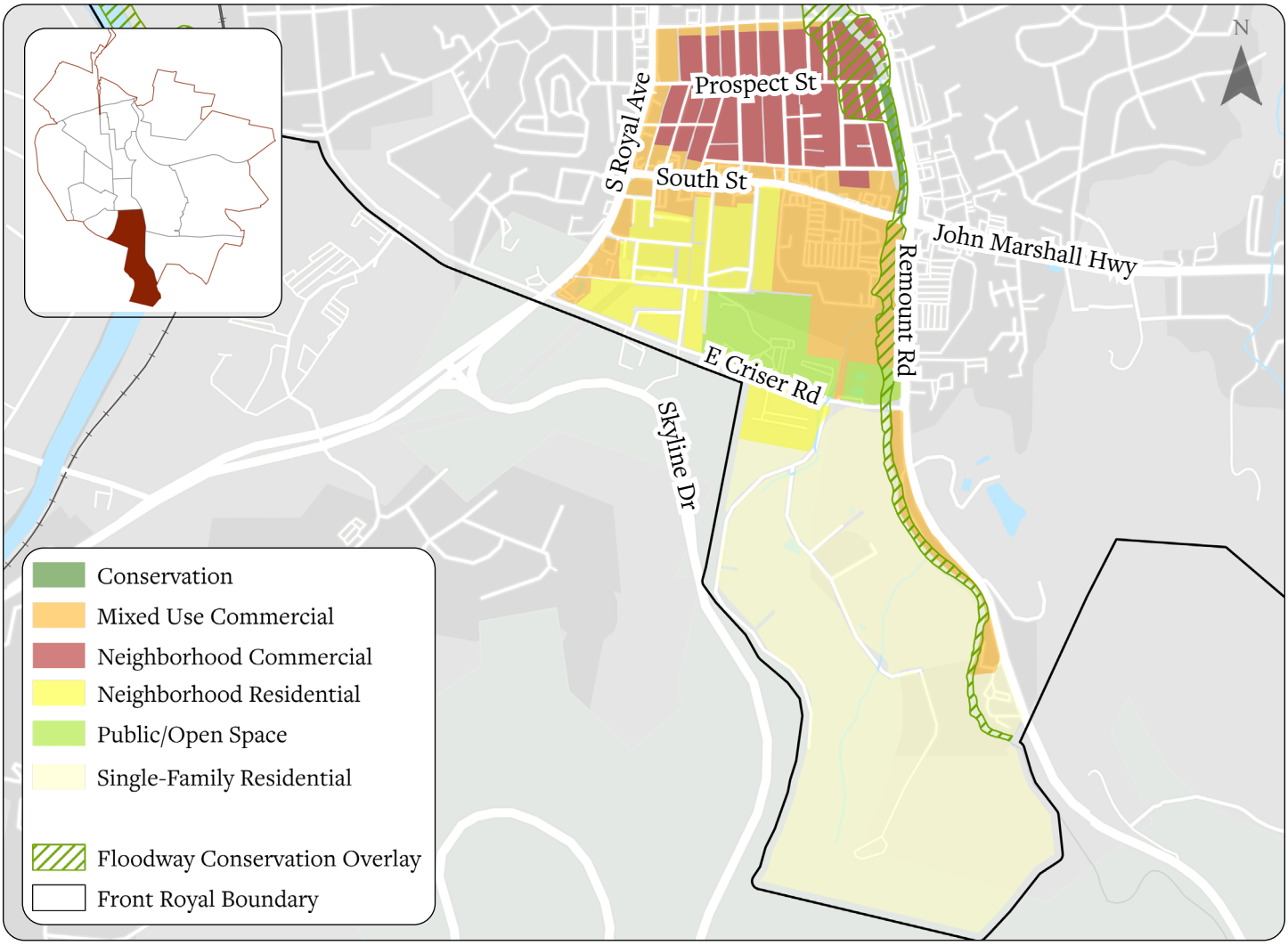
- Sidewalks and curb and gutter are absent in many streets of the planning area.
- Steeper slopes exist in the planning area, creating development challenges and an increased importance of stormwater control.
- Several dilapidated commercial buildings exist along Route 340. These uses are currently detracting from the aesthetics and walkability of an important southern corridor of the Town.
- The floodplain/floodway is a limitation for new development.
- Poor property maintenance exists within many residential areas.
- Traffic continues to increase on South Street. Pedestrian safety improvements have been added in recent years, but more is needed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Sidewalks and curb & gutter facilities are recommended along existing streets.
- Enhance wayfinding and directional signage.
- Landscaping enhancement and preservation of wooded areas is recommended for new development activities and redevelopment of existing sites.
- Assess the feasibility of adding a new North/South road with safe bicycle and pedestrian access.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Evaluate VDOT's recommendations for South Street and side streets, including the possibility of relocating the traffic signal on South Street that is across from Martin's Food; re-routing one-way street traffic flow to maximize traffic circulation; extending dead-end streets to improve side street mobility; and other access management strategies.
- Study Blue Ridge Avenue and address drivers traveling in the wrong direction.
- Encourage redevelopment of residential areas with higher density. Allow mixed-use development in commercial areas, such as residential units on the upper level of buildings. Encourage redevelopment of commercial areas, particularly the infill of large parking lots of strip malls.
- Evaluate how to work with property owners and add landscaping and/or stormwater retention facilities within large parking lots, such as, but not limited to, the parking lots of Royal Plaza.
- Ensure there are multiple safe and convenient north-south pedestrian and bicycle routes to raise the redevelopment potential of the planning area as well as integrate it with the downtown main street area.
- Add a crosswalk/pedestrian infrastructure at the intersection of East Criser Road and Remount Drive.
- Study intersection of Royal Ave, Tourist St, South St, and Ay-View Dr and implement changes to improve traffic flow and safety.



8. OLD TOWN

Area Description

The Old Town Planning area consists of 122.7 acres. The northern border of the Old Town Planning Area is 4th Street; and the southern border is Stonewall Dr. The western border is Virginia Avenue and Lee Street. The eastern border is Commerce Avenue and an inactive railroad spur owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad.

Opportunities

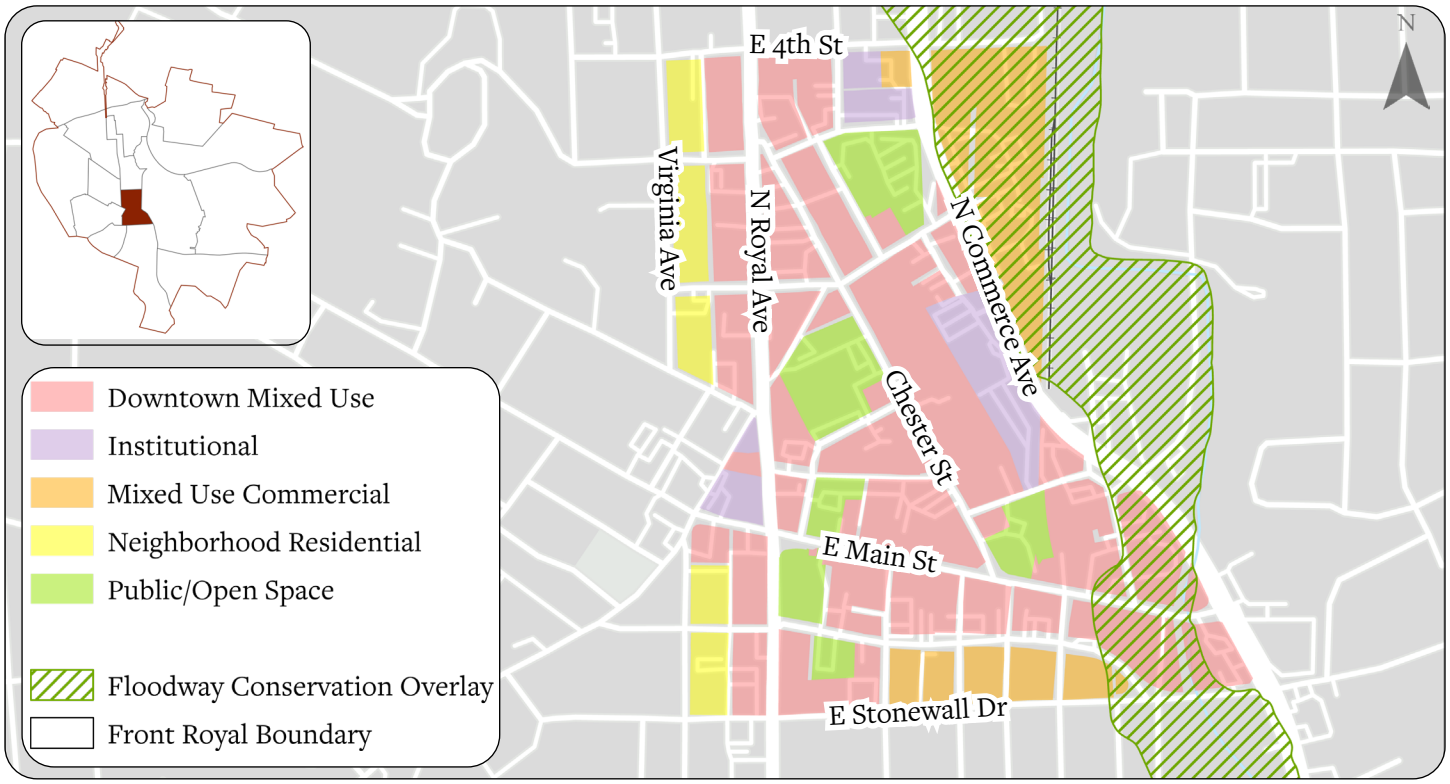
- Happy Creek is a scenic and environmental resource with a public trail.
- The Old Town Planning Area, also referred to as "Downtown," includes a core portion of the Front Royal Historic District. The historic architecture of the buildings located downtown are a cultural resource that attracts residents, community visitors, tourists, and small businesses.
- Downtown housing units increase the Town's diversity of housing unit types and contribute to the liveliness.
- The Town Commons, also known as the Village Commons and Gazebo Commons, is the focal point for numerous community events and festivals, and is the center of everyday activity downtown.
- Downtown is an attractive location for small businesses that offer local goods, food, entertainment and services in a walkable area.
- The restored train station is in use as a Visitor's Center that attracts tourists and disseminates information to the public on local events and points of interest.
- The government facilities located in the Old Town Planning Area, including Town Hall, the Visitor's Center, Warren County Government Center, the Courthouse, and E. Wilson Morrison Elementary School, generate everyday activity in the downtown that supports local businesses.
- Many churches and civic organizations are located downtown. These uses support local businesses by attracting people to the downtown and contribute to the local culture and atmosphere.

Challenges

- A significant amount of the parking in the Downtown is restricted by the property owners for their own use. Shared parking agreements should be facilitated by the Town to better utilize vacant parking.
- The Town should explore sites for a potential consolidated public parking garage.
- Some privately-owned buildings are poorly maintained and in need of repairs.
- Greater housing density is required to support local businesses as there are few high-quality apartments.
- The eastern portion of the Old Town Planning Area is located within the floodplain and floodway areas of Happy Creek. This is a significant limitation for new development or redevelopment.
- Currents signs in the Downtown do not adequately convey the location of public parking spaces, local businesses and services, Town branding, and local event times.
- There is a limited amount of public art.
- Multiple-merchant organizations often result in the communication of mixed-messages from local merchants.
- Few bicycle racks to accommodate and encourage bicycling.
- Continue to implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan: Envision 2.0.

Action Strategies

- Evaluate the Zoning Ordinance and development standards for ways to ensure that desirable land use regulations are in-place that do not discourage redevelopment.
- Review the sign ordinance and make revisions that are determined necessary and reasonable. Consider ways to make the sign regulations more user-friendly.
- Continue working with business owners and other stakeholders of the downtown area to improve services and communication. Continue with Town Community Development services.
- Enhance business-friendly government services, particularly those that provide technical assistance and promote economic development.
- Improve the quality of public parking spaces in the downtown and consider the development of a parking management plan. Parking meters, parking permits, facilitating shared parking agreements, and improved parking regulation enforcement can assist with managing demand.
- Explore the closure of E. Main Street as a pedestrianized public space from Chester Street to Town Hall.
- Explore streetscape improvements for Royal Ave, including traffic calming, street trees, and stormwater management to "expand the fabric" of the Main Street area.
- Reduce the number of cars in the Old Town area through the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and increased transit service.
- Study traffic between Royal Ave between Jackson St and W Main St and implement changes to improve safety and traffic flow.
- Introduce traffic calming measures on W Main St, such as speed bumps, raised crosswalks, vegetated traffic islands, and curb extensions, to slow vehicle speeds.
- Study feasibility of a shared-use path along W Main Street and install when possible.



9. ROYAL

Area Description

The Royal Planning Area consists of 159.9 acres. It is a narrow portion of the Town that extends north from 4th Street to 18th Street. The western border is Northern Shenandoah Avenue and Virginia Avenue. The east is bound by various streets, including Virginia Avenue, North Royal Avenue, 10th Street, and Crosby Road.

Opportunities

- North Royal Avenue and North Shenandoah Avenue are major arterial routes providing an entrance into the Town.
- Businesses along the two routes provide many services to the community and contribute to the Town's overall economic vitality.
- Royal Avenue offers the charm of a small-town character, with street trees and quality residential/commercial buildings.

