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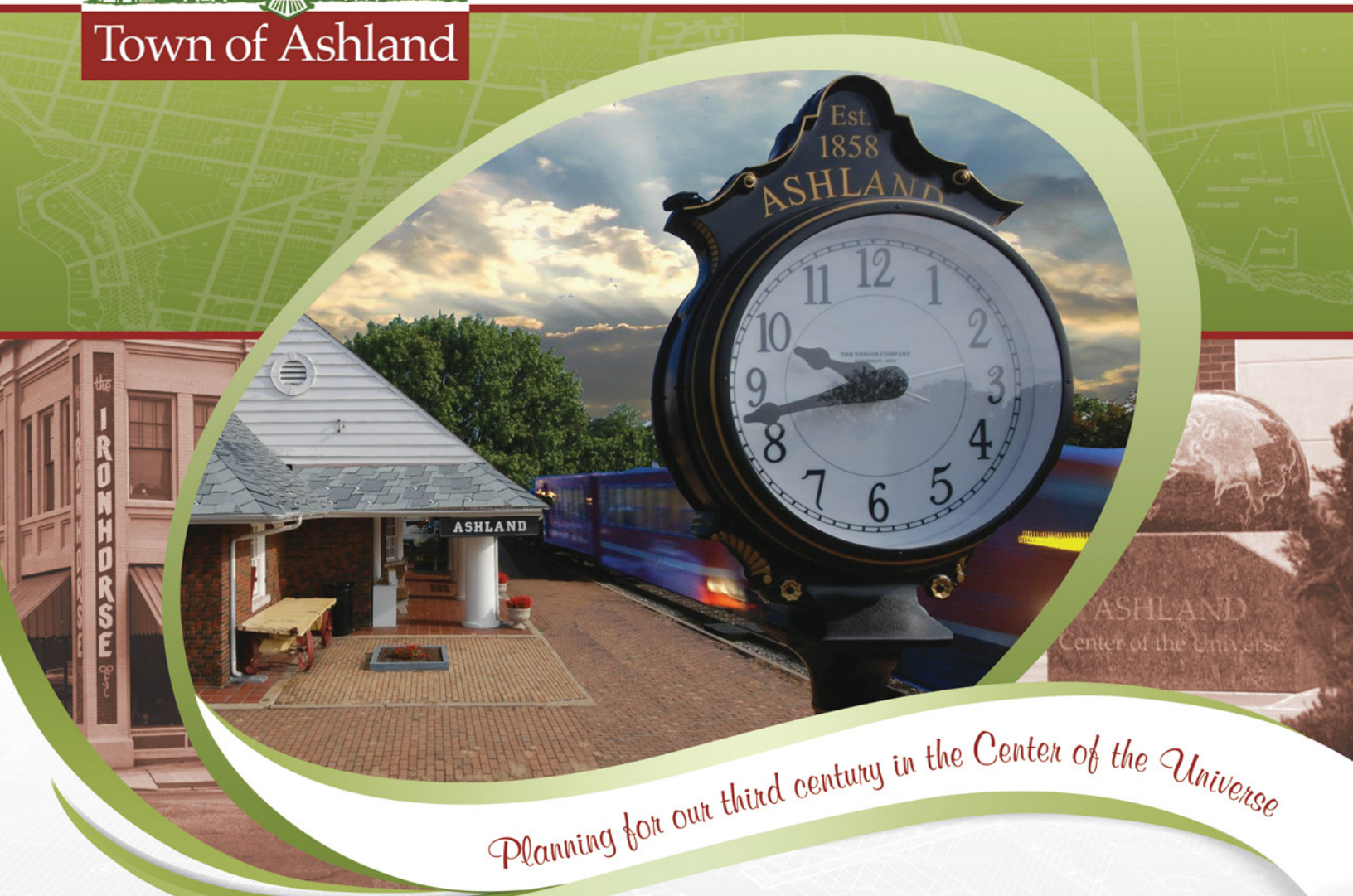
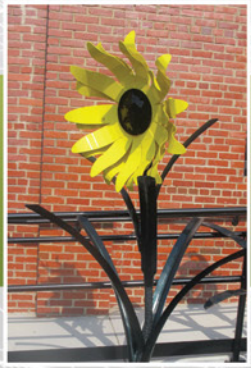


Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe

TOWN OF ASHLAND

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



2011 - 2012

Town of Ashland, Virginia | town.ashland.va.us

Town of Ashland

Comprehensive Plan

Approved by Town Council
December 7, 2011

Ashland Town Council

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We like to acknowledge the former members of the Planning Commission and Town Government who were part of this Comprehensive Plan process before us:

Jo Ann Hunter, Tina Kinney, Barbara Nelson, Pat Temple, and Steve Trivett

Neil Holthouser, Former Director of Planning & Community Development
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Town of Ashland 2011 comprehensive Plan

The Town of Ashland Comprehensive Plan is designed and published to provide information and to serve as a valuable resource to plan for the future of Ashland. This Plan will be used as a steering mechanism to provide guidance and continuity among our Town government, our citizens, and the business community. Through the solicitation and involvement of the Town's citizens, this Plan was created by encompassing values and identifying characteristics we hope to preserve for years to come. Within the 10 chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, a detailed description is provided of the future plans and growth for the Town of Ashland while striving to insure its economic vitality, to maintain its valuable character, to preserve its history and to engage all who live in our great community.

Ashland and Its Small Town Setting

Former Mayor Richard Gillis fondly nicknamed Ashland "The Center of the Universe" because of its central location within Hanover County and its convenient location in central Virginia and along the eastern seaboard. To the residents of Ashland, this term took on a new meaning as it truly is a center of activity to all who live here. The rich history of its railroad, historic homes and quaint residential streets provide a strong foundation apparent to residents and visitors alike. With the railroad that bisects its historic downtown area still used by freight and passenger trains daily and with Randolph-Macon College located within the Town limits providing educational and cultural activities for students and residents, Ashland is unique in this region.

2.0 Guiding Principles

At the beginning of this planning process, six guiding principles were chosen that best reflect the Planning Commission, the Town Council and the participating resident's most basic beliefs about Ashland. Each principle is described by the supporting details that best answer the question "What makes Ashland Ashland?". These guiding principles are the basis for this Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
4. **Encourage Continued Variety**
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**

3.0 Community Character & Design

Ashland has always maintained a small-town character with a tradition of walkable neighborhoods and a unique sense of place. The look of our small town and the feeling it gives residents is part of what makes Ashland unique in the region. The Town seeks to draw from this foundation as the new development occurs.

The Community Character & Design chapter of the Plan strives to enhance the form, character, and aesthetic appeal of the community by:

- Ensuring that a high level of design and quality construction is maintained on all projects within the Town borders.
- Promoting design characteristics that are consistent with the current architecture and nature of the Town.
- Encouraging sustainable development that utilizes eco-friendly construction materials that are high quality.
- Encouraging sensitive infill and redevelopment to create a cohesive Downtown area and preserve the historical nature of the Town.
- Maintaining and enhancing the Town's relationship with Randolph-Macon College.
- Enhancing the identity of Downtown through the promotion of the arts.
- Providing for the maintenance and replanting of the Town's trees to ensure the green quality of the Town in the future.

4.0 Land Use

Land use decisions are a balancing act: encouraging quality new development while diminishing impacts on existing areas. As Ashland progresses into the future it will be necessary to accommodate new growth and respond to change while maintaining aspects of the Town that are valued by its residents, workers and businesses. Decisions made regarding land use will guide the future organization of transportation and open space systems and work towards ensuring the economic health of the Town.

With the Land Use chapter, the Town endeavors to maintain the Town's character and ensure orderly growth by:

- Ensuring that growth does not outpace the availability of community facilities and services.
- Guiding well-planned, coordinated, and sustainable development. Quality of life is given high priority and outweighs the value of unnecessary growth.
- Ensuring that the housing needs of present and future residents of the Town are met through a variety of high-quality housing options that reflect the different ages, family types and income levels of our neighborhoods.
- Introducing the Mixed-Use designation within the Downtown to allow for more comprehensive, flexible and creative uses as new development and redevelopment occurs.

5.0 Housing & Neighborhoods

The long-term intention of this housing chapter is to guide new development to a higher quality standard and toward an increase in middle and upper income housing. Achieving the right balance of housing will positively affect the Town's economy by raising the median income, increasing local retail opportunities and growing the tax base, all beneficial to the whole Town.

Within the Housing & Neighborhoods chapter, the Town works toward creating the right balance of housing by:

- Capturing a larger population of the metro region's executive, middle and upper income housing.
- Preserving the distinctive, historical and attractive character in both the infill and new developments within the Town.
- Raising the quality standard of new and replacement construction in the Town.
- Encouraging a mix of housing options to meet the needs of a diverse population that includes higher end, middle class, working class and affordable housing options.

6.0 Economy

Ashland recognizes that a healthy, sustainable economy depends on the creation of conditions for business development, growth and retention across all sectors. The Economy chapter is intended to guide public and private decisions that foster the stabilization and strengthening of the local Ashland economy while enhancing community and social development.

The Economy chapter works to enhance Ashland's economic development and long-term economic health and sustainability by:

- Fostering a strong and diverse economy which provides a full range of employment choices for present and future residents.
- Supporting business development activities to retain, expand and recruit businesses.
- Mobilizing public and private resources to encourage new business development through the Technology Zone and the Green-Tech Incubator.

7.0 Transportation

A successful and efficient transportation system enhances the livability of the whole community by increasing accessibility to employment, shopping, recreation, and other amenities, while reducing vehicle trips and promoting pedestrian interest. The construction of new roadways allows increased access to land influencing the location of new development. For this reason, it is critical that the Town and County work together to ensure that appropriate connections occur across Town boundaries. The Transportation chapter considers the needs of Town residents including public transportation, interstate and regional travel, pedestrians, cyclists and daily vehicle trips.

The Transportation chapter is intended to maintain a high level of service for the various modes of transportation by:

- Promoting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for the residents, businesses, and visitors to the Town.
- Participating in regional planning efforts with Hanover County to enhance transportation for all areas surrounding the Town.
- Promoting safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation including automobile, transit, walking, and bicycling by continuing the pedestrian-scale, well-connected network of streets.
- Maintaining a high level of service on all Town roads. New development shall address all negative impacts to local roads.

8.0 Environment

Environmental stewardship plays an integral role in guiding how the Town accommodates growth and provides services. Recognizing the private sector as an equal partner in environmental stewardship, the Town can lead by its own behavior in delivering services, operating its facilities and managing its land in an environmentally sustainable manner.
With the Environment chapter, the Town seeks to ensure the protection, preservation, and improvement of the natural environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing Ashland's tree canopy through installation, replacement, and maintenance of trees.
- Continuing the Town's high standard of environmental quality.
- Maintaining the compact, walkable form of Ashland to reduce vehicle trips, improve air quality and preserve open spaces.

9.0 Parks & Recreation

The Town sees the value of open space and recreational facilities to enhance the quality of life for Town residents. Parks & Recreation provides the framework for a comprehensive system of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities that meet the needs of a diverse and changing population and takes advantage of the natural beauty of Ashland.

In Parks & Recreation chapter, the Town works to effectively provide recreational opportunities for the present and future residents by:

- Providing a balanced and varied system of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities which keep pace with community growth and changing community needs.
- Planning for a diversity of active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Ensuring that a level of service is maintained within the park system to meet the needs of the ever-changing population.
- Provide recreational facilities that are accessible to all members of the public regardless of age or disability.

10.0 Community Facilities

Well maintained public services and facilities promote health, safety and an enhanced quality of life for all members of this community. Community facilities, such as schools, are integral parts of the physical and social structure of our community.

Through the Community Facilities chapter, the Town works to continue the quality of public facilities that contribute to the quality of life in the Town by:

- Ensuring community safety through the provision of efficient and effective emergency services.
- Working with the School Board and County to enable our schools to remain an integral part of our unique community and a source of public pride.

Implementation

These policies will be implemented in part through adoption of a new future land use map for the Town, a revised Zoning Ordinance and updated design guidelines. The plan will be linked to the Town's Capital

Improvement Program, which prioritizes and schedules all capital investments in Ashland.

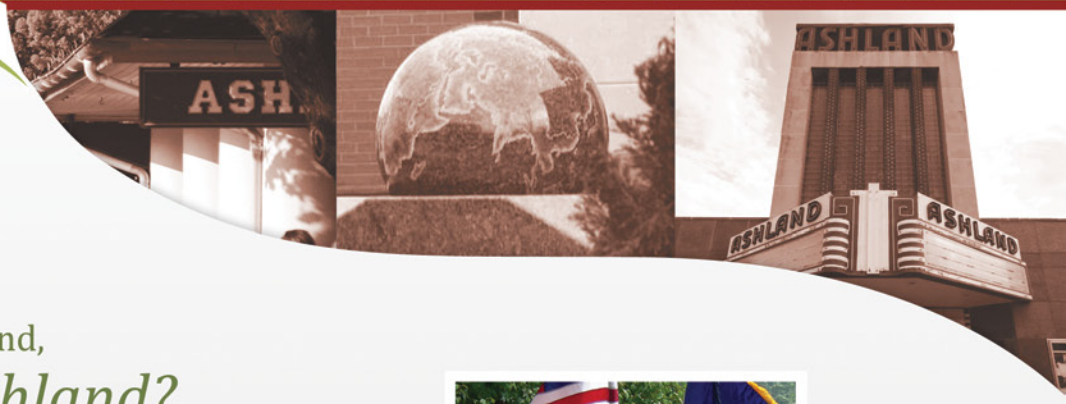
The Ashland Comprehensive Plan is the plan that will provide a framework for all other planning initiatives in the town including the Downtown Street Design Overlay District, Route 1 Overlay District, a downtown parking plan and the neighborhood plans to be created as part 2 of this process.

With its review and adoption by the Planning Commission and Town Council, Ashland will have a truly comprehensive and authoritative plan to guide investments in the future for the Town. This will be a powerful tool to stimulate growth, shape development, and measure our progress toward meeting our goals.

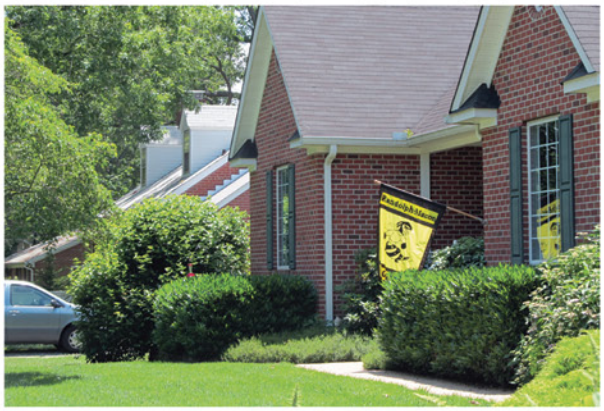
Chapter 1

GETTING STARTED

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



What makes Ashland, *Ashland?*



1.0 GETTING STARTED

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a statement by the community of what it is today, and what it would like to be in the future as depicted through a series of policies and maps. The plan is an official public document that serves as a decision-making guide for elected officials and the private sector. The policies in the Town of Ashland's Comprehensive Plan are intended to reflect enduring community values and the aspirations for the future. The Plan will be used as a means for coordinating projects for future development and the built environment such as capital improvement projects, economic development activities, transportation improvements, green infrastructure planning and the fulfillment of housing needs. The Plan contains a series of recommended actions necessary to achieve the desired outcomes. These actions focus on the physical development of the community, and envision the full build-out of the planning area. The policies, maps, and recommended actions contained in the Plan work in concert to explain where, when and how to build or rebuild the community.

Early in the planning process, a set of six Guiding Principles were established as an answer to the question "What makes Ashland *Ashland*?". It was through answering this question that two key themes emerged: 1) the value of the character of our neighborhoods and our Downtown, and 2) the intention to raise the overall level of quality of development in a way that supports our civic life and our requirements for economic development. It is the intent of the policies included in this Comprehensive Plan to address these two main themes.

What Makes Ashland *Ashland*?

We are quite serious when we refer to Ashland as "*The Center of the Universe*". Therefore, this Comprehensive Plan intends, at its most basic level, to value and protect our hometown. We realize that Ashland will grow, and even change in some ways, but no matter what happens, we must continually answer the question "What makes Ashland *Ashland?*".

We must carefully define those characteristics that make us love Ashland, so that as growth comes and when change takes place, the fundamental qualities that make our town what it is will remain. As a result, the recommendations and details of this Plan are very specific in identifying what we have now - from the smallest characteristic to the broadest – in a way that will set a firm and clear precedent for what should happen in the future.

The Great Small Town

Ashland is a town that appreciates and embraces its strong sense of community identity; diverse population; natural, historic, cultural and educational resources; human potential; economic vitality, and interdependence of citizens and businesses. Ashland takes great pride in its unique identity. This unique identity is based on:

- The beauty of our historic neighborhoods, historic railroad downtown, and historic college campus.
- The quality of our neighborhoods, their scale, density, walkability, compactness, and relationship to downtown.
- Our existence as a great, American small town.
- Our rural setting. As a town in the Richmond region, Ashland also acts as a service center for more outlying rural areas.
- Attractive centers of commerce that provide a diverse job base and a variety of shopping opportunities.
- Our transportation links to the wider region and the nation: the train, Interstate 95, and Route 1 all run right through town.
- The presence of Randolph-Macon College, the broad range of cultural opportunities and educational resources available to the community.

To protect these values, we will adhere to the following fundamentals:

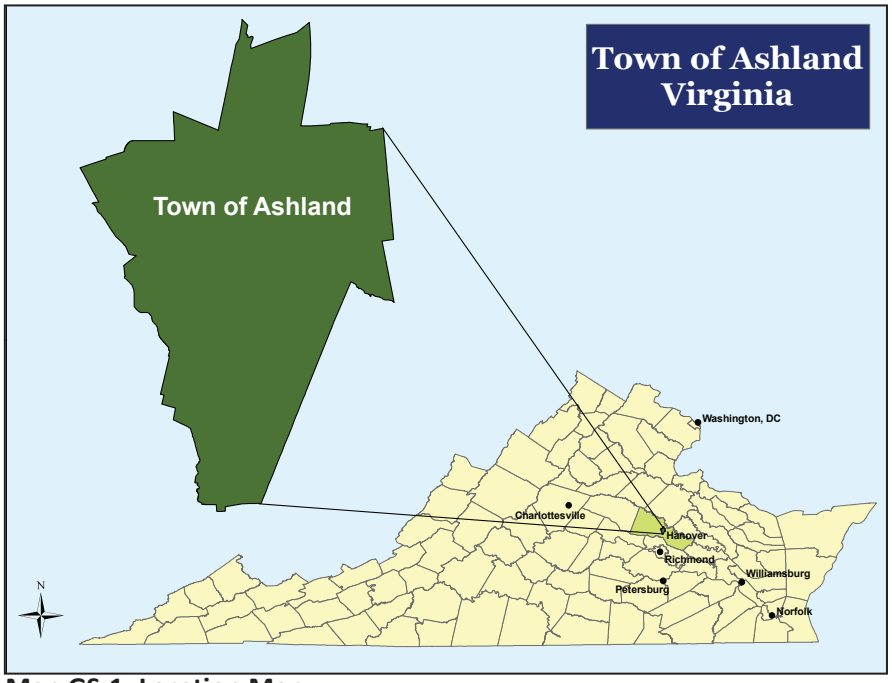
- We value planning, and in looking forward to the future, we will adhere to the guidance set forth in our Comprehensive Plan for decision-making. We also value the energy and inventiveness of private initiatives, so we seek a balance and collaboration between

community planning efforts and the initiatives of residents and businesses. In doing this, we will also maintain a strong relationship with Hanover County government in its planning processes.

- We will be a community that accepts reasonable change and growth, however we will be careful to ensure that change and growth will not harm the quality of life or community character that contribute to our identity. We will preserve or enhance the sense of place within our existing developed areas. We will ensure that newly developed areas are interconnected with the existing town, are based on the very qualities that make us special, and create a positive link to our edges.
- We will continue to encourage variety in the housing stock constructed in Town to ensure the availability of housing choices for young families, seniors, executives and first-time homebuyers.
- We will continue to have a diverse and thriving business environment, with emphasis on making the best use of our location, tourism, quality job creation, and providing needed services, goods and customer service.
- We will manage our transportation network to minimize congestion, and make every effort to ensure that our community continues to be walkable, bicycle-friendly, and accessible to passenger rail.
- We will be a community that acts as an environmental steward to sustain our environment for future generations and preserve the natural beauty that exists in our Town.
- We will provide opportunities for our residents to experience the many benefits of leisure and recreation activities. The ability to experience recreation outdoors will promote health and wellness and build a stronger community as the parks become a hub for community life.
- We value the quality schools located in the Town and educational opportunities provided to our residents. We will continue to work with Hanover County and the School Board to ensure this quality education remains available to the children of our Town.

1.1 Location

The Town of Ashland is centrally located within Hanover County on the northern fringes of the Richmond Metropolitan area, just 15 miles north of the state capital, Richmond. Covering an area of 7.12 square miles, Ashland is the only incorporated town in Hanover County and in the entire Richmond region. Interstate 95 and U.S. Route 1, major north-south transportation routes along the east coast, run through Town as well as through Washington, DC (92 miles north), Boston, MA (530 miles north) and Miami (966 miles south). Ashland's central location along the east coast is important to the Town's economy. Interstates 64 and 295 are also nearby and easily accessible to the Town.



Map GS-1: Location Map

Another mode of transportation that has been integral to Ashland's development since the Town's inception is the railroad. Currently owned by CSX, the rail corridor passes through the center of Town. In addition to the daily use by freight carriers, Amtrak provides passenger service with its Northeast Regional trains. This route provides service from Newport News, VA to Boston, MA with stops in cities such as Washington, DC, Philadelphia and New York. The train station in Ashland, aside from serving as the Ashland-Hanover Visitors Center, consist of a platform with shelter and no ticket office, but serves 12,000 to 15,000 passengers annually, with ten weekday and six weekend trains. The presence of this passenger rail service contributes to the unique character of the Town, enhances the local economy and provides a service to the citizens of the Town and Hanover County.

Ashland is considered part of the Richmond Metropolitan area, the

Richmond-Petersburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and is a member of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission.

1.2 Comprehensive Planning Process & Organization

In creating this plan, the Planning Commission began by developing an overall structure for the final document. The Plan is structured as two parts: Part 1 (Policies) and Part 2 (Focus Area Studies). This document is Part 1 (Policies) and sets forth the guiding principles for the physical development for the Town. Policy statements say, in effect, "When we encounter *this* situation, we will act in *this* way for *these* reasons." The Policy areas include and set forth the chapters as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Guiding Principles
3. Community Character and Design
4. Land Use
5. Housing & Neighborhoods
6. Economy
7. Transportation and Circulation
8. Environment
9. Parks and Recreation
10. Community Facilities

Appendix: Administration

Part 1 of the Plan specifically makes recommendations for all areas of town and intends to provide:

- Clearly articulated policies.
- An emphasis on excellence in construction and design, with a focus on preserving and enhancing the physical elements that contribute to Ashland's small town character.
- Recommendations based on an understanding of the market and physical forces that are affecting Ashland, particularly with the potential for new development on the outskirts of the Town in Hanover County.

In effect, it is a Plan for full build-out that intends to keep Ashland *Ashland*. Therefore there are no time-horizons; development will take place as the market demands and as the Town and County can provide the needed services.

Part 2 (Focus Area Studies), applies the Policies outlined in Part 1 to envision the ultimate build-out of specific areas, or Focus Areas. These studies will allow for a greater level of detail, study, analysis and geographic specificity in deciding the appropriate balance of land use. The entire land area of the Town will be divided into Focus Areas. The Focus Area Studies will be completed in the next portion of the Comprehensive Planning process.

1.3 Neighborhood Planning Areas as the Basis of the Public Process:

For the purpose of the public participation process, the Town was divided into eight Neighborhood Planning Areas that range from the historic downtown, to the various residential neighborhoods, to the areas of commerce and industry. In late 2008 and early 2009, a series of public workshops were held to gather input on various topics such as: defining community character, channeling growth, and "where do we want to be in the future?". The public workshops, attended by neighbors, business people, home and land owners, focused attention on each of these designated geographic areas. After hearing presentations about the comprehensive planning process, the participants viewed and wrote suggestions on maps of the Town's eight Neighborhood Planning Areas, sharing thoughts on what they would like to preserve and what they would like to change. General themes and ideas surfaced throughout the series of workshops. As a result of this process, many details listed in this Plan grew out of the small-scale discussions that took place, and are based in the observations of the various neighbors.

1.4 Guiding Principles as the Framework of this Plan

The Planning Commission developed the following six Guiding Principles, which are reflected throughout this document, based on the general themes that emerged from the workshops. These principles are based on long discussions at public meetings, on Planning Commission workshops, on discussions within Town Council, and on conversations with each other as neighbors. The Principles therefore represent our most basic beliefs about our town. The six Guiding Principles are:

1. Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character
2. Protect Ashland's Unique Features
3. Manage and Enhance Our Green Town
4. Encourage Continued Variety
5. Promote Continued Economic Development
6. Provide a High Level of Government Services

As basic values, the Guiding Principles summarize our aspirations for the future as they are rooted both in our past and present. The Guiding Principles are described in detail in Chapter 2, each followed by the supporting details that we believe answers our basic question: "What makes Ashland *Ashland*?". All policy recommendations made here and future decisions made for the Town of Ashland by both the private and public sector should be firmly based on these Guiding Principles.

1.6 Ashland's Character, and its Aspirations for Quality:

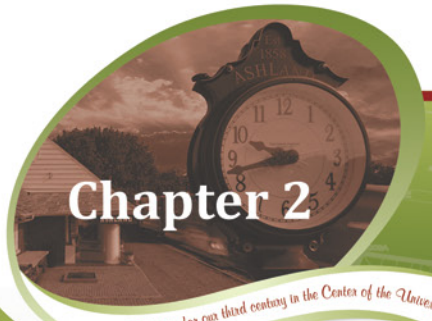
At the root of the Principles listed above are two aspirations that are necessary to determine just what is *Ashland*?: 1) the character of our neighborhoods and our Downtown, and 2) the intention to raise the overall level of quality of development in a way that supports our civic life and our requirements for economic development.

One of Ashland's greatest assets is its wonderful small town character. Small town refers to more than the number of residents or the geographic size of our town. Our small town character is distinguished by high quality, distinctive and well-integrated neighborhoods, attractive public spaces, a historic downtown and locally-owned businesses of all types including small and large scale retail and industrial. Equally important is the character of the people who call Ashland home and have become an integral part of our community. Many residents chose Ashland because it is a truly beautiful place and stay in Ashland because of the kindness of neighbors and its accessibility to shopping and everyday needs. Chapter 3, Community Character and Design is included to deal with the standards that are necessary to maintain this way of life in our small town. The details of this chapter evaluate the form and location of neighborhood homes, the visual nature of the historic Downtown, the beauty of Randolph-Macon College, and the great canopy of shade trees. This is important: any use of this Plan must notice this aspiration, and balance it with the needs for guiding land and building uses.

In addition to identifying our aspirations for what Ashland looks like, the process of researching this Plan has found that the character must also be based on a high level of quality of development and improvements. As explained in Chapter 6, Economy, Ashland's economic success in many ways is based on its level of quality. Based on figures from surrounding localities and similar towns, we have an ample supply of starter homes, affordable homes, rental homes; we have an ample supply of discount stores. To thrive as the town grows, legitimate needs and uses must be balanced with others that address different markets. Many have heard the old adage "retail follows rooftops." Quality of construction and design affects the bottom line. In this case, to attract a more diverse selection of retailers to meet our consumer and shopping needs, the Town will need the addition of higher-value "rooftops" (otherwise known as housing.) The added buying power provided by the high-value rooftops will attract the desired retailers. In addition, by introducing a high-quality design standard in construction, design, landscaping and various amenities, it can ultimately affect the Town as a whole by creating an expectation of higher community standards.

1.7 Other Applicable Plans

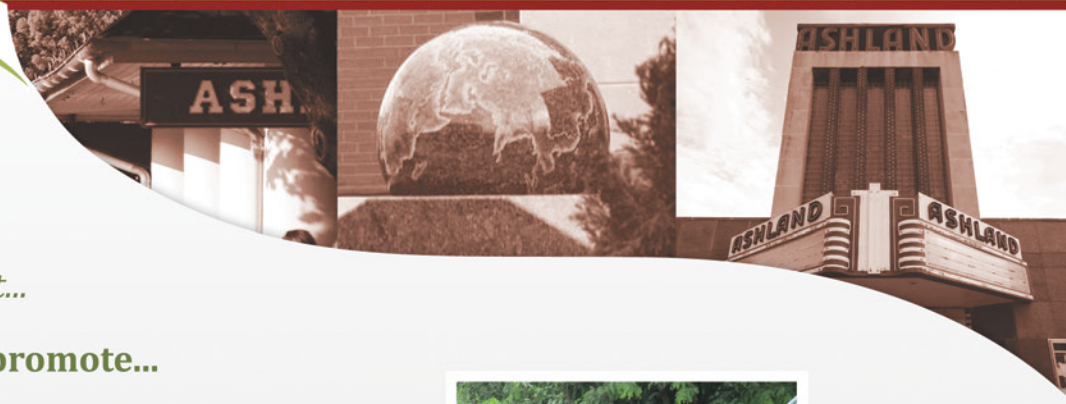
Finally, in addition to these basic parts of the Comprehensive Plan, other various plans are included, and are adopted by reference such as: the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027, the Randolph-Macon College Master Plan, an economic development strategic plan, a design guidelines document, a parks and recreation plan, a bicycle and pedestrian plan, and a Route 1 design overlay district plan.



Chapter 2

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Preserve...

Protect...

ENHANCE...

promote...

Maintain...

SERVE...

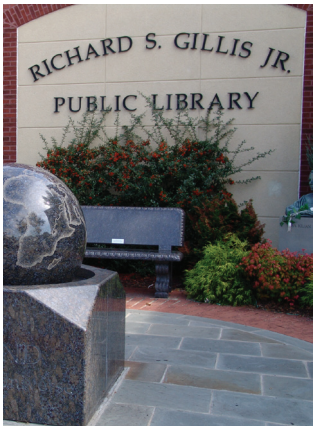
2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Town of Ashland has its own distinctive character and a strong sense of place. The following six Guiding Principles were identified during the planning process in an effort to identify the characteristics that define our small town character and as a means to connect the values suggested in the introduction to the policies suggested by this plan. It is by maintaining these principles that the small town character can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. Each guiding principle is followed by the supporting details that make Ashland *Ashland*.

Principle 1: Preserve Small Town Character:

Ashland is the quintessential small town with the benefits of modern conveniences. Ashland possesses many of the characteristics that make a small town stand above the rest. The availability of vital services, of arts and cultural programs, and opportunities to get close to nature are just part of what makes up Ashland's character. The Town is an assortment of quiet, safe, well-kept residential neighborhoods in a variety of price ranges. This small town character comes from more than just the built environment; it comes from the people as well. We are a community of neighbors and the framework of our neighborhoods allows us to easily be part of the community. Our residents are civic-minded and have a strong will to preserve the Town and the Town's history. Our small town has vibrant locally-owned businesses and strong participation in community events.

- Many homes throughout the neighborhoods are closely situated and engage the streetscape with front porches that are large enough to sit on, front stoops to give protection from the weather, and front doors; all of which face the street.
- The networks of streets and walkways are planned in a grid pattern, throughout both the neighborhoods and the Downtown areas. This grid plan promotes slow driving, simplicity of lot layouts, and the creation of blocks that feel like true neighborhoods with quiet, safe, and walkable streets. Our neighborhoods are safe for children at play, and pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities.



- The town landscape includes a canopy of shade trees in the neighborhoods, some street trees in the business areas and front yards with flowers and shrubs that can be appreciated by those who walk by.
- Our centrally located historic Downtown is compact and walkable with handsome small-scale buildings housing locally owned shops and businesses.
- We love that our merchants know us by name. Locally owned and operated businesses are important to our small town quality of life.
- We have schools and churches located within our neighborhoods. It is common in our community to see families and children walking to school and church. This is an important expression of life in a small town.
- We have a whole host of events from the Fourth of July parade to the Ashland Musical Variety Show with strong participation that exemplify the civic-mindedness and pride our residents have for Ashland.
- The small town atmosphere of Ashland seems to encourage the presence of friendly, familiar, and helpful neighbors. At its root, this quality of life in our small town is the one that makes our home special, and makes Ashland feel like the "Center of the Universe."

Principle 2: Protect Ashland's Unique Features:
Ashland is set apart from other small towns by the special places and activities that can be found here. It is these unique features that we must safeguard and support:

- The railroad tracks and the train station are located in the center of town. Few towns in America have passenger rail service, even fewer cherish their railroad as a fundamental part of life, and have the historic downtown, fine residential neighborhoods, and tree-lined walkable streets, all lining the tracks.
- We have Randolph-Macon College and its historic campus filled with beautiful buildings and trees located in the middle of town, professors and employees as neighbors, and many college-sponsored cultural activities for the entire community to enjoy.
- Our Library, Post Office, Town Hall are located in the center of Downtown so that commerce and civic life are intertwined. There is the opportunity to visit the library, have lunch in a downtown restaurant, shop in the downtown grocery store, mail some letters, and then join a volunteer activity in Town Hall all in one trip. This mix of uses generates a lively spirit of activity and a sense of vitality

in the Town.

- Lunches on the lawn, fairs, our Farmer's Market, parades, and more, are all possible because special open spaces have been created and maintained. The Town Green, the Hanover Arts and Activities lawn, and The Plaza support our civic activities, provide public green space and are places to just sit and enjoy the passing by of town life.
- The Town of Ashland hosts many recreational opportunities. We are the intersection of two national bike routes: Route 1 and Route 76. As a result, we have many cyclists passing through town, stopping to socialize, and to shop and dine. There are runners and walkers who drive here from other places to use our quiet, safe streets; the residents are not the only pedestrians here. These activities show off our community, support our Downtown businesses and add to the vibrancy of our town.
- We have links to the wider region and city, even though we feel as if we are sitting within a bucolic farming landscape. Our train and Interstate 95 intersection can take us as far as the edges of the nation; Route 1, Route 54, Ashcake Road, and Elmont Road take us to Richmond and the greater region.

Principle 3: Manage and Enhance our Green Town:
Ask any resident what is special about Ashland, and after mentioning great neighbors, the next comment will be that we have great shaded, tree-lined streets. However, if we press beyond that observation, we find that there is more *green* to our green town than just the tree canopy. We have wetlands, creeks, wooded areas, rural vistas, public parks, trails, and preserved open spaces. We must think of all of these landscapes as part of a single environment to be protected. The cherished green spaces that make up this environment are:

- Our neighborhood street trees are species large enough to spread across the streets, frame views of homes and shops, and give us comfort from the heat. Visitors from outside Ashland, who participate in our many organized runs, are often stunned by the beauty of this place – all because they are running framed by towering trees, protected by their shade.
- Our wetlands and stream corridors weave through many neighborhoods. Not only is it our obligation to protect them, it is our opportunity to live lives integrated with these native habitats.
- We still have some natural wooded areas within the town. These tree stands provide wildlife and bird habitats and add to the breadth of our Town's tree canopy.

- We are proud of our public parks and trails. They provide access to our beautiful natural environment for users of all ages.

- There are sheltering, retail-friendly street trees in the historic Downtown. Hill Carter Parkway is a lovely green-edged roadway. We have maintained our efforts to keep the commercial portions of Route 54 green and tree-lined.

Principle 4: Encourage Continued Variety within Ashland:

The assortment of home sizes and the range of home values allows for a vast mix of people and family types in all the neighborhoods of town. This is a cherished quality of Ashland. The conventional method of developing and marketing houses is single price range / one type only. This tends to lead to the present day patterns of social and economic segregation where people of different ages and incomes are socially isolated from one another. We find that our neighborhoods are not like that, and that variety must be integral with all future developments. The three characteristics listed in this Principle will permit – for example – seniors to remain at home, young people to find starter homes, families to live with other generations, and the affluent and working class to live side-by-side. Houses can be large and small, be of one or two stories, be designed with and without garages, have small gardens and large, and so on – and they all can be neighbors, and can maintain the community vitality that we cherish. Specifically, we intend to continue this variety in the future by reinforcing these basic characteristics:

- A variety of lot sizes, house sizes and home styles all located side-by-side within each neighborhood.
- We value the variety of size, scale and products offered by different businesses available in the Town and encourage more mixed retail in the future.
- We also value the diversity of people of different educational, religious, cultural and economic backgrounds and the new and life long citizens blending into one community.

Principle 5: Promote Continued Economic Development:

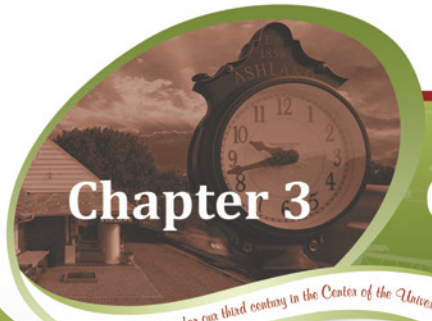
Ashland is an affordable place to live and a dynamic place to conduct business. Both exist in one community making life comfortable, easy, safe, and exciting all at once. This balance must continue so that we can always thrive. The following elements contribute to ensuring a strong economic base and are part of our vision for Ashland's future:

- Economic vitality of the business community in Downtown and on England Street must be maintained and must grow. Higher densities of both residential and commercial in this area will aid in this growth.
- High quality of design of buildings, signs, public landscapes, and street lighting in Downtown and on England Street is a necessary part of its success and must be continually encouraged.
- Route 54 between Interstate 95 and England Street, also referred to as the Golden Mile, serves as both a gateway and an economic benefit to the Town. We recognize its importance and strive for its improvement.
- Route 1 must become a special place, with a great landscape, good design of all types, and a variety of uses. This highway is not just a place to pass through; it must be a destination and part of the larger life of Ashland.
- We have a variety of small and large businesses; this must continue, so that we offer jobs to our residents, provide a wide range of services, and enjoy the benefits of both national and local merchants serving us.
- High quality office space or 'Class A' space is as important to include in our land use mix as higher quality homes. This use adds high level jobs, brings people here who will shop and maybe choose to live here, and adds to our tax base.
- We are fortunate to have many long standing businesses that remain here year after year. We will work to preserve and enhance the favorable business climate in the Town.
- Our consumer and service needs can be met here in Ashland thus making our lives easier, requiring fewer shopping and commuter trips out into the region. This keeps ~~us~~ Ashland real home town, where we can all live, shop, and work, right here, close to home.