Challenges

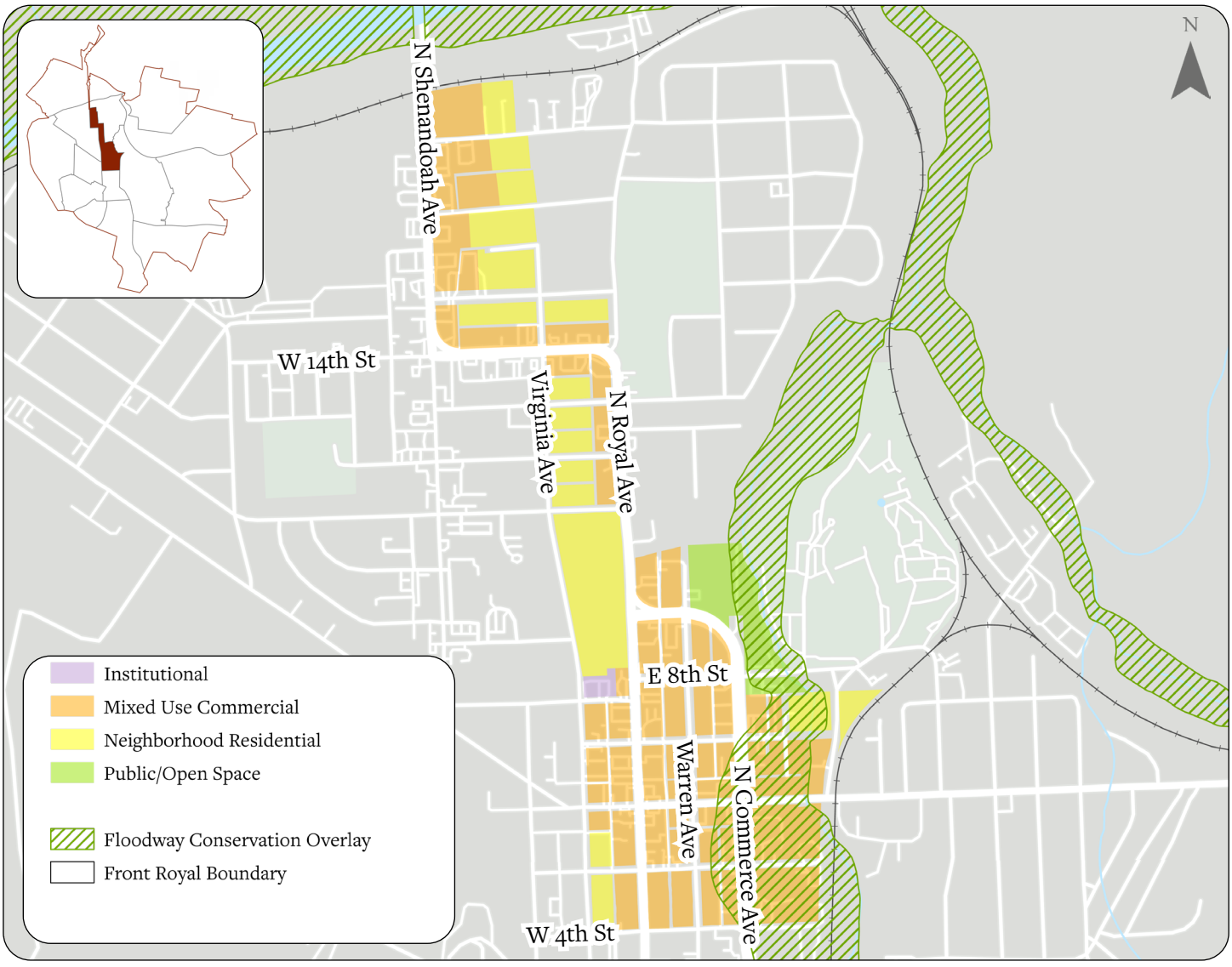
- Poor surface water drainage between 6th Street and 8th Street.
- Heavy traffic counts associated with commuters each afternoon and visitors on weekends.
- Traffic constrictions associated with drive-in businesses.
- Some privately owned buildings need maintenance.
- Traffic congestion at N. Royal Avenue and 14th Street.
- Floodplain areas.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- Continue to explore intersection improvements at the intersection of 14th Street and N. Royal Avenue to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Encourage economic development and beautification in the Entrance Corridor and require improvements to meet or exceed minimum development standards.
- Minimize the use of freestanding pole signs in the corridor.
- Evaluate the Zoning Ordinance and development standards to allow for more walkable mixed uses along this corridor.
- Encourage redevelopment of properties along and adjacent to Warren Avenue and ensure that a compatible mixture of commercial and residential uses are provided. This area is suitable for more neotraditional urban design standards, including higher density residential uses (apartments) on the upper level of commercial uses.
- Install curb & gutter and sidewalk and improvements in areas where such improvements are not present. Ensure stormwater management is given a priority for redevelopment. Also, consider the installation of bicycle lanes in accordance with the transportation plan.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Continue to encourage re-use of large homes on N. Royal Avenue. Encourage or require zoning standards that ensure compatibility and beautification of the corridor.
- Design connectivity to the planned East/West Connector street that minimizes traffic congestion and encourages bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.
- Implement traffic calming and safe crosswalks to allow for easier pedestrian and bicycle access from surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure that pedestrian and bicycle connections north to south are safe and convenient to encourage redevelopment in the planning area.
- Plant street trees along Warren Avenue between 5th St and 8th St to provide shade and serve as a buffer between the road and the sidewalk.
- Explore streetscape improvements for Royal Ave, including traffic calming, street trees, and stormwater management to "expand the fabric" of the Main Street area.



10. WARREN PARK

Area Description

The Warren park Planning Area consists of 199.7 acres. The planning area extends from 10th Street to the Shenandoah River. The Norfolk Southern Railroad comprises the eastern boundary and the western boundary is North Royal Avenue and the residential areas that are east of N. Shenandoah Avenue.

Opportunities

- Opportunity for in-fill residential development.
- Businesses along the two routes provide many services to the community and contribute to the Town's overall economic vitality.
- River frontage, with the potential for outdoor recreation.
- There exists the opportunity for a riverside trail and point of public access for boats.

Challenges

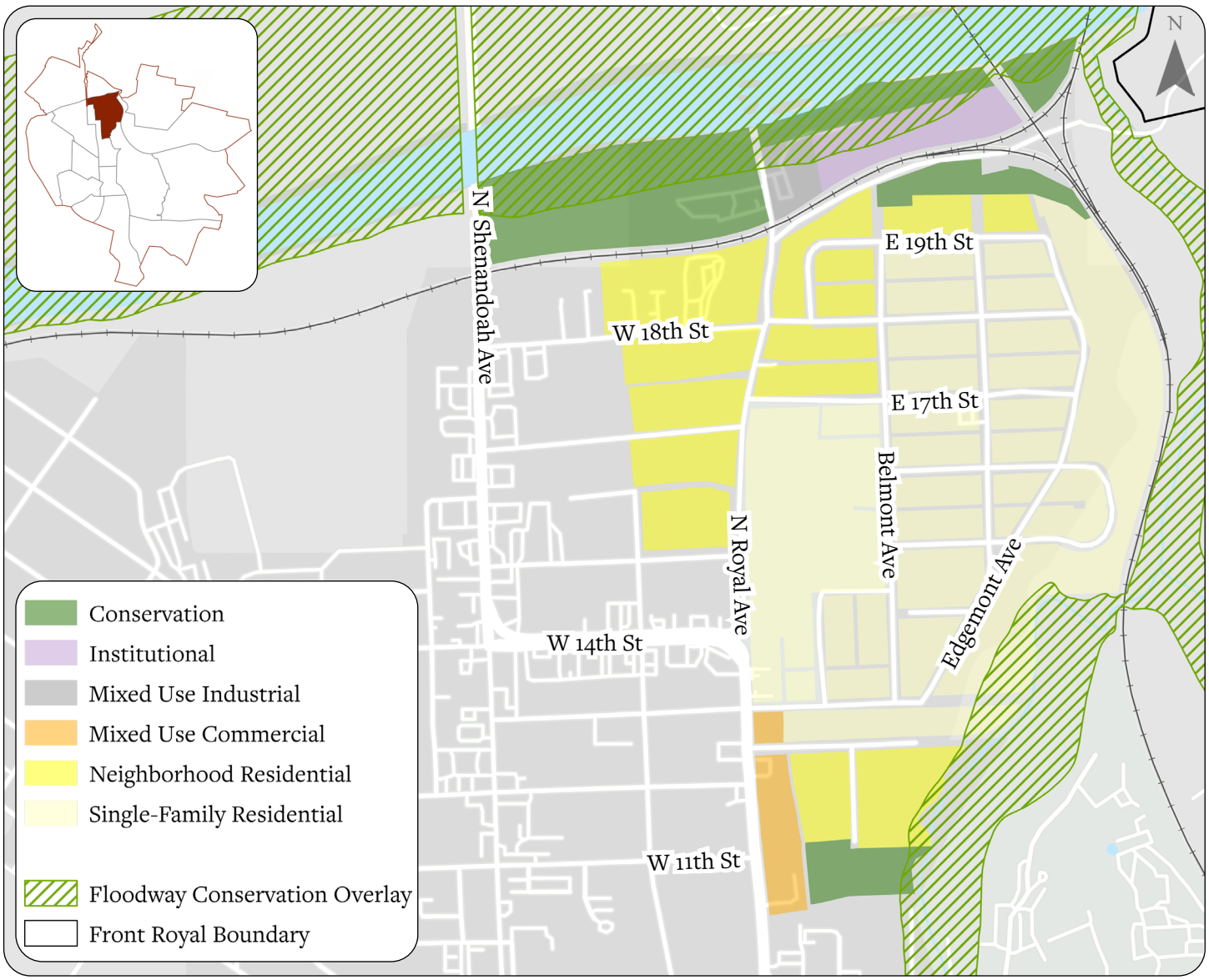
- Streets with limited curb & gutter, sidewalks, and street parking.
- A low underpass to the riverfront properties on the north side of the railroad.
- Flood prone areas along the river.
- Parking shortages in the southern area along N. Royal Avenue.

Action Strategies

- Annually monitor needed utility infrastructure with existing uses and planned development and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to project needs over at least a 5-year time period.
- The addition of sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails should be explored, including the potential for a riverside trail.
- Consider the potential for river access, outdoor recreation, and/or conservation of floodplain areas along the Shenandoah River.
- Ensure that infill development is accompanied with street improvements and compatible with existing residential uses.
- Support, encourage and/or promote projects that offer any of the following while also adequately addressing infrastructure needs: affordable housing, neotraditional design practices, low-impact best management practices.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Support, encourage and/or promote projects that offer redevelopment of existing properties that are under-developed or in disrepair.
- Implement traffic calming measures in existing residential areas to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as increasing access to more predominantly commercial corridors.
- Explore streetscape improvements for Royal Ave, including traffic calming, street trees, and stormwater management to "expand the fabric" of the Main Street area.



11. HAPPY CREEK

Area Description

The Happy Creek Planning Area consists of 679.8 acres. The planning area is generally located between Happy Creek and an unnamed stream that connects with Leach Run. The eastern boundary consists of Commerce Avenue, a railroad used by Norfolk Southern Railroad, and Happy Creek. The northern boundary is the railroad. At the planning area's eastern edge is an unnamed stream channel connecting with Leach Run; and to the south is John Marshall Highway.

Opportunities

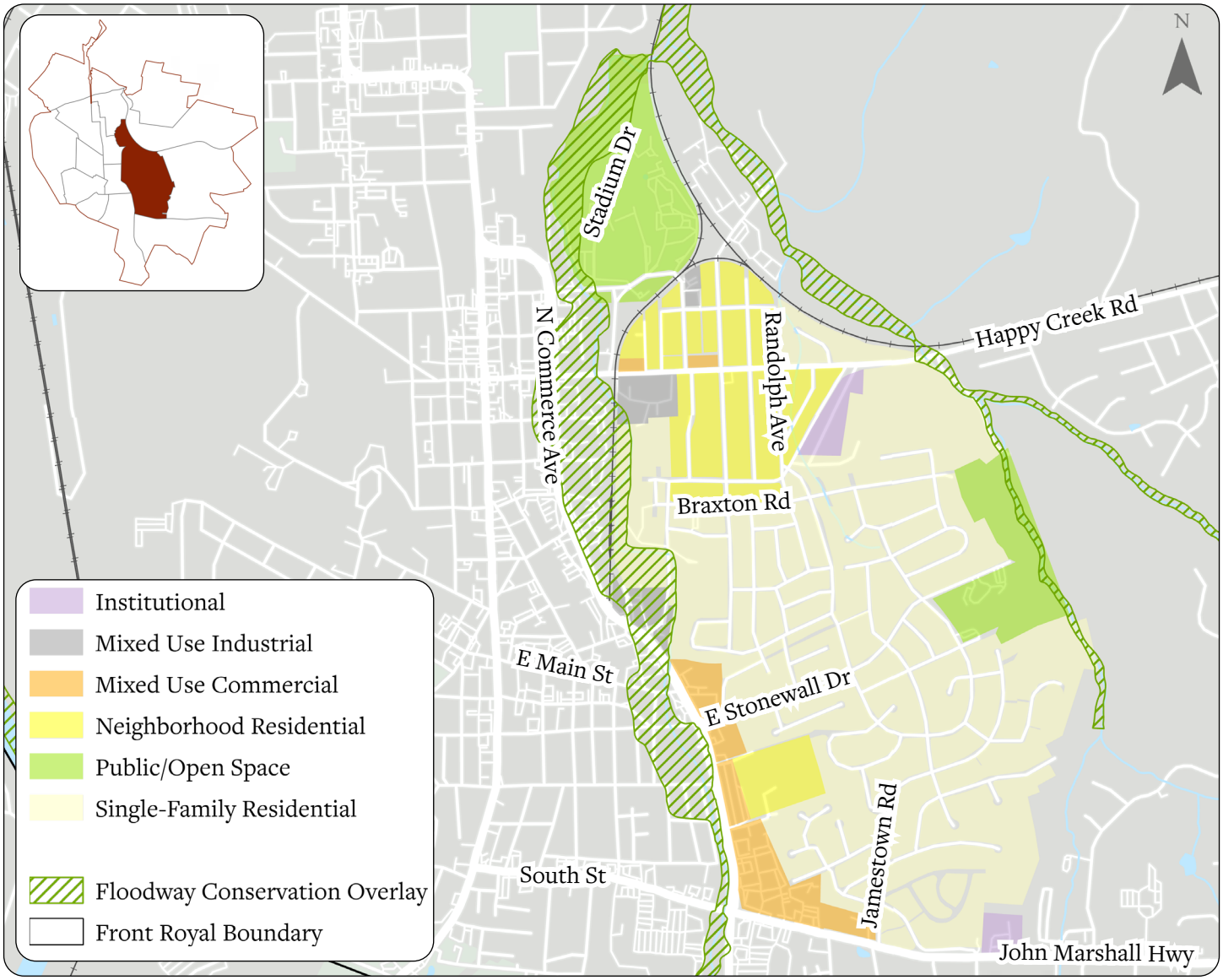
- Established single-family residential areas with relatively low traffic volumes on most local streets.
- Commercial properties located along John Marshall Highway and Commerce Avenue. Businesses along the two routes provide many services to the community and contribute to the Town's overall economic vitality.
- Happy Creek.
- Several undeveloped tracts of land.

Challenges

- Approximately 15.5% of area in flood plain areas (2008 Comp. Plan Amendment).
- Approximately 17.5% of area in steep slopes. (2008 Comp. Plan Amendment – slopes >25%).
- Few sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities.
- Large number of dead-end streets (cul-de-sacs).

Action Strategies

- Expand the Town's trail network to include a trail that connects Happy Creek Road with John Marshall Highway. Such a trail could follow Sycamore Lane and the unnamed stream channel to Leslie Fox Keyser Elementary School and extend to connect with sidewalks along Westminster Drive.
- Provide improved east/west mobility, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Support, encourage and/or promote projects that offer any of the following while also adequately addressing infrastructure needs: affordable housing, neotraditional design practices, low-impact best management practices.
- Support, encourage and/or promote projects that offer redevelopment of existing properties that are under-developed or in disrepair.
- Implement traffic calming measures in existing residential areas to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as increasing access to more predominantly commercial corridors.
- Coordinate with representatives of Warren Memorial Hospital to address concerns regarding vehicle speeds and safety overall.
- Ensure that development along Happy Creek addresses conservation areas.


N
Stadium Dr
N Commerce Ave
Randolph Ave
Happy Creek Rd
Braxton Rd
E Main St
E Stonewall Dr
Jamestown Rd
South St
John Marshall Hwy
Institutional
Mixed Use Industrial
Mixed Use Commercial
Neighborhood Residential
Public/Open Space
Single-Family Residential
Floodway Conservation Overlay
Front Royal Boundary

12. NORTH EAST

Area Description

The North East Planning Area consists of 865.5 acres. It is located north of the railroad used by Norfolk Southern Railroad. The southern boundary follows the railroad and Happy Creek Road. The planning area extends as far east as the Town boundary. The northern boundary extends to the Happy Creek Technology Park and the Marshall Planning Area (annexed in 2014). The western boundary extends to the Shenandoah River following the railroad.

Opportunities

- A large amount of mostly vacant land that has potential to meet future growth demand.
- An established business park (Happy Creek Technology Park).
- An undeveloped industrial park.
- Potential for rail access to industrial or residential users.
- Established private schools and organizations.
- Attractive view of nearby mountains.
- Leach Run Parkway.
- Opportunity for a variety of housing types.

Challenges

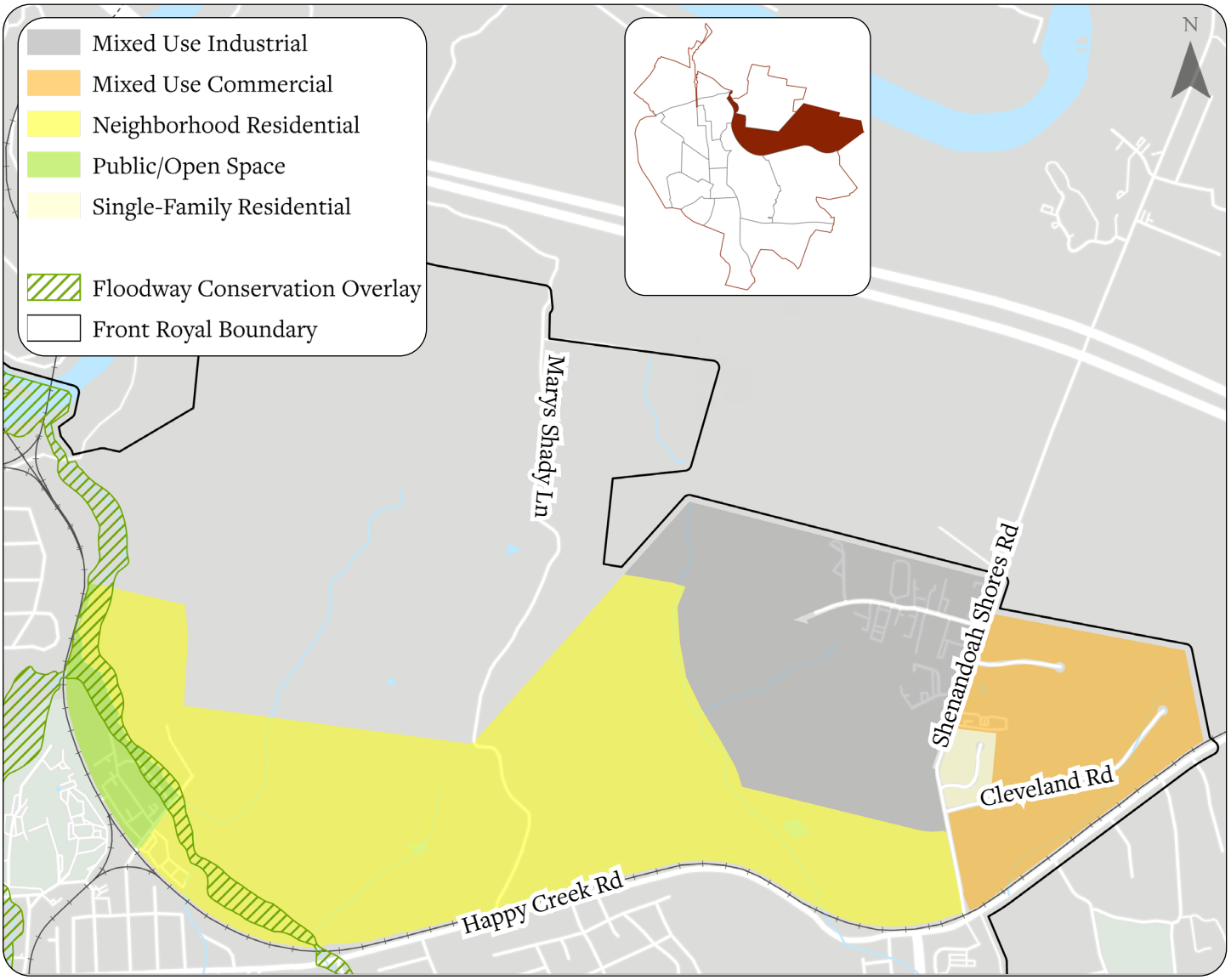
- Railroad is a barrier to road access, particularly for emergency access for residential uses.
- Need for significant utility and transportation infrastructure.
- Areas of moderately steep slopes.
- Progress Drive is currently a dead-end street with limited accessibility.

Action Strategies

- Encourage development of the Front Royal – Warren County Industrial Park with uses that generate jobs for the community. The site may be suitable for a certain campus-type development, such as, but not limited to, an educational campus or corporate office.
- Support additional development of the Happy Creek Technology Park with a mixture of business uses that are compatible with existing uses.
- Plan for extension of Progress Drive so that it will connect with future transportation infrastructure, and consider improvements to Progress Drive, such as lighting, pedestrian accommodations, and bicycle lanes.
- Encourage planned development so future uses are compatible with surrounding uses. Future rezoning applications should give consideration to design and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Consider areas for annexation potential in the long-term as transportation infrastructure improves.
- Consider an interstate interchange at or near Shenandoah Shores Road in the long-term to promote more demand for commercial and industrial uses.

Action Strategies (Cont.)

- Appropriately phase new residential development so that it occurs as future transportation and utility infrastructure is addressed.
- Ensure that future development contributes fairly towards necessary infrastructure and impacts of development on the community. Continue to partner with Warren County to identify impacts to schools, fire and rescue services, and parks and recreation.
- Consider locations and policies to support the establishment of future commuter transportation facilities, such as, but not limited to, a train station, bus stations, and commuter parking facilities.
- Consider commuter transportation facilities in the planning area to accommodate commuters. There is potential to establish both bus, rail and park-and-ride facilities.



13. LEACH RUN

Area Description

The Leach Run Planning Area consists of 1022.1 acres. This planning area includes Leach Run Parkway and the properties that abut the roadway. The eastern boundary is the Town/County boundary line. The northern boundary is Happy Creek Road. The western boundary includes Sycamore Lane and approximately Leach Run and Westminster Drive. To the south is John Marshall Highway.

Opportunities

- Consolidation of public school facilities, a major civic group, and churches that serve vital educational, recreational and religious functions for residents of nearby residential areas.
- A significant amount of land exists within the planning area that has the potential to meet future development needs.
- A recently completed new collector road with pedestrian and bicycle amenities (Leach Run Parkway).
- Recent addition of a new water line that follows Leach Run Parkway.
- Town-owned property that can be used for a future trail network.
- Existing single-family housing that is relatively new and in high demand.
- Quality affordable housing apartments.
- A new hospital with inpatient and outpatient care, and the potential for additional medical support services.

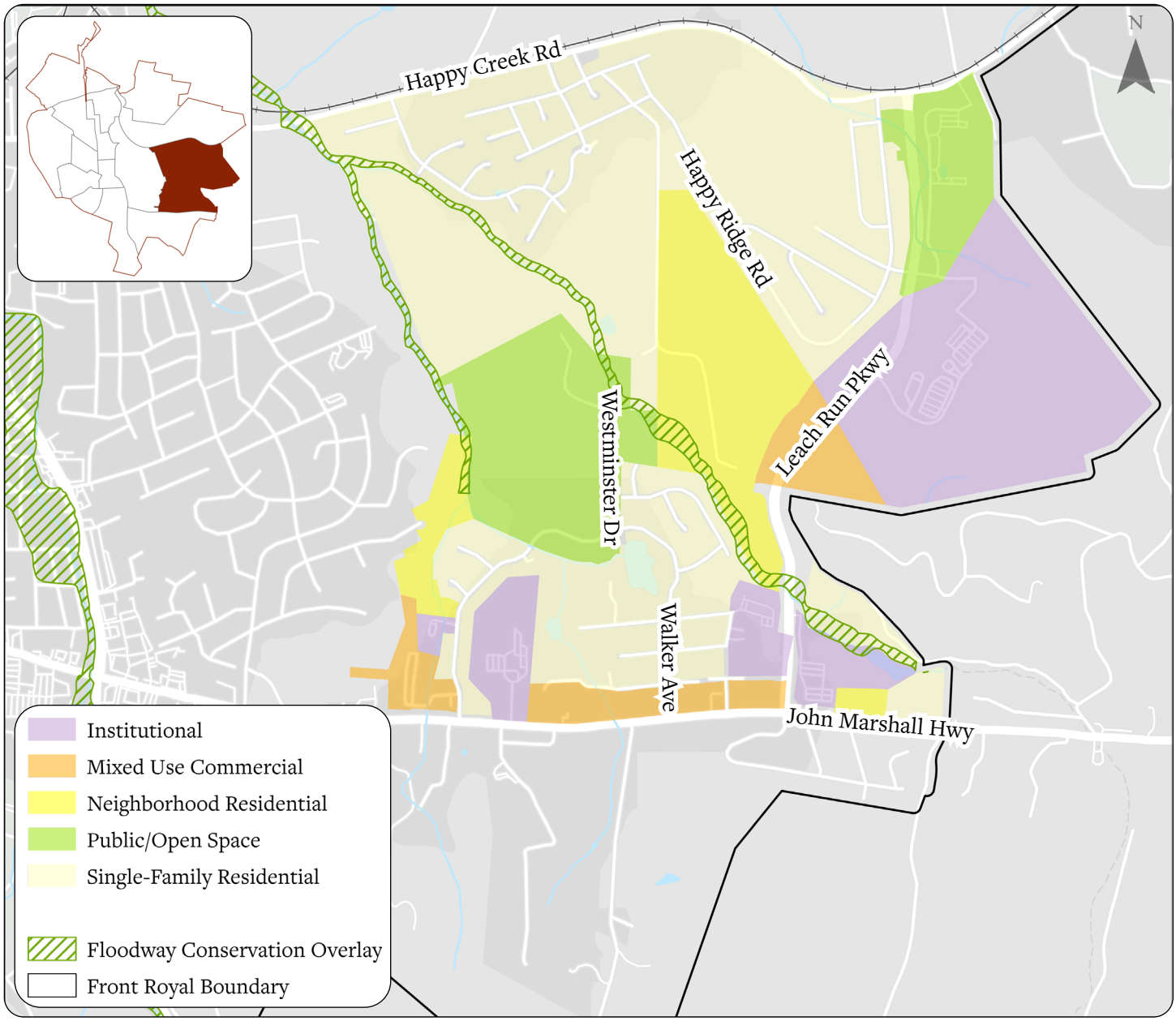
Challenges

- Lack of an integrated road network, particularly to the public schools at the end of Westminster Drive.
- Maintaining woodland areas when new development occurs.
- Inefficient stormwater facilities in the area around Mt. View Subdivision.
- Floodplain areas.

Action Strategies

- Gradually improve the stormwater facilities where inadequate to reduce maintenance costs and decrease damage caused by flooding.
- Maintain floodplains in their natural state where possible.
- Promote commercial redevelopment of the block located between S. Lake Avenue and Leach Run Parkway.
- Promote multifamily housing along John Marshall Highway where feasible, and ensure that adequate transportation facilities exist to accommodate additional traffic.
- Construct an underground electric distribution line along Leach Run Parkway Happy between John Marshall Highway and Happy Creek Road.
- Require future subdivision design that connects local streets with existing subdivision streets to create a more cohesive road network.
- Ensure that future development is inclusive of pedestrian and recreational facilities, such as play areas or other amenities.
- Avoid clear-cutting trees for new development and encourage the use of designated tree preservation areas.

- Expand the Town's trail network to include a trail that connects Happy Creek Road with John Marshall Highway. Such a trail could follow Sycamore Lane and the unnamed stream channel to Leslie Fox Keyser Elementary School and extend to connect with sidewalks along Westminster Drive.



14. SOUTH EAST

Area Description

The South East Planning Area consists of 543.8 acres. The planning area boundary begins in the east at the Town/county boundary near Heritage Subdivision and the intersection with Leach Run Parkway. The southern boundary follows the Town/County boundary line until reaching Remount Road (Route 522) at the western extent of the planning area. The northern boundary is John Marshall Highway.