Principle 6: Provide a High Level of Government Services:

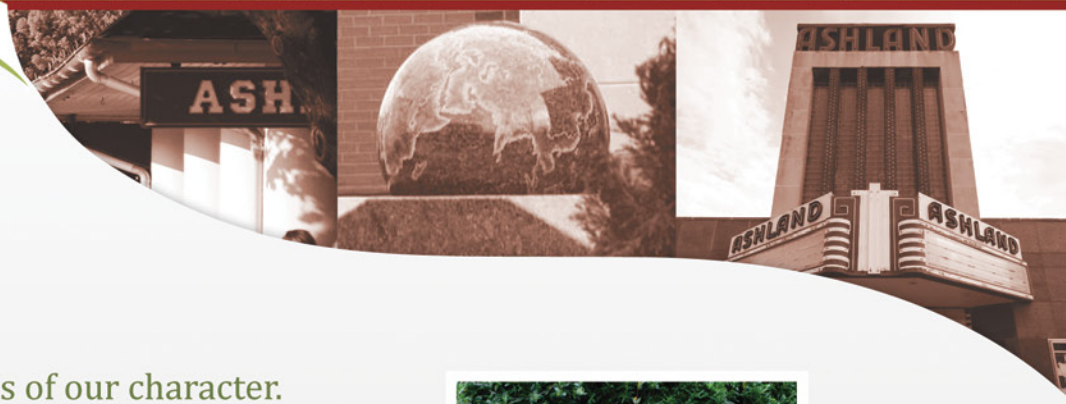
The Town of Ashland's citizens and business owners are privileged to have the opportunity to take advantage of both Town and County services. These are considered the perks of living in the Town and operating a small municipal government.

- The Town Hall in the heart of Town allows citizens the opportunity to have a close relationship with government officials.
- Residents receive trash and recycling curb-side pickup.
- The Public Works Department provides the following services:
    - Brush and leaf collection
    - Snow removal
    - Street cleaning
    - Project management
- The Town maintains six public parks and several trails throughout Town, including the management of a public pool.
- The Ashland Police Department resides in the heart of the Town where officers are able to interact with citizens and business owners on a daily basis to provide a safe community, a high level of service and quick response times.
- Through an adapting street and sidewalk improvement priority plan the Town maintains and adds to its stock of walkable streets and sidewalks. This includes appropriate drainage systems throughout Town.
- The Town provides community planning efforts focused on the needs and future of the Town.
- The Town operates a Farmer's Market between May and October.

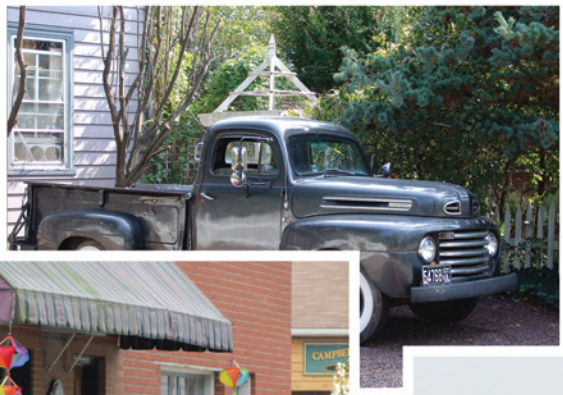


Chapter 3 COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



Dreams
are the touchstones of our character.
Henry David Thoreau



3.0 COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

Abstract
Ashland has always maintained a small-town character with a tradition of walkable neighborhoods and a unique sense of place. The look of our small town and the feeling it gives residents is part of what makes Ashland Ashland. The Town seeks to draw from this foundation as the new development occurs.

The Community Character & Design chapter of the Plan strives to enhance the form, character, and aesthetic appeal of the community by:

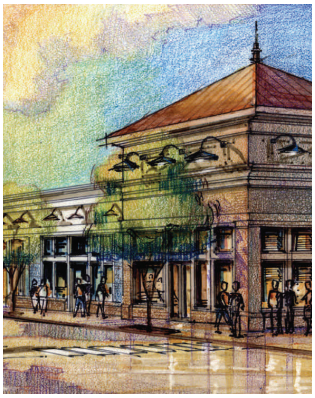
- *Ensuring that a high level of design and quality construction is maintained on all projects within the Town borders.*
- *Promoting design characteristics that are consistent with the current architecture and nature of the Town.*
- *Encouraging sustainable development that utilizes eco-friendly construction materials that are high quality.*
- *Encouraging sensitive infill and redevelopment to create a cohesive Downtown area and preserve the historical nature of the Town.*
- *Maintaining and enhancing the Town's relationship with Randolph-Macon College.*
- *Enhancing the identity of Downtown through the promotion of the arts.*
- *Providing for the maintenance and replanting of the Town's trees to ensure the green quality of the Town in the future.*

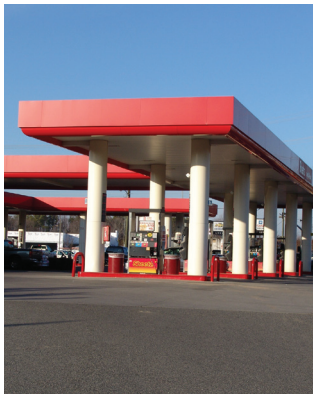
From its early history, Ashland has always maintained a small-town character with a tradition of walkable neighborhoods and a unique sense of place. The look of our small town and the feeling it gives residents is part of what makes Ashland unique in the region. Our small town character within a larger metropolitan region is why many residents have chosen to move here and stay here. In the course of this history, Ashland has experienced physical growth. Through new neighborhoods and new shopping areas, the development of an interstate highway, and a series of annexations, Ashland has expanded the Town's area from one square mile to more than seven square miles. This chapter precedes the chapter on Land Use, as an expression of Ashland's essence. The desire for tradition, beauty and for maintaining the Town's character is part of the Guiding Principles that are the foundation for the entire Plan.

Today, Ashland occupies an important location between Richmond and Northern Virginia. While this location offers dynamic opportunities for economic vitality, it also brings with it tremendous development pressures that have the potential to alter the Town's character. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve Ashland's small-town character while taking full advantage of its regional role and central location. The Plan supports a strong, understandable image of Ashland as a distinct community. Moreover, the Plan shall speak to areas just beyond the Town's political boundaries to encourage compatibility in character and design.

This chapter of the Plan contains policies related to the form, character, and aesthetic appeal of the community. The chapter organizes the characteristics that have made us what we are and those that we aspire to by focusing on the four areas that have created the appearance and feeling that we cherish: the residential neighborhoods, the Historic Districts, the College and our prevalent green landscapes. Other areas in Town included in this chapter are the commercial and industrial areas. The intent of this plan is to guide development to ensure that future growth is grounded in the Guiding Principles that are part of what makes Ashland *Ashland*. Provided in this chapter are the general character elements and design standards. More specific design standards will be presented in the individual neighborhood planning area studies and in a separate updated design guidelines document.

Character areas:
Residential Neighborhoods
The Downtowns:
Historic Downtown
England Street
Thompson Street
Randolph-Macon College
Mixed Use Commercial
Interstate Service Area
Industrial Areas





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - Provide design guidance that ensures the present character is preserved in existing neighborhoods and replicated as the Town expands.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Recommend measures to preserve the historic character of the Downtown.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Utilize specific recommendations for tree preservation and landscaping to ensure that the green spaces of Ashland are conserved for future generations.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety within Ashland**
   - Establish appropriate development patterns while ensuring that development caters to the various needs of the community.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Ensure through development guidelines that new construction and improvements/renovations meet a high level of quality as determined by the updated design guidelines handbook. The recommendations should be reasonable and not cost prohibitive so as to deter economic growth.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**
   - Adopt a specific plan of action to see that the development guidelines are implemented as requirements rather than suggestions.

3.1 Small Town Character

A common thread that ran through the citizen comments at the community workshops was the desire to preserve the small town character of the Town of Ashland. This small town feeling comes from our safe neighborhoods, the ability to walk to the post office, to church, school and shops, and to have parks close to home. It is also the landmarks and the familiar built environment that provides the sense of place we refer to as home. A few of the treasured resources that lend to our small town character are the historic districts, the varied historic architecture, the train, Cross Brothers Grocery, the trees, the coffee houses, and walkability of the neighborhoods. While change is inevitable, with the proper measures and protections, the Town can ensure that new development continues in a harmonious manner and maintains the existing small town character.

It is possible that there are buildings within the Town that are eligible to be included as part of the National Historic District but are not currently included. One example is Town Hall. Among other criteria to be considered, eligible buildings are generally at least 50 years old. The original nomination was completed in 1983. Therefore the nomination was based on the buildings age at that time. It is possible that in the future, further nominations may be considered.

Policy CD.1 Aspirations for Quality and Design in Construction

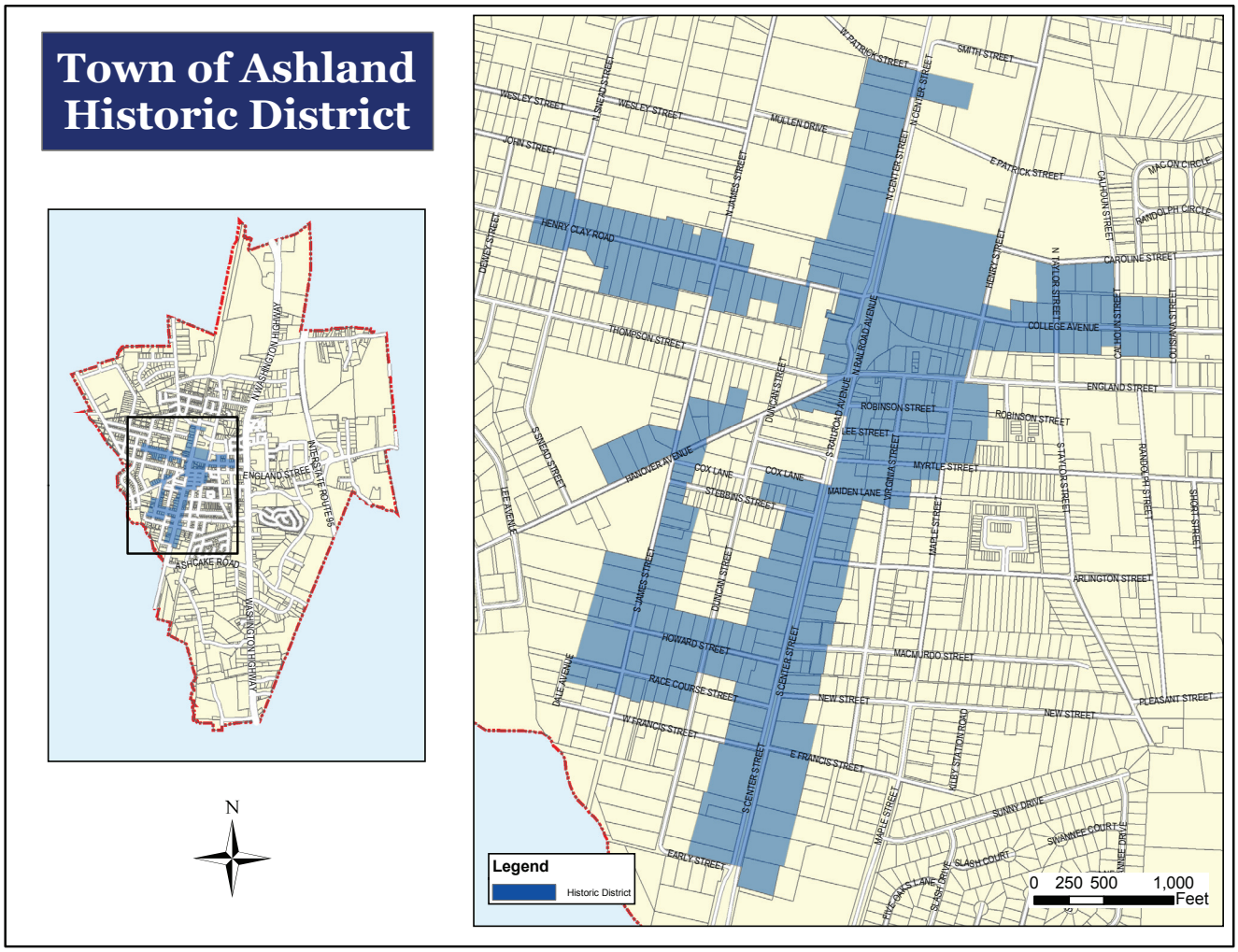
The Town of Ashland strives to have a high level of design and quality construction on all projects within its borders. To facilitate this desire, the Town shall define clear, simple design standards and principles to ensure that the Plan's guiding principles are reinforced. This can be accomplished with the updating and further developing of the 2004 Development Guidelines Handbook. The guidelines shall be addressed in terms of the desired results of visual character and quality instead of minimum acceptable standards. This same quality design and quality construction should be followed on all public projects completed by the Town to set a positive example for private development.

While the 2004 Development Guidelines Handbook does include some design standards for the Town, these guidelines should be strengthened regarding the desired results for the future visual character of the Town. The updated design guidelines document should address alterations to existing buildings, including additions; new construction, landscaping and site features, setback, form and scale, materials, roof form, fenestration, as well as guidelines for demolition. Other factors to be considered are type of foundation, presence or absence of porches, placement of garages and accessory buildings, and the use of fences. The updated design guidelines document should specifically address the neighborhood planning areas individually. Well-written design guidelines will allow property owners to know what is expected of them, while also providing the framework for the Town staff and planning commission to make objective and consistent decisions.

Policy CD.2 Local Historic District Ordinance

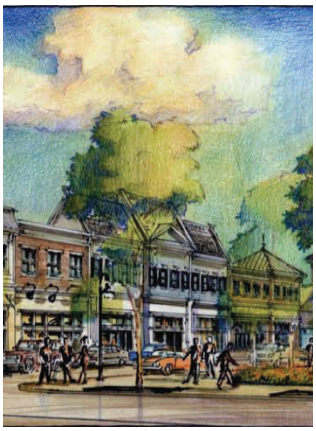
Our Town is fortunate to have two recognized State and National Historic Districts: Ashland Historic District and the Randolph-Macon Historic College Complex. These are cherished resources that as a cohesive district help tell the story of the community's past and its development. Historic resources build pride, community identity and contribute to economic development by attracting visitors interested in our Town's heritage. However, listing on the National Register is largely honorific and provides no preservation protections. By establishing a local historic district ordinance, the Town would create a mechanism to allow the review of actions that could affect the cohesiveness of the historic district. Other goals of a local historic district ordinance can include the protection of the Town's quality of life, the promotion of tourism, stabilization of property values and the education for residents on local history and heritage. The local historic district ordinance should be in the form of an overlay district and should provide for the review of new construction and demolition within the district. It can generate public dialogue and

create an organized process to protect the Town's resources from inappropriate change. The ordinance would be meant to manage change, not prevent new development. The boundaries of the historic district are shown on Map CD-1.



Map CD-1

In conjunction with a local historic district ordinance, Virginia code §15.2-2306 provides for the creation of an architectural review board. The architectural review or advisory board (AAB) would serve in an advisory capacity on matters regarding the historic district. The AAB is a resource during the renovation and alteration of historic structures to achieve the highest level of design standards and quality construction within the Historic District. The AAB can promote historic preservation by providing community education opportunities and/or preservation workshops. These events could include the identification of historical architectural styles and features, funding sources for National Register properties, maintenance of historic homes, or techniques of historic renovation. Advisory information can be provided to citizens who own historic property along with information on decreasing the carbon footprint of historic properties.



Policy CD.3 Compact form

Compact form refers to the physical layout of the Town. As was historically typical in many neighborhoods and downtowns, the compact form of development created a pedestrian oriented environment with a mix of uses and reasons for residents to walk. This compact form still exists today in the Downtown and the residential areas surrounding Downtown. These areas with the many historic homes and businesses are a treasured feature of Ashland. The homes are closely situated with neighbors nearby. These same homes are located very near Downtown and England Street making it possible for residents to walk and patronize our local downtown businesses.

The plans for future neighborhoods should continue to be built in this pattern, with generally straight streets that are laid out in walkable blocks, with walkable street and sidewalks. The houses are usually close together, and close to the streets; suggested dimensions that accomplish this are noted on the following illustrations. This neighborhood pattern is a basic part of the town's overall compact form.

This idea of compact form stems from the larger concept of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND). TND is a planning concept that follows the design patterns of early 20th century villages and towns that was developed as an alternative to sprawling, suburban neighborhoods. The intent is to create pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, commercial and residential uses and public spaces for socializing. There are accommodations made for the automobile, with adequate parking and efficient circulation, but the car is not meant to dominate the landscape. Many tools are available to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Streets in a grid pattern are utilized over cul-de-sacs or curvilinear streets as the grid allows for better pedestrian circulation and more direct routes to destinations. Buildings are oriented to the street. For commercial uses, buildings have entrances right off the sidewalk and large display windows and residential buildings have prominent front doors and front porches. It is important to note that TND is not meant to be superimposed over all areas of town but it meant to supplement the existing neighborhoods and offer a variety of housing options for residents in different stages of life i.e. singles, seniors, young couples and families.

In order to reinforce and enhance the pedestrian nature of our Downtown area, infill development within the Downtown should be constructed at the sidewalk with retail uses and large display windows at the ground level. Downtown infill development is described in further detail in Policy CD.7 and CD.9.

Residential Neighborhoods

Development of the residential areas of Ashland spans well over 150 years. With the earliest neighborhoods developing between 1850-1860 along Virginia and South Center Streets to more recent townhomes on Myrtle Street, Ashland has a remarkably consistent character within a diverse collection of residential neighborhood types. As noted above, a topic mentioned consistently throughout the community workshops was a desire to maintain the qualities of small town living. Residential neighborhoods are one area where this quality can be easily observed, particularly in the Town's historic residential areas. The following general guidelines can maintain this small town way of life in the existing neighborhoods and create that same quality of life in the new neighborhoods as they develop.

Note that these recommendations are based on the existing characteristics found in the historic and other neighborhoods throughout Ashland. This set of recommendations applies not only to houses themselves, but to the neighborhood streets as well. In setting these standards, the plan identifies a vision of not only what Ashland is today, but of what Ashland can be in the future and recommends that these standards are applied throughout the current and future neighborhoods:

Policy CD.4 Residential Infill and Development

- There should be an intermixing of home size, lot size and house setbacks within each block.
- Houses should be situated close to each other and to the street to allow for interaction with the neighbors or passers-by.
- The houses should face the streets, with doors on the front, and porches big enough for sitting or front stoops with sheltering roofs, all of which connect the homes to the neighborhood.
- Garages should be located to the rear of the structure and accessed by a narrow drive between the houses. In the case of smaller, clustered lots, attached, front-loading garages may be permitted if recessed a minimum of 1 foot behind the front façade.
- Small structures such as in-law suites or sheds are important to the variety of our neighborhoods. They should be constructed with the same care as the home and located to the rear of the main structure.
- Durable and high quality building materials are strongly encouraged. Examples of these materials as found in the Historic Districts include bricks, painted wood and precast siding, painted wood and PVC trim, windows with real mullions, and shutters that hinge.

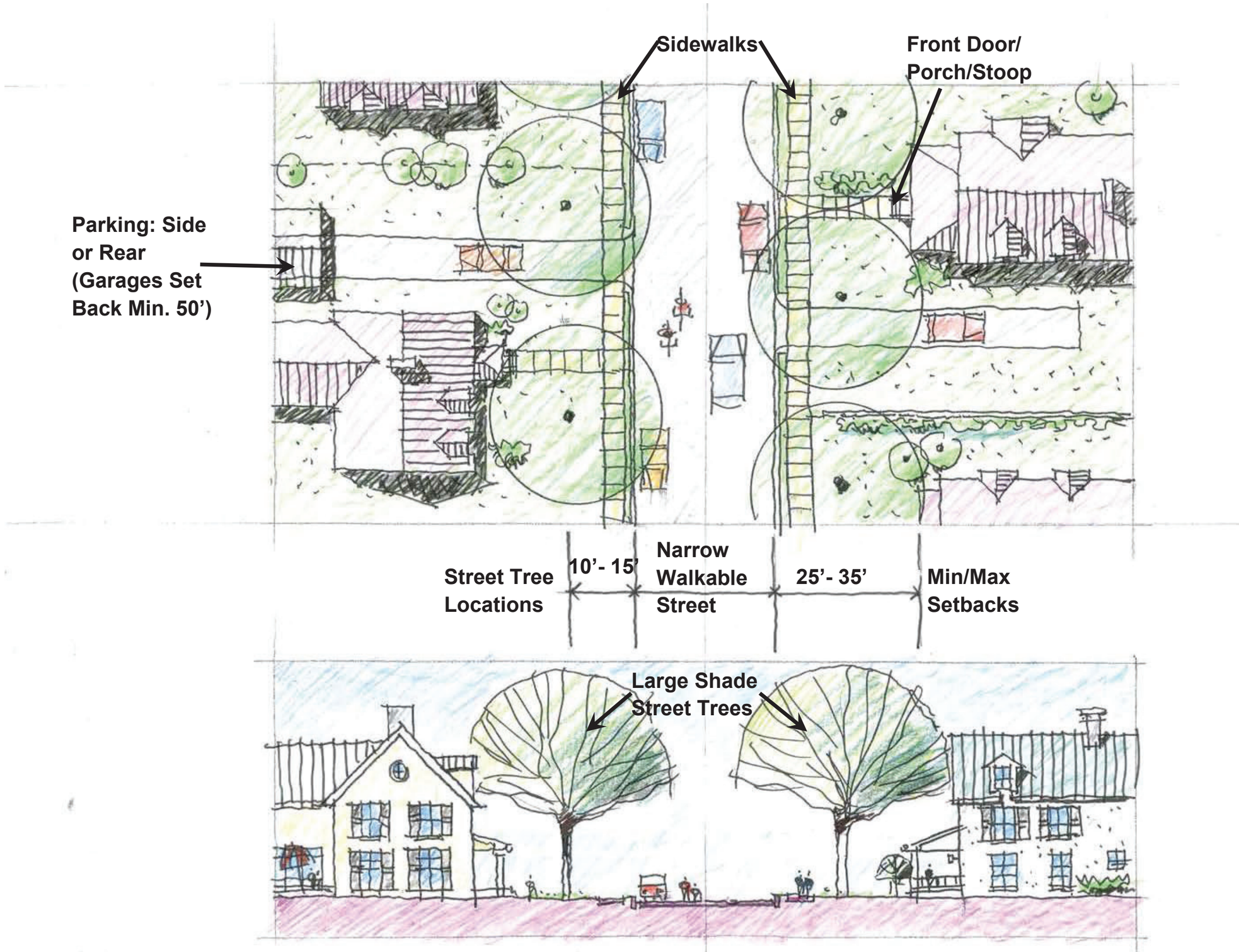
- Four-sided architecture should be implemented, meaning, no side of any building should be constructed with materials that are inferior to any other side.
- Every lot should have shade trees and landscaping to provide cooling in the summer.
- New construction should meet EarthCraft or LEED equivalent building standards, or future equivalents.

Policy CD.5 Residential Street Design

The combination of the homes closely situated to the street, the narrow travel lanes, and the sense of enclosure created by street trees gives our residential streets the feeling of an outdoor room. This design encourages traffic to move slowly allowing people of all ages to walk and cycle through our neighborhoods both on the sidewalks and on the street. These attributes give our neighborhoods a small town feel and create a comfortable space for neighbors to interact and children to play. This character should be continued in new residential developments. Newly constructed streets should be provided with curb, gutter, and sidewalks in most cases. If sidewalks are included, the planting strip between the street and sidewalk should be of an ample width to accommodate street trees.

Policy CD.6 Residential Street Trees and Landscapes

As noted in the Guiding Principles, Ashland's green quality is valued by its citizens. All part of this green quality are the shade trees along the streets, the private gardens that face those streets, and the native tree stands. Our neighborhood street trees are deciduous species large enough to spread across the street, frame the views of homes and provide comfort from the heat. The street trees and this green quality are just one of the reasons that visitors to Ashland admire the beauty of our Town. New developments within our Town should strive for this same green quality. Street trees and landscaping shall be included in all new developments and should be chosen and planted according to the updated design guidelines document. Note the recommended locations and spacing shown on the attached sketch. Trees should be close enough to the street, and to each other, to provide the desired sense of enclosure and shade from the summer's heat. Information regarding the placement of trees in situations where utility lines are present is located in Chapter 8, Environment, Policy E.2.



This sketch reflects the desired design for new residential streets. The sketch indicates the desired setback for homes, garages and street trees as a method to continue the existing character of the compact neighborhoods of Ashland.

RESIDENTIAL STREET DESIGN SKETCH

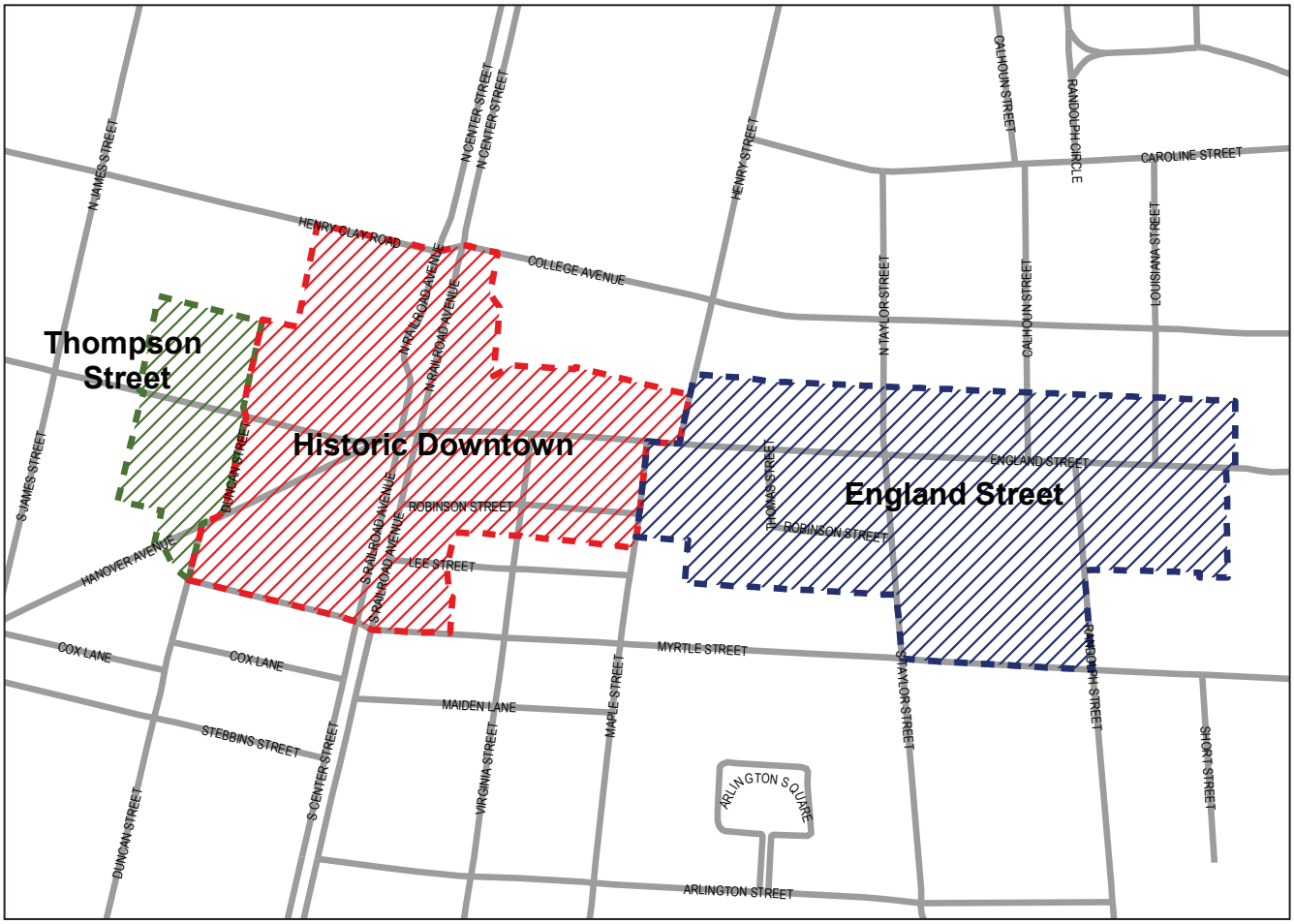
Downtowns: The Historic Downtown, England Street and Thompson Street

One of the strengths of the Town and the heart of our small town character is Ashland's Historic Downtown. When people picture Ashland, they often have Historic Downtown in their minds. There are specific details such as walkable, retail-lined streets, historic buildings built on a human scale, easily accessible parking and a train running through Downtown that make this area cohesive and memorable to residents and visitors alike. The charm and character are an important part of marketing the businesses here.

From a design perspective, there are three distinct parts of this downtown: the historic downtown, England Street, and Thompson Street. The Town must aspire to link these distinct areas together to make one place. England Street must become the gateway to Downtown from the east and Thompson Street must become the gateway from the west. These two places will require dramatic transformations to create a cohesive Downtown.

Our larger Downtown area serves many functions. Significant public buildings are located here including Town Hall, the Post Office and Library. Locally owned restaurants, stores and professional offices complete the mix. The combination of retail, business, and civic uses is enhanced by special events such as the Fourth of July parade, Ashland Street Parties, Inc. summer concerts and the weekly Farmer's Market. These elements reinforce the importance of Downtown's role in the community.

The Town has enlisted the assistance of the Ashland Main Street Association on design characteristics for the Downtown district. Ashland Main Street is an affiliate member of the Virginia Main Street program. This program follows the National Trust's Main Street Four-Point Approach®, which is a community driven, comprehensive strategy used to revitalize downtown business districts. One of the four points of focus is district design. Ashland Main Street will contribute research and design information on many of the topics covered within this section including lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks and landscaping within the Downtown.

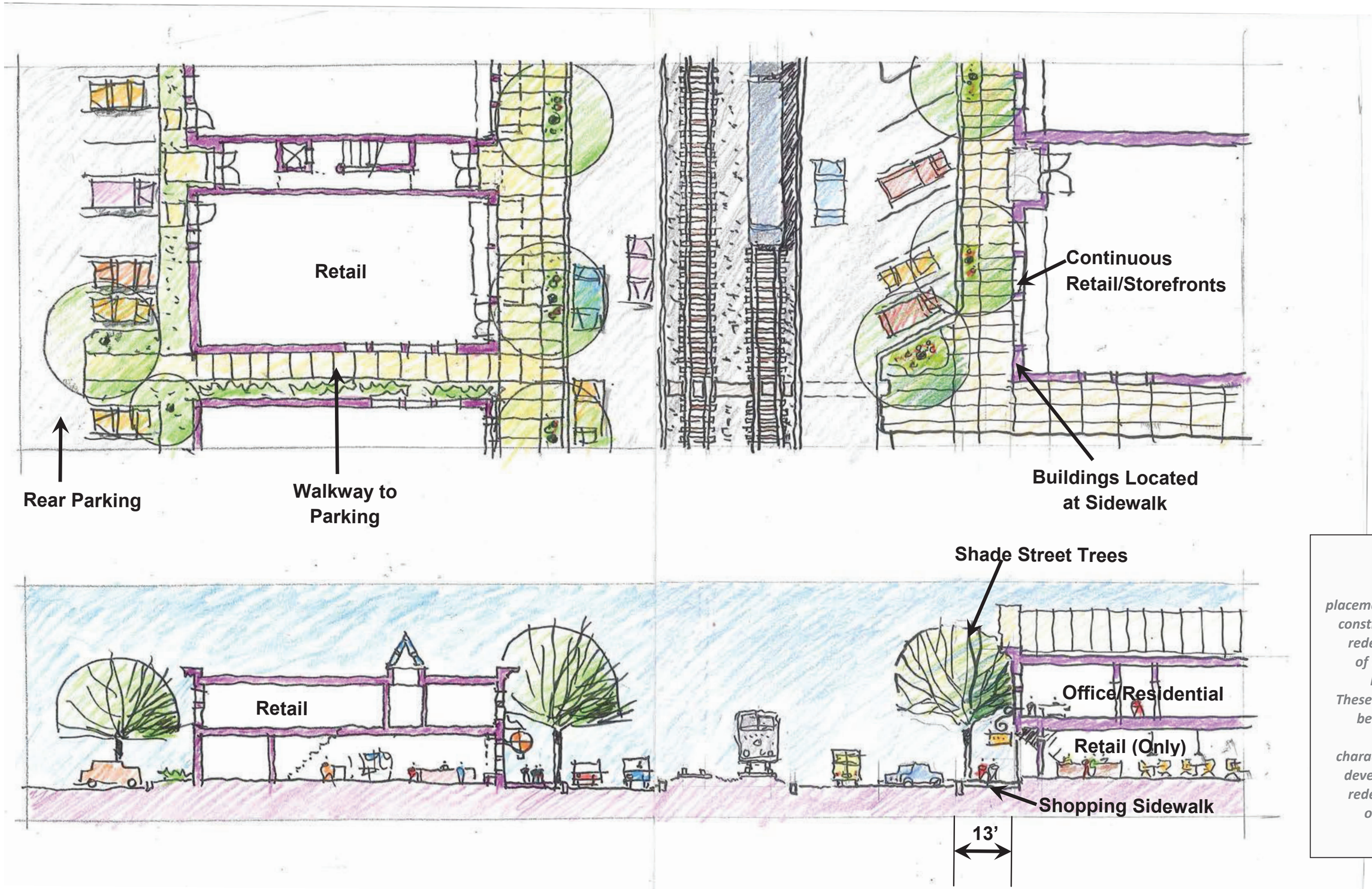


Three Distinct Parts of Downtown: Thompson Street, Historic Downtown and England Street

Historic Downtown

Policy CD.7 Historic Downtown Infill and Redevelopment

- Infill development should maintain the compact and walkable form of our Historic Downtown, including both sides of the tracks, up England Street to the Post Office and down Thompson Street to Town Hall.
- Shops with large windows and signs line the sidewalks, almost continuously. This is an important characteristic of successful downtowns and should continue this way. Both redevelopment and new constructions should follow the appropriate pattern for the specific location within Downtown. Within the historic Downtown, structures should be constructed up to the sidewalk and have the look of a retail space on the lower level with the large front display windows.
- Parking should be within walking distance of shops but not located between the storefront and the street.



This sketch indicates the desired placement for new construction and redevelopment of the Historic Downtown. These details will best maintain the current character as new development or redevelopment occurs in the future.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN SKETCH

- Business signs along the streets of Downtown can and should vary in design. The signs should be colorful and illuminated from the outside. These signs should reflect the pedestrian scale and character of this place. See the updated design guidelines document for recommendations regarding business signs.
- Downtown has a handsome variety in its architecture. The buildings are small in size, like the whole of Downtown. New structures need not replicate the historic architecture, however new structures should be compatible to the existing surroundings in many ways by matching size, scale, massing, fenestration, rhythm, setbacks, materials, and landscaping. See the updated design guidelines document for more details regarding this issue of character. A few examples of this character are: all of the buildings in this area are made of masonry (bricks, stone, and sometimes stucco); the building's column and window spacing along the street are always about 25 feet to 30 feet apart; there are often large office and residential windows on the upper floors. The Town should emphasize the use of well proportioned design, of quality materials and quality workmanship in all construction to ensure the continuity of Downtown into the future.

Policy CD.8 Historic Downtown Structures

Older commercial structures that are of historic interest within the area should be preserved. The Town should encourage property owners of historic structures to renovate to their original historic façade. The Town could provide incentives to property owners for exterior renovations.

A benefit of being a commercial building located in a district listed on the State and National Historic Register is the availability of state and federal rehabilitation tax credits. The rehabilitation tax credit programs provide private citizens with incentives for private investment in preservation. This private investment results in substantial advantages to the public in the form of public pride and enhanced neighborhoods. As suggested in Policy CD.2, an architectural advisory board could assist in educating citizens about possibilities for use of the rehabilitation tax credits.