Opportunities

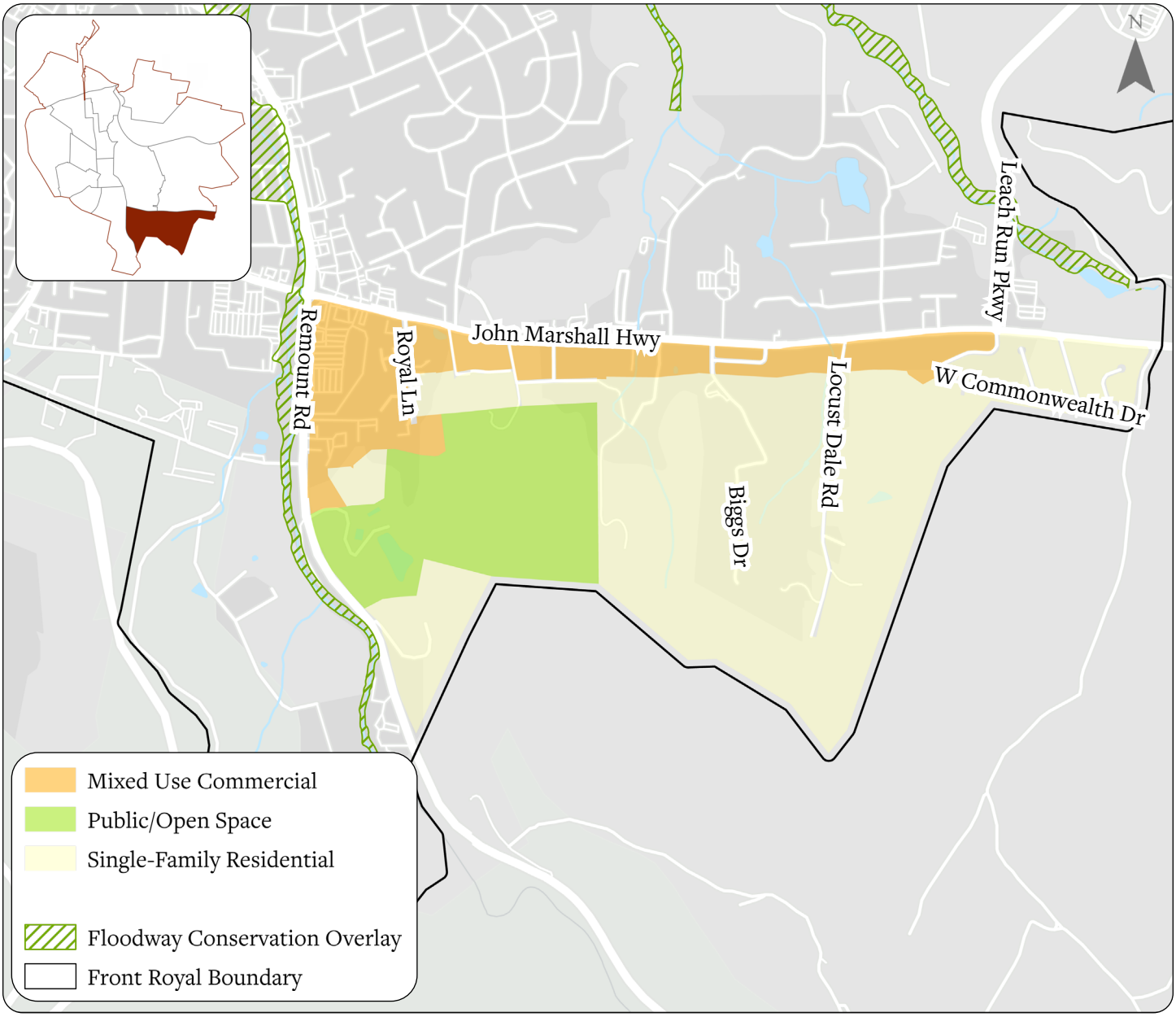
- Major arterial streets.
- Views of woodland hillsides.
- Contains a concentrated commercial development focused around the intersection of John Marshall Highway and Remount Road.

Challenges

- Steep slopes and hills that will cause significant erosion and other development challenges if developed.
- Vacant land is not generally suitable for development.
- Several major private streets have limited Town services.

Action Strategies

- Increase new commercial development along Remount Road, south of Gateway Plaza.
- Limit new development in areas of steep slopes to single family dwellings on existing lots.
- Where possible, seek to connect existing local streets.
- Support redevelopment and new development of multi-family development.
- Consider the feasibility of extending public water and sewer services to lots currently located on private streets.
- Enhance wayfinding and directional signage.
- Landscaping enhancement and preservation of wooded areas is recommended for new development activities and redevelopment of existing sites.
- Allow mixed-use development in commercial areas, such as residential units on the upper level of buildings. Encourage redevelopment of commercial areas.
- Evaluate how to work with property owners and add landscaping and/or stormwater retention facilities within large parking lots, such as, but not limited to, the parking lots of Gateway Plaza.
- Add a crosswalk/pedestrian infrastructure at the intersection of East Criser Road and Remount Drive.
- Pursue bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as well as additional transit service, to ease car congestion on John Marshall Highway. Collaborate with VDOT on roadway modifications for the corridor, as appropriate.


N
Leach Run Pkwy
John Marshall Hwy
Remount Rd
Royal Ln
Locust Dale Rd
W Commonwealth Dr
Biggs Dr
Mixed Use Commercial
Public/Open Space
Single-Family Residential
Floodway Conservation Overlay
Front Royal Boundary

15. MARSHALL

Area Description

The North East Planning Area consists of 604.8 acres. The property extends north to I-66 and follows existing property lines eastward to the current limits of Happy Creek Technology Park. The southern boundary abuts the Town property where the solar field, Department of Energy Services Office Building, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant are located.

Opportunities

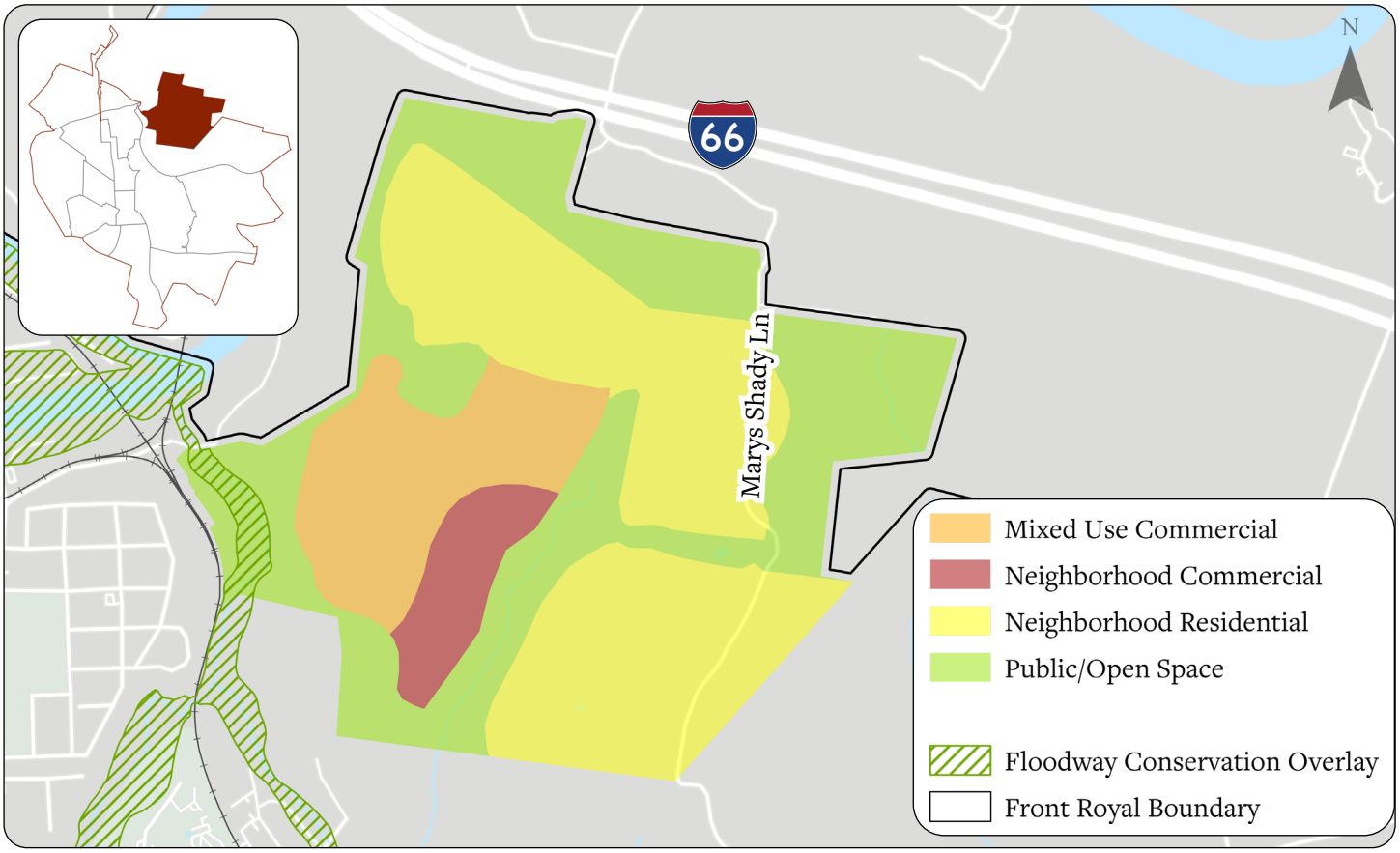
- A blank slate for designing a new community within the Town.
- A large amount of land that has potential to meet future growth demand.
- Potential for rail access to industrial or residential users.
- Attractive view of nearby mountains.
- An opportunity to provide greater housing variety to increase local housing options and to support a more robust labor force for high quality jobs.

Challenges

- Marys Shady Lane is a private road that traverses the site and is used by nearly 100 residential addresses outside of the Town limits to the north of the Marshall Planning Area.
- Railroad is a barrier to road access, particularly for emergency access to residential uses.
- Need for significant utility and transportation infrastructure.
- Areas of moderately steep slopes.
- Sinkholes are visible on the landscape.

Action Strategies

- Require that future development is designed to improve the lives of future residents by providing excellent pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and a road network that is well connected and integrated with the Town's existing road network.
- Ensure that environmental conservation, stormwater management, and recreational needs are adequately provided in future development proposals.
- Appropriately phase new development so that it occurs as future transportation and utility infrastructure is addressed.
- Protect the integrity and existence of the future Marshall Cemetery.
- Ensure that future development contributes fairly towards necessary infrastructure and impacts of development on the community. Continue to partner with Warren County to identify impacts to schools, fire and rescue services, and parks and recreation.
- Consider rail access if the opportunity arises in the future.



The property of the Marshall Planning Area is owned by the same property owner, Front Royal Limited Partnership (FRLP). FRLP submitted a citizen-initiated annexation petition in 2012. After extensive deliberations between the Town, County, and State, as well as numerous public hearings, the property was ultimately approved for annexation in 2014. In 2016 the Town adopted a Comprehensive Plan update to include a Future Land Use Plan of FRLP's property.

The annexation was approved with a settlement agreement that included terms related to future development. This included a minimum dwelling square footage for future single-family dwellings, minimum cash proffers, and a maximum number of market rate dwellings that can be developed there in the future. Regardless of these limitations imposed by Warren County, the property has the potential to accommodate future residential growth of at least 818 market rate dwellings. This would be in the addition to any other uses that the Town may approve, such as age-restricted or affordable housing and potentially an area of neighborhood commercial land uses.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following pages show the Plan's Goals, Objectives, and Strategies with the implementation date and the parties responsible for implementing them. Many tasks will be implemented in shared efforts between Town staff, Planning Commission, and Town Council. Others will involve the Front Royal Economic Development Authority, the Board of Architectural Review, local business owners, property owners, and developers.

The matrix uses the following abbreviations:

Town Council: TC
Planning Commission: PC
Planning and Zoning staff: P&Z staff
Board of Architectural Review: BAR
Front Royal Economic Development Authority: FREDA

Small Town Character

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Historic Preservation: Front Royal has a wealth of historic buildings but many are in a state of disrepair. When restored, these buildings can be a beautiful entrance to the town and downtown.		
Continue to maintain standards for, and encourage, historic preservation of buildings throughout the Town. Review and amend Historic District Guidelines for consistency and clarity.	Year one, ongoing	BAR, P&Z staff
Restore and encourage the development of attractive buildings in town and entering town.	Ongoing	BAR, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Expand the historic district to include Riverton Historic area.	Year one	BAR, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
The Town will pursue working with the State to become a Certified Local Government, this would allow the Town to receive funding for historic preservation efforts.	Year one	BAR, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Downtown Revitalization: A vibrant downtown is active day and night. Front Royal can increase evening activity through more music events and venues, educational and cultural events, attractive and diverse restaurants, safe and well-lit streets, and more festivals.		
Pursue the development of a community building downtown for dances or gatherings following the Gazebo Gatherings.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise	FREDA, TC, or other entity
Explore making Main Street a pedestrian mall or shared street and enhancing downtown parking.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Expand the Main Street parking exemption to include portions of Chester St.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Encourage new housing development in the downtown area with an emphasis on more owner-occupied units.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Establish a Buy Local campaign that encourages residents to shop at locally owned restaurants and stores.	Year one	FREDA, local business owners

Small Town Character (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Downtown Revitalization (Continued)		
Recruit, attract, and support more local restaurants with diverse cuisines.	Ongoing	FREDA
Attract a grocery store to the downtown area and/or on the north side of town.	Ongoing	FREDA
Encourage businesses to remain open after 5:00 PM.	Ongoing	FREDA
The Town will pursue working with the State to become a Certified Local Government, this would allow the Town to receive funding for historic preservation efforts.	Year one	BAR, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Clean & Attractive		
Encourage community participation and volunteerism by creating and advertising events that work to beautify and improve quality of life in Town, such as litter removal or other public projects that could use help. Promote more community use projects that connect residents, such as community gardens and adult education programs.	Ongoing	FREDA, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Involve high school students in Town and County community development projects.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Initiate a program to organize volunteers that will help senior citizens with home maintenance and repairs.	Ongoing	FREDA, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Enforce prohibitions on the use of flashing signs and flags, work with property owners to consolidate their signage to conform to Town regulations.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change), P&Z staff, ongoing enforcement
Ensure vigorous code enforcement, especially for rental units and structures near natural resources.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Launch a “Clean Up Our Town” program to organize volunteer help.	Ongoing	FREDA

Small Town Character (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Arts, Culture, & Entertainment		
Develop more events for children and families, such as parades and festivals.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Organize holiday walking tours of historic homes.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Coordinate with local festival and event planners and encourage the creation of new events to ensure that the entire year has something to celebrate in Front Royal. Continue to update and maintain a calendar that promotes local events.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Identify and encourage new types of service-based or entertainment-based events that Front Royal may not have hosted before. These could take place in areas away from the downtown to help "activate" them.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Promote and maintain a seasonal farmers' market.	Ongoing	FR Special Events, P&Z staff
Promote local artists in the community's work through implementing public art, creating a public art market, or other arts related events.	Ongoing	FR Special Events, P&Z staff
Continue to seek funding opportunities for muralists to showcase their work on facades throughout Front Royal, including other areas of Town outside the downtown.	Ongoing	FR Special Events, P&Z staff
Promote local musicians in the community by studying the available events and practice spaces. Include local musicians from a variety of styles in event planning.	Ongoing	FR Special Events

High Quality Development (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Traditional Neighborhood Development (Continued)		
Ensure that required landscaping is maintained from planting to maturity, replacing dead vegetation when necessary.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Set design standards that encourage walkable development. The Town and County can accomplish this action in the near term through zoning and development codes.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Placemaking: Placemaking refers to the practice of implementing new uses, such as activities or seating areas in a previously inactive space to increase the "sense of place." This increases community connections to its specific geographic location, rather than being "placeless" or indistinguishable from other places. New development can consider ways to add to placemaking by considering how their development interacts with the streetscape and public realm.		
Utilize placemaking strategies to build many different activities and reasons to be within places throughout the Town, placemaking can include design interventions or event programming to "transform" a space into a different temporary use.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC, FR Special Events staff
Encourage or require new development to implement public or semi-public amenities that enhance the public realm.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Implement unified wayfinding signage across the entire Town at the pedestrian scale, including areas outside of the downtown.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC

Tourism

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Tourism: Tourism is another important element of Front Royal's economy. Increasing awareness, lodging and visitor's services will help sustain and grow the Town's tourism industry.		
Develop a Tourism Master Plan.	As needed	P&Z staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Utilize social media to raise awareness about events in Front Royal.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Develop a consistent message and brand for Front Royal. For example, "Base Camp for Shenandoah" or "Canoe Capital of Virginia". The Town and County may take the lead with support from local businesses that stand to benefit.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff in collaboration with local businesses
Market the Town's Civil War history. The Warren Historic Society are knowledgeable and can assist in this effort.	Ongoing	Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Identify a revenue source for marketing and tourism promotion efforts.	Ongoing	FR Special Events staff
Provide clean, usable restrooms for visitors in the Town's public spaces.	As opportunity/funding is available	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Market a Skyline Drive/Shenandoah Valley Scenic Byway. Partner in the branding with National Park Service.	Ongoing	Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Develop a unique festival closely linked to the community's brand. This can help the town "get on the map."	Ongoing	Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Launch a year-round market downtown for farm products and crafts in a permanent space.	As opportunity/funding is available	P&Z staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Encourage development of a hotel or other accommodation space in the downtown area.	As opportunity is available	

Tourism (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Eco-Tourism: Environmentally based tourism is a strong asset that Front Royal can leverage in its effort to attract visitors. Whether to see the changing leaves, paddle along the Shenandoah, or enjoy a hike, many visitors already come to the area for the great access to nature. These strategies can assist the Town in growing this sector further.		
Host more events, such as long-distance running and bike races. For example, the Town could host a triathlon with biking on Route 522, running in Town, and canoing on the River. The Appalachian Trail Committee and a local outdoor retailer could take the lead on this event in the mid term, once construction of multi-use path on Route 522 is complete.	Ongoing	Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Market the Town's sustainability efforts as part of its overall "green tourism" strategy and "gateway to the outdoors" branding alongside implementation of sustainability projects.	Ongoing	Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Develop a hostel for international travelers, young travelers, and Appalachian Trail hikers.	As opportunity/funding is available	Local trail community with support from Town
Plan for a shelter at the trailhead of the Appalachian Trail in town. Encourage development of a hotel or other accommodation space in the downtown area.	As opportunity/funding is available	P&Z staff, PC, and TC in collaboration with tourism and AT

Economic Sustainability

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Economic Sustainability: Adding professional jobs in Front Royal will support a strong economy by retaining young adults that leave in search of jobs, providing local employment options for people currently commuting to the Washington metropolitan area on Interstate 66, and increasing local spending.		
Encourage and incentivize the redevelopment of the Avtex site into a productive use with jobs in clean energy, research and development, commercial uses or light industry.	As opportunity/funding is available	P&Z staff, PC, TC, in collaboration with developers
Identify target sectors in an economic development plan, identify infrastructure needs that will support these sectors, and market Front Royal to them.	Year one	FREDA, P&Z staff, PC, and TC
Create a vibrant arts and music scene and build new outdoor amenities to make Town attractive to new businesses and their employees.	Ongoing	FREDA, Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Start a dialogue and conduct interviews with existing businesses about how to grow the local economy.	Ongoing	FREDA
Explore slowing speed limits around the downtown area to allow for comfort and safety, as well as increasing the likelihood patrons will stop and shop.	Year one	P&Z, Public Works, Police Department staff
Attract businesses that support uses that are limited in Town, such as clothing stores or other shops that are not presently found in the market.	Ongoing	FREDA, P&Z staff
Review and update local zoning regulations to ensure areas such as the downtown are able to foster a vibrant nightlife.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Study the feasibility of a Town-sponsored “business incubator” space.	As opportunity/funding is available	FREDA, P&Z staff
Encourage local businesses to facilitate apprenticeships to build community ties and share business acumen.	Ongoing	FREDA

Economic Sustainability (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Economic Sustainability (Continued)		
Partner with local educational and vocational resources to provide for a skilled labor force.	Ongoing	FREDA
Continue marketing and branding efforts around Front Royal as a "gateway to the outdoors."	Ongoing	FREDA, Special Events staff in collaboration with Front Royal and Warren County tourism
Regional coordination of Economic Development Activities: Actively work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation, Warren County, Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation, Norfolk Southern Corporation, and other entities to establish the Town as a regional transportation hub.		
Continue to support the growth of the Inland Port as it relates to the Town.	Ongoing	PC, TC, FREDA
Utilize the Comprehensive Plan to support and align decision making with Economic Development projects.	Ongoing	PC, TC, FREDA, all Town staff

Transportation

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Policy & Ordinance:		
Review and update the Road Improvement Plan and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Plan at least every five years once adopted.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Prioritize the Bicycle Improvement Plan and Road Improvement Plan on an annual basis when updating the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Improve methods of prioritizing transportation projects to ensure that available public funds are used efficiently.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
The Planning & Zoning Department should work with Warren County examine and update the Construction Standards & Specifications manual to better incorporate the other goals of this section and updates to Chapter 148 of the Town Code.	Year one	P&Z staff
Identify sources of funding other than local tax revenue, including grants, private donations, public/private partnerships, and potential new operational revenue. Train Town staff and work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) so that grant applications are properly prepared to increase the likelihood of approval.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Require design features on roadways that improve the safety and comfort level of all users, including street trees, buffers between bicycle lanes and sidewalks from the automobile lanes, landscaped medians, street furniture and sidewalks that improve the safety and comfort level of all users.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Reduce local traffic congestion by reducing local vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and coordinate with Land Use strategies to plan and implement comfortable, accessible, and convenient multi-modal transportation options.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC

Transportation (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Policy & Ordinance (Continued)		
Review off-street parking requirements and amend or update to change to a "maximum parking" limit.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Encourage and implement shared parking agreements between local property owners.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Integrate innovative and sustainable stormwater infrastructure within the Town's streets.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Share knowledge of policies and strategies with partnering organizations to develop green infrastructure alternatives as an integral part of the development process.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Continue performing regular maintenance on existing transportation facilities while noting opportunities to improve or identifying new projects.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Study the town's one-way streets, with special attention to streets where drivers travel in the wrong direction.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Street lighting should be dark-sky compliant and direct light downwards, shielding it from the sky.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Multi-modal network: Prioritize increasing the number of pedestrian and bicyclists in Town.		
Seek to expand and anticipate traffic calming measures throughout the Town in collaboration with neighborhood residents and as part of the development process.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Consistently apply Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards to facility design and ensure that accessible curb ramps exist at all pedestrian crossings where possible.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Continue to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodation in conjunction with the planning and design of new public or private road projects.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff

Transportation (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Multi-modal network (Continued)		
Explore and implement safe, convenient, and visually attractive crossing alternatives to enable pedestrians and bicyclists to cross collector and arterial streets.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Evaluate street parking needs for new development projects and consider the implementation of narrower streets where street parking is determined to be unnecessary.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Require bicycle parking at public facilities and explore opportunities to provide or promote bicycle parking across Town to support local businesses.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Downtown Parking Study.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Consider locations for future consolidated structured public parking facilities.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Continue to support park-and-ride lots and ride-sharing programs.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Evaluate the potential to convert E. Main Street to a pedestrian and bicycle street or limiting car access at certain times of day.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Create a River walk along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River between points on the southern and northern ends of Town.	Year one, or as funding becomes available	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Build sidewalks on residential streets where they are lacking.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Build a safe walking path on Criser Road. The Town may take the lead on this project with assistance and cooperation from the National Park Service, which abuts the road.	Year one, or as funding becomes available	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC

Transportation (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Multi-modal network (Continued)		
Build a shared use path from Front Royal to the Appalachian Trail (a prominent hiking trail) via Route 522 to strengthen the bicycle and pedestrian connection to Shenandoah National Park and improve conditions for through-hikers that want to spend time in town. The Town and County governments may collaborate with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to build the path in the near term.	As opportunity/funding is available	P&Z and Public Wokds staff, PC, TC
Add bike parking downtown and at shopping centers. The Town can implement this action through an ordinance and collaboration with businesses through an adopt-a-rack program.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Explore opportunities to add a trail or pathway connecting the Appalachian Trail to the Town's multi-use trail network, potentially on the west side of Happy Creek.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Allow bicycles on greenway trail with simple paint markings outlining separate travel lanes for cyclists and pedestrians.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Explore feasibility of adding greenways along all creeks	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Build a system of greenways in town extending out along major corridors and connecting destinations	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Work to install marked pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Add pedestrian signals at all intersections in Front Royal.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Explore infrastructure improvements along bicycle and pedestrian routes, including lighting, hydration stations, bicycle work stands, and signage.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC

Transportation (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Multi-modal network (Continued)		
Improve access to the water and sidewalk / bicycle lane connections to the boat launch.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Utilize appropriate infrastructure to separate bicycle paths from car traffic, depending on the traffic speed and volume on the road.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Public Transportation: Continue to maintain and expand transit services offered by Royal Trolley. Coordinate with Warren County and other public transportation service providers to maximize transit services that are available to Town citizens.		
Ensure that printed schedules are available at key transit stops.	Ongoing	VA Regional Transit
Extend Virginia Railway Express commuter rail service to Front Royal in the long term (35 years plan).	As opportunity/funding is available	Virginia Railway Express, with Town support
Add a regional bus connector to the Washington metropolitan area.	As opportunity/funding is available	Bus service, with Town support
Require new development to be potentially accessible by public transit in the future, such as locating space for bus shelters.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Review transit stops to ensure that are connected with accessible sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes. Add shelters and lighting at stops and maintain them with unified signage and shelter design.	Year one, ongoing	VA Regional Transit and P&Z staff
Work with Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and the Virginia Department of Transportation to collect data regarding regional travel patterns, car traffic counts, bicycle and pedestrian counts, et cetera.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Explore the future demand and feasibility for passenger rail service for the Town and region.	Ongoing	P&Z staff in collaboration with NSVRC, DRPT, and other state partners

Transportation (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Public Transportation (Continued)		
Coordinate with Virginia Regional Transit to explore additional transit shelters, higher frequency routes, and additional connections. Support these efforts with local staff and funding, as available and appropriate.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Limit truck through traffic to main routes, restrict their movement into residential neighborhoods.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Explore creating an advertising campaign to promote taking public transit, bicycling, or walking to destinations that communicates the benefit of what individual action does for the community.		VA Regional Transit, in collaboration with Front Royal staff
Parking: Study and address parking issues throughout the downtown area.		
Re-introduce enforcement of the parking time limits in the downtown area to allow for more turnover of spaces.	Year one	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Assess the feasibility of paid parking for the downtown area as a way to ensure turnover of spaces.	Year one	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC
Plan for the location of a future public structured parking facility. This could be combined with other amenities, such as a rooftop viewing platform or playground.	Ongoing	P&Z and Public Works staff, PC, TC

Responsive & Accountable Governance

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
The Town shall take a fiscally conservative stance to ensure its long-term fiscal strategies and plans support identified capital projects and needs.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
The Town's staff will be accessible and responsive to the public.	Ongoing	All Town staff
The Town's decision-making process will be open and transparent.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
High levels of public participation are encouraged in public board and commission meetings	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
The Town will strive to cooperate with local and regional government partners.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
The Comprehensive Plan will be consulted along with other guiding documents as the primary basis for decision-making regarding land use and transportation.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
The Comprehensive Plan will be updated or reviewed every five years, per the Code of Virginia.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Consistent engagement with the community shall be maintained via town halls or surveys on resident satisfaction.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
Allow citizens to test "pilot projects" for ideas on how to improve the Town	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff, in collaboration with and support of citizens
Ensure that all voices are heard in the community when surveyed.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff
Ensure that revenues adequately support current and future service and infrastructure needs.	Ongoing	TC, PC, and all Town staff
Support funding for increasing the number of staff available for code enforcement.	Ongoing	TC, PC, and P&Z staff
Upgrade the Town's fleet when feasible to electric vehicles, allow for electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Town.	As opportunity/funding is available	TC, all Town staff

Reliable Utilities & Services

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Reliable Utilities & Services: Utility systems such as water and sewer will be continually modernized to meet local needs.		
Improve energy efficiency in all town buildings and structures. The Town's Electrical Services Department can take the lead on this action in the near term.	Ongoing	TC, Energy Services staff
Promote and facilitate high speed internet access for all residents.	Ongoing	Private providers, with Town support
Explore the provision of Town-wide public wireless internet (wifi) service or in parks.	Year one, ongoing	TC
Improve cellular service throughout the Town through co-located cellular towers or other facilities.	Ongoing	Private providers, with Town support
Street lighting should be dark-sky compliant and direct light downwards, shielding it from the sky.	Ongoing	DPW, P&Z
Ensure the efficient delivery of services and utilities through increasing density rather than allowing sprawl development. Carefully plan towards future needs.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z, Energy Services staff
The Town's water quality will be continually safe and reliable as a result of the high standards of Front Royal's Public Works.	Ongoing	Public Works staff
Communicate across governmental agencies to find efficiencies or innovation where possible.	Ongoing	TC, PC, all Town staff, all Town boards
Town roadways and trails will be well maintained and safe.	Ongoing	Public Works staff, VDOT
The Town's Department of Energy Services will continue to secure reliable power for the community.	Ongoing	Energy Services staff
Continue communicating and educating the public how the Town's services are provided.	Ongoing	Public Works, Energy Services staff

Reliable Utilities & Services (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Reliable Utilities & Services (Continued)		
The Town will ensure that services are provided equitably throughout the entire Town.	Ongoing	TC, Public Works staff
The Town will pursue opportunities in coordination with Warren County to increase the amount and quality of parks, recreation facilities, and programs.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Public Health & Safety