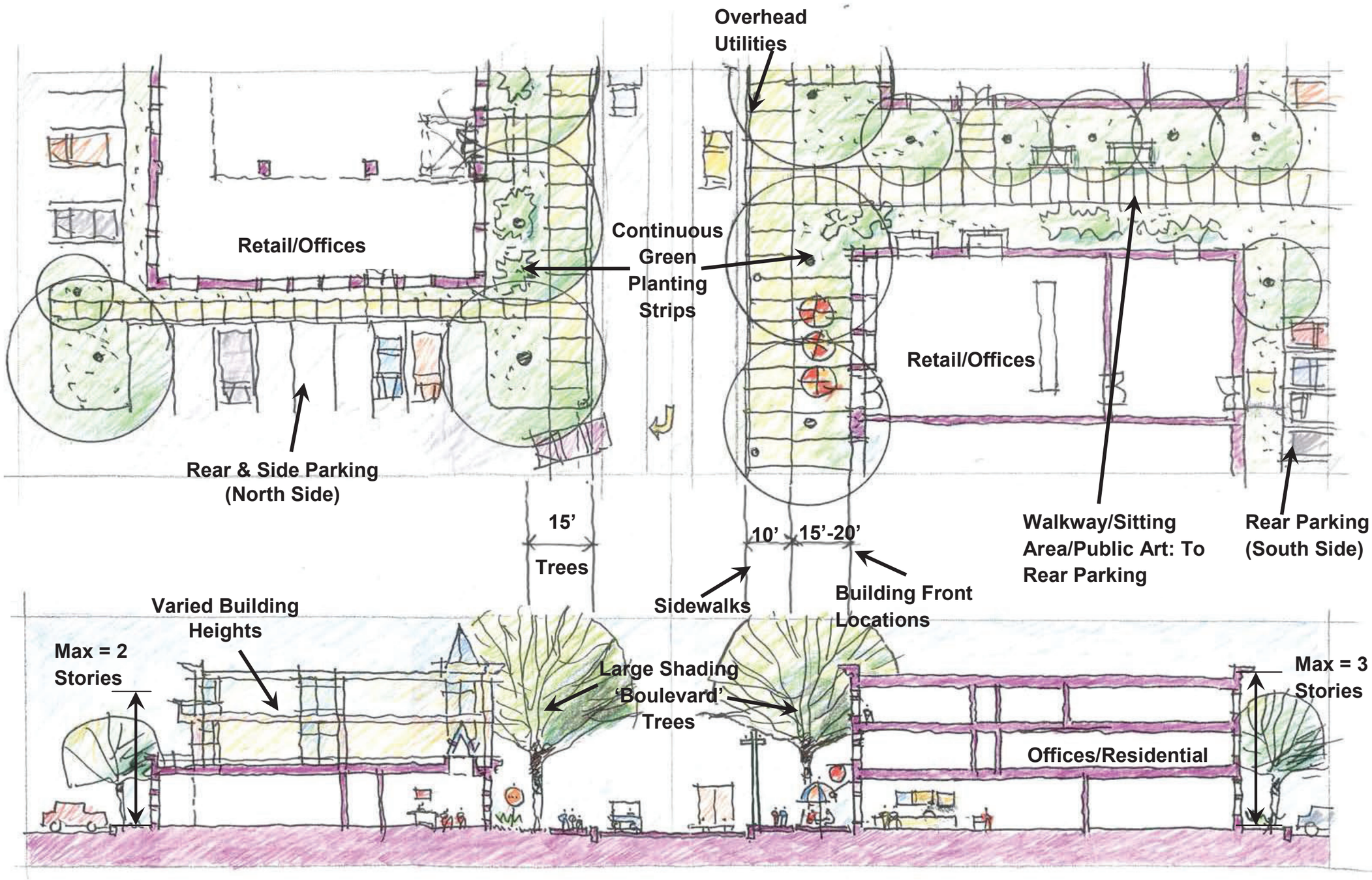
The Town should consider reinstatement of the Façade Improvement Grant Program once funds become available. This program should be established specifically within the Ashland Main Street area of Downtown. These boundaries shown in the map below are essentially England and Thompson Streets from Route 54 to South James Street and Railroad Avenue from Myrtle Street to College Avenue. Specific criteria should be defined as to what improvements are applicable for inclusion in the program.

England Street, The Eastern Transition

As shown in the above sketch, the future vision for England Street is that of a lively retail environment, bustling with pedestrians. England Street will serve as a tree-lined entrance to the center of Ashland. Where possible, the sidewalk will be widened and small green oases will be created. The addition of street trees will create a dramatic visual enhancement as well as shade for the sidewalk. New buildings will be constructed adjacent to the widened sidewalk and green space creating a feeling of enclosure for the pedestrian and a unifying streetscape. The inclusions of lower level retail-style windows and canopies for rain protection contribute to the human-scale of the streetscape. The widened sidewalks allow for the placement of tables and umbrellas in outdoor dining areas, planters, benches, and bike racks. These features contribute to an active street life and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Policy CD.9 England Street Infill and Development

- Along England Street, structures should be constructed with small setbacks, consistent with the Police Department building at the intersection of England and Randolph Streets. The intent is to create a pedestrian-oriented boulevard.
- A mix of retail and services should be located on the street level with office and residential uses on the upper floors. Structures should have the look of a retail space on the lower levels, with large retail-style front windows.
- The north side of England Street has lot depths of 200 feet. Some parking may be located to the side of the building with a continuous green hedgerow separating the sidewalk from the parking lot. Buildings should be a maximum of two stories and adequate landscaping shall be provided, designed so as not to interfere with the adjacent residential character.
- The south side of England Street has lot depths of 300 feet. Parking should be located to the rear of the building with a continuous green space along the sidewalk from the parking lot to the building front. Three stories should be the maximum building height as the south side of England Street is adjacent to a higher density residential district.
- Both sides of England Street should have a sidewalk at least 10 feet wide and a green space of equal width. A ten foot wide green space will accommodate the planting of shade trees.



This sketch depicts the desired design for the future appearance of England Street. The desire is for Retail and Office at street level with residential space above. Building should be located at or near the sidewalk to enhance the pedestrian atmosphere.

ENGLAND STREET AS A BOULEVARD SKETCH

Thompson Street, The Western Transition

Serving as the entrance to Downtown from the west, the two blocks of Thompson Street between Railroad Avenue and South James Street, should be designed in the same manner as the north side of England Street. The observation was made that these lots are approximately 200 feet in depth and mostly back to residential neighbors. By following the same design guidelines as described in Policy CD.9 for the north side of England Street, the boulevard quality of England Street will be extended and provide a connection between downtown and the historic bungalow neighborhood to the west.

Street Design in the Downtowns

Policy CD.10 Downtown Crosswalks

Pedestrian safety is a priority for the Town. As part of our walkable community, safe pedestrian crossings of major roadways should be provided. Crosswalks should be easily visible to both the pedestrian and the driver. This can be accomplished through a change in paving materials and/or surface treatment. As the crosswalk design repeats through the district, it serves as a unifying factor visually tying the area together. Well-marked crosswalks could be located on the England and Thompson Street portions of Downtown and on Railroad Avenue at the rail crossing boardwalks. A variety of crosswalks have been studied by Ashland Main Street and the various types should be included in the updated design guidelines document. As part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update, a study should be completed to determine exactly the best crosswalk locations and establish a priority list for crosswalk installations.

Policy CD.11 Downtown Sidewalks

Ashland Main Street has conducted a study of the types of sidewalks that should be considered for Downtown. The options considered including high quality concrete, brick trim, and brick pavers, will be evaluated in the updated design guidelines document. It must be noted, however, that the arrangement of sidewalk ownership within the Downtown area has made it difficult for the Town to proceed with necessary sidewalk maintenance. In order to gain support for this necessary undertaking, the Town should establish a half or whole block within the Downtown area as a test project. This test will be meant to show the successful outcome of the sidewalk repairs and the positive response of the participating property and business owners. The desired result of this experiment is to show that Downtown sidewalk repair and reconstruction can be completed with little disruption to the building occupants and no damage to the buildings. As part of this project, the Town should install pedestrian lighting and appropriate landscaping as space allows. The existing Sidewalk Replacement Plan should be updated as

current projects are completed. The priority list included in the Sidewalk Plan should be used to determine a location for the test project.

Policy CD.12 Downtown Parking

In order to maintain the compact form of Ashland, careful thought should be given to the treatment of parking throughout the Town. Throughout the Downtown and along some parts of Thompson and England Streets, parking should not be provided in front of buildings between the building and the street but along the side or to the rear of the building depending on lot size. A reduced parking requirement may be appropriate in this area.

Within the Downtown, parking should not be provided for individual uses, but should be provided on-street and at shared lots. The Town currently has one municipal lot referred to as the McKinney Lot between Hanover and South Center Streets. This lot is owned by the Town. There is also public parking available at Town Hall on Duncan Street. In addition, the Library lot is often used for multiple purposes. One additional lot could be added at the former site of the Duke house. This potential parking lot, located at the corner of Thompson and Duncan Streets, could serve as an interim use until a Town Hall Annex is constructed.

The shared use of parking lots should be encouraged in both the commercial and Downtown areas. For instance, an example of a shared parking lot may be the use of the lot by an office during the day, a restaurant in the evenings and a church on Sundays. Another example is that of two or more merchants permitting general shopper parking on what are usually private lots. A shared use agreement, signage alerting the public and notification to customers by participating businesses should be sufficient to ensure this arrangement is successful.

As a result of all these possibilities and expectations for parking in the Downtowns, an overall parking study should be prepared, which analyzes walking patterns, driving access patterns, employee parking needs, and a predicted total demand by the customers for all the businesses located here. This is especially true since many merchants have raised concerns over the years about the need to fully resolve the parking issue. This parking study is addressed further in Chapter 7, Transportation, Policy T.17.

Downtown Identity

In 2009, at the request of the Ashland Main Street Association and with the cooperation of the Town, a study was conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to examine the viability of encouraging the arts as a way to enhance and help define the character of Downtown Ashland. The market analysis, entitled “A Downtown Enhancement Plan,” states that “Ashland already has diverse arts and cultural resourc-

es, which could be organized and expanded upon to help downtown businesses thrive." Existing opportunities for residents and visitors to experience Ashland's creative environment include live music at local venues, art exhibits in both permanent and temporary galleries, dance and music lessons, and public events at Randolph-Macon College. Hanover Arts & Activities Center (HAAC), a valuable part of creativity and arts in Downtown since 1969, provides rental space for musicians, artists and teachers of the arts, as well as producing and presenting the annual *Hanover Idols Competition*, the *Children's Summer Theater Program* Musical, and numerous other special events and performances. Its biennial production of the *Ashland Musical Variety Show*, which showcases over 300 performers from the community, must be held at Blackwell Auditorium at Randolph-Macon College to accommodate the more than 2,000 attendees. In addition, the Town of Ashland is home to many professional artists working in diverse mediums such as jewelry-making, photography, painting, sculpting, pottery-making and woodworking. Other artists include dancers, writers, musicians, actors, and graphic designers.

By encouraging new arts and entertainment venues in Ashland, expanding art education instruction, creating more evening entertainment choices, and attracting additional professional artists to live, work and share their art in our community, there are opportunities to better define the identity of Downtown and promote Ashland as a unique destination for visitors and residents. The VCU analysis concludes that these kinds of efforts could be beneficial to all Ashland businesses and attractions by increasing foot traffic and general use of Ashland's historic downtown area.

Policy CD.13 Public Art

The use of public art as a landmark enhances the visibility of arts and culture in the environment. As part of Creativity and Arts in Downtown and England Street, this area can serve as an on-going outdoor art exhibition using sculpture in open spaces. Public art should be displayed throughout the town, at places such as Town Hall, the Ashland Town Center, local parks, and on busy downtown streets such as England Street and South Railroad Avenue.

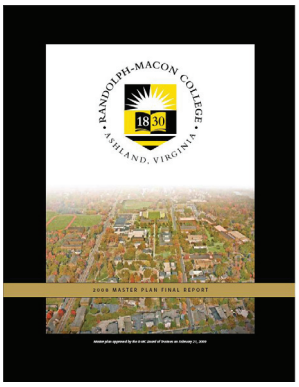
By locating art in significant areas throughout Downtown, a positive visual message is conveyed that Ashland is a town that supports the arts and its local artists. The Town should encourage Ashland Main Street to determine appropriate locations, a maintenance routine, and develop a request for proposal to solicit art for display.

An additional method of highlighting creativity and arts in Downtown and on England Street is to feature art in businesses throughout town. This may be the artwork of local artists or area students. To enhance the Town's appearance, art can also be displayed in vacant storefronts

throughout Downtown. These connections and arrangements for the display of artwork in businesses should be made by Ashland Main Street.

Policy CD.14 Live/Work Space

In an effort to establish new uses in the Downtown area that will complement existing businesses while enhancing the arts and culture environment, the creation of affordable mixed-use, live/work spaces in Downtown should be considered. Increasing affordable live/work space, as well as gallery space, in the Town is attractive to, and convenient for, artists and helps to strengthen an arts and cultural district. These mixed-use developments should be sited at prime locations along the England Street corridor in order to increase visibility and vitality of the arts and culture environment in Downtown Ashland. Financing opportunities for development may be available through Virginia Housing and Development Authority's Mixed-Use/Mixed Income program.



Randolph-Macon College

Randolph-Macon College (R-MC) is a small nationally known undergraduate liberal arts college with an enrollment of approximately 1,200 students. The campus, located near the center of Town, is beautiful and green with spreading trees and handsome brick buildings framed by well-groomed lawns. The mostly brick buildings face out onto the public streets, creating a visual integration with the homes in the surrounding neighborhood. Public streets run right through campus allowing for interaction between residents and students. The beauty of this campus and its quiet liveliness are an important part of the character of Ashland.

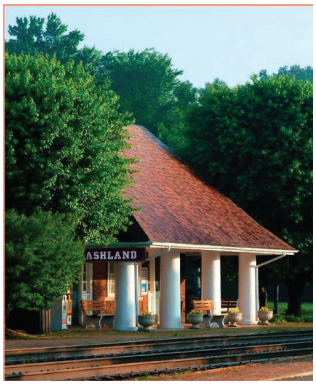
The College sponsors special and community events including sporting events, performing arts presentations, and lectures, all open to the public. The Keeble Observatory, which contains a 12-inch reflecting telescope, is the only observatory in Central Virginia that is open to the public. Three of the original College buildings, built in the 1870s, still exist and are included in the Randolph-Macon Historic College Complex designated by the State and National Historic Registers. The College has been a major factor in the Town's development and continues to be an integral part of the community.

Policy CD.15 Randolph-Macon College Master Plan

While the Town of Ashland and Randolph-Macon College have coexisted for many years and the College is a beautiful part of Ashland, Ashland is still a "town with a college" rather than a "college town". The Town and College will continue to work together to become more incorporated and build a stronger relationship.

As acknowledged in the R-MC Master Plan, adopted in 2009, the master plan principles seek to "Foster strong connections through porous edges

and thresholds" and "Strengthen relationships throughout Greater Ashland to encourage potential partnerships." The Town should continue to work with R-MC on goals such as better connecting the campus to Railroad Avenue and England Street intersections, strengthening physical connections to Downtown by streetscape improvements and opening up the campus edges to Downtown pedestrian activities while discouraging geographical expansion of the campus outside its current boundaries. Infill development within the current R-MC footprint should be encouraged.



Public Parks, Landscapes and Open Spaces

As part of Ashland's green quality, the Town contains a number of small neighborhood parks, as well as some open space and a growing trail network. Ashland's neighborhood parks are lush, green spaces that allow residents to relax, experience nature, and interact with users of all ages. The Town's parks are used primarily for informal, non-organized activity. These parks generally range from one to eight acres in size and mainly serve the residents who live within walking distance or a short driving distance. Hanover County provides regional parks that are designed for larger group activities and recreational events for all of the Hanover County residents. Ashland's neighborhood parks, combined with Hanover County's larger community parks, offer a wide range of amenities. More information on the Town's parks is included in Chapter 8, Parks and Recreation.

In addition to the public parks, several tree stands or small forests remain in various parts of town, often as wetlands. These stands are precious, both as native environments and as part of the character of Ashland. Every effort should be made to ensure that the minimum number of trees are removed when new development takes place such as the use of alternative stormwater management practices.

Town Landmarks

Landmarks enable people to orient themselves with a place and recognize where they are. Landmarks contribute to the uniqueness of a place. Our Historic Train Station is one of the more recognizable landmarks in region. It is a key identifying location within the community and a point of orientation for those passing through on the train. Ashland is fortunate to have many valued landmarks. Some examples of other landmarks within Ashland are: the active railroad at the center of town, the Plaza, the Green in front of Town Hall, Cross Brothers Grocery, and Frank E. Brown Fountain Plaza on the R-MC campus. The historic and cultural past of Ashland is integral to its sense of place and community; its economy; and its attraction to visitors. These landmarks, among others, must be protected and maintained as they are an important part of the overall fabric of the Town.

3.2 Character of Surrounding Areas

Mixed Commercial Use (includes Office, Retail and Hotels)

Ashland has long existed as a small town in a rural landscape. The Town's development has followed that of the north/south travel routes with increasing commercial development as the transportation system grew. These changes have left the Town with both aging and struggling commercial areas and newer retail concentrations. Retail businesses provide approximately 39 percent of the jobs within Ashland and provide a necessary service for both residents and visitors alike.

Equally important to Ashland's status as a regional employer and potential growth in this area is the office market. Currently Ashland has approximately 472 acres zoned for Office (B-1, B-2, B-4 & POB) which is 10.2 percent of the total area. The 2008 Ashland Market Analysis prepared by Urban Partners found that most office space in the Town is located in small repurposed buildings, and/or one story commercial or flex buildings. As mentioned in Chapter 4 Land Use, there is a need for Class A, multi-story office space. The Business Owners and Managers Association International defines Class A office space as "the most prestigious buildings competing for premier office users with rents above average for the area. Buildings have high quality standard finishes, state of the art systems, exceptional accessibility and a definite market presence."

Note, however, that in spite of the importance of these areas to the economy and life of Ashland, they never have had the character that makes our small town so beloved by its residents. Therefore, the recommendations here are made with the aspiration to raise the quality of the character and design in these places, so that they can join the rest of the town as special and uniquely Ashland.

The mixed-use commercial areas include several distinct places, each of which has its own needs, and therefore should have its own character. There are three such areas:

- Route 54 east of Route 1 is the hospitality and retail core of the mixed-use zone;
- Route 1 is an aging, auto-oriented corridor that requires a transformation;
- The rest of the areas east of Route 1, Hill Carter Parkway, East Ashland, etc., are a wide-spread set of varying uses, and are not as compact and potentially distinct as Routes 54 and 1.

Though each is a distinct place, the following policies address the shared characteristics that apply to all three places.

Policy CD.16 Encourage Commercial Building Design that fits Ashland's Character

Commercial buildings shall use building designs that are consistent with the character of Ashland and its Downtown and avoid prototypical designs used throughout the region. Through amendments to the zoning code and an updated design guidelines document, standards should be developed that address maximum setbacks (build-to lines), roof forms, massing, and fenestration as appropriate within each specific neighborhood planning area.

Policy CD.17 Redevelopment

The Town should encourage redevelopment of older commercial building and parcels. As part of the redevelopment process, improved site design should be considered in relation to placement of buildings, parking lots and landscaping and how these relate to the pedestrian.

Policy CD.18 Mixed Commercial Use Structures

The Town should encourage high-quality construction in both new construction and renovations of buildings. Building architecture in new construction, renovations and additions should provide visual interest relating to the user on a human scale. Special attention should be given in the updated design guidelines document to roof forms, fenestration, massing, the use of quality materials, quality workmanship and consistency with surrounding development. Four-sided architecture shall be implemented, meaning, no side of any building should be constructed with materials that are inferior to any other side. Also, mechanical equipment, dumpsters and loading zones shall be screened from public view.

Policy CD.19 Redevelopment of Mixed Commercial Use Parking

Property owners and developers should be encouraged to reconfigure existing large parking areas. As commercial properties redevelop, construction of additional infill buildings closer to the street, along with enhanced landscaping should be utilized to break up massive parking areas and better define the edges of the parking lot. It also may be appropriate for the Town to reduce parking requirements to allow for these improvements to occur. Alternatively, the Town may also consider the use of maximum parking requirements in a move away from minimum parking standards. As mentioned in Policy CD.12, shared parking should be encouraged including the use of shared lots.

Policy CD.20 New Development Site Design and Parking

Site development for new commercial uses should be designed with the pedestrian in mind. Buildings should be located close to the street.

Buildings should locate parking to the side, or at the most provide one row of parking in front. Big box users that desire additional parking in front should use design alternatives, such as facing buildings sideways, or providing outparcels in front. If this is still not possible, a large amount of landscaping should be provided within the parking area. It may be appropriate to reduce parking requirements for certain uses. Alternatively, the Town may also consider the use of maximum parking requirements in a move away from minimum parking requirements. As mentioned in Policy CD.12, shared parking should be encouraged through the use of shared lots.

Policy CD.21 Trees and Landscaping in Mixed Commercial Use Areas

Parking lots and setbacks shall be well-landscaped. Vegetated islands should be dispersed throughout parking areas. A variety of plantings should be provided including shade trees which should be used whenever possible to offset the heat island effect produced by the increase in hardscaping in a commercial project. Front setbacks should be provided with a mix of low growing shrubs, street trees, and ornamental trees as directed in the Town's updated design guidelines document.

Policy CD.22 Curb, Gutter and Sidewalks in Mixed Commercial Use Areas

Curb, gutter, and sidewalks should be provided across the frontage of newly developed commercial sites and retrofitted as redevelopment occurs.

Policy CD.23 Route 1 Design Overlay District

Route 1 (Washington Highway) is an aging but still important north/south corridor through the Town of Ashland. Until the development of Interstate 95, this was the main east coast thoroughfare. Much of the development along this corridor occurred in a sporadic manner without much long-range planning or vision for the area. Relationships between adjacent properties were not given consideration. This has given the corridor a disjointed appearance. Therefore, the Town seeks a real transformation.

As the long-term future of development is considered, there is opportunity to achieve a transformation. To achieve a sense of order and unity along the corridor, the Town should consider a design overlay district as an appropriate solution to guide future development. Currently, the development is typified by deep setbacks from the roadway, buildings of varying characteristics and conditions fronted by large parking areas, sporadic landscaping and limited pedestrian access. The new recommendations should suggest one-to-three story buildings located closer to the right-of-way with major parking areas to the side and rear, with

only small limited parking between the building and roadway. The inclusion of street trees, sidewalks, and signaled crosswalks will contribute to an enhanced pedestrian experience. This transformation will therefore create an overall parkway appearance that makes the road seem more like part of Ashland, and will at the same time increase the value of the land for business and development. Route 1 is a major gateway to our town, and must be developed to the highest standards.

The character of the corridor that results from these recommended design conditions, as illustrated in the attached sketch should provide for a distinctive and handsome overall appearance, more efficient use of land and in specific portions of the corridor, promote economic development and a pedestrian friendly environment. The fundamental purpose of a Route 1 Design Overlay District is therefore to enhance both the image and the functionality of the Route 1 corridor. The Design Overlay District will provide clearly articulated streetscape, site, and building design guidelines and recommendations. This will not only apply to new development but will provide guidance for the renovation and expansion of existing uses. The streetscape design is specifically intended to create the desired overall appearance, and to increase safety, enhance connectivity and improve pedestrian and vehicular access to shopping, services, nearby neighborhoods and employment. It may be appropriate for the Town to look at short-term strategies to improve the roadway and areas immediately adjacent to encourage future development.

The Route 1 Design Overlay District should run the length of Route 1 within the Ashland borders. As further addressed in Chapter 4, Land Use, this should be a district with a mix of commercial uses including office, hotel and retail. This mix of uses can reinforce each other, and by design coexist. Office workers can eat and shop in the restaurants and retail and hotels can serve the offices. Tourists using the hotels will benefit from the close proximity of the retail and restaurants as well. This mix of uses can occur in separate buildings or mixed in single buildings.

Policy CD.24 Route 1 Crosswalks

Signaled crosswalks should be provided at specific locations along Route 1 to (1) enable residents to safely cross from the residential neighborhoods to the retail shopping areas and (2) to walk safely along the new Route 1 sidewalks. Some features that should be considered in the design are: countdown and audible pedestrian signals; in-street “yield to pedestrian signs”; high visibility crosswalk striping; curb extensions; pedestrian-friendly slip lanes; and reduced corner radii.

Route 54 (Interstate Service Area)

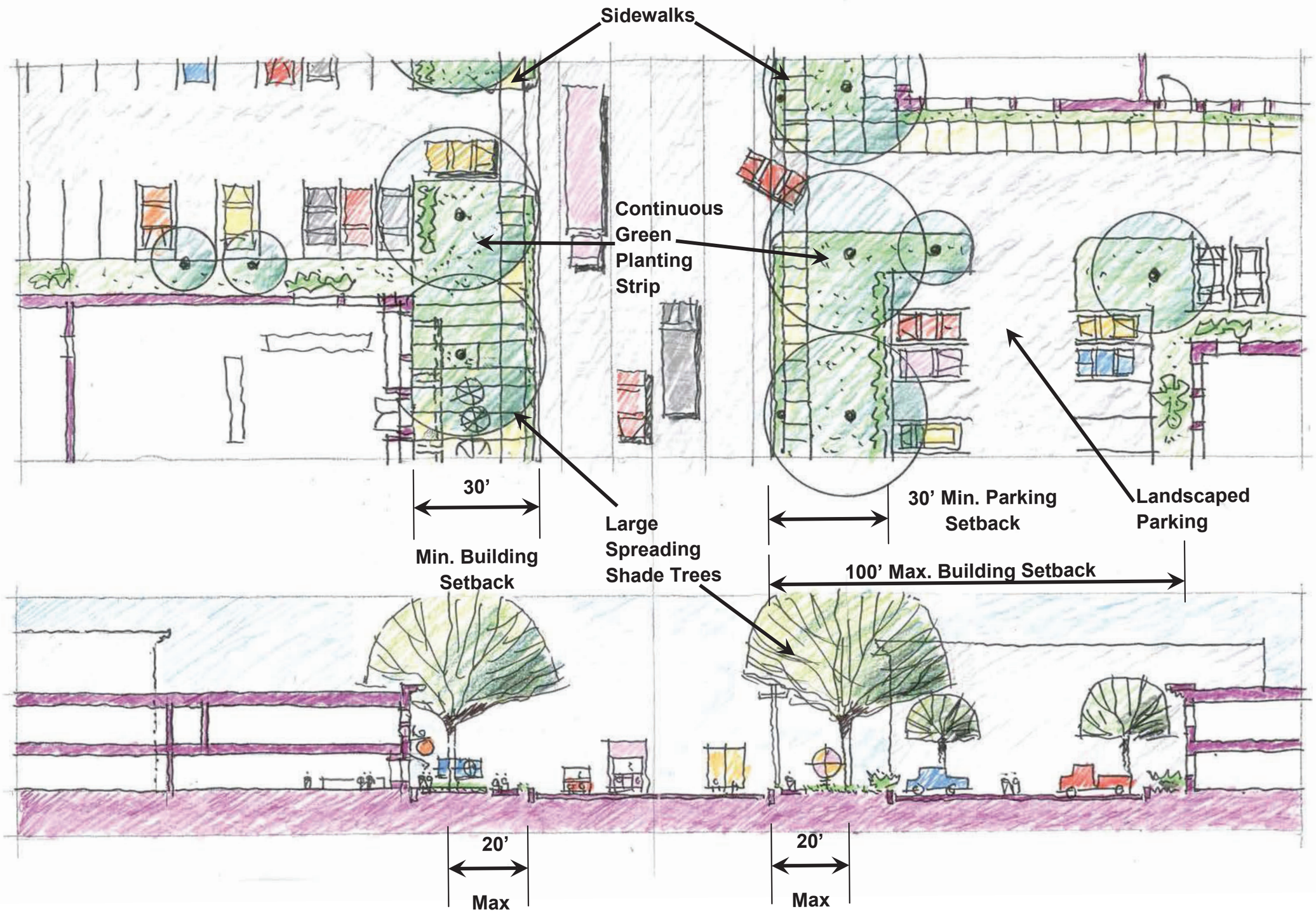
For many visitors to our Town, this is their first view of Ashland. This area includes various retail businesses, service stations, restaurants, fast-food locations, hotels, motels, and convenience stores. These are both highway oriented businesses and neighborhood commercial serving a wide range of users including interstate and regional through travelers, motor freight carriers, local residents and tourists visiting Downtown and nearby attractions.

Policy CD.25 Interstate Service Area Improvements

The interstate Service Area needs to be aesthetically pleasing to maintain its attraction to tourists especially as development continues at Hanover County's Lewistown exit only three miles away. The Town should encourage continued reinvestment by existing businesses and investment by new businesses in the visual appearance of Route 54 and Hill Carter Parkway within the Interstate Service area. The Town should itself continue to participate in reinvestment in the visual character of this area, as has been done with the landscaping and specific service signage along the corridor. Public/private partnerships should be sought to support both the installation and long-term maintenance of improvements. The Town should continue to maintain and enhance the landscaping along this corridor and signage welcoming visitors to Ashland, while also clearly directing them to our landmarks. These improvements and partnerships should be considered as part of a long-term economic development strategy for the Town.

Policy CD.26 Route 54/Route 1 Intersection

As noted above in the Route 1 policies, an equally important intersection is that of Route 1 and Route 54/England Street. This section of England Street should serve as the red carpet to Downtown and the development here should reflect this. New development on the two western corners should be encouraged closer to the street. Currently both of these corners are underutilized. Better utilization of these parcels would create a powerful centerpiece at this key intersection thereby drawing business enhancements down England Street toward the historic Downtown providing a positive domino effect of improvements.



This sketch shows the desired design for Route 1 in the future. Building setbacks and parking lot placement are indicated with the intention of creating a transformation of the character of Route 1.

ROUTE 1 SKETCH

Industrial Areas

The Town of Ashland, as a regional employer, has and can support a large proportion of industrial land. Currently the Town has approximately 960 acres zoned industrial which is 21% of the total land area. Just as residential and commercial must be buffered from industrial uses; the industrial zoning must be protected as well. This industrial development and the employment it provides is a critical part of the Ashland economy.

Policy CD.27 Landscaping for Industrial Development

Because the industrial areas have such a wide variety of uses and have developed over a long period of time, there is a very disjointed appearance from the locations fronting on the southern portion of Route 1 to the new Hill Carter Parkway. As Route 1 is a major travel corridor, industries located along this corridor shall provide for landscaping that enhances the Town's appearance. A good model to follow is Hill Carter Parkway. A significant landscaping investment was made both in the publically maintained and privately maintained areas. This is the appearance that should be strived for. Industries located off the main thoroughfares may require a much lower level of landscape enhancement and should provide what is appropriate to the context of their location. The landscape ordinance in the Town Code should be updated to include landscaping within the industrial areas. This landscaping should include large deciduous trees used as street trees, understory plantings, and shrub areas giving an overall green appearance.

Policy CD.28 Industrial Parks

Industries in Ashland are generally located as freestanding facilities. Ideally there will be future opportunities to consolidate parcels for the formation of one or more industrial parks. The advantage of industrial parks is that it gives the Town the opportunity to direct development in a more planned fashion. Industrial parks typically include provisions for better traffic flow, improved landscaping, sufficient parking and the provision of buffers from surrounding uses. To the extent possible the Town should encourage industrial parks over other locations for industry. This same idea applies to office parks. Both should be considered as part of an economic development strategy for the Town.

3.3 Other Details of the Town's Character

Street Trees

As mentioned numerous times throughout the Plan and in the Guiding Principles, the value of the green quality of our Town is an important part of what makes Ashland *Ashland*. This green quality is made up of the shade trees lining the streets, the private gardens that fill the yards and the native trees stands throughout the Town. Considering the importance of street trees to the Town, specific recommendations are given for street trees in the various residential and commercial sections of this chapter. The focus here is how the tree canopy impacts our Town.

While many streets throughout the Town are tree-lined, there is room for improvement. The Town's has a landscaping matrix with a priority list of possible street trees for planting within the public right-of-way on key corridors and gateways. The design guidelines provide information and diagrams regarding the proper spacing of trees within the public right-of-way along side streets. Additional tree policies including information regarding tree placement and avoiding conflict with utility lines can be found in Chapter 8, Environment.

Policy CD.29 Plan for Maintenance of Existing Trees

As mentioned in Chapter 8, Environment, as part of the Tree City USA program the Town is required to maintain a tree ordinance. This ordinance should address the retrofitting of existing trees. The Town's trees should be maintained by a tree crew that is skilled, knowledgeable and capable of a wide range of tree maintenance, from young tree planting to large tree removal. The Town should insist on high-quality tree care guided by a certified arborist. Town staff may be trained to complete this work. Regular maintenance should consist of path/sidewalk clearance, roadway clearance, and sign clearance. All pruning work shall be completed pursuant to International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Regular maintenance should also include structural training of young trees, crown cleaning of existing trees as needed and hazard identification for existing trees.

All removed Town-owned trees shall be replaced as appropriate. Any required Town-owned trees or other plantings that die or are improperly maintained shall be replaced with healthy specimens of similar species with the exception of those trees planted under utility lines. New street trees planted under or near utility lines shall follow the guidelines of the Municipal Tree Restoration Program described in Chapter 8, Environment.

Policy CD.30 Tree Inventory

In determining the appropriate trees to recommend for planting both as street trees and for other locations throughout town, the first step is

to complete a tree inventory for the Town. The tree inventory is an important part of maintaining genetic diversity within our tree population. A rule of thumb regarding the appropriate mix of trees, provided by the U.S. Botanic Garden, is no more than 30% of one family, 20% of one species and no more than 10% of one cultivar town wide. This reasoning stems from the past history of huge losses with the spread of Dutch elm disease and loss caused by the structural defects of Bradford Pear trees. Ensuring continued biodiversity within our tree population can minimize plant maintenance needs and losses. There are many tree management software programs available to assist the Town with tracking this information. Following the completion of a tree inventory, a recommended planting list should be created and regularly updated as trees are lost and replanted within the Town. A properly completed inventory will include a map of tree locations throughout Town. Policy E.2 from the Environment chapter regarding the placement of trees in relation to utility lines should be considered when making choices for placement of street trees.

Policy CD.31 Consistency & Variety

To create a sense of pattern and to help better define districts and their edges, a consistent species or cultivar of street trees should be utilized along any given street, at a standardized spacing. A change in street tree species can help visually define the edge between two districts. In creating this consistency, it is important to keep in mind the diversity of the entire Town in order to prevent spread of plant diseases. While consistency can be maintained by planting several blocks in a row of the same species, some alternation should occur every few blocks, to prevent the potential for entire corridors or large areas becoming devastated by the blight of a species. This pattern of consistency and variety can be organized using the map created in the tree inventory policy above.

Policy CD.32 Trees within New Developments

Street trees should be provided by developers along all newly constructed streets, across the street frontage for all new projects, both commercial and residential, and provided by the Town in conjunction with all major street construction projects as required by the Landscape Plan/Ordinances.

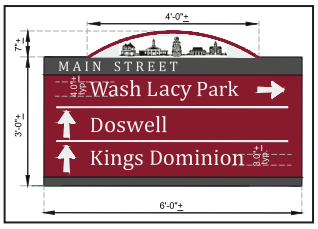
Policy CD.33 The Town's Tree Planting Program

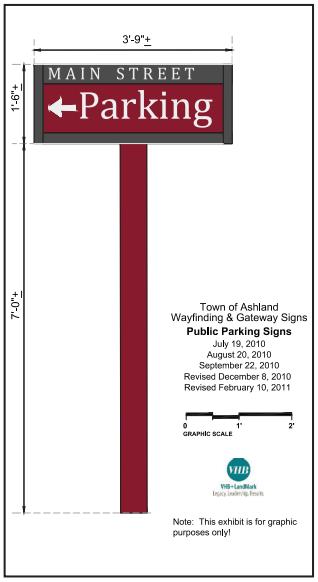
Just as developers must plant in new neighborhoods, the Town should work in existing neighborhoods to infill the streets with new street trees. As this may be cost prohibitive to allow the entire Town to request street trees at once, it may be feasible to work through the Neighborhood Planning Areas one at a time. This could also be accomplished as a matching donation through an "Adopt-a-Tree" program. The resident pays half of

the total cost with an agreement to water the tree for the first two years until the tree is established. This method has two positive results: (1) the Town is able to specify the type of tree according to the tree inventory and (2) existing neighborhoods get replanted.

Signage

Well placed, quality signs promote a visual image of the community and add to the aesthetic character of a building, benefitting both the business owner and the Town. Signs are an accessory use and should not dominate the landscape or building façade. Whether freestanding (pylon or monument) or building mounted, a sign should be compatible with its surrounding buildings and environment in both color and design. If externally illuminated, the sign should be lit from the top down to avoid overspill into the night sky or beyond the immediate environment. Three general sign classifications are noted: wayfinding, commercial as seen from a car, commercial as seen by a pedestrian.





These are just a few samples of the wayfinding signs approved by Town Council in 2011.

Wayfinding

A good wayfinding system is meant to get visitors into Town, to their destination and back out with as little headache as possible. A good system will project a consistent image for the entire Town and reduce visual clutter. There are several other useful purposes of a wayfinding system such as to highlight key attractions, enhance urban design, reinforce community identity, reduce driver and pedestrian frustration, and improve traffic flow and roadway safety.

Policy CD.34 Street Signage

To help create a unique identity for the Town, and assist with wayfinding, the Town is working with VHB Landmark. This process includes new entrance signage for the Town and street signage that will differ between districts including specific signs for the college area. The Town should follow through and implement the wayfinding recommendations Townwide, beginning with key corridors and Downtown.

Commercial signs as seen from a car

Two types of freestanding signs typically used on auto-oriented corridors are pylon signs and monument signs. The lower monument signs are generally preferred as they are better suited for visibility than the tall signs mounted on poles that often compete with the tree canopy. Landscaping around the base of a monument style sign can accentuate the sign if the landscaping is maintained and trimmed appropriately.

Policy CD.35 Mixed Commercial Use Signage

The Town is actively working with business owners to replace non-conforming pylon signs with landscaped monument signs where appropriate.

Monument signs can be just as effective, if not more so, because they are at the eye level of the driver. Property and business owners should be encouraged to replace existing, deteriorating and non-conforming signage. Both the freestanding signs and the building mounted signs should coordinate with both the building and surrounding neighborhood design. Provision of some incentives, such as additional building signage in exchange for using a monument sign may be helpful in encouraging this change.

Commercial signs as seen by a pedestrian

In a walkable area like the Historic Downtown and portions of England Street, the signs should relate to the pedestrian. Ideally, these signs should hang or project from a building to add dimension to the streetscape. Creative signs identifying the unique character of each establishment are encouraged. Building mounted signs in pedestrian areas should be externally illuminated. The lighting fixtures should be top mounted and shielded so that the light is directed only at the sign façade.

Visual Clutter

The appearance of the Town is an important part of the foundation for civic pride. Signage is one factor in the appearance of Ashland. The presence of too many signs is uninviting and the clutter can actually be counterproductive in helping people find their way. Reasonable sign controls along with other aesthetic standards can be a magnet for quality businesses with good paying jobs and a stable tax base.

The Town understands the need for businesses, public places and recreation areas to make their location known to the public, to shoppers, to travelers and to tourists. The purpose of the Town's sign ordinance is to promote signage that is orderly and appropriately sized, spaced, illuminated and located for its site. Good sign management improves the ability of the public to find businesses and other locations by reducing sign clutter, motivates them by enhancing overall aesthetic quality and creates a place where people want to spend time and money.

Policy CD.36 Sign Management

It is the Town's goal to minimize sign clutter throughout Ashland. The Town shall conduct a study on all public signs in an effort to create an effective signage system for the Town. Opportunities to combine signs will be sought out; for instance, reducing the number of no parking signs within a single block.

Public Lighting

As was mentioned in several of the community workshops, there is a need for well-designed street lighting both for the pedestrian and the

motorist throughout many areas of town. Well-designed lighting assists in creating a safe environment for residents both as pedestrians and in vehicles. As part of preserving Ashland's small town character, it is also important to protect our night skies. According to the International Dark Sky Association, it is the right amount of light, in the right place, at the right time that results in better safety and security not more lights. By following the appropriate guidelines, both the need for resident safety and the protection of the night skies is possible.

Also addressing the need for streetlights is the concept of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), a multi-disciplinary approach to creating safe environments. One of the CPTED principles is natural surveillance. The overall goal is see and be seen. Lighting plays an important role because a person is less likely to commit a crime if someone will see them do it. As mentioned above, it is the right amount and placement of lighting that is important. Lights that are too bright and improperly placed create bright spots, deep shadows and glare defeating the purpose of security lighting. Pedestrian lighting should be placed at the proper height for lighting the faces of people within the space.

The use of a single style light fixture can create a distinctive design element and provide continuity through the various neighborhood planning areas. Specifics regarding fixtures, placement and suggested corridors for installation are provided in the design guidelines.

Policy CD.37 Streetlights

As part of a joint task force, the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) have created a Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) for public review. This ordinance is created in generic code language for easy adoption into the Town Code and is adaptable to any community situation. This MLO should be reviewed and considered for adoption and use within the Town of Ashland. The Town is in need of a lighting policy to address streetlights on both the auto and pedestrian scale. Any policy created should consider and possibly update the ordinance regarding exterior lighting of buildings and parking lots. This policy should also provide direction in accordance with this Plan using the principles of CPTED and of dark sky compliant lighting.

Policy CD.38 Lighting Selection

Streetlights selected should be dark sky compliant, not cast glare to surrounding areas, and should provide natural appearing light rather than the discolored hues created by older lighting technology. The light fixtures should be low energy, high efficiency and low maintenance.

Policy CD.39 Light Placement

Similar to street trees, light fixtures should also create a sense of pattern and help better define districts and their edges, particularly between pedestrian and vehicular oriented areas. Pedestrian-style fixtures should be used in more densely developed commercial areas, historic areas, and in conjunction with new residential development. Modern overhead lighting is appropriate in all other areas, when needed for safety. The design guidelines document should be updated and utilized for guidance regarding specific placement.

Policy CD.40 Community Gateways

Immediately upon entering the Town, noticeable differences in the streetscape should be apparent to create a sense of entry and provide a clear edge to the Town limits. Visual cues are an important means to help visitors and residents distinguish areas from one another. Gateways, which can be viewed as the front doors into a community, provide the first impressions of that community. The gateways can either express a community's pride and sense of place or can give the community a poor public image. As the Town works with VBH Landmark to develop a uniform theme of signage throughout the community, special attention should be given to the gateways to reflect the sense of place that is special to the Town of Ashland and to create a sense of arrival to the visitor. Development of attractive entrances into Ashland should include landscaping and lighting with appropriate signage that is part of an overall uniform theme for the Town.

An important edge to plan for in the future is the boundary between the Town and County. The desire to keep the rural appearance of this edge was expressed by participants of the community workshops. The small town feel of our community is affected by the design and uses on our boundaries and edges.

Policy CD.41 Joint-Jurisdictional Planning

The Town should continue to work with Hanover County to ensure the delineation of the border between the Town and County. The County's Comprehensive Plan includes, by reference, several Small Area Plans that provide greater detail and more specific land use and transportation recommendations for certain areas of the County. The Town should participate with Hanover County to jointly develop a Small Area Plan for the newly-established Suburban Service Area immediately surrounding the Town. This could include plans for the Route 54 West / Falling Creek area (including Yowell Road, Elmont Road, Route 54, and areas northwest of Ashland along Blunts Bridge Road) and the Old Ridge Economic Development Zone (encompassing areas northeast of Ashland along Hickory Hill Road and Old Ridge Road, designated for business park development.)

Development of Small Area Plans would allow for significant citizen and stakeholder input, and would send the signal to the development community that the Town and County share the same vision for the ultimate build-out of Ashland and its immediate surroundings.

The character the Town strives for along the entrances to Town can be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Introducing enhancements to the corridor, such as landscaping, curb and gutter, medians, street lights, and underground utilities.
- Provide contrast in commercial signage through enhanced sign regulations.
- Locate buildings closer to the street with parking to the side, or at the most, provide one row of parking in front.
- Homes should face the main street instead of lining the street with backyard fences.

These changes in the streetscape should continue on and throughout these corridors, and not appear only for the sake of creating satellite edges.

Stormwater Management and its Impact on Character

Policy CD.42 Stormwater Management

Developers should be encouraged to integrate low impact stormwater management techniques and reduce impervious surface coverage, in order to minimize the potential for flooding and water pollution. Stormwater runoff can be managed through a variety of techniques such as permeable paving, green roofs, vegetated swales and sunken median strips along the roadway. Sunken median strips or vegetated swales can absorb runoff as it meets the surface, eliminating non-point source pollution. They provide both a functional and attractive solution to stormwater runoff. Additional landscaping options such as rain gardens and large areas of green open space, can not only reduce pollution collected by runoff, but will also provide an opportunity to beautify the community and create a more comfortable environment for its users. In addition, the use of rain barrels and cisterns provides an opportunity for the reuse of water. The Town should study other jurisdictions to investigate methods of working with developers to achieve desired development outcomes regarding stormwater management.

Policy CD.43 Utilities

Although there are more pressing issues than buried utility lines, underground utilities in the Downtown area and along England Street will benefit both the property owners and those who visit the Town. There are two ways of thinking about this issue: screening the wires with prop-

erly selected and located trees, and by relocating utilities from overhead poles to underground.

Because of the likely prohibitive expense of burying wires, the alternative of designing a landscape that masks the appearance of those overhead wires must be considered. One example of this is the block on Myrtle Street where the large shade trees are set back from the right-of-way creating the appearance of a tree-lined street thereby de-emphasizing the presence of the overhead wires. This design is a legitimate possibility in existing conditions where the cost of burying is assumed to be born by the town and the taxpayer. The cost of trees in many cases can be borne by the private development. (See the sketch proposals for England Street and Route 1 that illustrate this possibility.)

If the burying method is used, curb appeal is definitely improved, utilities are less susceptible to storm damage, the neighborhood and corridors are given a cleaner look, more room is allowed for the planting of large shade trees, and the historic look of the entire Downtown area is enhanced. Although the burying of existing lines can be cost prohibitive,

Street Tree Sketch.

This sketch indicates the desired placement of street trees in the presence of overhead wires to avoid conflict of branches and wires in the future.

a public-private partnership should be investigated and priority areas established so that as redevelopment occurs proper procedures will be in place.

A priority list should therefore be maintained by the Town for the undergrounding of utility lines. Undergrounding is the act of removing utility poles and burying wires and equipment in conduits or pipes. This can be incorporated with corridor plans or overlay districts where applicable. This can be considered an opportunity plan that will be ready if the opportunity or funding arises.

In the case of new development, all utilities shall be placed underground. In addition, underground utilities should be strongly encouraged in all redevelopment and restoration projects.

Policy CD.44 Publicly Owned and Maintained Landscapes

As good stewards of our Town, it is the Town's responsibility to maintain and enhance the landscape to the standards expected of others. By investing in targeted visual improvements to public places, the Town can continue to conserve and enhance the green character of Ashland. Because of limited availability of public funding, these improvements should be phased in over time. A plan identifying priority locations and implementation schedule should be developed. This should apply to gateways, medians, and public right-of-ways throughout the Town.

TO DO LIST

1. Update Development Guidelines Handbook or create new design guidelines document and the update Zoning code:

- To address desired result of visual character and quality instead of minimum standards.
- To address desired standards in residential infill and new development including materials, windows, roof materials and pitch, setback, accessory structure placement, street design, curb, gutter and sidewalks
- To address downtown infill and development including, fenestration, size, scale, massing, rhythm, materials, setback, signage
- To address commercial building designs including setbacks, material, four-sided architecture, roof forms, massing, fenestration, signage, streetscape, and screening of mechanical equipment as appropriate within each neighborhood planning area. This should include both new construction and redevelopment.

2. Update the Landscape Plan in the Town Code :

- To include street tree and landscape requirements for new residential developments
- To include street tree and landscape requirements for all of Downtown, including both Thompson and England Streets
- To include trees and landscaping in all other commercial projects

3. Establish a local historic district in the form of an overlay district and create an architectural advisoy board for the historic distric.

4. Consider renewal of façade improvement program as funds are available. Clearly identify that this program is for the Ashland Main Street area of the entire downtown. Create specific criteria for that program to assure its success in improving the quality of the Downtown Areas, and the overall business environment.

5. Update Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan including a study of crosswalk locations including a priority list for installation.

6. Update Sidewalk Replacement Plan as current projects are completed. Use the priority list in the updated design guidelines document to determine a location for a test project.

7. The Town should examine the parking requirements for the Town including Downtown, and commercial areas considering opportunities for shared parking and shared entrances, possibilities for reducing parking requirements, establishing centralized, shared use lots.

8. A public art plan should be created by Ashland Main Street.

9. Development of Live/Work space in Downtown should be encouraged.

10. The Town and College should work together to become more incorporated and build a stronger relationship, especially regarding the positive impact the college can have on the character of Downtown and the adjoining neighborhoods. Also work with College to accomplish the Master Plan goals.

11. Develop a Route 1 Design Overlay District.

12. Encourage reinvestment in the visual appearance of all of the commercial and retail roadways: England Street, Thompson Street, Railroad Avenue, Route 54 within the Interstate Service Area, as well as along Route 1.

13. Encourage new infill development closer to the street at the intersection of Route 54 and Route 1.

14. Train Town employees to perform proper tree maintenance as defined by a certified arborist.

15. Perform and maintain a tree inventory with list of appropriate street trees for the Town. Specifically note the various types of distinct tree-lined streets and public parks, note the differing needs for differing trees in each specific location. Create a map showing appropriate planting locations. Use this in conjunction with utility line information to update the design guidelines document and Landscape Plan within the Town Code.

16. Continue work with VHB Landmark and implement wayfinding recommendations

17. To minimize sign clutter throughout Ashland, the Town shall conduct a study on all public signs in an effort to create an effective signage system for the Town. Opportunities to combine signs will be sought out.

18. Review and consider the IDA-IES model Lighting Ordinance for possible inclusion into the Town Code.

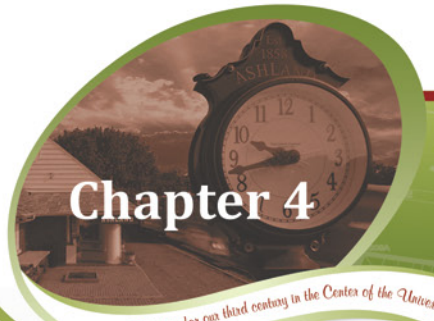
19. Development of attractive entrances and gateways into Ashland should be continued and maintained including landscaping and lighting with appropriate signage that is part of an overall uniform theme for the Town.

20. The Town should continue to work with Hanover County to ensure the delineation of the border between the Town and County. The Town should participate with Hanover County to jointly develop a Small Area Plan for the newly-established Suburban Service Area immediately surrounding the Town.

21. Investigate the methods other jurisdictions use to achieve desired development outcomes regarding stormwater management.

22. Review Article XXII in Town Code to ensure that language ensures the desired outcome regarding buried utilities.

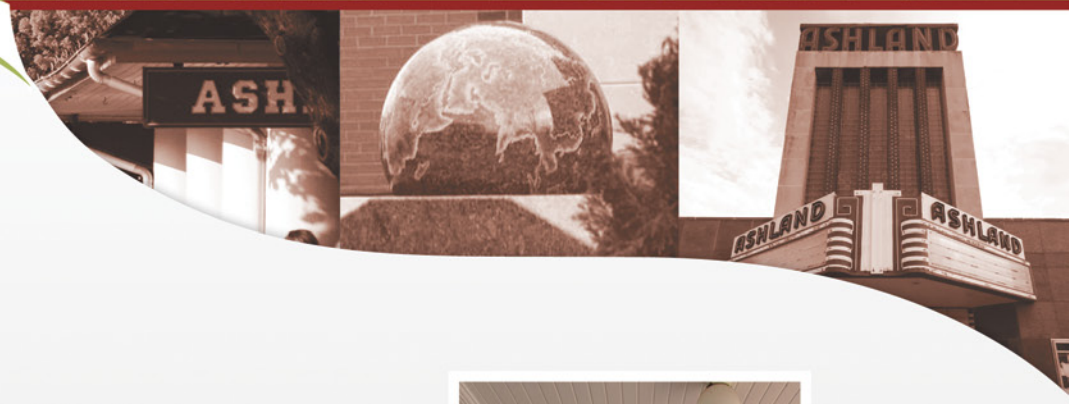
23. Create a plan to identify priority locations and implementation schedule for improvements of public landscapes.



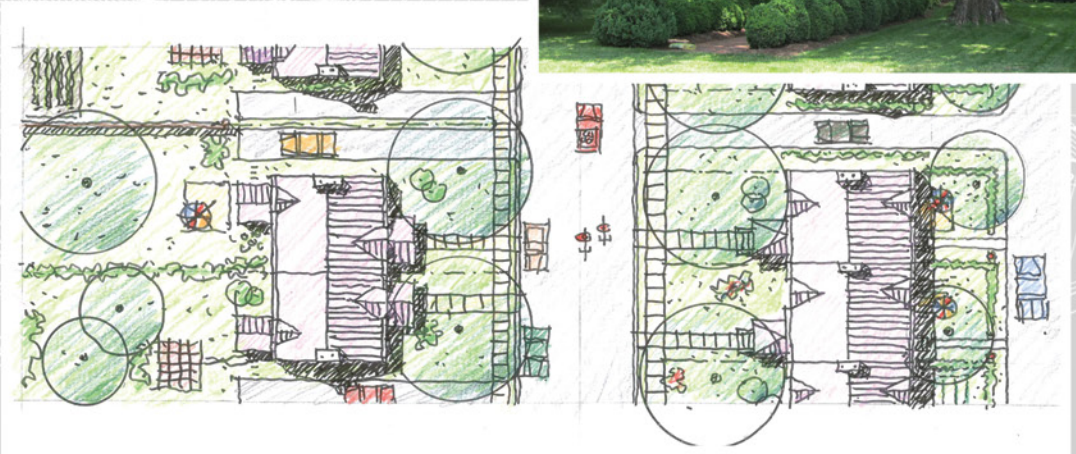
Chapter 4

LAND USE

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



Guiding the future of Ashland



4.0 LAND USE

Abstract
Land use decisions are a balancing act: encouraging quality new development while diminishing impacts on existing areas. As Ashland progresses into the future it will be necessary to accommodate new growth and respond to change while maintaining aspects of the Town that are valued by its residents, workers and businesses. Decisions made regarding land use will guide the future organization of transportation and open space systems and work towards ensuring the economic health of the Town.

With the Land Use chapter, the Town endeavors to maintain the Town's character and ensure orderly growth by:

- *Ensuring that growth does not outpace the availability of community facilities and services.*
- *Guiding well-planned, coordinated, and sustainable development. Quality of life is given high priority and outweighs the value of unnecessary growth.*
- *Ensuring that the housing needs of present and future residents of the Town are met through a variety of high-quality housing options that reflect the different ages, family types and income levels of our neighborhoods.*
- *Introducing the Mixed-Use designation within the Downtown to allow for more comprehensive, flexible and creative uses as new development and redevelopment occurs.*

The Land Use chapter must be considered, in combination with Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, as one of the two most important chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. These two chapters provide the framework for the Comprehensive Plan to follow by specifying the basic strategies necessary to preserve Ashland's unique character and ensure the orderly growth of the Town. Decisions made regarding land use will guide the future organization of transportation and open space systems and work towards ensuring the economic health of the Town.

This chapter identifies the policies that guide the distribution, general location, and extent of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, and other uses of land within the Town of Ashland. The Land Use chapter also ensures a compatible balance of land uses that will both meet the diverse needs of the community as it grows into the future, and help preserve Ashland's small town qualities. Equally important, the Land Use Chapter provides, along with the Future Land Use Map, the detailed planning tools and policies that will coordinate future development, preservation and revitalization efforts in the Town.

Community sustainability requires well-managed land use planning practices that will ensure close-knit neighborhoods with a sense of community, support continued economic vitality, create and maintain efficient infrastructure, and preserve the Town's natural systems. With this sustainable planning, the Town's projected population and economic growth can be accommodated while protecting and enhancing its beloved character. This comprehensive plan will enable Ashland to preserve its Downtown and neighborhoods while encouraging new development of a similar scale and character.

The Future Land Use Map (Map LU-2) is a graphic representation of the Land Use Chapter. This map is prepared by integrally tying land use designations to the Guiding Principles and policies that carry through the various chapters of the Plan.

The Land Use Plan is intended to set forth policies to be used to guide decision-making by:

- Designating areas of Town to be appropriate for Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional land uses including open space, government and educational uses.
- Encouraging development in patterns that reflect the Guiding Principles, especially the life of Ashland as a genuine small town.
- Designating areas of Town where current policies, such as zoning or subdivision ordinances may hinder reinvestment or diminish character, and suggesting strategies to promote new developments and reinvestments in ways that reflect our values.

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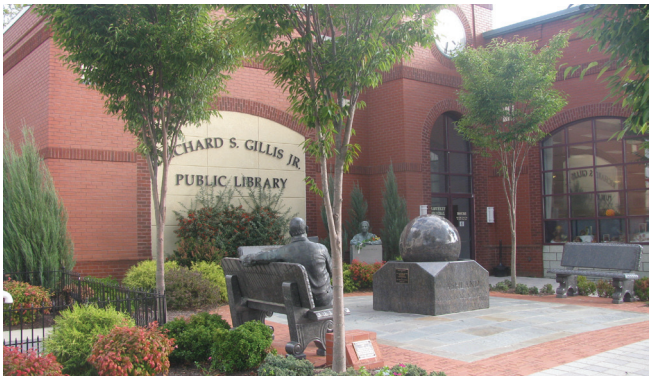
Annexation History

As originally incorporated in 1858, the Town of Ashland consisted of one square mile. The Town has grown, through several annexations, to a size of 7.12 square miles and is one of the larger towns in land area in Virginia. When the Virginia General Assembly adopted the original charter for the Town in 1858, the physical boundaries of the Town were not specifically identified. The charter merely established a village known as Ashland having the powers of an incorporated Town. The Town boundaries were established by the General Assembly in 1893-94. The defined limits, approximately one square mile, were entered into the records of the Circuit Court of Hanover County in May 1932.

Effective January 1, 1977, the boundary of the Town was expanded by 3.02 square miles, to a total of approximately 4.02 square miles, following a Town-initiated annexation filing. This 1977 annexation included a large population increase of approximately 1,848 County residents.

The most recent annexation became effective January 1, 1996, when the Town boundary was expanded by approximately 3.1 square miles to its current area of 7.12 square miles. The 1996 annexation brought several notable changes to the Town. The Town of Ashland and Hanover County entered into a Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA). One of the stipulations of the agreement was the transfer of water and sewer services. Therefore, the Town's water and sewer services merged with Hanover County's services and these services are now provided by the County. The ownership and operation of the Town's water treatment plant and distribution system was transferred to Hanover. While there are no known landfills within the Town, prior to the annexation in 1996, several automobile salvage yards existed in Hanover County; these have been grandfathered into the Town of Ashland. Again, prior to the annexation of 1996, about 25 percent of the land in Ashland was designated for industrial purposes. The annexation brought an additional 973 acres of industrial land into the Town and increased the percentage to 35.7 percent. The three annexation boundaries are shown on Map LU-1 (page 4-5).



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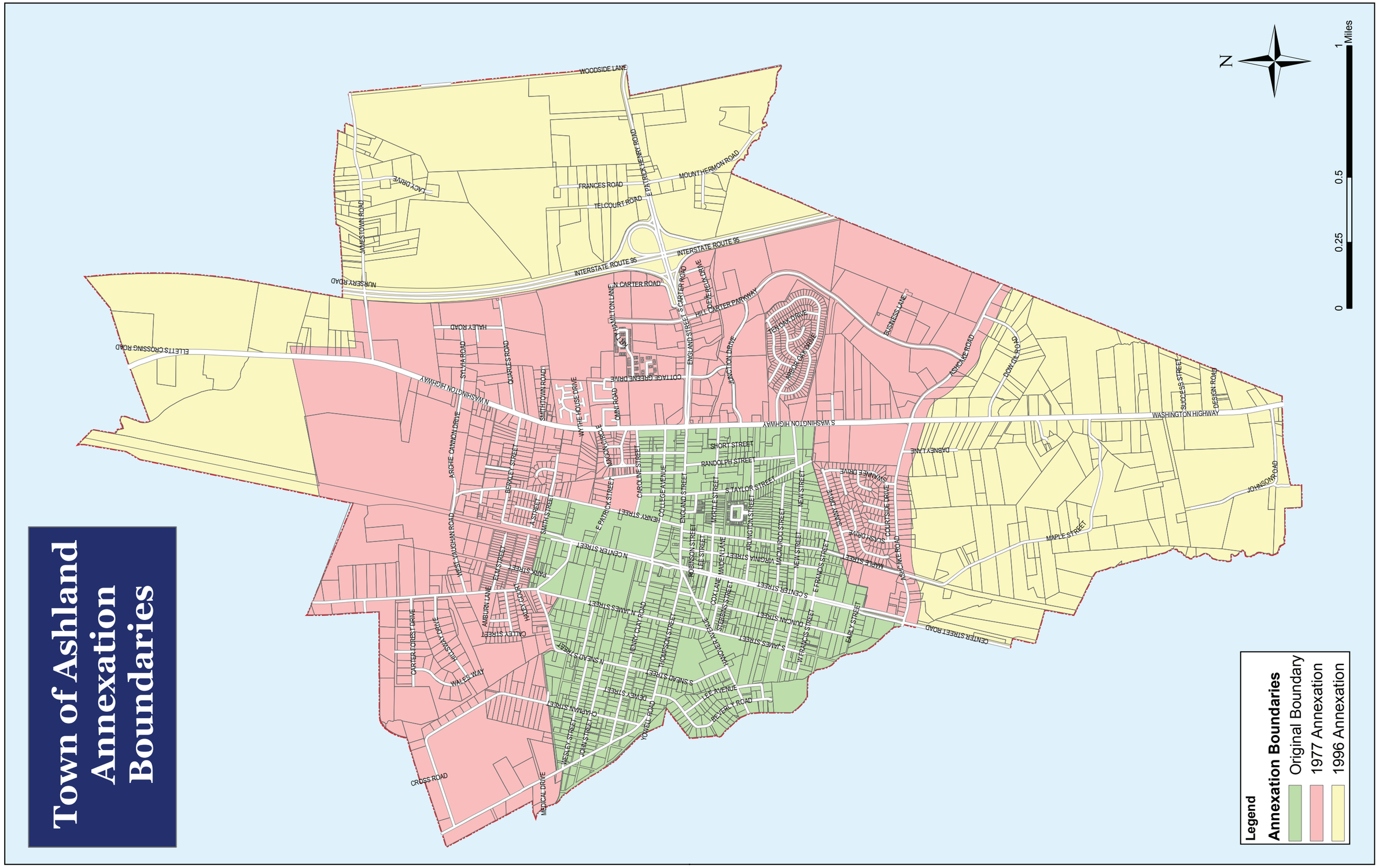
Ashland's Values: What Makes Ashland *Ashland*

The process of creating this Comprehensive Plan, and this specific Land Use Plan, was focused on eight neighborhood planning areas. This neighborhood focus resulted in a great level of specificity that was based on the residents' and owners' very clear expectations. Furthermore, it was made clear throughout the process that a future Ashland must continue to be like *Ashland*, and that the many details that make our Town great must be noted and described.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - Strengthen the walkable core in the Downtown area in close proximity to established residential areas.
   - Champion the preservation of historic development patterns and appropriate extension of those patterns in developing areas.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Structure the Land Use recommendations to assure that the unique features remain.
   - Advocate for appropriate densities and development activities in the historic core area of the Town.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Designate specific open space areas.
   - Establish appropriate densities for development that would allow for preservation or enhancement of existing tree cover.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety within Ashland**
   - Endorse the construction of various types of housing in various sizes on a variety of lot sizes side by side within neighborhoods in appropriate quantities.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Provide sufficient land area for a wide range of retail, commercial, office, and industrial uses.
   - Bolster development and redevelopment activity in the Downtown area.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services.**
   - Secure land use areas for the provision of government activities.
   - Ensure orderly development to most efficiently deliver municipal services.



MAP LU-1 TOWN OF ASHLAND ANNEXATION BOUNDARIES

4.1 Land Use Map

The Land Use Map, MU-2 (page 4-9) is hereby incorporated to be a part of this chapter.

Interpretation of Land Use Map

The Land Use Plan Map is intended to serve as a generalization of the land uses anticipated in the future. The location and the description of the land uses are not intended to be exact, but a reflection of the predominant location and use intended in the future. The Zoning Code, including the use of form-based zoning in some areas where the character must be clearly identified, will be used to interpret the map. This map is intended to be a general guide to future zoning, and is not intended to exactly designate the location of future zoning boundaries.

Boundaries between Land Uses

Boundaries shown on the Land Use Plan Map are intended to be approximate, especially where they do not follow any boundary feature. Where a boundary feature is followed, such as an existing or proposed roadway, a stream, and in some cases, existing parcel boundaries, the boundary shall be considered less generalized.

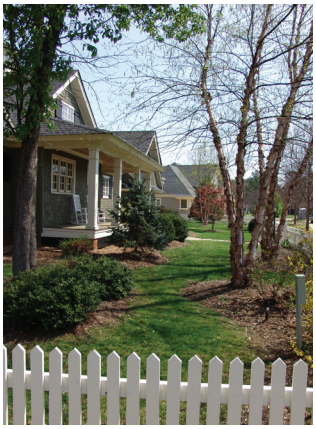
4.2 Land Uses Designations

The Land Uses listed here are organized into four groups:

- Residential
- Mixed Use
  - Residential
  - Retail
- Commercial
  - Retail
  - Office
  - Hotel
  - Industrial
- Institutional
  - Government Facilities including schools and public parks

Note that, while these descriptions are about uses only, there is to be a strong and clear relationship between uses and character, as listed in detail in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design. Chapter 3 contains criteria to assist in ensuring high-quality, sustainable developments within the Town. Our aspirations for quality design and construction must be recognized as new development takes place, so that Ashland retains its cherished small-town qualities.

As explained in detail in Chapter 6, Economic Development, Ashland needs to improve the quality of development, both residential and com-



mercial. Studies, such as the study by Urban Partners completed in August 2008, have shown that the Town has a high number of affordable homes. Therefore, it is the intention of this Comprehensive Plan to create the basis for future developments that will focus on a higher level of quality in the homes, the properties, the landscapes, and in the roadways. Ashland must create a better balance between affordability and higher quality living, for the larger health of the community, and for the consumer markets for our shops and businesses.

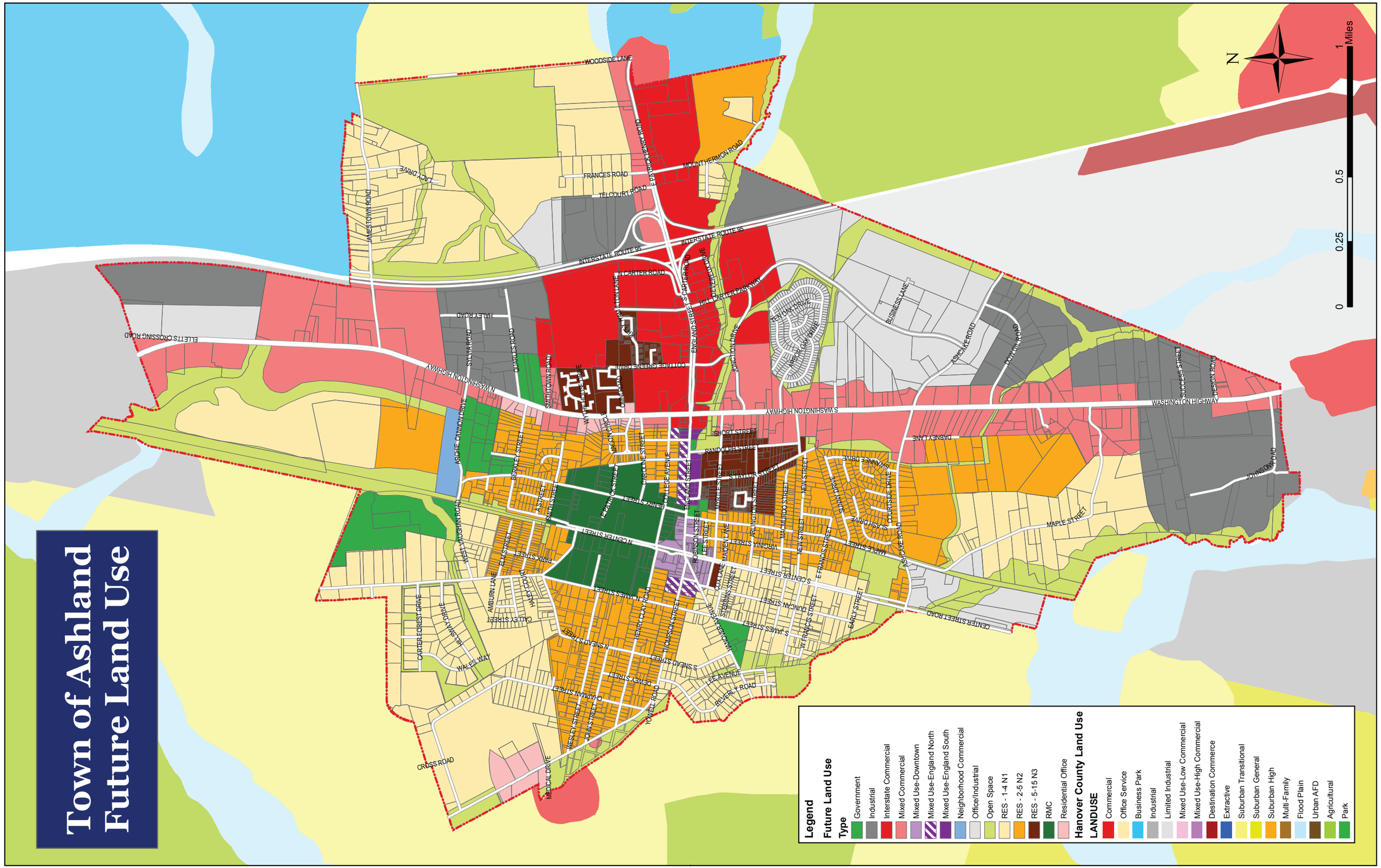
Residential Designations

The Town has identified three different residential land use categories: Single Family Low Density; Single Family Medium Density; Mixed Residential Higher Density.

Single Family Low Density & Single Family Medium Density

Single Family Low Density is defined by 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre. By right development will allow 1 house per acre. In order to develop smaller lot sizes, up to the maximum of 4 units per acre, a developer would need to take advantage of density bonuses that meet the Town's requests for variety of house and lot sizes with a higher quality of construction and other ideals as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan that will be specifically defined in the zoning code. Single Family Medium Density is defined by 2 to 5 dwelling units per acre. By right development will allow 2 houses per acre. In order to develop smaller lot sizes, up to the maximum of 5 units per acre, a developer would need to meet the ideals as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan that will be specifically defined in the zoning code in order to receive this density bonus. These two categories encompass the basic neighborhood districts, which cover most of the residential areas of Town. The criteria for development in these districts reflect, specifically, the expectations of Principles 1 through 4, regarding the small town character, the unique features of Ashland, the landscape and tree shaded streets, and the variety of homes and lots that exist here. Assessment of the existing conditions in the many Ashland neighborhoods has shown that the areas in Single Family Low Density are slightly less dense and the lot sizes are slightly larger than in the Single Family Medium Density neighborhoods. Otherwise, these two districts are the same.

The basic intention is to promote and preserve the character of a grid of streets that are tree-shaded, where houses are close enough to each other and to the street to create a real sense of neighborhood, but are far enough apart to maintain the open, green quality that is valued by the community. The streets are to be quiet and safe, enabling people of all ages to walk along and on them. And, there is to be a variety of house



MAP LU-2 TOWN OF ASHLAND FUTURE LAND USE

and lot types possible, so that young and old, and single people and families can live in the same neighborhoods and on the same streets.

An important aspect of our neighborhood standards are the more specific design guidelines, such as building and roofing materials, windows, porches, etcetera. These items are identified in Chapter 3, Community Character & Design, and should be addressed in detail in the updating of the 2004 Design Guidelines Handbook. The Town encourages projects that include green building techniques in compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council LEED rating system, EarthCraft House Virginia or similar certification standards. The Town will work with Hanover County Building Department to continue to update the building code to include recommendations, where permitted, of these standards.

In order to create the shade and enclosure that is typical of Ashland's streets, street trees should be placed in the right location depending on the presence of sidewalks and overhead wires. The street trees planted within the public right-of-way should be chosen from the Town's approved tree list. This list is not based on personal aesthetics, but the work of a trained arborist, working specifically with the Town. These trees were chosen because they do well in Ashland's climate and because the wrong tree can cause damage to public property such as sidewalks and streets. It is intended that large, spreading, deciduous trees such as a London Planetree, Zelkova, or Red Maple be used in appropriate locations to create the desired tree canopy along Ashland's streets. More information on street trees is provided in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, Chapter 8, Environment and within the updated design guidelines document as part of the recommended tree list.

Variety

Ashland enjoys the virtues of having a variety of home types to permit people of different ages, family types and incomes to live side-by-side. The word variety, as used in this plan, refers to variations in lot sizes, lot widths, house sizes, house design and house cost, but not in construction quality. It is the intention of this plan that all new homes, regardless of size, be built with the same consideration for quality design and high quality construction.

Policy LU.1 Variety in Home & Lot Size

The Town desires a variety of house and lot sizes within blocks and neighborhoods. In order to maintain the desired variety in the neighborhoods, a maximum density is given with the expectation that larger lots will be intermixed with smaller lots. To promote sustainable development, higher density allocations will be allowed provided the developer meets the ideals as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan that will be specifically defined in the zoning code. Density bonuses would be

offered in return for the developer providing features, design elements or amenities desired by the Town including but not limited to, site design incorporating principles of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood development, environmentally sustainable and energy efficient building design, and historical preservation, as part of the development. Recommended design elements are included in the updated design guidelines document. The density bonuses will act as an incentive allowing developers to react to the changing market. As a guide, maximum lot coverage for single family homes should not exceed 30 percent of the area of the lot. Density credits will also be offered to encourage more sustainable building and lot design and discourage the use of traditional BMPs. Suggestions for more attractive BMPs are given in Chapter 8, Policy E.16. These recommendations and incentives are intended to encourage the desired variety in house and lot sizes to be intermixed within blocks and neighborhoods. The similarity in our homes should come from the level of quality with which they are designed and constructed.