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Public Health & Safety: Front Royal's residents value safety and family-friendly programs. Safety can be improved through better street design that slows traffic and makes walking and biking more attractive, and through actions to reduce drug use and drug-related crime.		
Increase youth sports, arts, and service programs. Encourage all ages event programming to promote community health.	Ongoing	Warren County Parks and Recreation, FR Special Events staff
Emphasize drug law enforcement and support programs to reduce drug use.	Ongoing	Police Department, other agencies as appropriate
Explore the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in creating Town Design Guidelines and Design Standards. CPTED provides researched examples of how buildings can be designed to prevent crime through avoiding entrapment areas or allowing for greater visibility.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Improve lighting around town and on major corridors into Town.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Establish a program to improve relationships between police officers and citizens, coffee with a cop is good example.	Ongoing	Police Department
Invest in improving the schools and retaining good teachers.	Ongoing	Warren County Public Schools
Address problems caused by aggressive dogs and nuisance animals.	Ongoing	Warren County Sheriff's Office - Animal Control
Work with the County to facilitate the addition of outdoor exercise equipment at local parks to improve community health.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Map and ensure all areas of the Town have quick access to fresh locally sourced food by mapping proximity of residential areas to grocery options.	Ongoing	P&Z staff
Create a program for the implementation of "Victory Gardens," that can help supply local food banks.	Ongoing	P&Z staff

Public Health & Safety (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Public Health & Safety (Continued)		
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that physical and mental healthcare services are permitted by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Ensure that physical and mental healthcare services are easily accessible by multi-modal transportation.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z and Public Works staff, VDOT
Amend Zoning Ordinance to permit methadone clinics and other support resources for those suffering from addiction by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Town Council should fund Code enforcement division to ensure vigorous code enforcement is able to protect residents from unsafe living conditions.	Ongoing	TC, P&Z staff
Coordinate with public schools and develop a Safe Route to School Travel Plan for every public school in the Town.	Ongoing	TC
Take part in FEMA Community Rating System Program to help residents in the Town's floodplains.	Ongoing	TC

Affordable Housing

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Affordable Housing: A wide range of housing options contributes to Front Royal's vision as a lifelong community where people of all ages and stages in life can meet their housing needs. The options should include a wide range of housing types from single-family homes to apartments above downtown stores.		
Monitor the mix of available housing types in Town to ensure that the stock remains varied and diverse for different housing needs.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Implement and continue research on methods for increasing the amount of affordable workforce housing.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Support housing where it exists with services and other amenities equitably throughout the Town.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z and Public Works staff
Amend appropriate Zoning Districts to allow for development of multi-family buildings.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Ensure that all housing is supported locally by a mix of neighborhood commercial uses.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Allow for the development of Accessory Dwelling Units, additional dwelling units on any given parcel that are "accessory" to the principal use of another residency. An example of this would be a carriage house or in-law suite.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
In accordance with the Code of Virginia Sec. 15.2-2223.5, ensure that manufactured homes remain a source of affordable housing by preserving existing manufactured housing communities or providing for the creation of new manufactured home communities.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Preserve and maintain historic residential architecture.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff, BAR
Enforce maintenance standards for rental properties.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff, BAR
Promote new housing types that are attractive to seniors, making it possible for them to age in place rather than leaving Front Royal.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Affordable Housing (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Affordable Housing (Continued)		
Encourage development of age restricted communities, especially near Town Trolley stops.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff, VA Regional Transit
Encourage the return of old houses from business use to housing use.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Increase single-family housing in the greater downtown area.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage energy efficient rental housing development.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage construction of more affordable apartments.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Environmental Sustainability

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Water Quality: A clean Shenandoah River supports healthy people, fish, and wildlife and outdoor recreation. The Town can clean the river through cooperation with other towns, the state, and residents. Public education is also an important element.		
Update zoning to protect riparian buffers, promote permeable pavements, and other strategies that protect rivers. The Town and County can make these changes in collaboration with upstream communities.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Work with surrounding communities to limit pollution runoff into the River from stormwater and agriculture into the River.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z and Public Works staff
Recruit groups that promote clean rivers, such as the Potomac Watershed Alliance, to locate in Front Royal.	Ongoing	FREDA
Invite scientists involved in clean water to hold conferences in Front Royal.	Ongoing	Special Events staff
Explore implementing permeable pavement for public parking lots and other public facilities, encourage or amend Design Standards to require less impervious surfaces.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be utilized to manage stormwater on newly developed sites.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff, developers
Bioswales, rain gardens, or other innovative techniques to trap and slow stormwater should be implemented throughout the Town to improve water quality and prevent flooding.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff, developers

Environmental Sustainability (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Protecting the Environment: Front Royal can act through a multitude of ways to protect its natural assets.		
Construct a second boat launch and exit, preferably near the VFW to allow for one-way trips through town.	As opportunity/funding is available	TC, PC, P&Z staff with VFW, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Shenandoah River Keepers.
Development should avoid steep slopes and other critical environmental features.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Clear-cutting trees should be avoided for new subdivisions, and areas where trees can be preserved should be clearly identified.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Preserve mature trees throughout the Town, collect data about the tree canopy cover and promote more plantings to grow and expand.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Study the sustainability of Town facilities and fleet, explore improvements where possible.	Year one	TC, Public Works staff
Support the work of organizations, such as the ESAC, to maintain the Tree City USA designation and the health of Front Royal's Trees.	Ongoing	TC, PC
Set minimum environmental standards for public buildings within the Town.	Ongoing	TC, Public Works staff
Require native and pollinator-friendly species in landscaping for all Town maintained projects.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Consider strategies to mitigate the urban heat island effect.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Remove regulatory barriers to installing rooftop solar panels on buildings. Explore installation of 2-way electric meters.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Ensure that development along Happy Creek and other environmentally sensitive areas addresses conservation easements and follows best practices to prevent and/or mitigate impacts.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Development Policies

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Protect environmentally sensitive areas, while efficiently co-locating density with diverse uses to connected, walkable, and central nodes.		
Encourage highly productive, efficient, diverse, and varied use of land.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage the clustering of uses to increase the amount of reasons people will venture to different areas of the Town.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage the development of new uses in large areas of singular use.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Develop small area plans for each of the future Land Use map's planning areas.	As opportunity/funding is available	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Amend and update the Zoning Ordinance to allow for mixed uses in more zoning districts and move away from traditional Euclidean zoning.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Ensure that use of the land avoids critical environmental assets, such as floodplains, riparian buffers, woodlands, steep slopes, viewsheds, wildlife corridors, endangered species habitats, and natural waterways or drainage channels.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Eliminate and reduce requirements for buffer yards and setbacks that increase the amount of distance between varying uses, except where needed to mitigate nuisances or in existing residential neighborhoods.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
"Activate" the grounds of public facilities with pop-up uses where possible.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Development Policies (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Allow and encourage remaining space on parcels to be used for auxiliary seating areas or other amenities that build shared value, particularly in the downtown area.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Allow for corner commercial mixed use buildings by conditional approval to support neighborhoods.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Study various "chains of activity" for how residents and visitors might spend an entire day in the Town to identify gaps for attraction of new land uses.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, FREDA
Review and update the language from all Zoning Districts and the Town's Design Standards to encourage walkable development.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Amend and reduce the requirement for a 12,000 square foot lot for an Accessory Dwelling Unit. Add language to allow for Accessory Commercial Units, particularly in areas such as downtown.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Create and implement Design Guidelines that promote architectural quality and enhance the community's walkability.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Ensure that the Zoning and Future Land Use Maps are aligned for desired development patterns.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage new residential subdivisions to utilize the Town's cluster Design Standards to preserve open space.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Discourage linear "strip" commercial development. Encourage and require higher standards for uses within the Entrance Corridor Overlay Districts.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Development Policies (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow age-restricted affordable housing in more areas, especially parts of the Town that are more walkable.	Year one	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Invite or incentivize landowners and developers to dedicate park space where land is suitable to meet identified recreational or open space needs for the community, particularly where land can create a through-trail connection.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Allow farm related uses in agricultural lands which are zoned for low density residential use. Allow limited agricultural uses that are more intensive than regular gardening, such as backyard chickens and gardens in residential areas, subject to permitting and performance standards.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage new industrial uses within approved industrial parks.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Future sites for industrial parks should be directly accessible to major thoroughfares for truck access. Industrial development should be reviewed and analyzed for slopes and soil suitability.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Development Policies (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Industrial sites should provide extensive buffering and screening to mitigate any impacts to residential areas.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
The Town will coordinate with Warren County as needed to plan for any industrial expansion and its burden on local infrastructure.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Encourage the development of existing commercial centers with residential development, public open spaces, public restrooms, and other amenities, particularly around South Street.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Support development on vacant properties or redevelopment of properties that have fallen into disrepair, especially along the Main Street corridor.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Plan for ways to activate and connect Front Royal's waterfront to the Town.	Year one, ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Continue implementing the recommendations of Envision Front Royal and Envision 2.0	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Viewsheds of the surrounding mountains or Shenandoah River should be utilized in site design. It is discouraged for any development to disrupt existing viewsheds of adjacent properties.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff
Data center development should be evaluated carefully to mitigate all impacts on adjacent properties including, but not limited to: noise, views, and stormwater runoff.	Ongoing	TC, PC, P&Z staff

Development Policies (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
As permissible by State Law, ensure that all new development projects that require rezoning approval are adequately evaluated to ensure that the proposed development pays for its fair and appropriate level of contribution for new infrastructure necessary for the new development and for impacts that the new development will have on public services, such as fire and rescue, schools, and law enforcement. For all new development that does not require rezoning, ensure that the development complies with the Town Code, including Chapter 175 (Zoning), 148 (Subdivision and Land Development), 156 (Urban Forestry), and any other applicable Town Code ordinances.	Ongoing, beginning immediately	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council
Update the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to reflect infrastructure investments where necessary.	Year one, ongoing	Public Works staff, Town Council
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit methadone clinics and other support resources for those suffering from drug addiction by right in commercial and mixed-use zoning districts to assist with drug addiction issues among residents.	Year one	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council

Development Policies (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Remove barriers to installing solar panels on residential, commercial, and institutional buildings.	Year one	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council
Study and pursue the reduction of the number of cars in the historic downtown area while increasing the number of pedestrian and bicyclists.	Year one	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council
Amend Subdivision Ordinance to require additional open space provisions and "clustering" of homes with smaller setbacks.	Year one	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council
Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for alternative commercial uses and accessory commercial uses in large single-family homes, as appropriate.	Year one	Planning and Zoning staff, Planning Commission, Town Council

High Quality Development

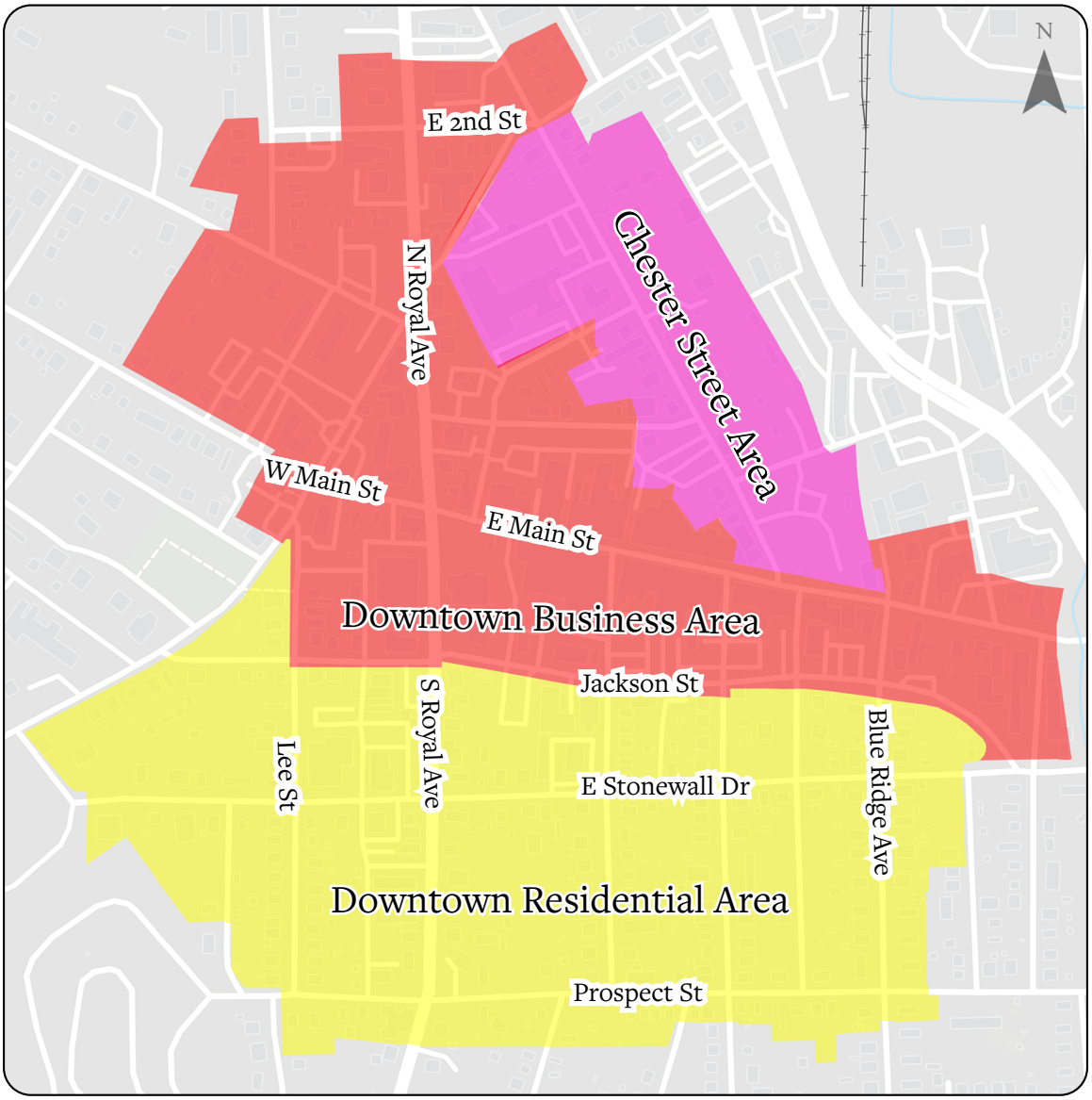
Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Improvement of Gateways: Attractive and beautiful entrance corridors send a message to visitors that Front Royal cares about community and takes good care of its assets. This is an important message for tourists, prospective employers, and employees. It also contributes to community pride among existing residents. Possible supporting actions or ideas include:		
Encourage the retrofitting/redevelopment of older motels along the northern entrance to Town.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Prioritize improvement to the gateways from North Front Royal and the National Park (Route 340 and Route 522 and John Marshall Highway.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Extend the Entrance Corridor Overlay District to include John Marshall Hwy and South Street.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Increase the number of street trees in the entrance corridors.	Ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC, Public Works
Enforce prohibitions on the use of flashing signs and flags, work with property owners to consolidate their signage to conform to Town regulations.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change), P&Z staff, ongoing enforcement
Traditional Neighborhood Development: Front Royal desires new growth that is consistent with the characteristics of traditional neighborhoods, which include well connected streets, sidewalks, and the potential for mixed use. Possible supporting actions or ideas include:		
Focus on where to place new housing and local/unique retail.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change)
Continue to concentrate big box retail in existing locations. Big Box retailers and national chains can have a place in the Town, but the focus should be on locally owned businesses. The Town will not encourage the expansion of national retailers/big box entities.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change), P&Z staff, ongoing enforcement
Increase density in areas that are an easy walk or bike to downtown, creating a population that will demand services downtown. The Town and County can help implement this action through zoning ordinances.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change), P&Z staff, ongoing enforcement