Policy LU.2 Accessory Structures

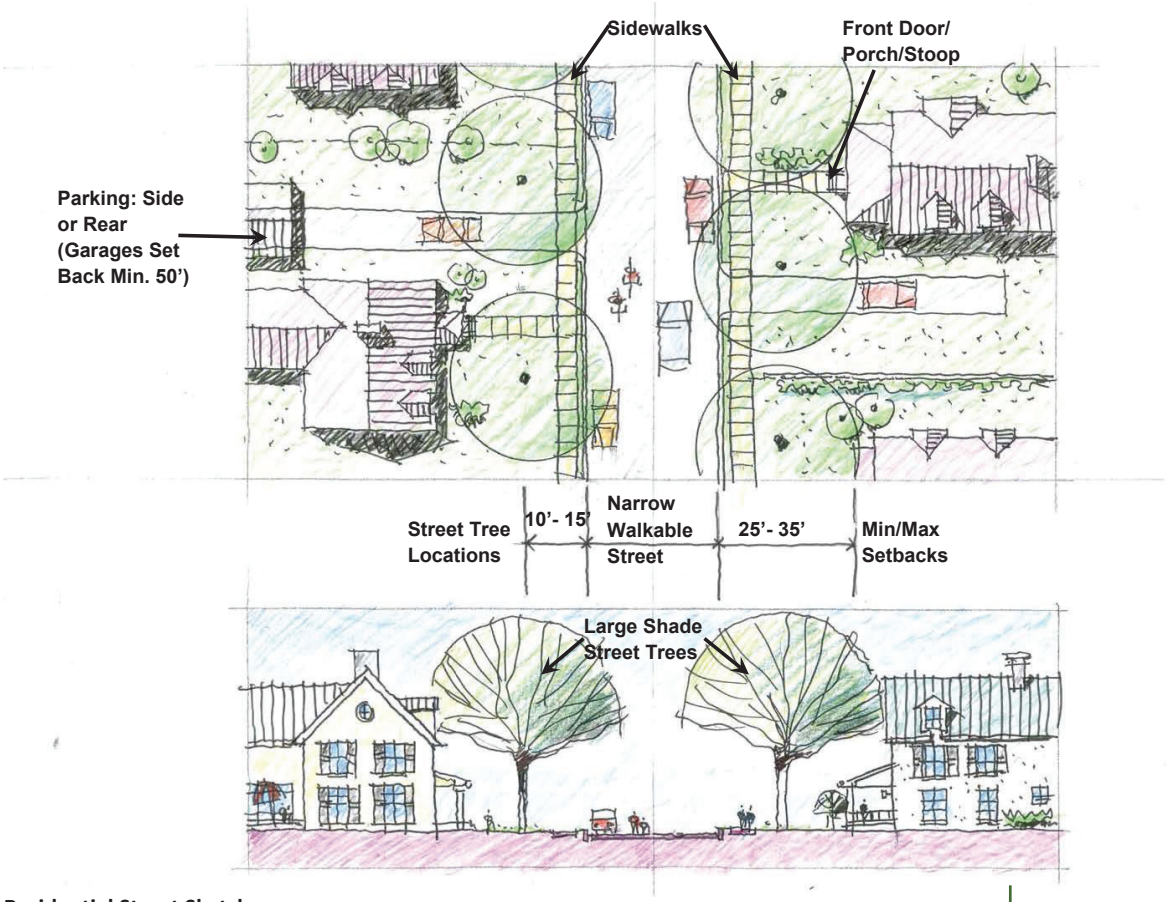
Small accessory structures used as garages, tool sheds, and accessory apartments are part of the fabric of our small town. These small structures must be set to the rear of the main structure and designed and constructed with the same care as the main structure.

Policy LU.3 Parking/Garages

In Ashland neighborhoods, the car does not dominate. They are small scale, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. To keep this aspect of our small town, the parking of cars and other vehicles, such as boats on trailers, should not be the dominant design feature in front of homes. On-site parking should be provided on the side or to the rear of the main structure accessed by a narrow driveway. Garage doors should not dominate the front façade. The preferred garage location is detached and located to the rear of the home.

Policy LU.4 Street Design

It is important to remember that Ashland is a walkable community. The dimensions of the streets and sidewalks should be such that pedestrians are safe and comfortable. Streets should be wide enough to provide on-street parking on both sides, plus two moving lanes, but not so wide as to encourage fast driving speeds. The streets should be designed to encourage slow driving speeds and permit on-street walking and cycling. A typical street width that accomplishes this in Ashland is a width of 31 feet from curb to curb; examples include Henry Clay Road, Howard Street and College Avenue. Sidewalks should be at least five feet wide; wide enough for two people to walk side by side.



Residential Street Sketch.

This sketch shows the desired street design through the suggested location of street trees, the recommended house setback and the desired setback for a garage.

Mixed Residential Higher Density

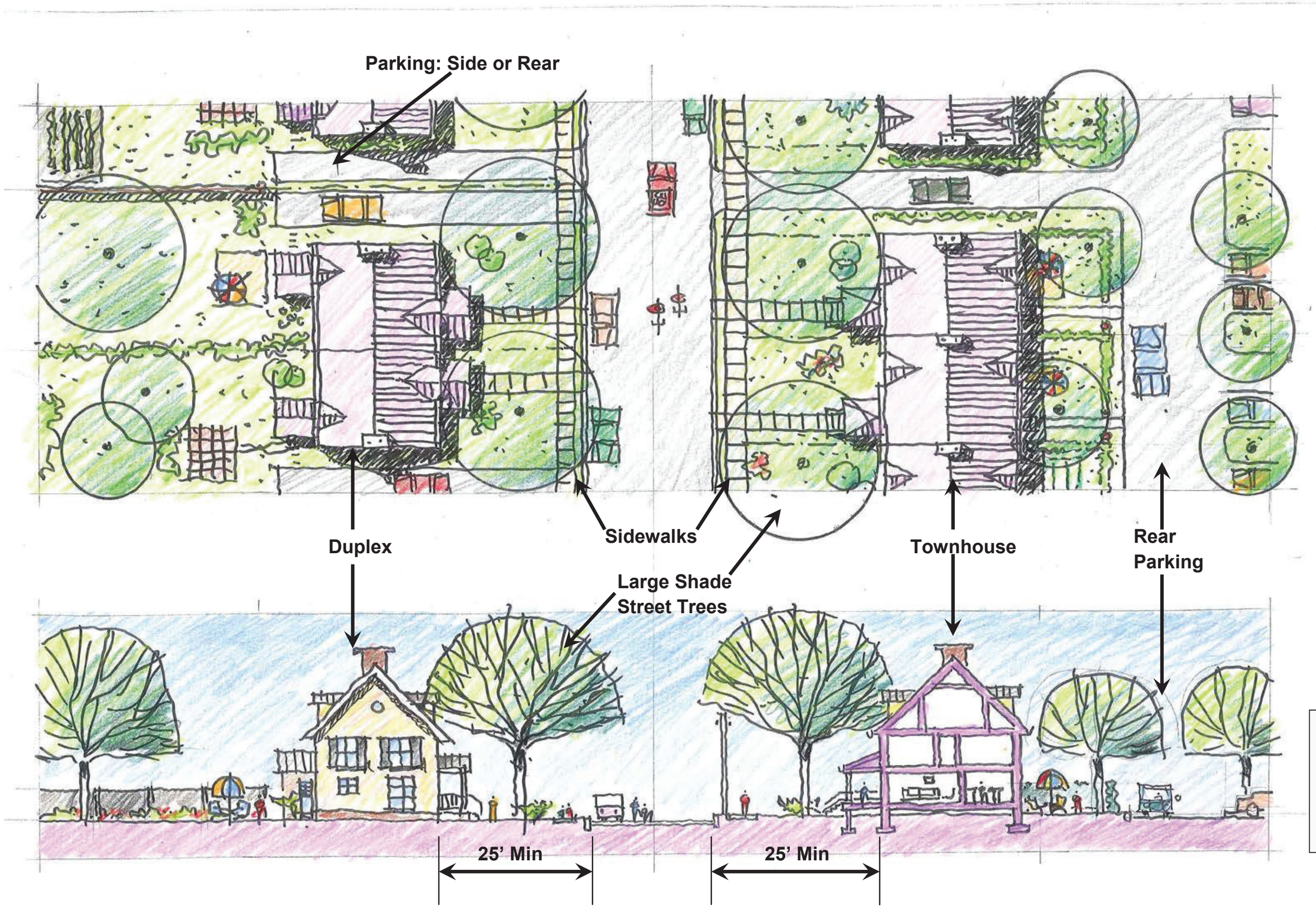
In the area south of England Street, it is recommended that the precedent set by the townhouses on Myrtle Street and the houses in Arlington Square be extended to create a higher density residential neighborhood that is walkable from the shops on England Street and on Railroad Avenue. With this pattern of development, another opportunity for residential variety and support for future (and current) shopping is created. In order to accomplish this, the plan and design conditions as stated in this Plan and in the updated design guidelines document should be met.

Policy LU.5 Multi-Family Projects

The residential composition of this land use designation may contain duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. Any multi-family project should be intended for owner occupancy. Patio homes, townhouse-style units, side-by-side duplexes, or cottage neighborhoods should be encouraged as an alternative to traditional apartment complexes. Front doors should face a public street to engage the neighborhood. As in the other residential districts, the maximum building height is three stories or 35 feet.

The aspiration for quality design, quality materials and quality construction applies equally to the residential structures within the Mixed Residential Higher Density designation. The quality and detail of all dwellings constructed and the included common areas should be given high priority throughout the design and development process.

Note that this District, and these criteria, also apply to the few residential areas east of Route 1, as indicated in the Land Use Map.



This sketch shows the desired placement street trees, duplexes, townhouse and the parking for each.

HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL SKETCH

Mixed-Use Designations (Walkable Retail): Our Downtowns

Three Mixed-Use land use designations have been identified on the Future Land Use Map. These consist of a combination of retail and residential development.

The goal of this new land use designation is to allow a more comprehensive, flexible and creative use of the Historic Downtown and the adjoining England and Thompson Streets. This compact development is intended to reduce the public investment in infrastructure, enable creative site design and preserve open space areas that provide benefit to the community as a whole. Mixed-use developments combined with pedestrian friendly streets tend to reduce the number of trips as well as the number of miles driven and ideally encourage less dependency on the automobile. A pedestrian-oriented environment promotes safety in commercial areas through an around-the-clock presence of people. The use of proper design standards in conjunction with mixed-use zoning can create an environment complimentary to the existing neighborhoods in the Town.

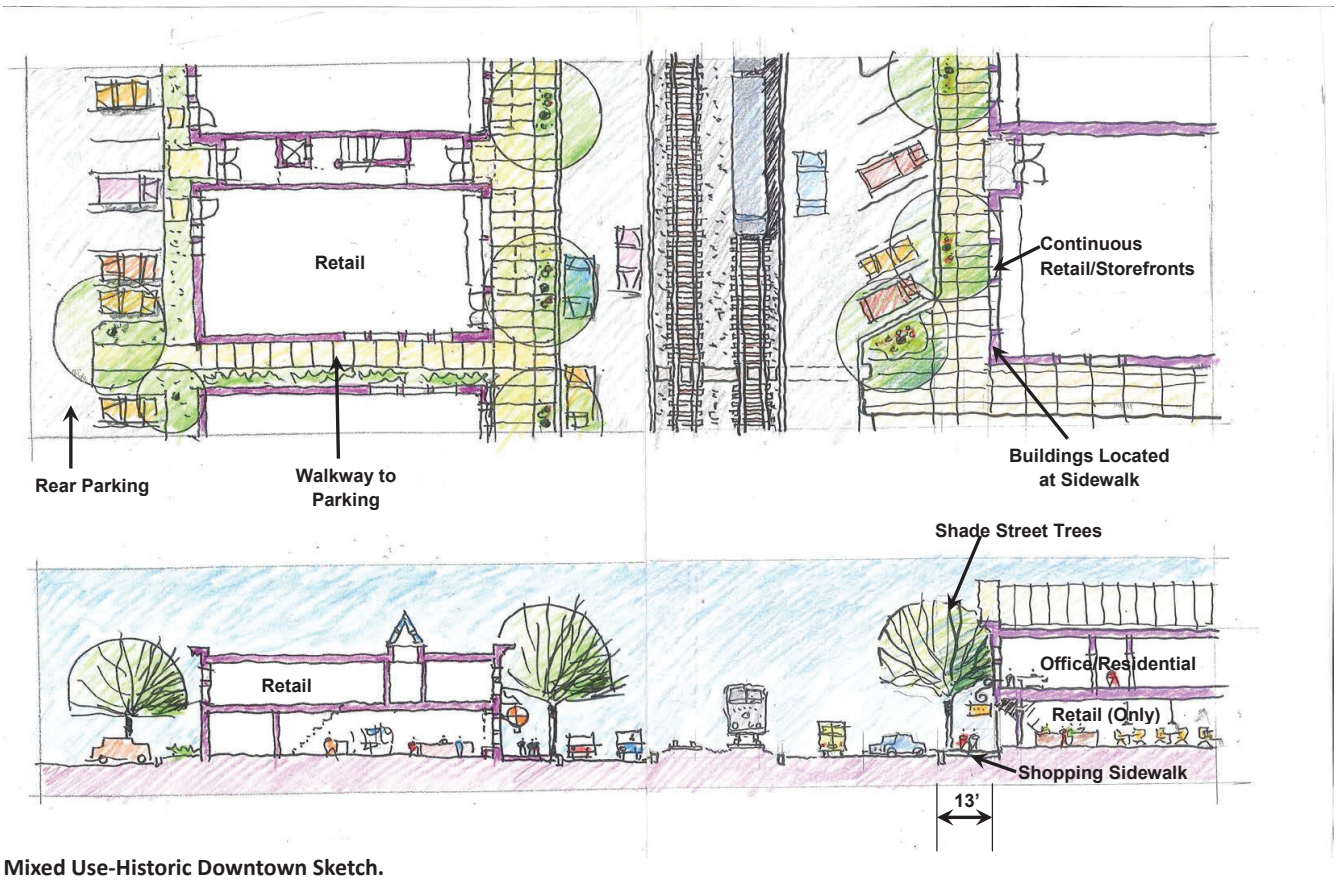
The three areas designated for Mixed Use are:

- Historic Downtown
- England Street North
- England Street South

MU-Historic Downtown

This category is intended for conservation of the existing building stock that is characteristic of the iconic image of Historic Downtown Ashland, as well as redevelopment and infill throughout the area that will contribute to the historic image, and contribute to the perception of Historic Downtown as an area of high pedestrian activity. Land uses on parcels near the edge of Downtown shall be designed to provide appropriate transition to adjacent residential areas. Blocks should consist of a mixture of retail and restaurant uses on street level to encourage a high level of pedestrian activity, with the upper levels accommodating both residential and office uses. As mentioned in the Community Character and Design and Economy chapters, another appropriate use for the street level locations are arts related businesses. Building heights should be two or three stories.

Building footprints should occupy as much of the lot area as possible, except for the need to provide parking (at the rear of the building). The expectation is that the retail storefronts are continuous along the sidewalks. A floor area ratio of 1.0 or greater should be attempted. Floor area ratio is the floor area of a building or buildings on a lot divided by the lot area.



Mixed Use-Historic Downtown Sketch.

This sketch shows the desired placement for infill development in the historic Downtown district. New buildings should be constructed adjacent to the sidewalk with parking to the rear and along the street.

In order to maintain the pedestrian orientation, buildings should be constructed directly adjacent to the sidewalk. As noted in the 2004 Development Guidelines Handbook, construction of new buildings at the 0-setback (from the sidewalk) line is encouraged, but special consideration must be taken when adjacent to a building of historic significance. The following sketch shows the ideal placement for new construction within the historic downtown.

This sketch of the Downtown area shows the intended overall form of the Mixed-Use Downtown and the appropriate locations for parking. Parking should be provided in convenient centralized areas; both on-site and in municipal lots. It should be located to the rear and sides of buildings, instead of between the building and street. On-street parking should continue to be utilized. Parking requirements should be amended to a maximum allowable requirement to reflect the walkable quality of Downtown, and its convenience to adjacent neighborhoods. As part of the overall provision of parking, an effective, clear set of directional signs should be utilized to easily lead visitors directly to the available parking spaces.

An alternative parking solution for mixed use areas is that of shared parking. This involves multiple users of a single lot. Examples of shared parking include the joint use by adjacent shops and restaurants or by an office building during the weekdays and a movie theater and restaurants

in the evening and on weekends. Efficient sharing of spaces can allow parking requirements to be reduced significantly. In a mixed use district, shared parking can actually encourage vibrant street activity simply by having pedestrians walk between destinations.

Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation Study, November 2008

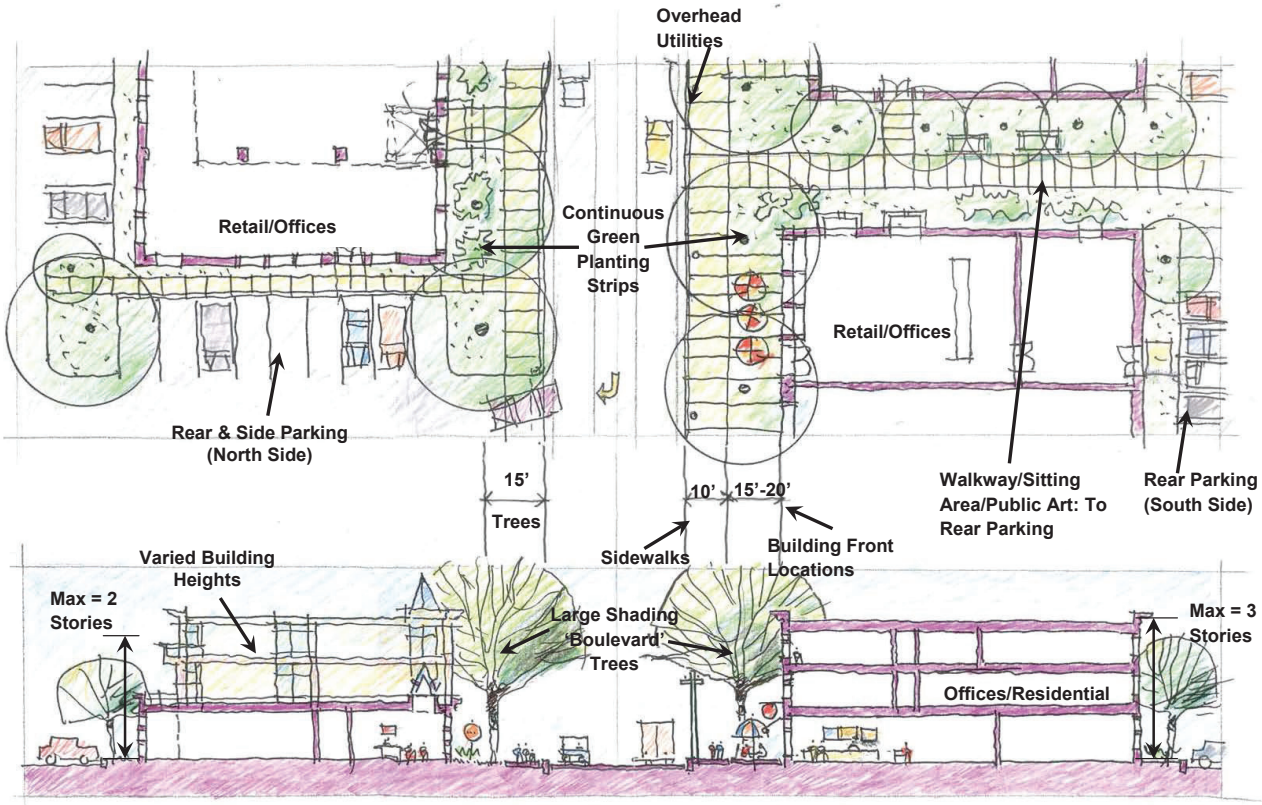
In 2008, the Town of Ashland was included in an Amtrak Station Area Planning and Land Use Analysis completed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. This project was conducted to assist with the redevelopment planning of station areas along Amtrak routes within Virginia and focused on the use of transit oriented development (TOD).

In 2007, approximately 12,000 riders boarded or disembarked from the train at the station in Ashland. With increased rail service along the major metropolitan corridors in Virginia, Downtown Ashland would be a convenient and desirable place for both businesses and families to locate. This type of land use would reinforce Ashland as a center of employment. The station area is a logical location for nodes of increased residential and economic activity. As stated in the DRPT study, "These recommendations are formed by, and seek to build on, Ashland's unique character and small-town intimacy, as well as its rich variety of architectural styles and periods. Overall goals include enabling more people to live downtown, increasing the amount of retail space downtown and fully integrating the Randolph-Macon College campus with the town." The new development is intended to fit in with the historic Downtown character on existing vacant lots, through coordination with Randolph-Macon College and through redevelopment of and around existing buildings. Planning for this type of development will support continued rail service and other forms of public transportation. Future transit oriented development will take considerable planning by the Town, some of which is included in this Plan and includes items such as:

- a significant investment in local and regional transit that supports and complements the rail service;
- zoning changes allowing for and encouraging mixed use development within the Downtown areas;
- an increase in allowable building heights within the Downtown areas;
- a reduction in parking requirements to allow for shared use of parking;
- the creation of a build-to line in the zoning ordinance to require a consistent relationship between the buildings and the street.

Policy LU.6 Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor Initiatives

The Town of Ashland supports the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor Initiatives. The Town shall work with federal, state and regional partners to ensure the success and development of this initiative.



Mixed Use-England Street Sketch.

This sketch shows the desired placement buildings for new construction and redevelopment projects and the placement of parking and street trees.

MU –England Street North and England Street South

The current uses on this part of England Street and the established residential areas nearby make England Street an appropriate location for the land use designation of Mixed Use. The addition of residential on England Street with the current mix of retail, restaurant, service, and office will better unify the historic downtown with England Street. The addition of arts related businesses at the street level will help to create the lively business district the Town desires. Two separate land use categories were created to differentiate between the lot depths from the north side to the south side of England Street. These are Mixed Use England Street North and Mixed Use England Street South. The Mixed Use England Street North designation will also be utilized along most of the first two blocks of Thompson Street. Appropriate transition from commercial activity along England Street to the residential areas on the north and south should be provided. While the automobile should be accommodated, the uses in this district should be oriented to the pedestrian.

No matter the specific uses that are ultimately developed here, this street should become, in its appearance, a tree-lined entrance to the center of Ashland; it could be considered a boulevard in the future. Therefore, there are very specific designations for the landscape along England Street listed below, and shown on the illustration above.

As development and redevelopment takes place along this corridor, the differences in the sizes of the north and south blocks must be considered. On the north side, the depth of the lots, between England Street and the alley serving College Avenue is about 200 feet. In contrast, the southern lots are approximately 300 feet deep. Therefore, it is assumed that a slightly higher density of development can take place on the southern lots allowing more parking and taller buildings than on the northern lots. As a result, three story buildings may be appropriate on the south, and two stories should be the limit on the north both designed so as not to interfere with the adjacent residential character. This is especially true when adjacent to College Avenue. In contrast, a higher density residential district is recommended to the south of England Street, where development can be effectively coordinated with the patterns of size and design of any adjacent mixed use buildings here. Blocks on either side of the street shall consist of a mixture of retail, office, and services on street level, with a mix of office and residential uses on upper floors.

The previous sketch indicates the recommended locations and heights of buildings, the widths of the sidewalks, and the nature of the boulevard style landscapes including street trees and small green parks. Note that the buildings are to be set back about 20 to 25 feet from the curb, no matter where the actual property line is located. This will permit the addition of sidewalks at least ten feet wide; wide enough for pedestrians to move comfortably. This recommended setback dimension will also accommodate the inclusion of a 10 foot wide green edge along the street. This green edge provides the space for large shade trees and added green space along the length of the street. The increased setback allows for the opportunity for small plaza areas to accommodate uses such as outdoor dining.

On the south side of the street, the setback, sidewalk and green edge dimensions will permit the planting of trees without the need to remove the overhead wires. This criterion follows the guidelines as suggested by the Municipal Tree Restoration Program mentioned in Chapter 8. (Note that the removal of these wires has been considered in the past, but the cost has always proven to be prohibitive.)

Building footprints should occupy a minimum of 25 percent of lot area, and floor area ratios should be at least 0.6. Floor area ratio is the floor area of a building or buildings on a lot divided by the lot area.

These numbers are intended to be consistent with the idea of a walkable boulevard and yet be small enough in scale and spacious enough to be compatible with the idea of small town Ashland.

Parking should be provided on-site, but at a reduced ratio than is required in more suburban areas of Town. On the south side of England Street, parking can and should be accommodated only to the rear of buildings. On the smaller north side, some parking may be located on the sides of buildings. If parking is located on the side, a continuous green hedge row should separate the parking lot from the sidewalk. On both sides of the street, walkways that lead from the sidewalk and building fronts to the rear parking should be designed as small, shaded, green sitting parks. Exceptions may be granted for corner lots to allow parking on the side of a building along secondary streets. Buildings should always front on the principal road, England Street.

Also, as mentioned in the MU-Historic Downtown section, shared parking should be considered which can reduce the amount of parking needed, reduce the coverage of our precious land by asphalt, and yet be fully functional for the mix of uses here.

Thompson Street

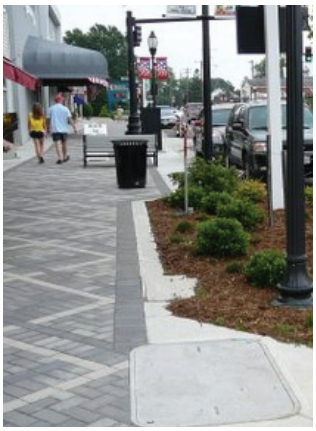
A portion of Thompson Street falls within the MU-England Street North land use designation. The characteristics of Thompson Street, on both sides from Duncan Street to the western edge of the commercial district, are the same as the north side of England Street; both of these areas are about 200 feet in depth and have residential neighborhoods behind them. Therefore the design details on Thompson Street are the same as those for England Street North: sidewalks approximately 10 feet wide, a green planting strip for shade trees approximately 10 feet wide, and a building setback of approximately 20 feet. In addition, lining this small portion of Thompson Street with shade trees will extend the boulevard quality of England Street and yet be seen as a link to the historic bungalow neighborhood at the immediate west. Again, parking will be in the rear or on the side, and small green landscaped walkways should lead from the sidewalks to the parking areas.

Redesign of England Street

As established in § 15.2-2306 of the State code, a historic overlay district may be established on significant routes of tourist access to the Town or to designated historic districts. England Street falls into this category. An overlay district does not alter the underlying zoning regulations but provides additional requirements for the design and form of new and/or expanded buildings. This overlay district would provide an authority to the Town in affecting visual character of England Street in terms of architectural design and design of the surrounding streetscape allowing greater detail than conventional zoning.

Policy LU.7 England Street Design Overlay District

In order to fulfill the vision of England Street as the red carpet to the historic Downtown, a design overlay district should be created for England and Thompson Streets from South James to Route 1. The guidance provided by the overlay district will ensure optimal results for new development and redevelopment along this gateway corridor.



The Future of the Downtowns

The best way for Downtown Ashland to reach its full potential is to have a clear and effective plan of development. A downtown plan will set the stage for catalytic new development, while focusing on preserving existing historic resources and neighborhood character and enhancing existing open spaces. The main goal of a downtown plan is to spur new residential development and residential conversion of existing buildings and thereby foster a more lively retail, dining and entertainment district. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infill development leverages existing infrastructure making the Town more sustainable as it continues to develop.

Policy LU.8 Downtown Plan

The Town should work to obtain funding for a Downtown Plan that addresses details such as suggested public improvements, a parking plan, future building locations, guidelines for building design, and other suggestions for the Downtown.

Commercial Designations

Five commercial land use categories have been identified. These designations are:

- Mixed Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Interstate Commercial
- Residential Office
- Office/Industrial
- Industrial

Mixed Commercial

The Mixed Commercial Land Use category is the predominant use along Route 1 and is also located to the east of Interstate 95. This is a land use category that contains a mix of office and commercial uses, which complement each other and by design coexist. Office workers can eat and shop in the retail and restaurants, hotels can serve the offices, and so on. Regarding future development located on Route 1, see the section below concerning the creation of a design overlay district.

Corporate, Class A office space as defined in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, is appropriate in this land use category. This land use should employ a large number of people, and be highly visible. Buildings should employ quality architecture and sit on highly landscaped campuses. It may be appropriate to exceed the three-story standard used elsewhere throughout Town. Where this land use occurs on the east side of Interstate 95, due to the greater visibility of this site from the I-95 corridor, it is our intent to maximize the use of land for economic development activities.

Also appropriate within this land use designation is a mix of retail, restaurants and hotels. These can be located in separate buildings or mixed in to single buildings. These uses should be designed at a density that is appropriate for a pedestrian scale, while still being easily accessible to the automobile.

Retail developments that encourage interconnectivity and pedestrian activity should be encouraged. The construction of new conventional strip shopping centers should be discouraged in Mixed Commercial.

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial category is located on the map along Archie Cannon Drive. This land use is a limited business activity area meant to provide services to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Types of appropriate businesses are retail stores and personal service businesses such as a barbershop/beauty parlor, bike or small appliance repair, self-service laundromats/dry cleaners, or a seamstress/tailor. These businesses are meant to be small in scale. Development should be buffered to protect nearby residential development. Acceptable uses will have a limited impact on adjacent residential areas especially in terms of lighting, signage, traffic, noise, and hours of operation.

Interstate Commercial

This category appears on the map on Route 54 between Route 1 and Interstate 95. Interstate Commercial is similar to Mixed Commercial in that it accommodates a mix of higher-end hotel, restaurant, retail, and general commercial serving both the residents of Ashland and interstate travelers. This land use should serve and employ a large number of people, and be highly visible.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Economy, there are underutilized parcels along the Route 54 corridor between Interstate 95 and Route 1. These sites are a prime location for mixed-use commercial development with higher-quality retail, hotel, and office components. By redeveloping at a higher floor area ratio, this would equate to a higher value for the land and the improvement resulting in a higher total property tax and increased revenue for the Town.

Buildings in this category should have high quality architecture and may exceed the three-story standard used elsewhere in Town, as the intent is to maximize the use of land along the interstate for economic development activities. Parking along right-of-ways and between buildings should be minimized. As mentioned in Policy CD.40, as one of the gateways to Ashland, the Town shall continue to maintain and enhance the landscaping along this corridor.

As mentioned in Mixed Commercial, future development should encourage interconnectivity between uses and pedestrian activity should be encouraged. The construction of new conventional strip shopping centers should be discouraged in Interstate Commercial.

Residential Office

Residential Office appears on the Future Land Use map in two areas: along Route 1 between Archie Cannon Drive and Caroline Street and on Thompson Street north of Wesley Street. Professional office uses are appropriate within this land use. Generally, this use should serve as a graceful transition use between more intense commercial land uses and residential uses. Building heights for new construction should not exceed two-stories, should be complementary to the residential character, and appropriately buffered from adjacent residential uses. Parking areas should be discouraged adjacent to right-of-ways. Most appropriate placement of the parking lot would be to the rear or side of the building.

Office/Industrial

A mixture of professional offices, research facilities, light manufacturing, and warehouses are appropriate in this land use designation. These facilities should be fully enclosed, with no outside activities, and should be highly attractive from the public right-of-way. Building heights of one to two stories would be appropriate.

Industrial

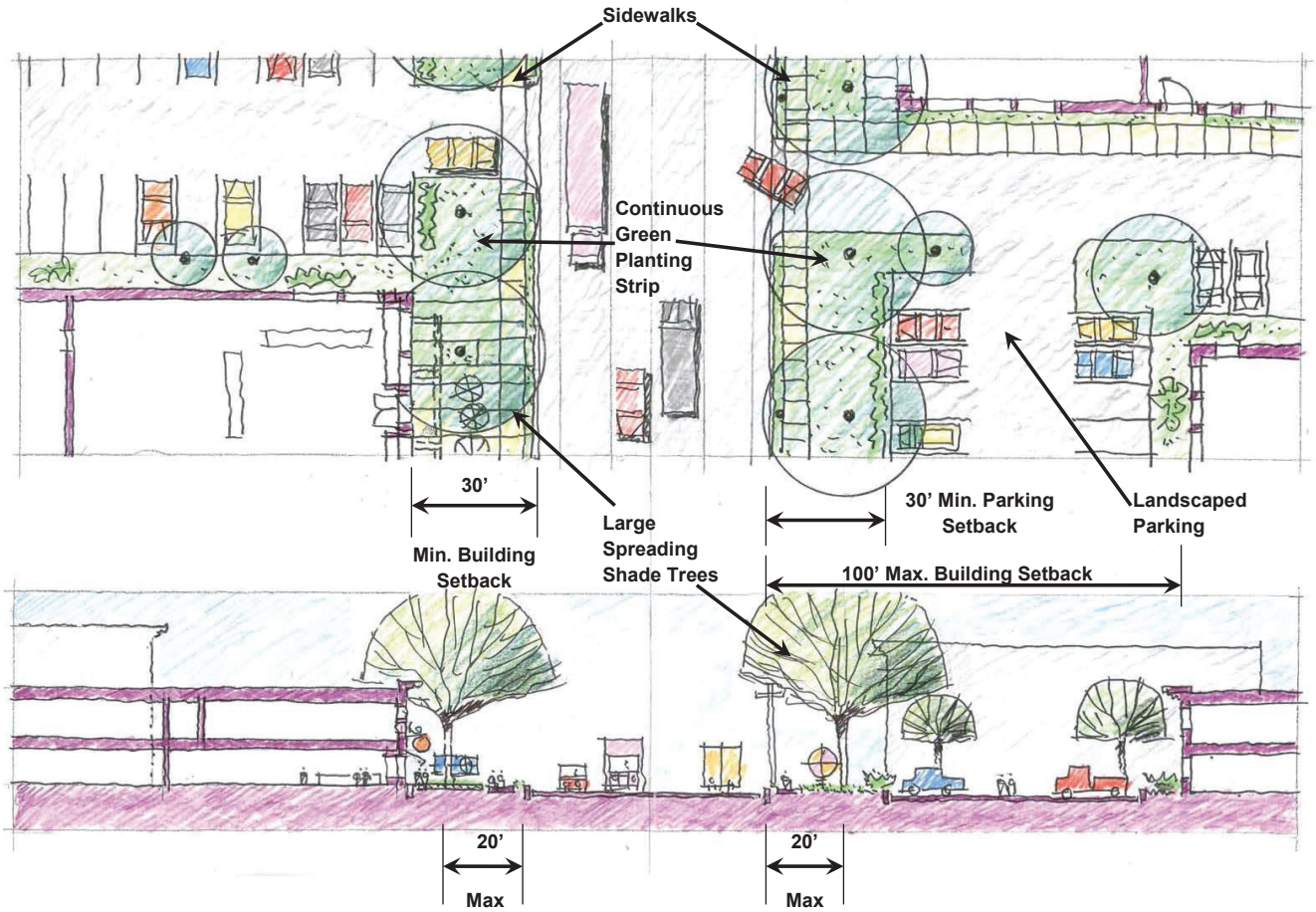
Industrial uses including manufacturing, truck terminals, warehousing and processing of raw materials are appropriate in this area. These uses should be designed to ensure compatibility with less intense uses. Outside storage may be appropriate, provided that it is fully screened from adjacent properties by architecturally compatible walls or evergreen screening. If it is necessary to conduct significant portions of these operations outside, then the uses should be located and designed to minimize noise, dust, or other environmental impacts on existing and anticipated areas of development.

Technology Zone Overlay District

In July of 2010, the Town Council adopted an ordinance designating three corridors in Town as a Technology Zone. Tech zones are designed to attract, accommodate and accelerate new-economy technology businesses. This zone is specifically designed to facilitate business investment, increase quality jobs and employment opportunities, increase public revenue, and keep Ashland competitive in attracting new industry. The three corridors are Route 1 South, Hill Carter Parkway and Dow Gill Road. These corridors are located in Mixed Commercial, Office/Industrial and Industrial land use designations on the Future Land Use map. Additional information regarding the Technology Zones including a map can be found in Chapter 6, Economy.

Route 1 Design Overlay District

As noted above concerning mixed commercial use and as mentioned in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, Policy CD.23, creation of a design overlay district for the Route 1 corridor will provide guidelines and standards for public and private development projects in commercially zoned areas along the Route 1. The intent of the Design Overlay District is to provide guidance and direction in the creation of a parkway-like quality and to raise the quality of design and business within this corridor. This overlay district will address the design of new buildings and the rehabilitation of existing buildings and storefronts in order to improve the appearance, enhance the identity, and promote the pedestrian environment of the Route 1 corridor. All projects within the boundaries of the Route 1 Design Overlay District should comply with the design guidelines and development standards as established in creation of the design overlay district. These guidelines and standards are intended to provide architectural guidance and create a unified character for the Route 1 corridor. Specific incentives should be considered to encourage existing businesses to participate in the redevelopment effort. The resulting improvements to the corridor are intended to attract new businesses and customers, and provide for the comfort, convenience, and safety of workers, residents, shoppers and visitors. New development and revitalization projects along the Route 1 corridor should follow the form and character of a parkway once the overlay district is created. The intended result of the parkway is shown in the following sketch.



Future Route 1 Sketch.

This sketch shows the desired look of Route 1 in the future indicating the placement of buildings, parking, sidewalks and street trees.

Policy LU.9 Key Intersection Overlay District

Because corner lots have road frontage on two sides of the property, the developable area is reduced by the buffer that must be maintained along the two road frontages. This required buffer may act as a hindrance to development and redevelopment. An overlay district should be created to provide flexibility to the developer/property owner to encourage redevelopment at specific key intersections. Design waivers may be given to allow for variations in the site plan. Key intersections along Route 1 are Archie Cannon Drive, England Street/Route 54, Ashcake Road, and Maple Street (extended). Along Route 54, the key intersections are Hill Carter Parkway and Mount Hermon/Frances Road.

Institutional Uses

Three Institutional land use designations have been identified on the Future Land Use Plan Map. This designation consists of:

- Open Space
- Government
- Randolph-Macon College

Open Space

Open space areas are intended to be reserved for a variety of uses, such as formal recreation parks, passive parks, and greenways. Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation discusses policies related to the completion of the open space framework of the Town. The goal of designating land areas as Open Space is to preserve wetlands and green infrastructure within the Town. Information regarding wetlands and green infrastructure is provided in Chapter 8, Environment.

Policy LU.10 Open Space

Linear open space areas as shown on the Future Land Use map are intended for maintenance by the Town, as part of a Town-wide greenway system. Construction of these amenities shall be provided by private development where practicable. On parcels that are not intended for development, the Town may need to proactively acquire and develop portions of the greenway system.

Government

These areas are intended for uses incidental with the provision of federal, state, and municipal services. Government uses include uses such as public schools, the library, the post office, Town Hall, and the police station. Most of the land area designated as this land use type is already occupied by government facilities. Expansion of these facilities in their existing locations is appropriate.

This statement is not intended to imply that government services should not occur in other land use areas, however the type of land use category where these services are provided should be appropriate for the type of service delivered. For example, administrative offices would be appropriate where office uses are suggested, or additional land for the Town Shop would be appropriate where industrial uses are suggested.

Policy LU.11 Schools

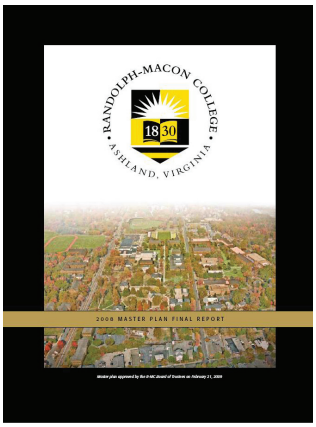
The Town will encourage any new schools that are proposed by the County to serve the Ashland population to be built within the Town limits. Property near Gandy Elementary would be an appropriate location for new construction, if the time comes that the existing structures become unusable as schools.

Randolph-Macon College

Randolph-Macon College adopts its own Master Plan for campus development. In conjunction with this plan, the Town adopts the College's Master Plan. The most recent Randolph-Macon College Master Plan was adopted in 2009 by the College's Board of Trustees.

The main focus of the College's Master Plan is to create a more pedestrian-friendly and inwardly focused campus. The R-MC Plan suggests fostering connections with the Town of Ashland, reducing on-street parking, increasing while consolidating surface parking within the campus boundaries, and enhancing student safety while crossing Town thoroughfares. Also recommended is increasing the tree canopy according to the Town's 2004 Development Guidelines Handbook and developing a sign package in conjunction with the Town specifically for the Higher Education Zone.

It is recommended that as development of R-MC continues west of the railroad tracks, that the current footprint be maintained with no further expansion. Attention should be given to land use decisions in this area for potential impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods.



Ashland Overlay District

The Ashland Overlay District was created by Hanover County as a result of the 1996 annexation agreement between the Town and County and is included in the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027. This district is an overlay zoning district established to provide additional controls for commercial and industrial development. It is intended to encourage compatible development in areas of the County that are adjacent to the Town. Under the terms of the 1996 Voluntary Settlement Agreement, amendments to the Ashland Overlay District require the approval of both the Town and Hanover County. This is an opportunity for joint planning between the Town and County.

Policy LU.12 Cooperative Planning with Hanover County

The Town should coordinate with the County in the development of additional code language that would govern residential development, as well as commercial and industrial development, surrounding Ashland. Issues that should be addressed include: lot width and size, street grid and capacity, subdivision interconnectivity, subdivision access requirements.

4.3 Phasing of Development

The Development Patterns Map, Map LU-3, is hereby incorporated to be a part of this chapter. The map is intended to be a generalized depiction of current development patterns, similar to the generality implied with the Land Use Plan Map policies.

When referring to development patterns within this chapter, the chapter is meant to be interpreted as all-encompassing regarding the general character of development in an area, with respect to setback, building height, building spacing, lot widths and building character.

Policy LU.13 Established Areas

Established Areas are characterized by an existing, established, built-out pattern of development. Development activity in these areas should keep and reinforce these patterns.

Policy LU.14 Redeveloping Areas

Redeveloping areas are already developed, but lack a cohesive or sustainable pattern, or contain areas of conflicting land uses, or are no longer reasonably representing a highest and best use of the land.

Redevelopment in these areas should benefit from development policies geared to encourage appropriate re-use of the property.

In certain instances, especially in high-profile areas, it may be appropriate for the Town to assist with the initiation of redevelopment of certain properties.

Policy LU.15 Infill Areas

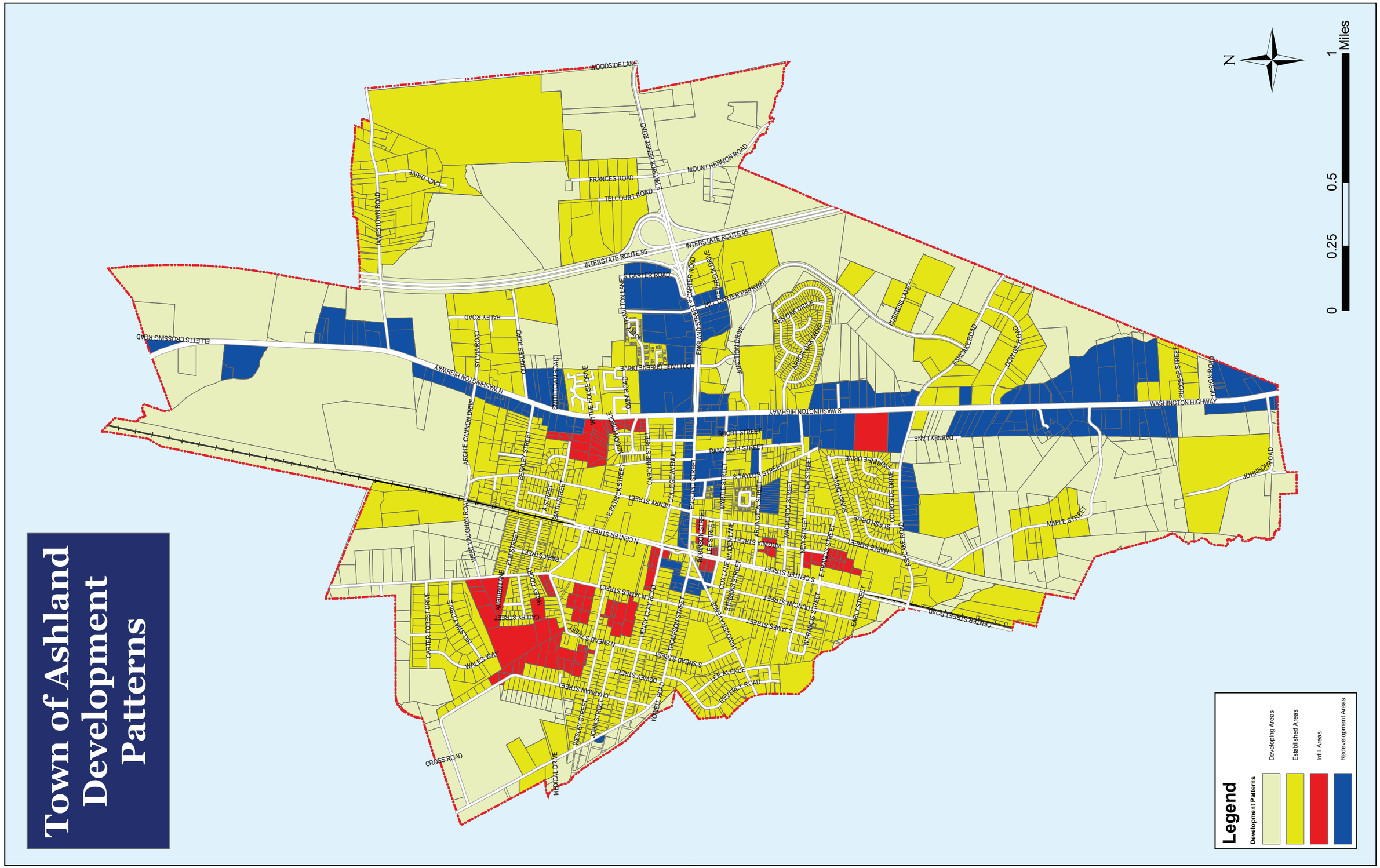
Infill areas are vacant tracts that are nearly surrounded by existing development.

Development in these areas should benefit from development policies geared to encourage appropriate infill development that takes advantage of the existing infrastructure and proximity to built-up areas. These policies should attempt to make infill areas similar in character to surrounding development, as well as ease some of the regulation that may have prevented prior development on the tract.

Policy LU.16 Developing Areas

Developing areas generally lack an established pattern of development.

Development in these areas should create new, sustainable development patterns that attempt to incorporate the existing and future street grid network.



MAP LU-3 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

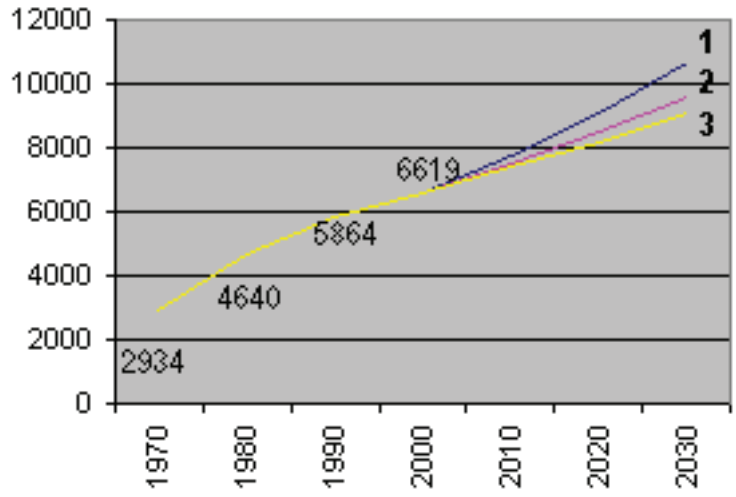
4.4 Growth Rates

Rationale for a Target Growth Rate

The Town of Ashland recognizes the need to manage a reasonable growth rate for the following reasons:

- Fair and efficient allocation of community resources that could be harmed by a high growth rate.
- Too much growth too quickly can result in a large amount of similar housing saturating the market, which can cause long range problems as the housing ages and becomes less desirable.
- Preservation of community character and diversity. Ashland grew organically beginning in the 1850s. What has resulted is a mix of housing types, even next door to one another. There are examples within the Town where large developments have been constructed within a short period of time and therefore little variety exists, and the character is not reflective of the rest of the Town.
- In order to balance the desire to maintain a small-town character, yet remain a significant force in Hanover County and the Greater Richmond area.
- A natural human desire for gradual change.

Town of Ashland Population through 2030



Three ways to project growth for the Town:
(1.) Using Hanover County's projected growth rate of 1.61% (2030 pop. 10,687)
(2.) Using the Town's historic growth rate of 1.25% (2030 pop. 9608)
(3.) Using the assumption that the Town will continue to capture 4.38% of the County's projected growth rate. (2030 pop. 9058)

In either of the three assumptions, the 2% maximum growth rate was not met, which would result in a 2030 population of 11,989.

Based on these three scenarios, and the 2% maximum growth rate, the Town must plan for anywhere between 750 to 2000 new dwelling units by the year 2030.

Table LU-1:
Town Population through 2030

Policy LU.17 Desired Rate of Growth

The Town should grow at a rate of 1.25 to 2 percent annually. This rate is justified as Hanover County has set its target growth rate at 2 percent. The Town must grow at a similar pace in order to remain a center of activity and new investment as surrounding areas develop. Further, it will be important that the Town absorb some of the area's growth to ensure that the Town maintains an active position in County politics, and is an attractive location for County facilities.

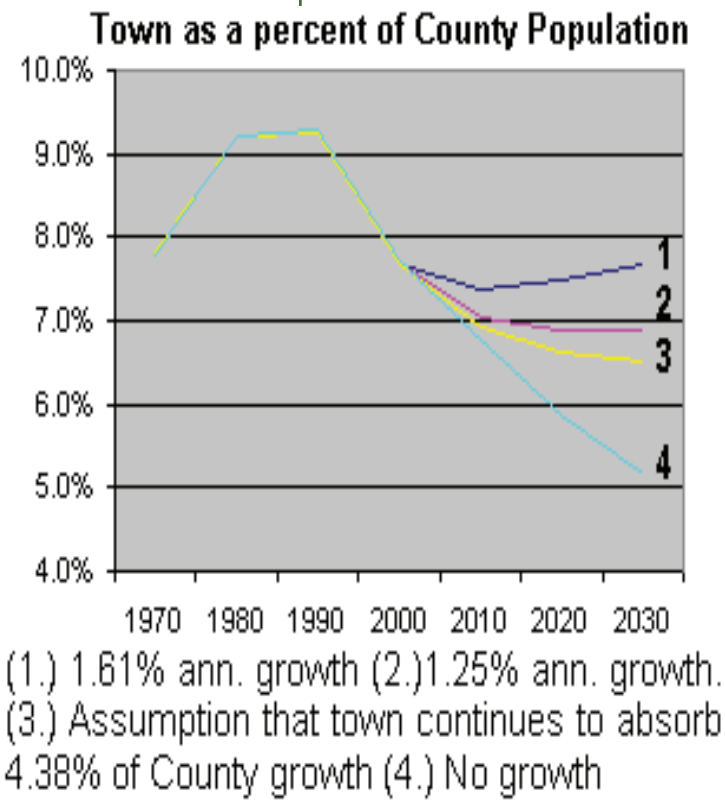


Table LU-2: Town as a percent of County Population

The intended growth rate should not be considered on an annual basis, as economic cycles fluctuate from year to year. A five year trend in building permits should be analyzed to see if the Town is in fact meeting the target 1.25 to 2 percent growth rate. Projects should be reviewed individually based on the merit of this Comprehensive Plan. The growth rate can be exceeded by addressing the specific impacts to the Town and County including transportation, schools, emergency services, parks and recreation and other capital needs.

Policy LU.18 How to Apply the Intended Growth Rate Over Time

As of 2009, approximately 38 to 65 units should be constructed annually to maintain the growth rate. This number will, of course increase over time as the base population increases.

Policy LU.19 How to Apply the Intended Growth Rate to Individual Zoning Requests

Through the rezoning and conditional use permit process, phasing shall be implemented through the use of proffered conditions (or imposed conditions in the event of a conditional use permit) to ensure that the Town's intended annual growth rate is not exceeded. Phasing shall apply for projects larger than 10 units.

Historically, about 10 to 20 percent of new units constructed have been located on existing individual lots, therefore the rezoning and conditional use permit processes should not authorize more than 80 to 90 percent of the maximum 2 percent growth rate.

As of 2009, no more than 52 to 58 units would be appropriate on an annual basis within an aggregate of all approved and unbuilt rezonings.

The Planning Commission and Town Council shall consider the potential for future rezoning requests when applying the growth rate, and therefore should be cautious not to approve the entire 80 to 90 percent to a single development, unless impacts are adequately addressed or as an incentive to provide higher quality design components.

Policy LU.20 Application of the Intended Growth Rate in Established, Redevelopment, Infill Areas

The Planning Commission and Town Council recognize that application of the phasing suggested by Policy LU.19 may be detrimental to Established, Redevelopment and Infill Areas, and may exercise discretion in allowing a greater number of units annually than suggested. This discretion is intended to encourage development within built-up areas, as well as decrease the length of time that a proposed development may inconvenience existing neighbors while it is being constructed.

Table LU-3: Annual Average Growth Rate of the Town

	Average Annual Growth Rate	Growth principally attributed to:
1940s	4.3%	Scattered infill development
1950s	0.6%	Scattered infill development
1960s	0.6%	Scattered infill development
1970s	4.7%	Very little development. Annexation of Several neighborhoods.
1980s	2.4%	Trotter Mill condos -- 35 units Sedgefield MHP -- 265 units Slash Cottage -- 206 units Hanover/Laurel Woods -- 80 units
1990s	1.2% (0.8% w/o VSA)	Arlington Square -- 53 units Myrtle Street Commons -- 18 units VSA annexed -- 105 units
2000s	1.6%	Ashland Woods -- 150 units North Macon Terrace -- 46 units Omni Park Place -- 60 units Maple Street -- 23 units Berkeley Woods -- 20 untis Cottage Greene -- 54 units Carter's Hill -- 23 units

Source: Planning Staff

TO DO LIST

1. Update Zoning Code:
   - Adjust zoning to agree with residential designation
   - Specifically define what actions are necessary to receive density allocations
   - Adopt an ordinance to design guidelines included in neighborhood plans
   - Implement form based zoning where applicable.
   - Make changes to reflect mixed use intentions in Downtown and on England Street
   - Adopt changes necessary to support Transit Oriented Development
   - Adjust zoning to agree with Commercial designations

2. Create England Street Design Overlay District

3. Fund a Downtown Plan

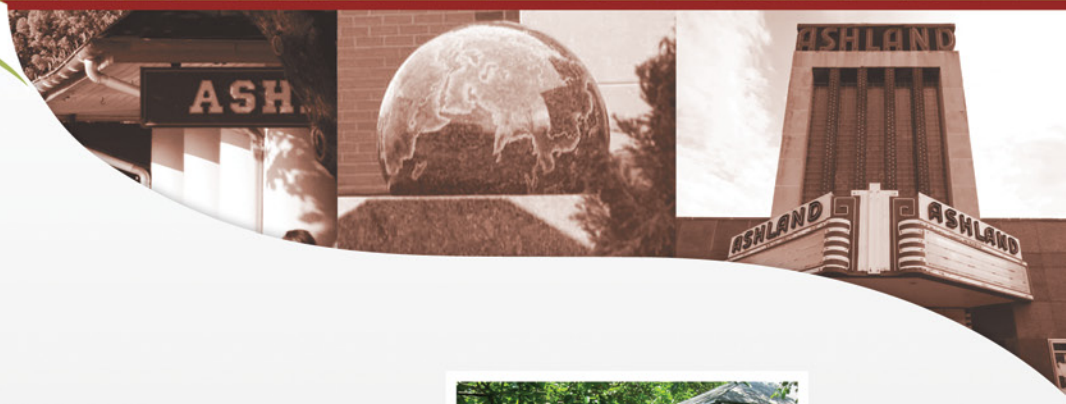
4. Create Route 1 Design Overlay District

5. Study the following Key Intersections for their potential development as improvement overlay districts:
   - Route 1: Archie Cannon Drive, England Street/Route 54, Ashcake Road, and Maple Street (extended).
   - Route 54: Hill Carter Parkway and Mount Hermon/Frances Road.

Chapter 5

HOUSING

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



Acheiving the right balance

5.0 HOUSING

Abstract
The long-term intention of this housing chapter is to guide new development to a higher quality standard and toward an increase in middle and upper income housing. Achieving the right balance of housing will positively affect the Town's economy by raising the median income, increasing local retail opportunities and growing the tax base, all beneficial to the whole Town.

Within the Housing & Neighborhoods chapter, the Town works toward creating the right balance of housing by:

- *Capturing a larger population of the metro region's executive, middle and upper income housing.*
- *Preserving the distinctive, historical and attractive character in both the infill and new developments within the Town.*
- *Raising the quality standard of new and replacement construction in the Town.*
- *Encouraging a mix of housing options to meet the needs of a diverse population that includes higher end, middle class, working class and affordable housing options.*

During the past 150 years of development, Ashland has accrued a diverse array of housing options. This includes both older and newer single family homes, manufactured homes and multifamily housing. Through the presence of small detached dwellings, townhouses, apartments, and manufactured homes, the Town provides a significant amount of affordable housing. Currently, the Town's housing stock is short only in terms of middle to upper income and executive housing. The long-term intention of this plan is to guide new development toward an increased percentage of middle and upper income housing. The presence of more middle and upper income housing will positively affect the Town's economy by raising the median income, increasing local retail opportunities and therefore growing the tax base. An increased percentage of executive, middle and upper income housing can be beneficial to the whole Town. Middle and upper income housing is defined as housing affordable to those earning 150 percent of the median income or higher. Using the median income for the Town of Ashland as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2005-2009 of $44,609, this equates to a home price of $300,000. This calculation is demonstrated in Table HN-4 later in this chapter. Executive housing is described as housing to meet the needs of the executives and owners of the businesses that the Town seeks to recruit.

Studies have shown that Ashland has a larger percentage of affordable housing than the surrounding Hanover County. This can be partly attributed to the amount of multifamily housing located within the Town's boundaries. Based on the 2000 Census, only 8 percent of the County's housing is multifamily whereas 26 percent of the Town's total housing is multifamily. For the purpose of this plan, workforce housing is defined as housing affordable to those earning between median and 120% of median income.

As is mentioned many times throughout the Plan, it is through maintaining the guiding principles that the small town character of Ashland can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. This small town character is typified by the variety of house and lot sizes that exist within neighborhoods. This variety allows for a diverseness of neighbors all living within the same block. Variety of house and lot types is described in the preceding chapters as a standard that should be applied throughout existing and future neighborhoods. It is with this principle in mind that the future housing needs of the Town are considered.

Over time, the size and composition of the population evolves and housing preferences shift creating a change in the Town's housing needs. At different times, changing social and economic factors may influence whether families choose to rent or buy, construct new homes or renovate old homes. These same factors also influence the size and type of homes in demand at a given time. An important part of the Housing and Neighborhoods chapter is analyzing the demographic changes that take place within the Town and how these changes affect the future housing needs of the Town. It is our role to steer the type of development that occurs within our borders through future land use decisions and zoning and subdivision ordinances. It is important that such policy decisions are made with the future housing needs of the Town in mind. While there will always be outside market influences at work, a balance must be met between the short-term market forces and the Town's long-term development goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - Preservation of historic structures allows citizens to take pride in the history of the Town and preserves a visual history for future generations.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Historic homes should be maintained and renovated when necessary to prevent demolition.
   - New housing should be compatible with the existing housing stock of Ashland with the traditional neighborhood design of through streets on a grid pattern.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Minimum clearing should occur during construction of new housing developments.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety**
   - Provide housing to meet the needs of citizens of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Augment the amount of higher-end housing to accommodate the needs of prospective business developers and middle and upper management employees.
   - Create housing units over retail on England Street to increase the level of activity in this mixed-use district.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**
   - Increase higher-end housing as a method of improving the Town's tax base and continuing the high caliber services and amenities offered by the Town.

5.1 Residential Housing

It is the Town's desire that single-family detached units remain the primary dwelling type in Ashland while encouraging the addition of a mix of sustainable townhouse and above-retail units. Table HN-1 presents the structural makeup of the housing stock in the Town. Single-family detached homes represent 56 percent of the Town's total housing stock. Single-family attached homes, which include townhouses and duplexes, constitute 6 percent of all units. According to the U.S. Census, multi-family (apartments) includes structures containing 2 or more housing units within the same structure and represent 26 percent of all units. A physical count in 2011 estimates the total number of apartment units to be approximately 750, a 16 percent increase over the 2000 census.

Table HN-1

Residential Structure Types		
	2000	
TOTAL	2,445	
Single-Family Detached	1,373	56%
Single-Family Attached	146	6%
Multi-Family	631	26%
Mobile Homes	295	12%
Source: US Census 2000		

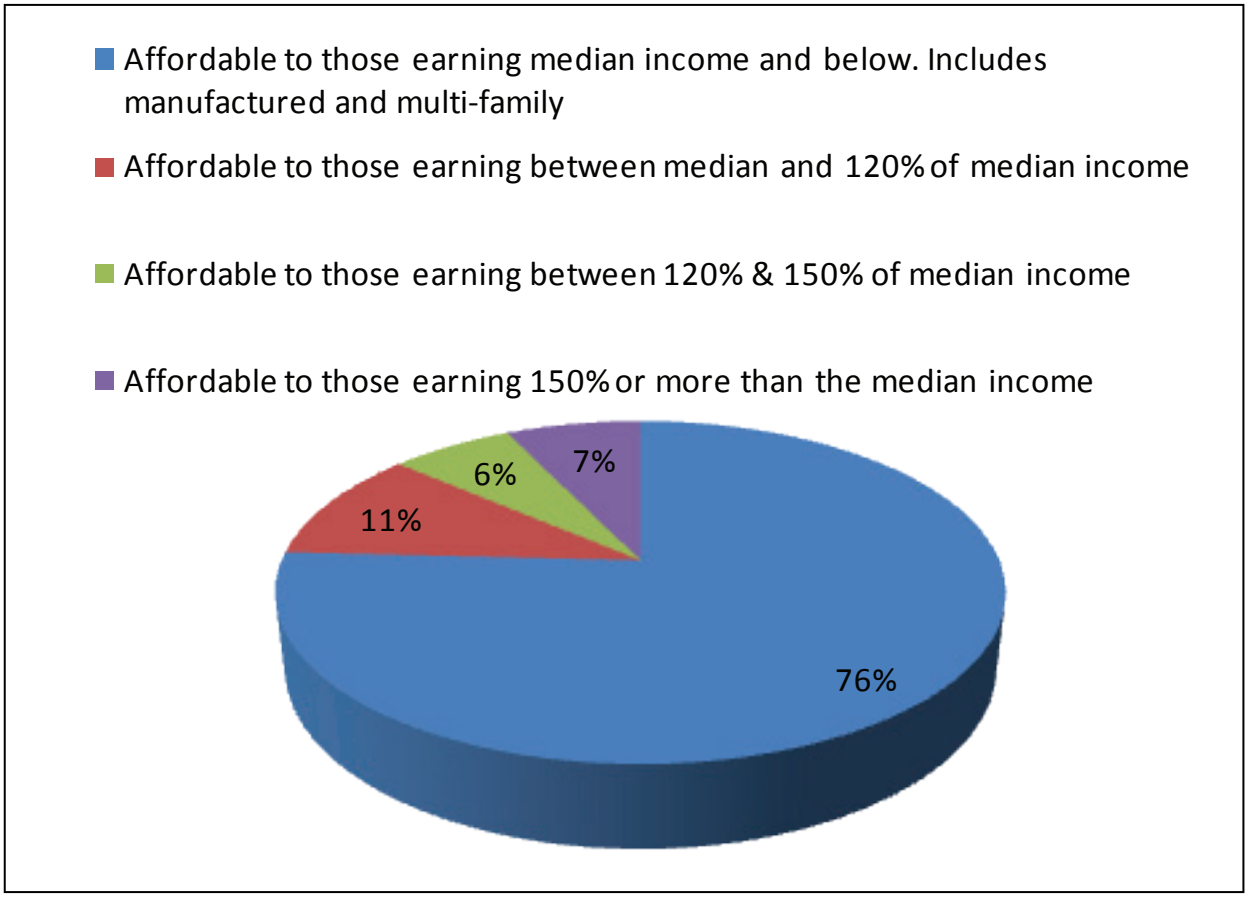
Finally, there were 295 housing units classified by the Census Bureau as mobile homes. Mobile homes should not be confused with modular homes, which are a type of single-family detached dwelling unit that is constructed in units that are movable but not designed for regular transportation on highways, and which are designed to be constructed on and supported by a permanent foundation and not by a chassis permanently attached to the structure and which meet the requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Whereas as modular homes are permitted by right in all single-family residential zoning districts in the Town, Town zoning regulations limit additional mobile home placements to locations within mobile home parks. Consequently, mobile homes have declined over the past 10 years as a share of the housing stock and are likely to continue to do so. There are two mobile home parks in Ashland both located off of Route 1. A physical count in 2011 revealed that Sedgefield, on the east side of Route 1, has 262 homes and Palm Leaf, on the west side of Route 1, has 44 homes, differing from the 2000 census by a count of 11.

The Right Balance of Housing

The Town has a significant deficit of upper income housing which has caused prospective business developers and residents to question the adequacy of the Town's housing stock for middle to upper management employee needs. This also contributes to the Town's low median income level. The addition of executive, middle and upper income housing will help to balance the Town's housing options. The following Housing Affordability Chart, HN-2, was created using County property assessments from January 2010 shown in chart HN-3. Although not assessed individually, the approximately 750 apartments and 306 mobile homes are included in with the affordable housing in order to create a more accurate assessment of the existing housing in Town. As presented in the Housing Affordability Chart HN-2, 87 percent of the Town's housing is considered affordable and workforce housing, leaving only a very small percentage considered middle and upper income (affordable to those earning 150 percent of the median income or higher.) Therefore, the Town seeks to increase that percentage of housing to accommodate middle and upper income residents.

There are many benefits to the presence of middle to upper income housing and the middle and upper income wage earners this attracts. Executive, middle and upper income housing is often one criterion for executives seeking out a new location for business. New businesses choosing to locate in Ashland equals job creation in the Town.

Chart HN-2 Housing Affordability (including apartments and mobile homes)



Housing at a higher price point is attractive to buyers with a higher disposable income, which could increase spending at our local businesses thereby providing added support to local retailers. As the population and the median income rises, there is a greater chance for attracting the higher-end retailers.

In addition to the higher price point, the lack of higher quality sustainable housing has been noted in several chapters of this Comprehensive Plan including Economy and Community Character and Design. The issue of quality is of importance because desirable, quality housing should be available at various price points within the market to accommodate both current and future residents who may wish to locate here.

Table HN-3 shows the property assessment as of Jan 2010 of the residential properties within the Town. This table includes single family detached homes, condominium units and townhouses.

Table HN-3

Town of Ashland Residential Assessments January 2010		
Value Range	Total Properties	Percent of Total
< $100,000	95	5.9%
$100,000 - $149,999	357	22.0%
$150,000 - $199,999	522	32.2%
$200,000 - $239,999	282	17.4%
$240,000 - $299,000	172	10.6%
$300,000 - $399,999	135	8.3%
$400,000 - $499,999	39	2.4%
> $500,000	18	1.1%
TOTAL	1620	100.0%
Median Home Value	**$184,100**	

Note: This table uses Jan 2010 assessed values.

Source: Hanover County Assessor's Office

It does not include apartments or mobile homes. This table with the addition of apartments and mobile homes was used to create the Housing Affordability chart above.

The following table is included to provide an example of how much house is affordable at three different income levels. Table HN-4 shows median income (affordable), 120 percent of median (workforce) and 150 percent of median (middle and upper income). The amount equaling 25 percent of monthly income and the suggested home price at each income level is then calculated based on these three income levels.

Table HN-4

How Much House is Affordable?						
		25% of monthly income (available for housing)	**5% of monthly income for utilities**	**Mortgage**	**10% Down Payment**	**Home Price**
Median household income (Affordable)	**$44,609**	$929	$186	$181,800	$18,180	$199,980
120% of Median household income (Workforce)	$53,531	$1,115	$223	$218,200	$21,820	$240,020
150% of Median household income	$66,914	$1,394	$279	$272,805	$27,280	$300,085
Generally accepted standard is that no more than 30% of annual income should be spent on housing. Mortgage is calculated as 4.5% interest 30yr loan w/ 1% origination fee = $5.11/month per $1,000 borrowed						

Policy HN.1 Encourage Higher-end Housing

The Town desires to capture a larger amount of the region's executive, middle and upper income housing while preserving the wide assortment of housing available. An increase in executive, middle and upper income

housing would work to increase the number of middle and upper income residents in order to improve the Town's tax base and increase spending potential to attract higher quality retail stores. It is important to strike the right balance between housing affordability and the continued need for middle and upper income housing for the sake of economic development and the continuation of high caliber services and amenities offered by the Town. Incentives such as density bonuses should be provided to encourage new middle and upper income housing development.

New Residential Neighborhoods

It is the intention of this Plan that new developments are created with a variety of home sizes and styles and lot sizes side-by-side within a neighborhood. It is the Town's desire that a large percentage of the new housing constructed be executive, middle and upper income housing. This can be achieved with better quality materials and designs as well as increasing the average square footage in developments. Developers of new neighborhoods should consider the character of the Town when considering design elements in the construction of new homes. The traditional neighborhood design of through streets on a grid pattern should be maintained. The street design, the planting of street trees, and the siting of homes in close proximity to one another all lend to the small town character of Ashland.

Residential Infill

As described in Chapter 3, Community Character & Design, residential infill development should consist of a varying mix of home size, lot size, and house setbacks. It is the Town's desire for newly constructed homes to be compatible with existing housing stock in both design and placement of homes on the lot. As a method of character preservation within the Town's historic neighborhoods, the feasibility of local historic district ordinance should be explored. At the community meetings, the desire for an architectural advisory board (AAB) with guidelines to provide technical support to homeowners was expressed by citizens. The AAB was explained in detail in Chapter 3, Policy CD.2 and could assist in guiding new development in Ashland's cherished historic neighborhoods.

Policy HN.2 Update Town Ordinances

Along with the updating and strengthening of the design guidelines document mentioned in policy CD.1, the Town ordinances shall be updated to ensure that the desired variety occurs in both the infill and new developments within the Town. To encourage developers to adhere to the updated design guidelines document, incentive based higher density allocations will be allowed provided the developer meets the ideals as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, updated design guidelines and as specifically defined in the zoning code.

Residential Land Use

The Zoning Ordinance should provide for a wide variety of single-family lot sizes. Not only is this important to the affordability of construction, but also for the desired variety within the Town as mentioned above.

By ensuring that the future residential land use designations accommodate the construction of both large and small single-family detached homes, townhouses and condominiums, a range of family size and income levels will be provided for. These are all important avenues for home ownership and provide necessary alternatives for first-time homebuyers, young families and seniors choosing to downsize.

The Mixed–Use land use designation, while not specifically residential, allows for the combination of commercial and residential uses and provides a wider range of ownership and/or rental opportunities within the same neighborhood. It also provides convenience and the opportunity to utilize less expensive forms of travel such as walking and cycling as well as the necessary density to support public transportation.

5.2 Capacity Analysis

A capacity analysis is useful as part of the Comprehensive Plan process to consider what our Town will look like at full build-out. It is a step-by-step process of evaluating the amount of future potential development for a given area looking at both residential and commercial development. This analysis provides valuable insight into future development potential for the Town based on current zoning. The outcomes of this analysis can guide future rezoning decisions. The general steps are:

- Determine what is undevelopable
- Determine already existing development
- Determine vacant/redevelopable land
- Determine zoning densities
- Apply proposed zoning densities, less land utilization factor, to vacant and redevelopable lands

The result shows the estimated full future capacity. With the current zoning in place within the Town, Table HN-5 shows that the vacant / redevelopable land available in the Town can accommodate 1,343 dwelling units and approximately 2,955,661 square feet of commercial space.

Table HN-5

Capacity Analysis Summary Based on Current Zoning			
	Existing	Future Capacity	Total Buildout
Dwelling Units	2,794	1,343	4,137
Businesses	660	383	1,043
Square Feet of Commercial	5,099,578	2,955,661	8,055,239

Source: Renaissance Planning Group, 2008

Note 1: Future business counts based on current average of 7727 sq ft average per existing businesses.

Note 2: There is no definitive time line associated with when this future capacity could occur, nor what level of demand exists.

The future land use map was used to create Table HN-6. The amount of acreage of vacant / undeveloped residential land was calculated according to the future land use designation then multiplied by the average number of dwelling units per acre allowable. With the land use designations in place on the Future Land Use map, the Town can accommodate 2,915 additional dwelling units.

Table HN-6

Capacity Analysis Summary Based on Future Land Use Map			
	Existing	Future Capacity	Total Buildout
Dwelling Units	2,794	2,915	5,709

Source: Planning Staff

Table HN-7 shows there have been approximately 310 building permits issued by Hanover County between 2000 and October of 2010. This provides a picture of the rate at which development has occurred within Ashland over the previous ten years.

Table HN-7

Area Building Permits							
	2000-2001 (# of units)	2002-2003 (# of units)	2004-2005 (# of units)	2006-2007 (# of units)	2008-2009 (# of units)	2010 (thru Oct) (# of units)	Total
Ashland	90	43	39	110	78	30	390 *
Hanover County**	1,868	1,850	1,185	1,029	614	252	6,798

Source: Hanover County

* Of this number 76 permits were for setting mobile homes

**Hanover County numbers include building permits issued in the Town of Ashland

5.3 Owner Occupied & Rental Housing

As the national housing market has gone through a tumultuous period since the middle of the last decade, perceptions regarding home ownership have begun to shift. This shift is attributable to several factors including concerns about the economy, a lack of available credit and a lack of market confidence. As perceptions change and the real estate market settles, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing may be affected.

As shown in Table H-8 on the following page, in 2000 the ratio in the Town was 60 percent owner occupied to 40 percent renter occupied. As compared to the County's homeownership rate of 84 percent, Ashland has a notably lower homeownership rate. The 2010 census revealed a six percent decrease in the number of owner-occupied units within the Town, changing the ratio to 54 percent owner occupied and 46 percent renter occupied. Hanover County showed a two percent decrease in owner occupied units according to the 2010 census. Of the Town's tenant-occupied housing units, approximately 750 are multi-family located within the Town's apartment complexes. Although commonly associated with apartments not all rental property is multi-family housing. Within the Town boundaries a number of single-family detached homes and townhouses serve as rental properties.

Table HN-8

Tenure						
	2000	2010		2000	2010	
	Ashland		change	Hanover		change
Total housing units	2,445	2,863	+418	32,196	38,360	+6,164
Occupied Housing Units	2,279	2,670	+391	31,121	36,589	+5,468
Owner-occupied	1,364	1,455	+91	26,226	30,171	+3,945
% Owner-occupied	60%	54%	-6%	84%	82%	-2%
Tenant-occupied	915	1,215	+300	4,895	6,418	+1,523
% Tenant-occupied	40%	46%	+6%	16%	18%	2%
Vacant units	166	193	+27	1,075	1,771	+696

Source: U.S. Census 2000, 2010

Homeownership encourages long term commitment to neighborhoods and the establishment of community. Homeownership tends to promote pride and stability within a neighborhood and creates a higher rate of maintenance. The proliferation of rental housing, which is sometimes poorly managed, has the potential to damage the integrity of the neighborhood in which it is located.

Policy HN.3 Homeownership

The Town should continue to encourage homeownership among low and middle income residents. The Town should launch a home ownership study to identify programs being utilized by other localities in Virginia that could address the balance of owner occupied to rental housing. One option may be partnering with a qualified non-profit agency to finance and market a program to selected Town/County employees like teachers, police officers and firefighters and also a program for first time homebuyers.

5.4 Sustainable Housing

The Smart Growth Network, a public/private/non-profit interested in land use, has made the following suggestions as to what characterizes sustainable housing:

- Housing located near transit options, jobs, commercial centers, schools, open space and public and community services.
- Housing developed through rehabilitation and infill to make use of already existing structures and/or utilities.
- Housing that provides a safe, healthy and productive environment for the occupants.
- Housing that is compact, constructed using green building standards and reduces energy consumption enabling a smaller carbon footprint.
- Housing that is characterized by a mix of income, size and housing types allowing for a variety of household sizes, resident ages and various income levels within a given neighborhood.