High Quality Development (Continued)

Objective/Strategy	Implementation Date	Responsible Party
Traditional Neighborhood Development (Continued)		
Redevelop the Town in a manner that accommodates the population's changing needs. For example, the desire for older residents to "age in place" is an emerging concern.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, and TC (ordinance change), P&Z staff, ongoing enforcement
Create design guidelines for creating shade, wind protection, and shelter from rain through the dimensions and design of buildings.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC, property owners and developers
Amend applicable codes and Design Standards to ensure that new mixed-use development, including residential units associated with it, have at least a 12-foot-tall ground floor to allow for flexible use and adaptation over time.	Year one, ongoing	
Widen and maintain sidewalks where possible, particularly in the downtown area.	Ongoing	P&Z, Public Works staff
Design guidelines for storefronts should require transparency and accommodate large windows for visual interest.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Amend Design Standards for new mixed use and commercial development to provide more narrow storefronts along a street frontage to improve the vertical rhythm of the streetscape and increase density and diversity for new uses.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Design Standards to require high quality design that contributes to the Town's built environment.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Allow for the development of Accessory Commercial Units where possible.	Year one	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Maintain high standards of landscaping across the Town with particular emphasis on the Entrance Corridor Overlay District.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC
Encourage new development to utilize innovative measures to handle stormwater.	Year one, ongoing	P&Z staff, PC, TC

APPENDIX

- Historic Districts
- Existing Zoning
- Potential East/West Connector
- Survey Results



To protect significant architectural assets, the Town has applied a Historic Overlay District and subsequent guidelines published by the Town of Front Royal Board of Architectural Review (BAR). The overlay district is in addition to the underlying zoning that dictates uses, housing types minimum lot requirements, height, and setbacks.

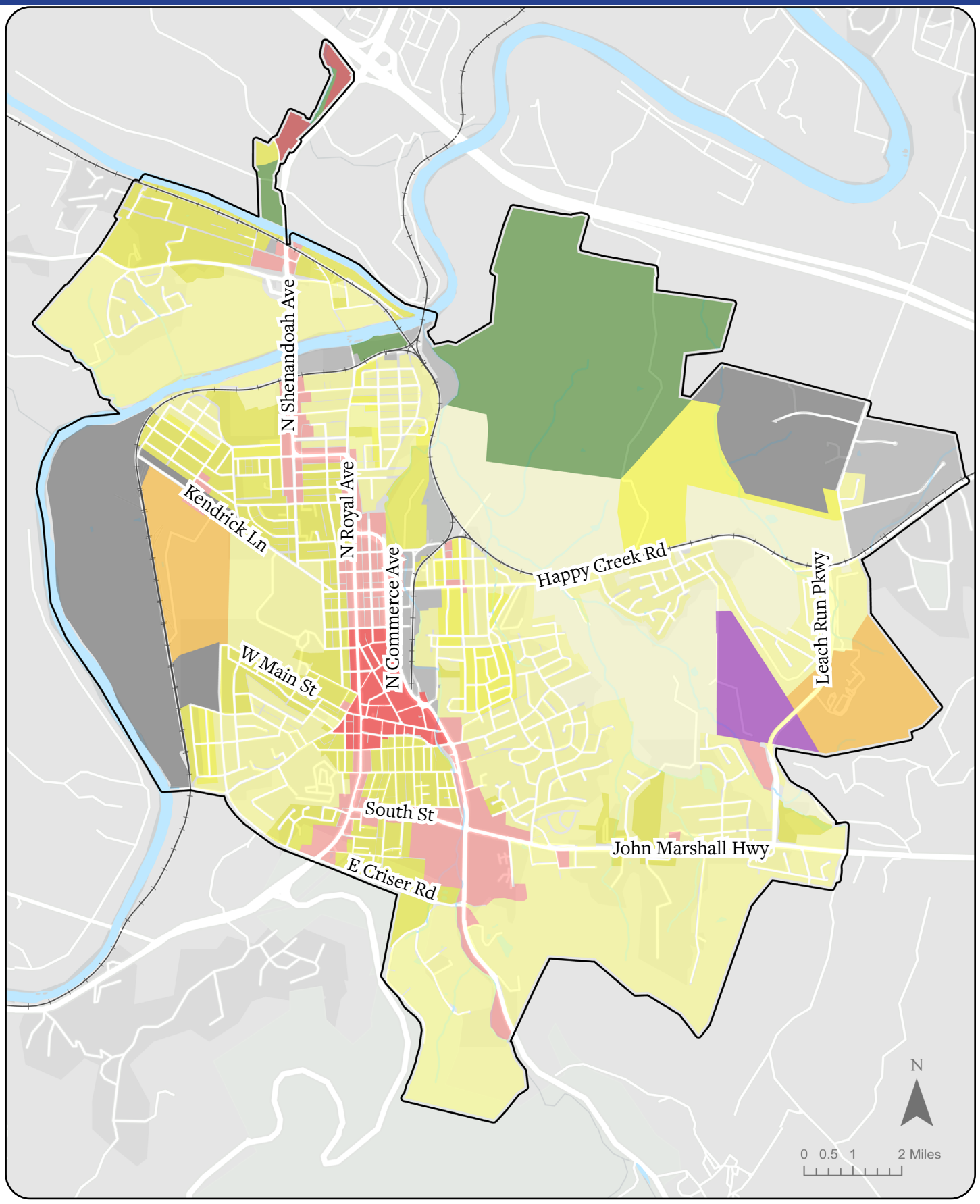
Exterior changes, new construction and demolition within the overlay district must be approved by the BAR.

The criteria by which the BAR will determine approval are laid out in the Town's Historic District Design Guidelines, and the process ensures that Front Royal's historic neighborhoods maintain their historic charm and that the Town's historic character endures.

The Overlay District has three distinct character areas:

- Downtown Business Area
- Downtown Residential Area
- Chester Street Area

EXISTING ZONING



A-1 Agricultural & Open Space

C-1 Community Business

C-2 Downtown Business

C-3 Highway Corridor Business

I-1 Industrial Limited

I-2 Industrial Employment

MCD Mixed Use Campus Development

PND Planned Neighborhood Development

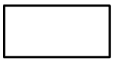
R-1 Residential Low Density

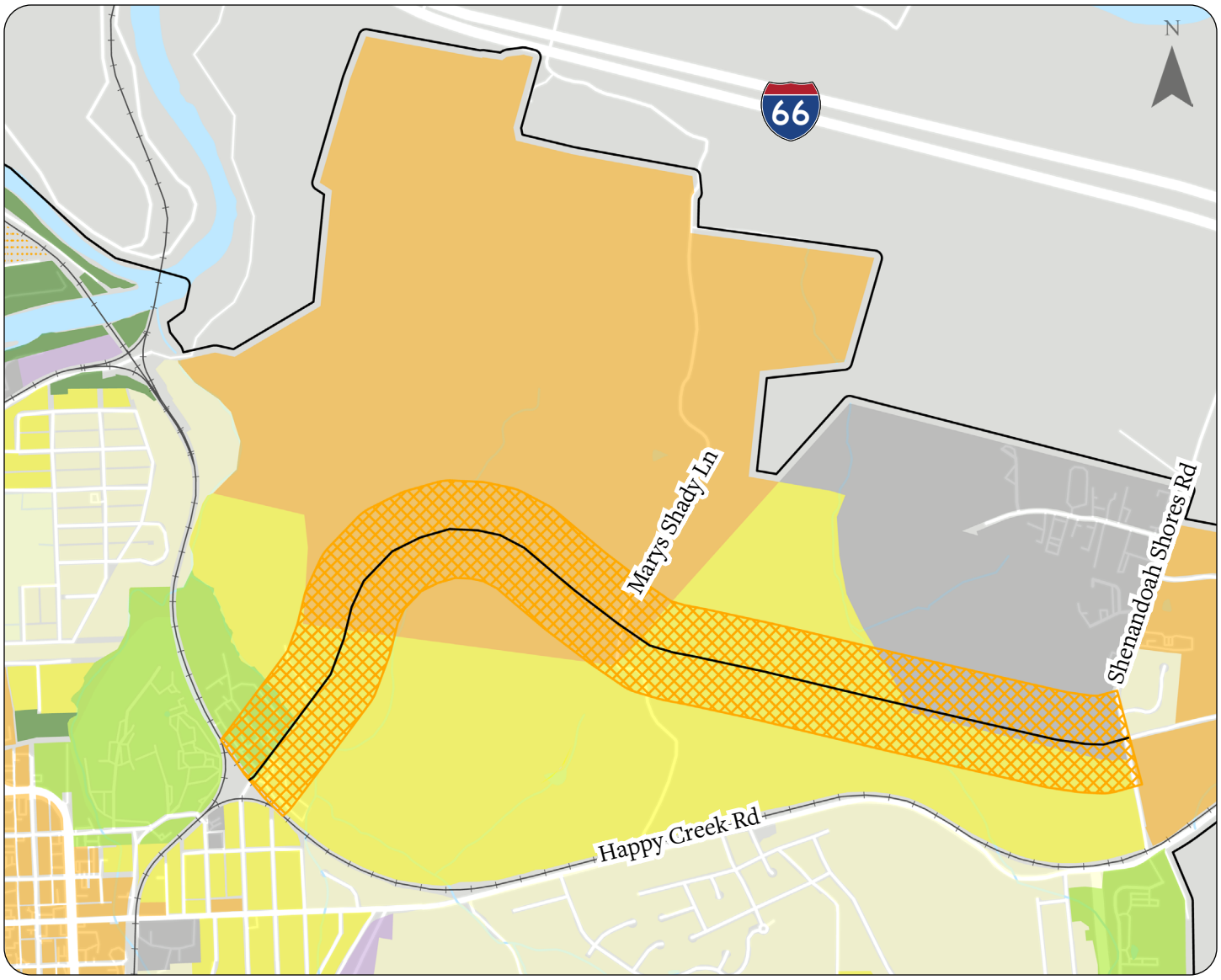
R-1A Residential Low to Medium Density

R-2 Residential Medium Density

R-3 Residential Medium to High Density

R-E Estate Residential
R-S Suburban Residential


Front Royal Boundary


N
66
Marys Shady Ln
Shenandoah Shores Rd
Happy Creek Rd

Future Connector & Land Use

At the outset of the planning process, an East-West connector road was planned for the northeastern area of Town. The future of this roadway project is unclear due to potential development in the area. While right-of-way has not been acquired and this area is a long time off of completion, land use along the connector is planned to be of Medium Density Mixed Use in character. This is depicted overlaid over the Single Family Residential and Neighborhood Residential categories that are currently designated for the area without the connector.

The Town of Front Royal distributed a survey that was open between November 2021 and January 2022 to solicit public input for the Comprehensive Plan update. There were a total of 469 participants, representing 3.1% of Front Royal's 15,011 residents. The following pages report the results of the survey.

Age of Participants

The age of participants were generally evenly distributed amongst all age brackets with the exception of young adults and children. Future planning efforts should take special interest in engaging this demographic.

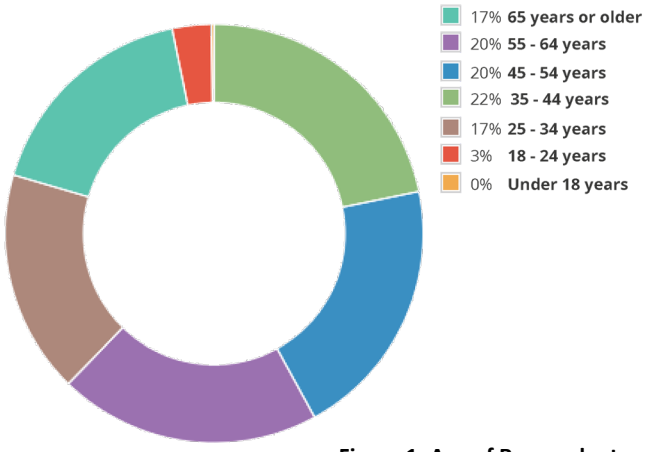


Figure 1: Age of Respondents

Why Front Royal?

Participants were then asked what their connection to Front Royal was, and were able to select all responses that applied. Of the 444 respondents, 57% live in Front Royal and 48% live in the County.

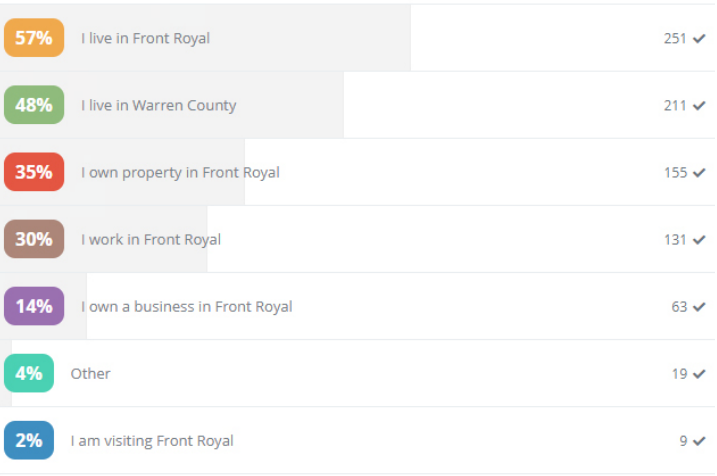


Figure 2: Connection to the Town

Of the total survey respondents, 75% reside within the 22630 Zip Code, while the remaining 25% reside within other zip codes.