Energy efficiency is an important factor within sustainable buildings. Measures to reduce energy usage should be encouraged such as high-efficiency windows and insulation to create an efficient building envelope. Buildings should be constructed and rehabilitated using durable materials and energy efficient components. As stated in Chapter 4, Land Use, precedence will be given to projects that include green building techniques in compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council LEED rating system, EarthCraft House Virginia or similar certification standards.

The Age Wave

As the demographics of the population change over time, the housing needs of the Town's residents will changes as well. According to the United Way's Greater Richmond Age Wave Plan, the population in Hanover County is expected to grow by 67 percent by the year 2030 with the 65 plus population growing by 240 percent. Housing design and developments suitable to meet the needs of the aging generation will need to be considered. The location of housing and the manner of con-

struction will affect the lives of its occupants. A goal in Ashland should be to enhance the overall livability of the existing and new neighborhoods for residents in all stages of life.

By 2030, one out of five persons in Virginia will be older than the traditional retirement age. In order to prepare Virginia for this change in the age demographic, the *Older Dominion Partnership* has been formed as an initiative by government, business, foundations, and non-profits to help Virginia localities plan. As stated by the Commissioner for the Virginia Department for the Aging, "Age Wave planning is an opportunity to improve life in our communities for everyone—whether it is accessible housing, improved transportation systems, multipurpose community centers, meaningful volunteer opportunities, or countless other issues-improving life for seniors can improve life for us all." The Richmond region has launched *The Greater Richmond Age Wave Plan: Building Ready Communities*. The planning efforts are led by the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, Senior Connections and other key stake holders. Two of the guiding principles of the Age Wave Plan are that older adults will be viewed as a resource to the community and not just a service recipient and that the plan will foster multi-generational opportunities.

Policy H.4 Universal Design

Universal design, otherwise known as *life-span design*, *age-in-place design* and *inclusive design*, is based on the idea that all environments and all products should be useable by all people of all ages, sizes and abilities. An important part of universal design is maintaining good aesthetics while achieving accessibility. Universal design concepts for homes include four-foot wide hallways, a master bedroom on the first floor, lever door handles rather than knobs, easy to reach rocker-style light switches, and stepless entrances. The intention of universal home design is to allow a person to remain in their home while accommodating the changes that might occur over a lifetime due to aging or injuries. The Town should encourage the use of universal design practices in all new construction.

Policy H.5 Housing Diversity

The Town desires to continue to have a mixture of housing options to meet the needs of the elderly, the physically and/or mentally challenged, and others who are not capable of living unassisted. Housing for the elderly who live independently should be in close proximity to basic services. Other facilities such as assisted living, skilled nursing homes and continuing care are located in the Town and should continue to be encouraged to provide for the varied needs common to different stages of life.

In addition, the Town of Ashland currently has group homes to provide housing for those with mental and/or physical challenges. These homes are supervised by Hanover County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services.

5.5 Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization

Vital neighborhoods with well-maintained homes are a key part of the quality of life in Ashland. As homes age, whether historic or not, routine maintenance plays a pivotal role in maintaining property values. In considering the future of housing in Ashland, it is important to consider not only how new development will affect the Town but also the need for maintenance of our existing housing stock. Upkeep of the Town's existing housing is critical for both preserving the unique character of the community and for providing an adequate and varied supply of housing options for residents.

Historic Preservation

There are many historic homes within the Town both in and out of the historic districts. As mentioned in the Guiding Principles, the historic homes are part of Ashland's unique character. Culturally, the Town is richer for having the tangible reminder of past eras and historic styles. Economically, the Town benefits when historic buildings are protected and when the Town is attractive to visitors seeking heritage tourism opportunities. The Town benefits when citizens take pride in the history and mutual concern for the protection of the historic building fabric. By preserving historic structures, a visual history and the artistic workmanship so evident in historic structures is preserved for future generations. There is a value to the oldness of these structures. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, an architectural advisory board (AAB) should be established with guidelines to provide technical support to homeowners during the process of renovations or completing a home addition.

Historic preservation works as method for achieving our guiding principles. Ashland's small town character can be preserved by the maintenance of the existing housing stock and the myriad of housing options preserved in the existing housing stock will encourage the continued variety within Ashland.

Aging Housing Stock

Age is a significant factor for much of the housing in Ashland. While we treasure the historic homes in Ashland, not all homes were built of the same quality construction. As of the year 2000, more than one-half (51 percent) of the total housing stock was built before 1980. Table HN-9 shows the breakdown of the age of homes in the Town. The age of homes is not necessarily an indicator of poor condition, but indicates a need for vigilance in housing preservation and code enforcement. This vigilance by the Town should forestall the need for substantial rehabilitation if property owners are not undertaking the necessary maintenance.

Table HN-9

Age of Housing Stock		
Total	2445	
Built 1999 to March 2000	117	5%
Built 1995 to 1998	202	8%
Built 1990 to 1994	159	7%
Built 1980 to 1989	518	21%
Built 1970 to 1979	324	13%
Built 1960 to 1969	260	11%
Built 1950 to 1959	242	10%
Built 1940 to 1949	267	11%
Built 1939 or earlier	356	15%

Source: US Census 2000

The median age of owner-occupied housing stock in Ashland in 2000 was 20 years, with 1980 as the median year built. According to the 2008 Urban Partners study, this indicates a need for diligence in housing preservation and code enforcement as the housing stock ages. If allowed to deteriorate, this could possibly lead to a lower median household income as increasing portions of the housing stock filter to lower income households and possible further reductions in homeownership rate as investors increasingly purchase older homes. The Town should continue code enforcement to ensure that sustainability of the Town's housing stock is maintained.

Policy HN.6 Revitalization

The Town should actively identify areas for revitalization as a method to preserve, maintain and improve the existing housing stock. Criteria should be developed for designating revitalization areas such as: land value vs. value of building, concentration of rental housing, and incidents & violations. These criteria should enable the Town to effectively monitor neighborhood health to know when corrective action is needed.

Once areas have been identified, the Town should seek the support of County programs for rehabilitation assistance. Programs administered by various Hanover County human services departments, including the Department of Social Services, Community Services Board and the Department of Community Resources are available for housing assistance and repair for special needs populations. Project:HOMES (formerly

Elderhomes) is an example of a program offering rehabilitation assistance.

Because Hanover County administers the maintenance code through the Building Department, the Town should coordinate with the County to ensure that ordinances are in place to ensure the proper maintenance occurs in both single- and multi-family homes. Although all plans are reviewed by the Town, it is the responsibility of the County to perform building inspections and provide all approvals.

The benefits of housing rehabilitation are for both the homeowner and the community. For the homeowner, housing rehabilitation means: 1) a safe and healthy home to live in, 2) pride of ownership of a livable and attractive home, 3) maintaining and improving the value of the home, 4) potential tax credit availability, and 5) energy efficiency education and/funding assistance. For the community, housing rehabilitation means: 1) improved quality of life in the neighborhood, 2) improved quality of housing stock, 3) quality housing is kept within an affordable range.

In an effort to aid revitalization of Ashland neighborhoods and individual properties, there are several programs that could be established by the Town. Funding would come from Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG). The CDBG funds are issued on a competitive application process. The Town of Ashland is eligible to apply for these funds. The grant application commonly includes a request for funds to hire a program administrator. A program of this type would be the responsibility of the Planning & Community Development Department.

Policy HN.7 Energy Efficient Homes

To encourage energy efficiency in the existing homes, the Town should consider establishing an energy efficiency education program. This program could offer mini-energy audits in residential homes. The audit will help to educate residents about potential changes that can be made within the home to cut energy costs. Examples of potential changes are: sealing air leaks with insulation, caulking, and weather-stripping; repair of drafty duct systems; and installation of energy efficient lighting. The Green Building Council has created a Green Retrofit Checklist for retro fitting older homes to meet some Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. The checklist includes recommendations such as: switch to green power, reduce water usage, explore solar power, use low-VOC products, switch to a programmable thermostat, and switch to compact fluorescent lighting.

Blight Abatement

The visible and physical decline of neighborhoods due to their age, lack of property maintenance, or vacant, overgrown housing tends to

lead to further deterioration resulting in blight. These characteristics have a tendency to increase once it begins unless a community works together to stop it quickly prior to its becoming unmanageable. In addition, criminologists have theorized that blight breeds crime. In order to preserve neighborhoods and their quality of life, town governments, law enforcement, civic groups, businesses and individual residents need to quickly address issues as they arise. The Town's Blight Abatement Team (BAT) consists of the Ashland Police Department and the Planning and Zoning Department and infractions are quickly and strictly enforced to prevent further decay.

Policy HN.8 Property Maintenance

The Town and residents should work together to resolve property maintenance violations. The Town should continue the Blight Abatement Team as a proactive measure and implement improvement plans in targeted areas as funding allows. A coordination task force should be continued including the Town's Planning and Community Development and Police Departments and Hanover County Building Department and Fire Marshall to do cross-referrals and joint neighborhood projects. The Town should also support citizen involvement in neighborhood clean-up programs and events.

Randolph-Macon College Student Housing

Although R-MC is considered a residential college, not all students can be accommodated within student housing. Some students occupy houses in residential neighborhoods, which often bring to light fundamental lifestyle differences between the students and neighbors, many of whom work and are homeowners whose major financial investment is their home. Activities associated with college life such as occasional parties, late night visitors and noise may conflict with the neighbors who keep a more regular schedule. Excess cars parking on the street may also become a burden to residents. The following policies address ways that the Town can work together with the College to maintain the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.

Policy HN.9 R-MC Student Housing

When reviewing development applications from Randolph-Macon College, the Town will continue to recommend that adequate housing be provided for all non-commuting students within the campus or within R-MC sponsored housing.

In the event that all students cannot be accommodated on campus, the Town and College should maintain a Town/Gown program. This program is utilized in Blacksburg, VA as a voluntary collection of Town and Virginia Tech staff, students, citizens, rental property managers, the police

department and community service agencies. The group works together towards the goal of proactive education about quality of life issues and neighborhood stability, ultimately blending the Virginia Tech and Blacksburg communities. The program was started to facilitate positive, outcome based solutions to the different demands placed on the Town's neighborhoods and residents. The presence of the students living off campus in Blacksburg has created an eclectic mix of people, housing, and living styles.

Informational videos have been created to educate students about signing a lease, being a good neighbor, and dealing with laws and regulations that might be new to them. A public service announcement has also been created to alert the students to the existence of the Town/Gown program and what it offers.

An additional element Ashland could consider is the inclusion of a "how to be a good neighbor" contract between the students, landlord and the police department. The contract should address issues such as yard maintenance, noise, animals, parking of cars, illegal drug and alcohol use, speeding within the neighborhoods and the consequences for breach of contract.

Policy HN.10 R-MC Housing in Downtown

The Town and Randolph-Macon College should explore the option of a public/private partnership to provide student housing for upperclassmen along England Street above retail and office uses. Similar to RAMZ Hall near the VCU campus, R-MC would act as the leasor of the student housing allowing the college to maintain the same control as the on-campus dormitories. Details are provided in Chapter 6, under Student Housing.

5.6 Housing Affordability

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the Town has significant affordable housing with a mix of manufactured homes, small detached dwellings, townhouses and approximately 750 rental apartment units. The Town's housing stock is short only in terms of executive, middle and upper income housing. Within the range of housing options, it is necessary to have a selection of housing to meet the demands of all market participants. This includes income levels from executives to retail employees. The availability and affordability of housing is an important concern for all communities, including Ashland.

Housing affordability is measured by the ratio of housing cost to household income. The concept of housing affordability is based on the general rule that no household should have to spend more than 30% of its annual gross income on housing. When considering affordability, there are essentially three types of housing: affordable, workforce and executive. Affordable housing is characterized by the Commonwealth and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as housing, which residents with incomes at or below the area median income can afford, provided they pay no more than thirty percent of their gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities. Workforce housing is described as housing affordable to those earning 120 percent of the area median income. Executive housing falls into the category of housing affordable to those earning at least 150 percent of the area median income. Of Ashland's single-family detached homes, townhouses and condominiums, 60 percent are considered affordable, 17 percent are workforce and 22 percent are affordable to those earning more than 120 percent of the median income. In addition, there are approximately 750 rental apartment units located in the town, of which over 230 are subsidized as part of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. With the inclusion of the rental units, approximately 86 percent of housing units fall into the affordable and workforce categories.

According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median household income for the Town of Ashland is $44,609. As shown in Table HN-10, Ashland's median household income is lower than both Hanover at $76,929 and Virginia at $60,316. As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, household income takes all households into account, whereas family income only accounts for households with two or more people related through blood, marriage, or adoption thus eliminating single person households.

Table HN-10

Median household income		80% of median	120% of median
Ashland	$44,609	$35,687	$53,531
Hanover	$76,926	$61,541	$92,311
Caroline	$56,829	$45,463	$68,195
Henrico	$59,807	$47,846	$71,768
King William	$64,682	$51,746	$77,618
Louisa	$51,775	$41,420	$62,130
Richmond	$37,735	$30,188	$45,282
Virginia	$60,316	$48,253	$72,379

2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars)

To Do List

1. The Town desires to capture a larger amount of the region's executive, middle and upper income housing while preserving the wide assortment of housing available. Incentives such as density bonuses should be provided to encourage new middle and upper income housing development.

2. The Town ordinances shall be updated to ensure that the desired variety occurs in both the infill and new developments within the Town.

3. In an effort to support homeownership, The Town should launch a home ownership study to identify programs being utilized by other localities in Virginia that could address the balance of owner occupied to rental housing. One option may be partnering with a qualified non-profit agency to finance and market a program to selected Town/County employees like teachers, police officers and firefighters and also a program for first time homebuyers.

4. The Town should actively identify neighborhoods for revitalization as a method to preserve, maintain and improve the existing housing stock. Criteria should be developed for designating revitalization areas such as: land value vs. value of building, concentration of rental housing, and incidents & violations. These criteria should enable the Town to effectively monitor neighborhood health to know when corrective action is needed.

5. The Town should seek the support of County programs for rehabilitation assistance.

6. The Town should coordinate with the County to ensure that ordinances are in place to ensure the proper maintenance occurs in both single- and multi-family homes.

7. Consider applying for CDBG funds to facilitate housing revitalization programs in the Town.

8. The Town should consider establishing an energy efficiency education program offering mini-energy audits in residential homes.

9. The Town should reinstate the Blight Abatement Team as a proactive measure and implement improvement plans in targeted areas as funding allows. A coordination task force should be reestablished including the Town's Planning and Community Development Department, County Building Department, police, and fire to do cross-referrals and joint neighborhood projects. The Town should also support citizen involvement in neighborhood clean-up programs and events.

10. Prepare for the increase in 65 plus population by encourage the use of universal design practices in all new construction.

11. Encourage the creation of senior housing in close proximity to basic services such as churches, cultural sites, medical facilities, and convenient shopping.

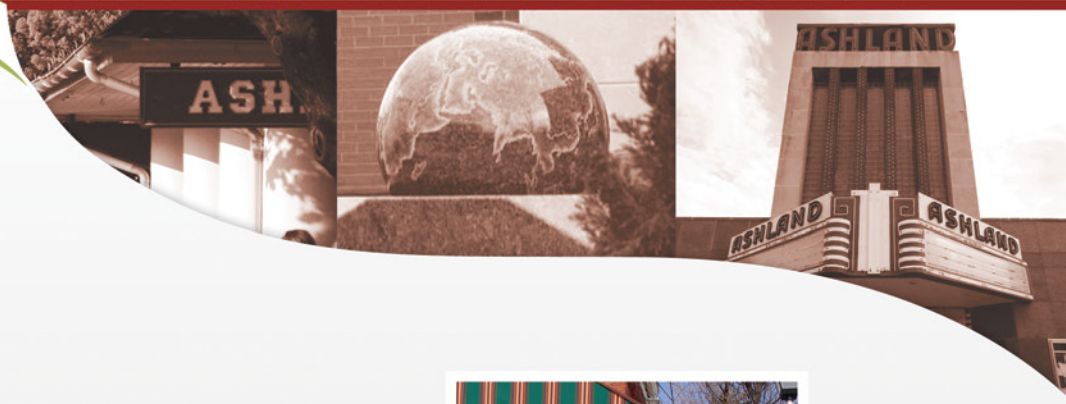
12. The Town should support the provision of housing opportunities for physically and mentally challenged persons. This can be accomplished by partnering with regional non-profits specializing in these types of housing.

13. Create opportunities to improve student housing issues within the town, including implementing good neighbor contract programs.

Chapter 6

ECONOMY

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



Healthy... Sustainable... Diverse

6.0 ECONOMY

Abstract
Ashland recognizes that a healthy, sustainable economy depends the creation of conditions for business development, growth and retention across all sectors. The Economy chapter is intended to guide public and private decisions that foster the stabilization and strengthening of the local Ashland economy while enhancing community and social development.

The Economy chapter works to enhance Ashland's economic development and long-term economic health and sustainability by:

- *Fostering a strong and diverse economy which provides a full range of employment choices for present and future residents.*
- *Supporting business development activities to retain, expand and recruit businesses.*
- *Mobilizing public and private resources to encourage new business development through the Technology Zone and the GreenTech Incubator.*

The economy is a central factor in a community's ability to sustain itself. Economy plays a central role in maintaining the vitality and quality of life within a community. A strong and diverse economy provides employment and a tax base that supports a livable community by providing for schools, police, fire protection, parks and many other community facilities and services. Ashland can capitalize on numerous advantages from an economic development perspective. Because of Ashland's location and amenities (including excellent highway access, small town atmosphere and proximity to Richmond and Washington, DC), the Town's economic base is poised to grow.

The purpose of the Economy chapter is to guide public and private decisions that foster the stabilization and strengthening of the local Ashland economy. In addition to strengthening the economy, economic development is valuable for community and social development as well. Traditional economic development is evolving from basic recruitment and business attraction, to the cultivation of local entrepreneurship as a foundation of a diverse business community. Home grown businesses tend to be more loyal, they draw on local resources and owners that live locally are often more sensitive to the need for a small town to retain its unique quality of life characteristics. The Town of Ashland is fortunate to have a diverse collection of home-grown businesses including both large and small retailers selling everything from riding supplies to fleet vehicles. There are locally-owned construction industry

contractors, real estate sales, development companies and distribution outlets. This concept of local entrepreneurship is well tailored to suit the needs of Ashland, particularly the historic Downtown and the England Street corridor, by growing local businesses and creating jobs from within the local economy. Ashland's continued economic vitality depends on the Town's ability to support a diverse mix of businesses and industries, build on existing amenities and promote a high quality of life.

Over the years, as transportation methods have changed, so has the economic structure of Ashland. Initially the Town served railroad passengers as a resort town, then automobile travelers along Route 1, and today, although the first two are still used, the predominant thoroughfare is Interstate 95. These transportation changes have situated the Town of Ashland to be very competitive when recruiting for desired companies. Location is a primary factor in attracting quality firms.

At the same time, these changes have also positioned Ashland to serve a diverse base of retail customers ranging from Town residents to those who live in smaller rural communities nearby, interstate travelers, college students and employees coming to work in Ashland. As new retail outlets locate along the borders both in and out of Town, the retail businesses and shopping centers in Town, including the Historic Downtown and England Street corridor, must continue to reinvent themselves and find their niche in today's market.

Historic Downtown is the place people envision when they think of Ashland and it must remain a top priority to strengthen this area as part of our effort to keep Ashland *Ashland*. The Town must continue to strengthen other areas of Town so that investments can be made in the Historic Downtown. Retail is a vital sector to support residents and visitors and should be encouraged. Also, Ashland's prime location within the Richmond region establishes it as a potential regional employment center, poised to grow into the future. Diversification and a balance of retail, office, industry and manufacturing are all possible and will foster the economic health and stability of the Town.

This Plan chapter contains policies related to economic development and Ashland's long-term economic health and sustainability. These policies address issues such as strategic planning, quality of development, Randolph-Macon College student spending, business clusters, regional partner priorities and creativity and the arts. Economic development should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as a fundamental principle that is reflected in all elements of the comprehensive plan. The policies in this chapter are meant to work in conjunction with other plan policies to achieve the Town's objectives. For instance, Policy CD.14 in Community Character and Design suggests the creation of affordable mixed-use, live/work spaces on England Street to complement existing businesses as well

as strengthen an arts and cultural district. By creating a space where people can live, work and shop, an economic driver is created, hopefully spurring further revitalization. In Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods, Policy HN.1 voices the Town's desire to capture a larger amount of the region's higher value housing. The presence of higher value housing attracts middle and upper income wage earners, new businesses, and the higher-end retailers; all adding to the economic vitality of the Town.

Population Projections

Population projections provided by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) suggest a population change from 7,600 in 2008 to 12,749 through the year 2035, an increase of 67.7 percent as demonstrated in Table E-1. In the Hanover County Retail Business Strategy, by Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates, the report predicted Ashland's ability to support 1 million more square feet of retail space by the year 2022 attributable to the increasing population.

Table E-1

Population Projections		
	2008	2035
Ashland	7,600	12,749
Hanover	102,015	174,123

Source: RRPDC

**County totals include Asland

***The Hanover County Comprehensive Plan has a stated goal to achieve an average 2% annual growth. This is consistent with the growth rate that the County has experienced since 1940. Hence, the overall population control total was derived using this growth rate. Hanover County also has a unique land use development system inherent in its Comprehensive Plan that provides for the "phasing" of more dense residential developments in specific areas using specific timing measures. The Comprehensive Plan also contains goals for the distribution of development in the suburban and rural areas to balance infrastructure and service needs geographically. 2035 Population threshold derived from 2030 VEC straight line projection to 2035 and adding up to 10%. Since 2035 Total Population approved by Hanover is 3.4% higher than this 10% cushion, document supported justification has been provided by the county.*

Employment

Table E-2 shows the most current employment data available for the Town. It was compiled by the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) based on information from the Virginia Employment Commission. This data is compiled in a manner that protects the individual employer's confidentiality. While limited in nature, this table shows the following:

1) 37.1 percent of Ashland's total employment is employed within the retail sector.

2) Ashland's total employment in 2008 of 7,910 exceeds the total population of 7,600 as estimated by the RRPDC.
3) Of total employment in Hanover County (Ashland included) 15.7 percent is located within Ashland.
4) Of the total County retail employment (Ashland included) 25.3 percent is located within the Town. 12.9 percent of the County non-retail employment is located in Ashland.

Table E-2

Town of Ashland 2008 Employment					
	Total	Retail		Non-Retail	
Ashland	7,910	2,936	(37.1)	4,974	(62.9)
Hanover County	42,380	8,677	(20.5)	33,703	(79.5)
County incl Ashland	50,290	11,613	(23.1)	38,677	(76.9)

Source : VEC 2008 Second Quarter Masterlist. Cross checked and verified by RRPDC Staff

Labor Force

The Town's labor force is very diverse. According to the 2007 Economic Census, performed by the U.S. Census Bureau, employment in the Town of Ashland is divided among eleven different employment sectors including administrative support, wholesale trade, education, manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical services. This diversity of employment options can offer stability during tough economic times. Table E-3 reinforces that idea by showing that Ashland's largest employers reflect this diversity of employment sectors.

Table E-3

Ashland's Largest Employers				
	Number of Employees			
Employer	**July 2010**	**July 2009**	**2008**	
Hanover County	501	679	679	Government
Wal*Mart	322	322	325	Retail
Randolph-Macon College	317	321	321	Higer Education
Produce Source Partners (new)	180	160	0	Wholesale
Ashland Nursing & Rehab	173	182	184	Medical
IES Commercial, Inc (moved)	-	0	162	Contractor
Cox Transportation	150	160	160	Trucking
Martins formerly Ukrops	127	100	120	Retail
TruGreen Lawncare (moved)	-	0	150	Contractor
Cracker Barrel Old County Store	107	109	105	Retail Restaurant
Richmond Restaurant	95	107	122	Wholesale
Sheehy Ford	60	63	-	Retail

Source: Ashland Business Development Office & VEC Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

Town Revenues

One of the benefits the Town receives from its high number of employers is a broad tax base. This comes from real estate and personal property taxes as well as business/professional/occupational license tax (BPOL). In addition to the real estate and personal property taxes, retail businesses also contribute a portion of sales tax revenue. Meals and lodging taxes are collected as well and represent close to 30 percent of the Town's revenue. These taxes allow for an extremely low ratio between the percentage of property taxes paid by homeowners and the high level of services provided by the Town.

Applicable Economic Development Plans & Studies

Over the past several years, a series of development plans and studies have been completed both for the Town and for the County by various consultants. Several of these studies are summarized here.

Urban Partners

Completed in August 2008, a study by Urban Partners for the Town of Ashland highlights the historic importance of transportation to the Town, from the train, to automobiles on Route 1 and then Interstate 95. The study includes many suggestions and facts which if heeded could enhance the Town:

- England Street between Route 1 and the railroad tracks lacks cohesiveness and draw as a retail district. Revitalization and an overall district attraction is necessary to establish this corridor as a red carpet to Downtown;
- Existing shopping centers in Ashland have undergone decline and repositioning them with a modernized store mix and a diversified range of goods and services will aid the Town in revitalization efforts;
- Capitalize on the growing retail concentration at Lewistown Road by developing the southern end of Route 1 as a gateway to trigger development of underutilized properties;
- Ashland is a prime location for denser Class A office development adjacent to I-95 at the Route 54 exit;
- Strengthening the relationship between Randolph-Macon College and the Town will help improve Downtown's economy;
- Opportunities exist in Ashland for the development of new specialty goods stores, services, and activities;
- Add additional high-value housing to our varied residential mix to decrease the gap between the disproportionately large portion of mobile homes and a disproportionately small portion of owner-occupied housing as compared to Hanover County.

According to the study, there are 14 hotels located within Ashland and of these, two-thirds are over twenty years old. Due to the age of the existing hotel stock, and the lack of high-end lodging in Ashland, the report suggests there is unmet demand for new amenities. There are several competitive locations within Ashland such as near Interstate 95 at the Route 54 exit, on both sides of the Interstate and on Route 1 near England Street.

Hanover County Retail Business Strategy

The retail business strategy developed by Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates in 2008, identifies three existing retail nodes in Hanover County (Ashland, Mechanicsville, and Sliding Hill/Lewistown), with a future node to be developed at Atlee over the next few decades. While Ashland's position as a retail node in the County is currently strong and expected to grow, population and retail growth in other parts of the County may limit Ashland's percentage of the County's retail sales. It is suggested that as retail development continues at the County retail nodes of Atlee and Sliding Hill/Lewistown, as well as the continued draw of Short Pump, Ashland property owners attract reputable brand name tenants as infill within existing shopping centers. As shown in Table E-4, Ashland currently captures about 60 percent of tourist expenditures in Hanover County with that number expected to drop to 40 percent by 2022 as the Atlee and Sliding Hill/Lewistown retail nodes become more developed during 2012-2022. Although Ashland's percentage of Hanover tourism expenditures are projected to decline, actual lodging and food expenditures are expected to grow due to the Town's proximity to high tourist activity spots like Kings Dominion immediately to the north and Bass Pro Shops immediately to the south.

Table E-4

Tourist Expenditure by Retail Node (2007-2022)				
Trade Area	2007	2012	2017	2022
Sliding Hill/Lewistown	$0	$4,004,761	$4,421,579	$4,881,781
Mechanicsville	$5,078,129	$4,805,713	$5,305,895	$5,858,137
Ashland	$8,705,364	$6,407,617	$7,074,527	$7,801,849
Atlee	$0	$800,952	$884,316	$976,356

Source: VTC's 2006 Virginia Visitor Study, Greater Richmond CVB, BBPC Associates

Hanover County Economic Development Strategic Plan

Hanover County's 2009 Economic Development Strategy focuses on four major goals: 1) expansion of the tax base, 2) economic stability, 3) job retention, and 4) job creation. Combined with these goals are four objectives: 1) new business attraction, 2) existing business expansion and retention, 3) support for the agriculture and forestry industries, and 4) building on tourism and convention services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - Enhance the presence and visibility of the art in Downtown through a designated Arts and Culture District and the addition of public art.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Cultivate an appropriate retail cluster in the historic Downtown so that it may serve as a destination for shopping and entertainment.
   - Support Randolph-Macon College's efforts to strengthen physical connections between to Town and college as an opportunity to draw increased spending and general community interaction with the R-MC students.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Utilize trees and landscaping to enhance the aesthetic quality of development as a method of improving quality of life factors to make the Town more attractive to professionals and industry.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety in Ashland**
   - Further the use of high quality design and construction in new developments.
   - Provide housing that increases the sustainability and economic vitality of the Town by increasing the number of jobs retained and new businesses recruited.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Develop an economic development strategic plan to ensure continued stability and future growth.
   - Employ the new Mixed Commercial land use designation to establish a synergistic mix of office and commercial uses along Route 1.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**
   - Create a positive business atmosphere to promote business development and expansion.
   - Explore and utilize incentive, grant, and loan programs.

6.1 Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is a proactive, future-oriented approach to planning that establishes a long-range view of economic development. It provides the community with a clear understanding of their current situation, identifies potential opportunities as well as challenges, and defines the efforts required to achieve specific goals. This long-term plan is intended to provide an expanse of economic activities that not only strengthens existing businesses but also helps to diversify the employment base through the attraction of additional companies and the start

up of new entrepreneurial firms. It is important to continually expand the local economy with new opportunities not only to ensure Ashland's stability today but also to ensure jobs for the next generation of Ashland's workforce.

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a seven member body of persons appointed by the Town Council but is a separate entity enabled by the Code of Virginia §15.2-4900. The focus of the EDA is to encourage competitive property development. The EDA issues tax exempt financing bonds and manages and funds a developers loan program. The EDA operates as a quasi-governmental, nonprofit and is authorized by the state to own, develop and manage real properties separate from the Town while maintaining its tax exempt status.

Policy E.1 Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Town of Ashland does not currently have its own economic development strategic plan. To establish an organized effort towards continued stability and future growth, the EDA will develop and periodically maintain a comprehensive Economic Development plan. This Economic Development strategic plan should be completed in concert with Economic Development staff, the EDA, a representative from the Town Council, a representative from the Planning Commission, and a hired consultant. Until such time as a completed strategic plan is in place and adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, the EDA will rely on and respond to the regional partners' plans.

The study in preparation for the Economic Development Strategic Plan should focus on: 1) identifying opportunities for and constraints on economic development; 2) establishing goals and criteria for a development strategy and building consensus among stakeholders; 3) the expansion and diversification of employment opportunities in the town; 4) the disproportionate number of retailers that offer sustainable goods versus the need for large format/specialty retailers to support the desired higher-end real estate; 5) increasing the percentage of retail uses while decreasing the high percentage of office uses on Railroad Avenue; and 6) improving the balance of high-quality/affordable/workforce housing mix. The study will also aid Ashland in defining how it will fit within the growing Hanover County. As part of the economic development plan the Economic Development Coordinator shall maintain a list of vacant and blighted commercial properties. This list shall serve as a method to focus redevelopment toward these properties through public/private partnerships.

6.2 Business Clusters

The term business cluster as used in this context refers to a geographical concentration of associated business. While it may sound counter-intuitive at first, the benefits that businesses obtain when locating near

each other generally outweigh any perceived disadvantage. In the case of a retail cluster, for example downtown, the extra foot traffic outweighs the increased competition. In the case of office space, medical offices, or technology companies, the importance of clustering comes from the shared need for supportive services such as shipping facilities, a range of lunch options for staff and good regional access. Another cluster example is the stretch of Route 54 between Interstate 95 and Route 1, also referred to as the Golden Mile. Dominated by lodging and fast food establishments, the Golden Mile serves primarily as an interstate service area catering to the needs of interstate travelers. The location of a business is extremely important to its survival and specific areas of Town meet the needs of certain markets. Ashland has several different types of business clusters and the potential for more to be encouraged.

Policy E.2 Downtown Retail Cluster

The three portions of Downtown have the potential to be a successful retail cluster featuring arts related businesses or serving the tourist market. However, in recent years the historic Downtown has become off balance with its many office uses. In this location, the proliferation of office uses undermines the potential of this historic Downtown. As new development occurs and as tenants vacate the spaces, it would be desirable to have the ground level uses convert to retail and arts related businesses. A better location for the office uses would be on the second or third floor of the buildings allowing the three Downtown areas to become one cohesive shopping district. Typically, offices and some service businesses do not need the visibility or pedestrian traffic that is needed by retail. The Downtown retail corridor should be continuous, interesting and attractive to hold the interest of the pedestrian and maintain the pedestrian traffic.

The Downtown should be seen as a destination for shopping and entertainment. This area is the core of the community and an ideal location for independent businesses and retailers. The Town should continue to promote Downtown as a destination focusing on the unique heritage and small town character. This can be a valuable focus of resources as the entire Town will benefit from a healthy Downtown.

Policy E.3 Technology, Medical, & Class A Office

Growth from the Richmond Metro area is pushing north into Hanover County, positioning Ashland to grow as a regional employment center. This anticipated growth will increase the demand for both Class A office space and medical facilities. As defined in Chapter 3, Class A office space is defined as "the most prestigious buildings competing for premier office users with rents above average for the area. Buildings have high quality standard finishes, state of the art systems, exceptional accessibility and a definite market presence."

The Town should plan accordingly for these future needs. As shown on the Future Land Use map, there are several locations suggested as appropriate for new, multi-story Class A office space. Two specific areas suggested as target areas for business clusters are: 1) The central and southern end of Route 1 for office use; 2) The northern end of Route 1 for a potential medical facility. In following with the concept of business clusters, the Town should continue to support the newly established Technology Zone (partially located along Route 1) to promote a supportive environment of like businesses.

In order to facilitate the establishment of business clusters along various part of Route 1, a new land use called Mixed Commercial has been established. Mixed Commercial is meant to establish a synergy among the mix of office and commercial uses along the corridor. The mix of retail, restaurants and hotels will serve the technology, office and medical workers and their daily business needs. The establishment of these business clusters will work towards strengthening Ashland as an employment center.

Policy E.4 Interstate Service Area

The area referred to as the Interstate Service Area is primarily Route 54 between Interstate 95 and Route 1. This area operates as a business cluster serving the needs of interstate travelers with service stations, fast-food outlets and motels. There are several nationally known businesses operating in this area. Walmart serves as a dominant retailer drawing shoppers into the Town from surrounding rural areas. Cracker Barrel, McDonald's and Ruby Tuesday are national chain establishments which bring in travelers.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, Route 54 between the Interstate and Route 1 serves as a gateway to our Town. It is important that the good work and improvements on landscaping and signage made by our Town be maintained. Continued beautification of this area should serve to inspire redevelopment of aging properties, investment by new businesses and inspire travelers to spend more time in Ashland.

According to the Urban Partners study, the area immediately off the Route 54 exit from Interstate 95 is a prime location for development due to the presence of several underutilized parcels. These parcels are considered underutilized because each is a large expanse of land in a prime location with only a small amount of development. At the time of this writing, one underutilized parcel is occupied by the TA truck stop; another is occupied by Quality Inn. If either were to relocate, these sites are ideally situated to be developed as major mixed-use commercial developments with higher-quality retail and hotel components to compete with development in Hanover County. Density should be increased on these underutilized parcels when future uses are considered.

Business Parks

Ashland is home to several business parks which also serve as a type of business cluster. Located off the north and south portions of Route 1, these business parks are the site of a considerable number of successful, low impact businesses. The business parks are made up of multi-tenant flex space, office and light industrial and are home to both local and nationally owned businesses.

6.3 New additions to the Town of Ashland

Technology Zone

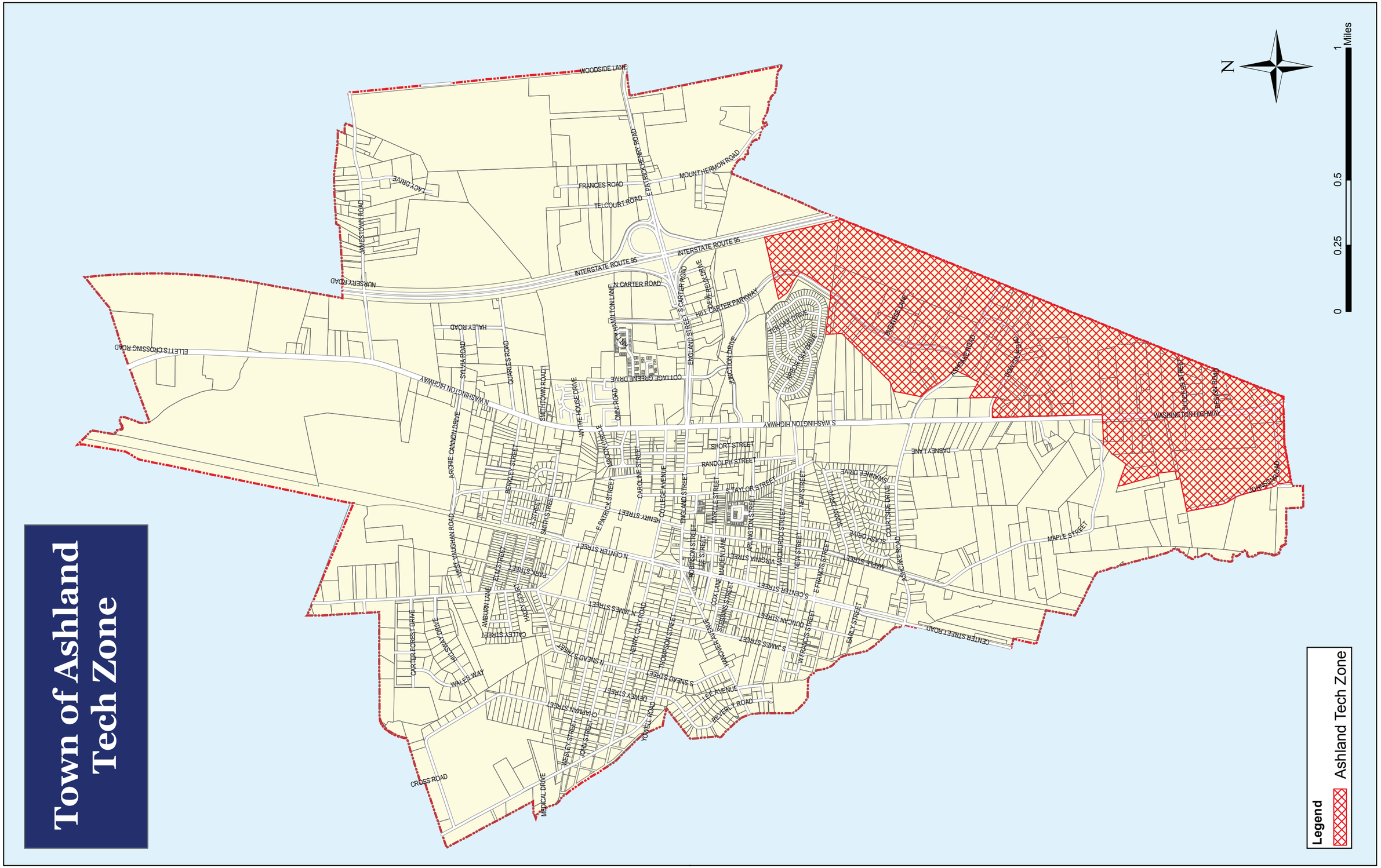
As an important economic development tool and in sync with the regional partners' priorities, an ordinance was passed in July 2010 by the Town Council designating three corridors, Dow Gil Road, Hill Carter Parkway and Route 1 South as a technology zone. This technology zone acts as an overlay district and offers incentives to existing or new businesses located within specific areas of these three corridors. These incentives include 100 percent tax rebates for years 1, 2, and 3 and 50 percent rebates for years 4 and 5 on taxes including personal property, real property, machinery, and tools, and BPOL. Incentives such as these are often the basis for a company's final decision to locate their business in Ashland. In order to qualify a certain capital investment is required, a minimum number of jobs must be created, and there is a minimum threshold for wages. In order to keep the tax rebates, the company must remain in the Tech Zone for five years. The boundaries of the Tech Zone are shown on Map Econ-1, page 6-13.