This shows that the majority of responses came from residents of the Town, which can also be seen from survey software's map of response locations. All areas of Front Royal generally appear to be represented as well.

Figure 3: Response Location

How long have you lived here?

The survey then asked of those respondents that **live in Town**, how long have they lived there? 54% have lived in Town over 10 years, while 45% have lived for less than 10.

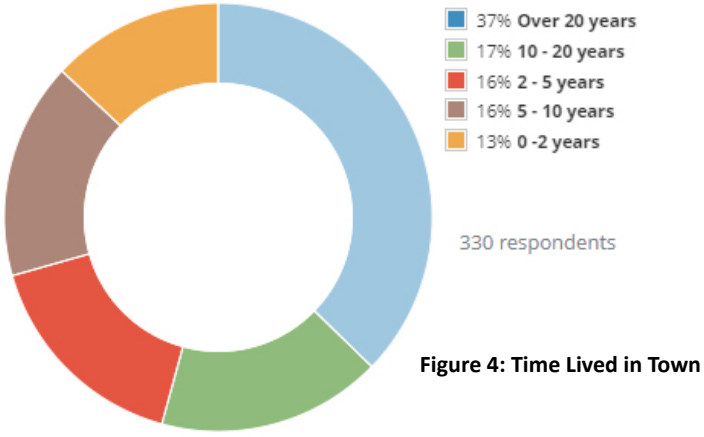


Figure 4: Time Lived in Town

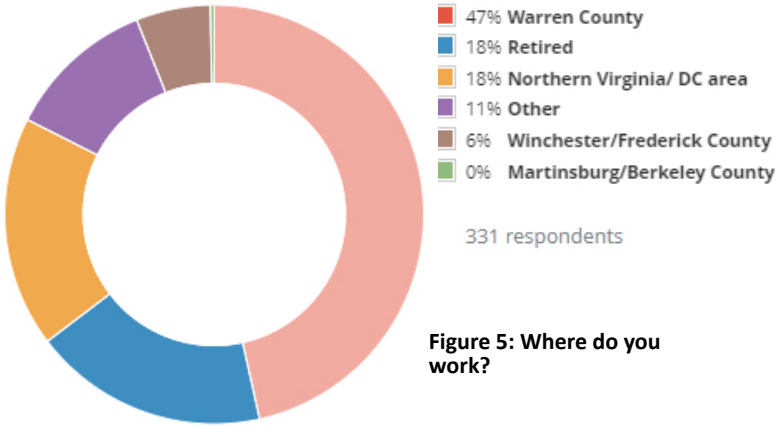


Figure 5: Where do you work?

Where do you work?

Of those respondents that **live in Town**, the survey asked, where do they work? 47% responded that they work in Warren County, of areas outside of Warren County, 18% work in the Northern Virginia / DC area and 6% work in Winchester/Frederick. This shows that of the respondents, most live and work locally. "Other" could include the Town, or jurisdictions in the region to the west, south, or east.

How long have you worked in Town?

The survey then asked for participants **that work in Town**, how long have they worked there? 43% of respondents have worked in Town for over 10 years, while 57% have worked for less than 10. Of those who have worked for less than 10 years, 37% have worked between 0 and 5 years.

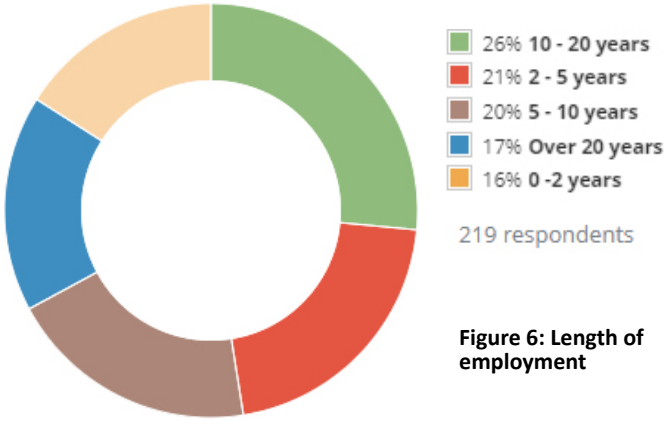


Figure 6: Length of employment

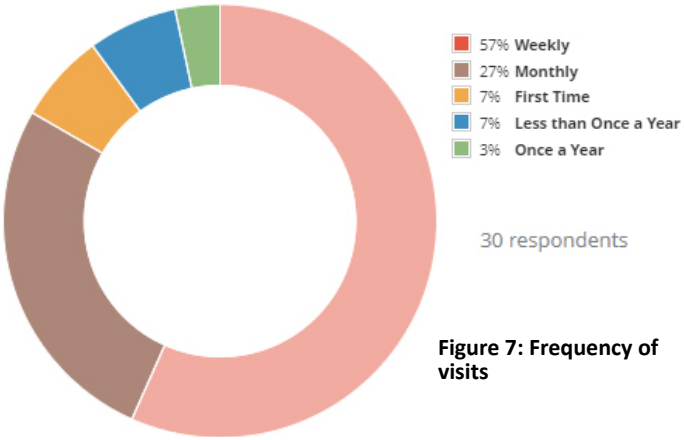


Figure 7: Frequency of visits

How often do you visit the Town?

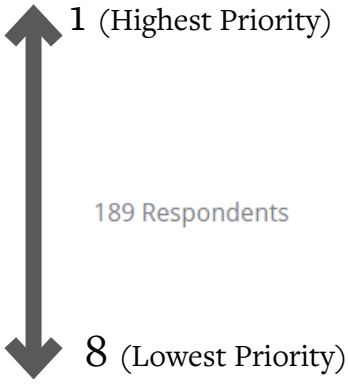
Of the respondents that are **visitors to the Town**, it was asked, how often do you visit? Most visitors report weekly trips into Town, while some report monthly trips.

Why choose to live in Front Royal?

Respondents were asked why they chose to make their home here in the Town with 1 being the most prioritized reason and 8 being the least. The highest ranked choices were Close to family/friends, Community Character, Closeness to outdoor activities, and the Town being a good place to raise children.

Figure 5: Why did you chose to live in Front Royal

Close to family/friends Community Character	**3.27**
Community Character	**3.57**
Close to Outdoor activities	**3.85**
Good place to raise children	**3.93**
Type of Housing	**4.77**
Walkable Neighborhoods	**5.12**
Close to Major Interstates	**5.20**
Other	**6.01**



What contributes positively to quality of life in Front Royal?

The next set of questions were about quality of life in Town. Several categories were listed and respondents were asked to rank them 1 through 3, with 1 being Very Important, to 3 being Not Important. Respondents could also choose "No Opinion." The results are shown in the figure below with higher amounts of respondents per ranking shading that response darker.

353 respondents	1	2	3	No Opinion
a. Town Services (DPW, Fire, Police)	51% 1	27% 2	8% 3	13% No Opinion
b. Schools	32% 1	25% 2	23% 3	20% No Opinion
c. Parking Availability	18% 1	42% 2	28% 3	12% No Opinion
d. Affordable Housing	43% 1	29% 2	19% 3	9% No Opinion
e. Safety & Security	54% 1	30% 2	11% 3	5% No Opinion
f. Recreational Resources	49% 1	36% 2	12% 3	3% No Opinion
g. Open Space and Parks	54% 1	32% 2	10% 3	3% No Opinion
h. Job Opportunities	29% 1	26% 2	28% 3	17% No Opinion
I. Transportation Options & Connectivity	16% 1	38% 2	31% 3	15% No Opinion
j. Walkability	30% 1	41% 2	21% 3	9% No Opinion
k. Shopping Convenience	26% 1	48% 2	19% 3	7% No Opinion
l. Cultural Activities	23% 1	39% 2	26% 3	12% No Opinion
m. Other	17% 1	9% 2	11% 3	63% No Opinion

Figure 6: Items that Contribute Positively

How important are these to overall quality of life in Front Royal?

The next question asked how important the same categories were to overall quality of life in Town, with darker shading denoting where people placed the most emphasis. Safety and Security ranked the highest with 76% of the respondents labeling this Very Important. Interestingly, the importance of these topics generally matches the positively contributing reasons people live in Town.

347 respondents	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion
a. Town Services (DPW, Fire, Police)	66% Very Important	30% Important	3% Not Important	1% No Opinion
b. Schools	56% Very Important	27% Important	10% Not Important	8% No Opinion
c. Parking Availability	15% Very Important	55% Important	26% Not Important	4% No Opinion
d. Affordable Housing	56% Very Important	32% Important	8% Not Important	4% No Opinion
e. Safety & Security	76% Very Important	21% Important	2% Not Important	1% No Opinion
f. Recreational Resources	47% Very Important	45% Important	7% Not Important	1% No Opinion
g. Open Space and Parks	51% Very Important	43% Important	5% Not Important	1% No Opinion
h. Job Opportunities	47% Very Important	38% Important	9% Not Important	6% No Opinion
I. Transportation Options & Connectivity	28% Very Important	42% Important	23% Not Important	8% No Opinion
j. Walkability	36% Very Important	45% Important	16% Not Important	4% No Opinion
k. Shopping Convenience	35% Very Important	53% Important	9% Not Important	3% No Opinion
l. Cultural Activities	31% Very Important	45% Important	19% Not Important	6% No Opinion
m. Other	17% Very Important	12% Important	4% Not Important	66% No Opinion

Figure 7: Importance To Overall Quality

How important are these items for Future Development?

There are numerous factors that will influence the way a Town will look 20, 30 or 40 years into the future. The listed items will inform the Comprehensive Plan's policies and strategies for future growth.

	Very Important,	Important	Not Important
a. Job Creation	57% Very Important,	35% Important	8% Not Important
b. Transportation Network - Roads, Buses	41% Very Important,	44% Important	15% Not Important
c. Parking Availability	23% Very Important,	54% Important	23% Not Important
d. Walkability	41% Very Important,	45% Important	14% Not Important
e. Homes, Neighborhood	60% Very Important,	32% Important	8% Not Important
f. Parks/Access to Green Spaces	56% Very Important,	37% Important	7% Not Important
g. Types of Businesses	57% Very Important,	40% Important	3% Not Important
h. Affordability of Housing	61% Very Important,	31% Important	8% Not Important
I. Availability of Cultural Activities	32% Very Important,	50% Important	18% Not Important
j. Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency	48% Very Important,	33% Important	18% Not Important
k. Historical Preservation	46% Very Important,	43% Important	10% Not Important
l. Broadband Access	69% Very Important,	23% Important	7% Not Important
m. Preservation of Opens Space and Farmland	61% Very Important,	33% Important	6% Not Important
n. Green Infrastructure, Solar Facilities	36% Very Important,	32% Important	32% Not Important
o. Diversity of Businesses	49% Very Important,	39% Important	12% Not Important

Figure 8: Factors important to the future development of Front Royal

What should the Town focus on for when making decisions about Future Development?

The next question was open ended. Respondents were able to see comments left by other participants and "upvote" to agree with them. Some of the highlighted themes from responses are shown in the word cloud below, they are sized based on the amount of times they appeared in the responses. The top themes included **Responsible Growth, Better Water Supply, (utilize) Shenandoah River, Restricting Development, Redevelopment / Revitalization focus, Preserve Town History, Help Small Businesses**.

Figure 9: Priorities to focus on for future development

What do you wish Front Royal had more / less of?

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of items what they wish the Town had more of. The top categories were Entertainment, Restaurants, and Bike/Pedestrian infrastructure, of which half of all respondents desired. Open Space, Affordable Housing, and Shopping were also noted as important future additions to the Town at 39%, 38%, and 37% of respondents. It was also asked what respondents wished Front Royal had less of, with open ended comments available for "upvoting" to agree. Top themes included wanting less **dilapidated buildings, issues with local governance, and certain types of businesses.**

Figure 10: What should Front Royal have more of?

What are Front Royal's biggest assets?

Respondents were asked what they believed Front Royal's biggest assets are, ranked from 1 (biggest asset) to 7 (smallest asset). Quality of Life ranked highest followed by Community Character and Parks & Recreational facilities.

Figure 10: What are Front Royal's biggest assets

Quality of Life	**2.53**
Community Character	**2.64**
Parks & Recreational Facilities	**2.86**
Community	**3.01**
Historic Downtown	**3.29**
Housing	**5.05**
Other	**5.26**

230 Respondents

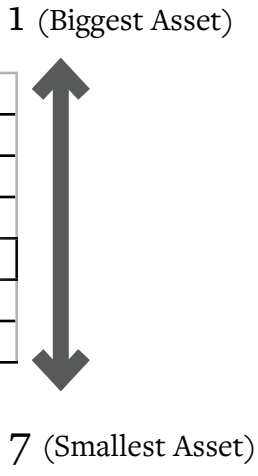


Figure 11: Biggest Assets

Rate life in Front Royal

Respondents were asked to rate quality of life in Front Royal from 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent. The Average response was at "6.3" showing that residents think life in Town is above average. The comprehensive planning process will include strategies to get future ratings closer to 10!

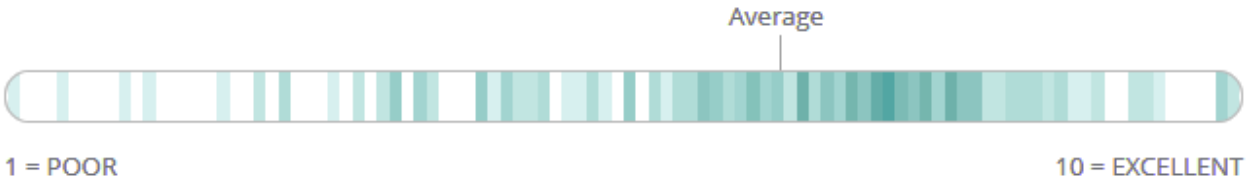


Figure 12: Rate the Quality of Life within the Town of Front Royal

What is challenging about life in Town/What is missing?

Respondents were asked for open ended comments about what is challenging about life in Town. The top ten answers that appeared, in no particular order were:

- **Rising issues with Drugs**
- **Homelessness**
- **Lack of pedestrian infrastructure**
- **High utility taxes**
- **Traffic issues**
- **Need for more healthcare facilities**
- **Need for more choices for grocery stores**
- **Housing costs and lack of available housing**
- **Difficult job market**
- **Lack of clear vision for growth**

What is missing from life in Front Royal?

The final question of the survey asked what features were missing from Front Royal. The responses are shown in the word cloud, sized according to the amount of times they appeared in responses. There were many great ideas that can be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 13: What is missing from Front Royal?