Green Incubator

As energy costs rise and concern for the future of the environment grows, a rapidly growing field has emerged referred to as green technology. Green technology is an evolving group of methods, materials and techniques for everything from generating renewable energy to creating

non-toxic cleaning products. The intention is to meet society's needs in a clean and sustainable manner that can continue into the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Widespread excitement is building around green technology and corporate investment is beginning to grow.

As a first step into this emerging market, the Dominion Resources *GreenTech* Incubator (DRGI)/DGRI Commercialization Program opened in January 2010 Ashland. The facility is located on Hill Carter Parkway in Ashland. DGRI/ DGRI Commercialization Program's founding partners are Dominion Resources, Hanover County, Town of Ashland, Virginia Bio-Technology Research Park and Virginia Biosciences Development Center. A number of other Strategic Partners and Sponsors have joined since DGRI's inception. DGRI/ DGRI Commercialization Program was established to serve entrepreneurs creating new businesses focused in clean, green, alternative energy-related technologies and services. An incubator provides support for start-up businesses such as assistance with research, financial services, business planning and office space. The focus on green technology was chosen because it is a valuable niche for the mid-Atlantic region. An incubator greatly increases the start-up businesses' chances for success and a home grown company is more likely to locate permanently in the area. The long term goal is to incubate 25 companies and 15 graduates within the first five years and for the incubator to become self-sustaining at the end of the five year period. It is the Town's first priority that these new companies grow, prosper and become established members of the business community in Ashland. This incubator partnership has allowed Hanover County and the Town of Ashland to create a premier incubator facility in a cost-effective way, with the potential to generate new high-technology growth firms for the Town and the region.



MAP ECON-1 TECHNOLOGY ZONE

6.4 New Development

Policy.E5 Quality in Design & Construction

A high quality of design, construction and landscaping contribute to the image, identity, sense of community and the marketability of a project. Quality design and construction serves not only to enhance the aesthetic quality of development but to improve the quality of life. Quality of life is often a factor businesses consider when deciding where to locate. In Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, Policy CD.1 refers to the Town's aspirations for quality and design in construction.

The Town should strive to improve quality of life factors to make the Town more attractive to professionals and industry. This may include the variety of housing types offered, recreational and entertainment amenities, low crime rates and quality education options. Priority attention should be given to areas that contain parcels and or buildings ripe for development that are for sale.

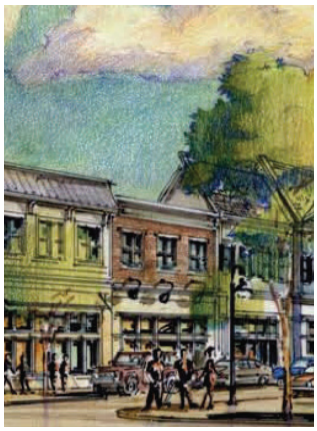
Policy E.6 Housing Stock

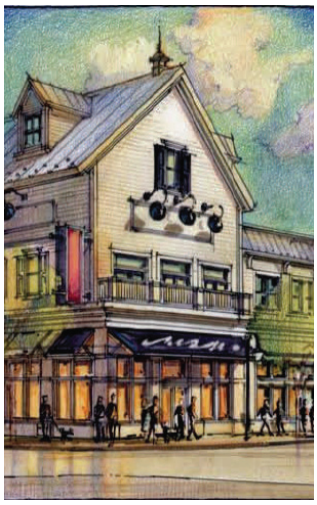
As defined in Chapter 5 Housing and Neighborhoods, workforce housing serves households earning between median income and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI). Workforce housing is intended to appeal to gainfully employed, essential workers in the community such as teachers, nurses, police officers, and firemen.

Workforce housing should not be confused with low income/affordable housing of which there is a disproportionate number in Ashland. Affordable housing is that which is affordable to persons earning the median household income. Low income housing is typically subsidized rental housing and as earlier studies have shown Ashland has a higher percentage than the surrounding county.

Additional higher quality housing in Ashland, on the other hand, will attract residents with more disposable income to support retail businesses in Town. It will also provide residences for the employees in the Class A office spaces and the technology businesses. The proper housing balance will aid in future business retention and recruitment.

Economic development and housing are directly linked to the Town's future. The Town's sustainability and economic vitality relies on the residents living in Ashland, their occupations and skills and the businesses that are attracted to the Town. The available housing must be compatible with the sales needs of the businesses and the type of employment available to the Town residents. Much of the retail success of Ashland, especially in the Downtown areas, is due to the vital support of our residents.





Mixed Use as Economic Generator

Mixed-use development is appropriate in historic downtowns, neighborhood-oriented retail centers, transit nodes, and main streets all of which describe different areas in the Town of Ashland. Bringing together a mix of retail, restaurants, offices, civic uses, transit and housing promotes an efficient use of land and infrastructure while protecting environmentally sensitive resources. A diversity of people on the street, living and working in the Downtown, provides the catalyst for success. Businesses recognize the benefits associated with areas able to attract more people, as there is increased economic activity when there are more people in an area to shop. This increased activity should also spur revitalization in older properties and businesses. Compact development costs less for roads, water, sewer, and other necessary infrastructure thereby creating increased revenue for the Town. In addition to the economic benefits of bringing new workers, residents, and pedestrians to underutilized areas, mixed use development can bring a unified streetscape and a real sense of place to both the England Street and the Route 1 corridors. As mentioned in Chapter 4 Land Use, the Mixed Use areas of the Downtowns and the Mixed Commercial are meant to encourage a synergy of complementary uses existing together.

6.5 The Identity of the Downtowns

Policy E.7 Creativity and Arts

The Plan suggests strategies that can help the Town of Ashland and its various organizations build upon the Town's existing strengths and charm and bring arts and cultural activities to the historic Downtown and England Street. A recommendation was made to develop new uses in Downtown Ashland that will complement existing businesses while enhancing the arts and cultural environment. An example of this would be to create affordable mixed-use, live/work spaces in Downtown Ashland and on England Street. Some uses that would be conducive to live/work space are galleries, culinary arts or music stores, artisan bakery or brewery and artists' studios. The use of large display windows on the ground floor provide a retail experience and allow the passerby to observe working artists.

Also suggested is the increase of public art throughout the Town to enhance the visibility of the arts and culture environment. Public art may be located in significant areas around the Town of Ashland to convey a positive visual message that Ashland is a town that supports the arts and its artists. For additional information, see Policy CD.13 regarding suggestions for an outdoor art program.

The implementation of these ideas will take the participation of several parties: the Town government, the property owner and Ashland Main

Street. This combination of ideas works to build and strengthen an arts and cultural district.

Policy E.8 Incentives for Arts-Related Businesses

To increase the presence of arts-related businesses and organizations such as art galleries and studios, an art supply shop, theaters (both cinema and stage), a music center, retail music instruments, craftware shops, photography studios, culinary arts, and art and music education venues, consideration should be given to the provision of economic incentives or regulatory flexibility. Examples of incentives are exemption from BPOL fees, real property tax exemption, or special regulatory flexibility for arts and cultural venues within the district for a defined period.

In order to provide such incentives, the Town will need to take advantage of Virginia State Code § 15.2-1129.1 (House Bill 1735) passed in February 2009. This enabling legislation allows any locality to create an arts and cultural overlay district. By creating this overlay district within a designated area, communities are able to grant tax incentives as well as relax certain regulations to arts and culture related businesses for a period of up to 10 years. There are other incentives available in addition to those suggested above. Other examples of the benefits of this designation include flexibility of sign regulations or exemption from ordinances dealing with issues pertinent to Downtown such as parking or hours of operation. The arts and culture overlay district should be established and managed by the Town of Ashland and Town Council with the assistance of Ashland Main Street.

Policy E.9 Main Street Four Point Approach®

Through a partnership of Economic Development staff, Ashland Main Street, community volunteers and partners representing a broad cross section of the community, the Main Street Four Point Approach® should be used to revitalize the Downtown/England Street area. This approach is an economic development tool that leverages local assets to revitalize commercial districts. The four points are organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Organization builds partnerships to get everyone working on the same goal for the commercial district through a volunteer driven revitalization program. Promotion works through marketing, events and retail promotions to build community pride and build both consumer and investor confidence in the district. Design is about the physical appearance of the district from storefronts to public spaces to window displays. It is about encouraging appropriate new construction, effective rehabilitation of older structures and educating business and property owners about maintenance and long term planning. And finally the purpose of economic restructuring is to recruit and assist viable businesses, create a network of business support and

establish a balanced commercial mix to create a district that meets the needs of Ashland residents.

As a method for building stronger local businesses, the possibility for hosting SBA events should be investigated. Entrepreneurial programs should be considered to educate new or potential business owners. The Virginia SBDC offers a Small Town & Merchant Program (STAMP). This program offers workshops, hands-on initiatives and resources specifically geared toward main street retailers and restaurateurs.

6.6 Randolph-Macon College

Although Randolph-Macon College is located in the heart of Ashland, very little of the student's spending is done in Town. There are potentially two reasons for this: 1) the self-contained nature of the College; 2) lack of shopping options for the college student. The Randolph-Macon College Spending Patterns survey, prepared by R-MC business majors for a marketing class in 2004, shows the expenditures made by R-MC students annually. These expenditures include dining, entertainment, and retail purchases. The survey found that the majority of purchases made by the College community happen outside of the Ashland Downtown area, either within Ashland but east of Route 1 or at Virginia Center Commons, Short Pump and in Richmond. Due to the proximity of R-MC to the Downtown and England Street commercial areas, select businesses catering to the College community seem to be a logical suggestion. As the quality of development and housing increases, the quality of Ashland's demographic information (per capita income) will increase thus, attracting the types of retail businesses desired by college students.

Policy E.10 College Market

There are few resources dedicated to the attraction of the R-MC community. Existing businesses located in close proximity, specifically in Downtown and on England Street, to R-MC should be inclusive of the College community and strive to meet this market's needs and capture its enormous untapped spending potential. An initial step for existing businesses would be to consider merchandising that appeals to the college

market. Businesses may consider social media marketing techniques designed to capture a student audience. Advertising in the Yellow Jacket, the R-MC student newspaper, is affordable and recommended. The R-MC calendar should be considered when planning festivals and other Downtown promotions, in order to ensure that students will be on campus, and also to take advantage of the increase in visitors for important College events such as homecoming and parents' weekend.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, the 2008 Randolph-Macon College Master Plan was passed by the Randolph-Macon Board of Trustees in February of 2009. Primarily addressing urban design issues, the plan connects the college's strategic mission with the physical environment. The plan identifies two gateways into the campus that need improvement. The college also seeks to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, especially along campus edges, to improve connections to Downtown. Randolph-Macon plans to build two mixed-use buildings at the corner of North Center Street and England Street. Commercial spaces in these buildings are intended to serve students as well as Town residents.

Student Housing

As mentioned in Chapter 5 Housing and Neighborhoods, Policy HN.9, the Town and Randolph-Macon College should explore the option of a partnership with a private developer to provide student housing for upperclassmen on England Street above retail and office uses. A successful example of this type of partnering can be found in the RAMZ Hall and Capital Garage buildings on Broad Street in Richmond at the VCU Monroe Park Campus. The upper floors of both buildings are leased and managed by VCU for student housing. The lower level, managed by the development group, houses businesses such as Cold Stone Creamery, Qdoba and Five Guys Burgers and Fries. With R-MC as the leasor of the student housing, the college maintains the same control as the on-campus dormitories. The intention of establishing student housing on England Street is to encourage activity after 5:00 P.M. thereby creating a livelier neighborhood and a stronger retail environment.

Policy E.11 Enhanced Campus Connections

The Town should continue to support the college's efforts to physically connect with the Downtown and England Street areas. Enabling these connections creates an opportunity to draw increased spending and general community interaction by the College students and staff.

6.7 Regional Partner Priorities

Hanover County Economic Development (HCED) is a publicly funded office whose mission is to increase the County tax base and create new jobs for its citizens. HCED offers services such as location finding for prospective companies and assistance to existing businesses through the Small Business Association. HCED also has access to numerous databases, programs and information services. As a regional partner, the Town of Ashland has access to many of these resources through HCED. Also, the Virginia Department of Business Assistance and the Virginia Small Business Development Center (Virginia SBDC) stand ready to serve the Town's Economic Development staff.

Policy E.12 Utilize HCED Tools

HCED has many tools at the disposal of Town staff, businesses, property owners and residents. Economic Development staff should identify ways to utilize the available tools to nurture and support our locally-owned businesses and entrepreneurs such as increasing mentoring and networking opportunities.

The Town Economic Development staff should continue to utilize all tools that HCED has to offer such as the Business First Program, the Hanover County Economic Development Strategic Plan, and the Hanover County Retail Business Strategy. As stated in Policy E.1, until such time as the Town's own study is completed, the Town should continue to rely on the County's Economic Development Plans for information. It is important for the Town to stay acutely aware of what is happening in the region and make an effort to respond to the regional partners' priorities.

6.8 Supply and Demand

Supply and demand is one of the most basic concepts of economics. Simply put, supply is how much of something is available and demand is how much of something people want. Ashland must strive to keep up with the development that is happening outside its borders. As investment continues in Hanover County, underutilized properties along Ashland's borders will become more attractive to developers and the Town should be prepared.

Policy E.13 Hotel

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Ashland's hotel stock is aging and of lower quality. There are many choice locations for hotel development just outside Ashland borders. The Town should be proactive in encouraging a new, higher-quality hotel with conference area and meeting center within its borders. Economic Development staff should research potential incentives for use in recruiting such entities.

Policy E.14 Commercial Development

Commercial development will continue along Ashland's borders. The Town should take advantage of this development and encourage the location of high quality commercial and industrial firms, while maintaining an atmosphere conducive to expansion of existing ones. The Town should be proactive in developing strategies that solidify, protect and enhance its existing markets. To facilitate this goal, staff should always prioritize areas that offer a larger number of parcels for sale where positive change can actually occur.

Policy E.15 Route 1 South

There are currently multiple commercial properties for sale in Town. Specifically on the Route 1 South corridor, however, these parcels lack appropriate infrastructure. Hanover County owns the utilities and it is Ashland's responsibility to seek ways to encourage improvements to these areas to facilitate the desired end result of a cohesively developed Route 1 corridor. In order to create a critical mass of new development, the Town should encourage developers to assemble smaller parcels into a larger parcel for a larger-scale development as opposed to developing one and two acres at a time.

6.9 Infrastructure

Utilities: As previously mentioned in Policy E.15, the Route 1 South corridor lacks the appropriate infrastructure. The Town should encourage the owner of the utilities, Hanover County, to improve the connections in the same manner the Town encourages VDOT to continue improving the road systems.

Road Systems: Intersections are a vital key to economic growth. Improvements made to the corridor between Interstate 95 and Route 1 along England Street (Route 54), including the Hill Carter Parkway project, greatly improved safety and accessibility to the businesses that reside in this area, in turn increasing revenues. Improvements to intersections designed to increase business development potential in concert with appropriate site plan requirements should be a priority. Current setback requirements prohibit certain quality development on some corner parcels. See Chapter 4, Land Use for more information regarding Key Intersection Overlay Districts. Key intersections along Route 1 are Archie Cannon Drive, England Street/Route 54, Ashcake Road, and Maple Street (extended). Along Route 54, the key intersections are Hill Carter Parkway and Mount Hermon/Frances Road.

TO DO LIST

1. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) will develop and periodically maintain a comprehensive Economic Development plan. This Economic Development strategic plan should be completed in concert with Economic Development staff, the EDA, a representative from the Town Council, a representative from the Planning Commission, and a hired consultant.

2. Encourage retail clusters in Downtown area as office space becomes available for lease.

3. Promote Downtown, encourage new retail, offices, arts related businesses, etc.

4. Plan for future needs of technology, medical and class A office space

5. Increase density on underutilized parcels in Interstate Service Area when future uses are considered.

6. Encourage high quality development in the Town

7. Add housing as necessary to maintain the appropriate balance of higher quality, workforce and affordable housing.

8. Encourage live/work space and public art downtown.

9. Consider an arts and culture overlay district within the Downtown area.

10. Through a partnership of Economic Development staff, Ashland Main Street, community volunteers and partners representing a broad cross section of the community, the Main Street Four Point Approach® should be used to revitalize the Downtown/England Street area.

11. Utilize VA SBDC's STAMP to assist independent retailers to build stronger businesses

12. Work with R-MC to assist local merchants to meet the needs of the College market

13. The Town should work with the College to strengthen the physical connections between the college and the Town.

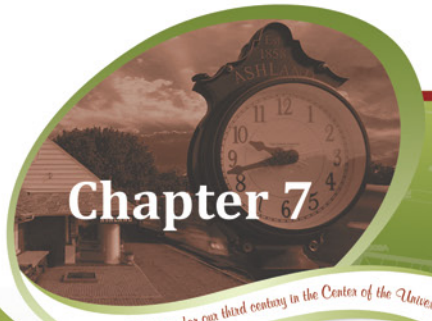
14. Utilize HCED tools to nurture and support our locally-owned businesses and entrepreneurs such as increasing mentoring and networking opportunities.

15. The Town should be proactive in encouraging a new, higher quality hotel with conference area within its borders.

16. Encourage high quality commercial and industrial firms while protecting existing markets.

17. Encourage developers to assemble smaller parcels into a larger parcel to create larger-scale development.

18. Encourage Hanover to improve utility connections to create more easily developable areas.

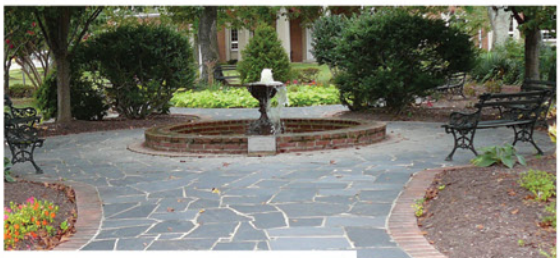


Chapter 7

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around in the Center of the Universe



7.0 TRANSPORTATION

Abstract
The Transportation chapter considers the needs of Town residents including public transportation, interstate and regional travel, pedestrians, cyclists and daily vehicle trips.

The Transportation chapter is intended to maintain a high level of service for the various modes of transportation by:

- *Promoting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for the residents, businesses, and visitors to the Town.*
- *Participating in regional planning efforts with Hanover County to enhance transportation for all areas surrounding the Town.*
- *Promoting safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation including automobile, transit, walking, and bicycling by continuing the pedestrian-scale, well-connected network of streets.*
- *Maintaining a high level of service on all Town roads. New development shall address all negative impacts to local roads.*

The Town of Ashland recognizes the importance of a safe and efficient transportation system to serve existing residents, as well as to influence the location of future development. The Town owns and maintains all public streets within the Town limits. It will be critical in the future to ensure that development, both within the Town and in the adjacent unincorporated areas, does not overwhelm Town streets.

The Comprehensive Plan describes a multi-modal system of streets, sidewalks, trails and rail that are intended to absorb anticipated growth. The Plan establishes policies for treatment of public streets, clarifying the role of the public and private sectors in providing street improvements, prioritizing street improvements, planning for future transportation needs, and providing for public transportation. The Plan seeks to enhance the livability of the whole community by increasing accessibility to employment, shopping, recreation, and other amenities, while reducing vehicle trips and promoting pedestrian & bicycling interest.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

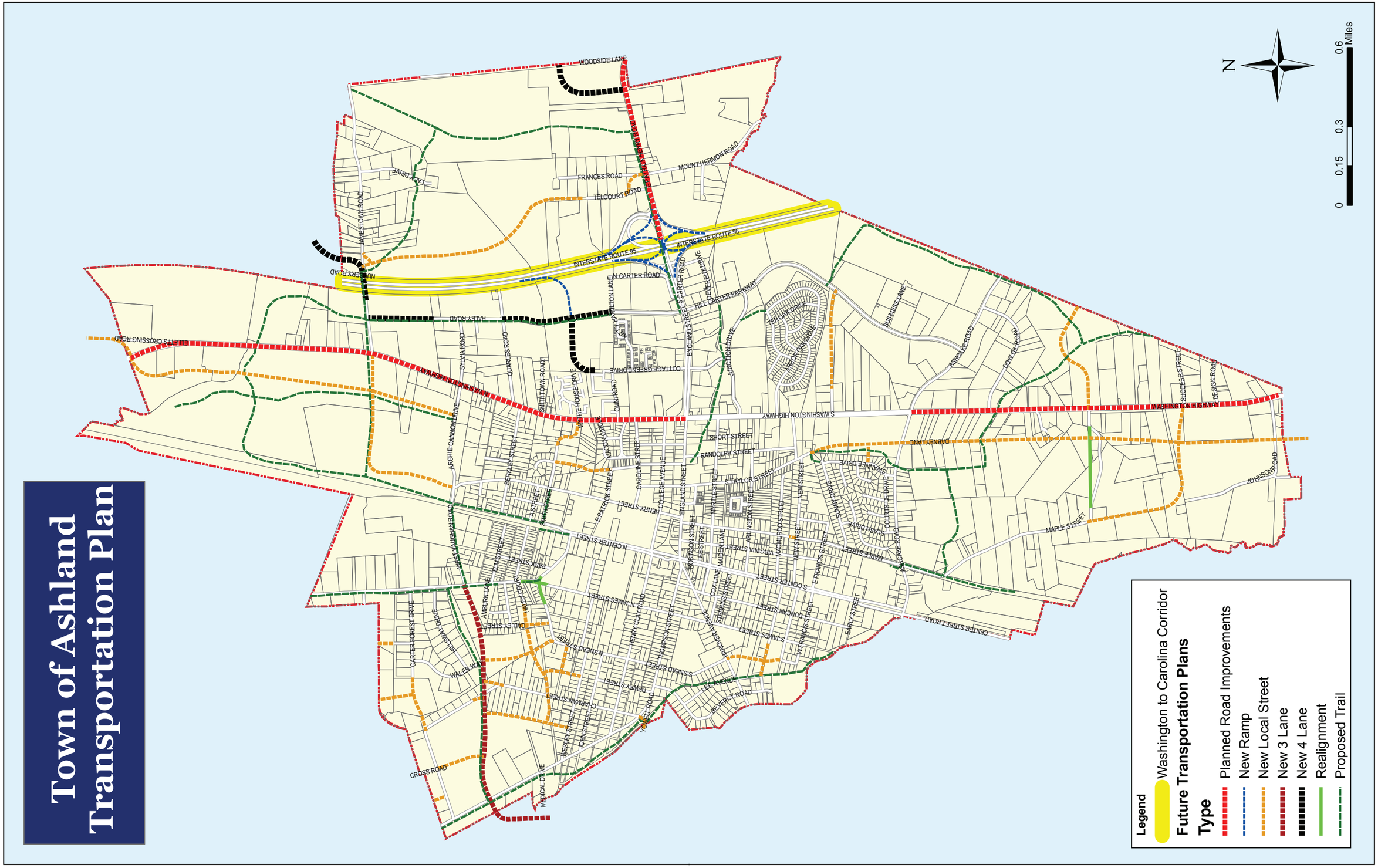
1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character.**
   - Ensure that the street network is walkable and not congested.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Encourage completion and extension of the street grid network.
   - Recognize the railroad and station as centerpieces of the Ashland community.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Ensure that the Town is easily accessible, therefore attractive for business development.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety in Ashland**
   - Local neighborhood streets should be developed less intensely than collector and arterial streets. There should be a clear distinction between streets designed to meet various levels of service.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Perform a Downtown parking study to assess current and future parking needs and address any deficiencies.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services.**
   - Maintain and improve our existing street network locally to provide superior results, compared to VDOTs statewide maintenance program.

7.1 Transportation Plan Map

The Transportation Plan Map, T-1, is hereby incorporated to be a part of this chapter. The transportation plan shows the ultimate street classification for each existing and proposed street throughout the Town.

Corridors of Statewide Significance

In developing a statewide transportation plan, eleven Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) were identified. The CoSS include major roadways, rail lines, airports, ports and transit services across the state. These corridors were deemed significant in developing a state-wide, intermodal network of transportation options. One of the eleven CoSS, the Washington to North Carolina Corridor, traverses Ashland. The corridor is primarily defined by Interstate-95, often referred to as the Main Street of the east Coast. Within the Town, this corridor includes I-95, Route 1, CSX National Gateway Corridor (freight rail), and Amtrak Northeast Corridor (passenger rail).



MAP T-1 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Code of Virginia requires local governments through which designated corridors of statewide significant traverses to note such corridors on the Transportation Map as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ashland 2020 Transportation Plan

The Town's most recent transportation plan was completed in 2001. As part of the planning process, a study was conducted to address immediate, short-term, mid-term and long-term transportation needs within the Town boundaries up to the year 2020. It has been utilized as a planning resource by the Town Council and staff to evaluate and prioritize a wide range of multimodal transportation improvements.

Policy T.1 Ashland 2020 Transportation Plan Updates

In lieu of an immediate new transportation study, several streets warrant further study and updating from the Transportation 2020 Plan. These locations are as follows and shown on the Transportation Plan Updates map on page 7-7:

- New Interstate 95 off-ramp
- North Hill Carter Parkway
- Vaughan Road Extended
- Maple Street Extended
- Ashcake Road
- Woodside Lane

Policy T.2 Right-of-Way Dedication

The Town shall update its existing policy regarding right-of-way dedication and make the policy part of the Town Code to ensure that adjacent right-of-way dedication to the ultimate right-of-way width occurs at the time of site plan or subdivision approval. Additionally, this policy should note under which circumstances a developer would be responsible for building a segment of roadway shown on the Plan, or when a cash proffer may be appropriate.

7.2 Transportation Planning in Ashland

Policy T.3 Metropolitan Planning Organization Participation

The Town of Ashland is a voting member of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's mission is to serve as the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making throughout the region. The Town shall continue to be an active participant in the MPO to secure funding to implement improvements shown in the thoroughfare plan.

Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027

Prior to their 2007 Comprehensive Plan update Hanover's Suburban Service Areas were concentrated on the east end of the County and along the Interstate 95 and Route 1 corridors (including the Town of Ashland.) In the 2007 update, the Town is now shown surrounded by Suburban Service Area, including a newly established Suburban Transitional residential area west of Ashland, and a large new business park northeast of Ashland in the Hickory Hill/Old Ridge area. These development changes will have an effect on transportation patterns in and around Ashland.

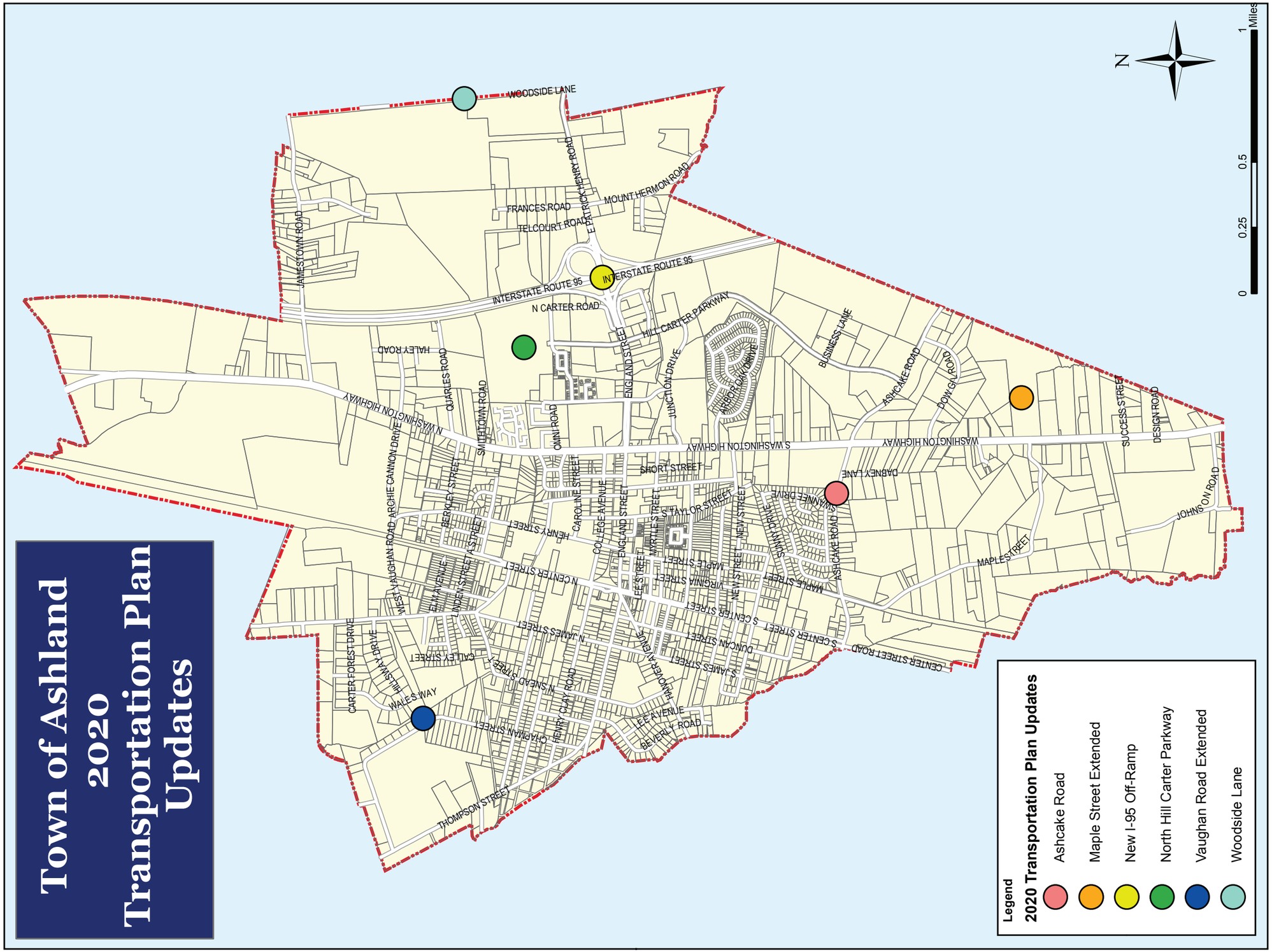
As part of the Hanover County comprehensive plan update, the Hanover County Major Thoroughfare Plan was created. Specific recommendations are identified to accommodate future anticipated changes in County land use. The recommended improvements as quoted from the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027 that are nearest Ashland are:

- Recommended for reclassification as a Major Collector—Elmont Road (State Route 626) between West Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54) and Willow Farm Drive (private) from Minor Collector (60' ROW)
- Recommended for reclassification as a Minor Collector—Proposed intersection improvements at East Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54), Woodside Lane and Providence Church Road (State Route 662).
- Proposed new Major Collector road (100' ROW) between Washington Highway (U.S. Route 1, north of Jamestown Road) and Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646).
- Proposed new Major Collector road (100' ROW) between Hickory Hill Road (State Route 646) and East Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54).

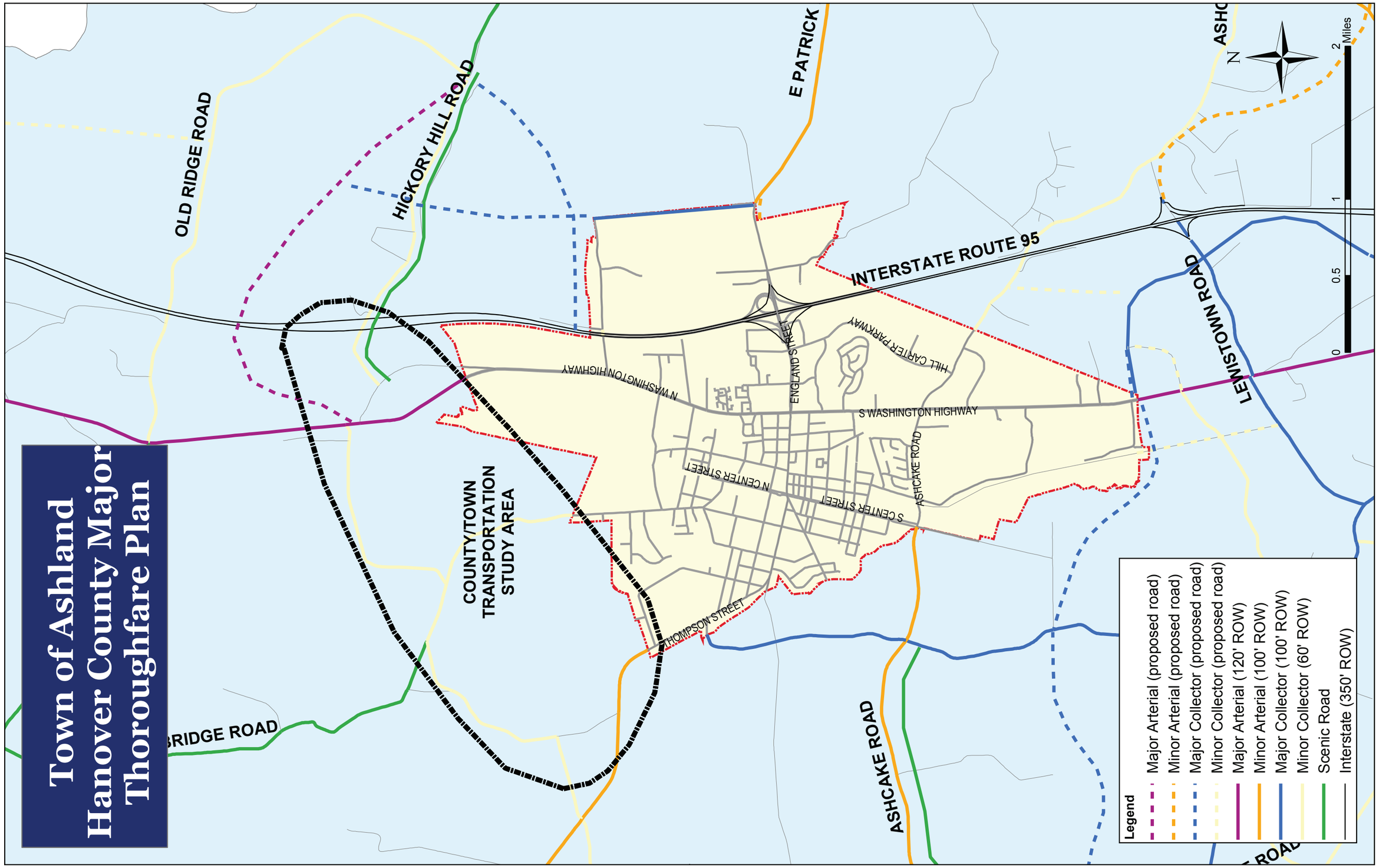
Noted on Map T-3 (page 7-9) is an area to the northwest of Town designated as the County/Town Transportation Study Area. It is recommended in the Hanover Plan that the County coordinate land use and transportation planning efforts surrounding the Town of Ashland with the Town, to assure that County and Town policies and plans are coordinated to the extent practicable.

Policy T.4 Joint Transportation Planning with Hanover County

The Town shall coordinate with Hanover County to ensure that appropriate connections occur across the Town boundaries. A detailed thoroughfare plan should be created jointly for all areas surrounding the Town, including recommended improvements for Route 1, Route 54, Ashcake Road and the proposed new interchange along Interstate 95 north



MAP T-2 2020 TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATES



MAP T-3 HANOVER COUNTY MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

of Ashland. Additionally, the Town shall assess any transportation improvements and development proposals in Hanover County for any negative impact to the Town and would request that the County work with the Town and developers to mitigate any impacts through proffers and infrastructure improvements. Specifically, Ashland desires that the road systems to be built in the County would encourage residents to drive, walk or bike into the heart of our Downtown. Although, alternate routes should be planned to avoid increased congestion on Route 54 and Ashcake Road during peak traffic periods. The Town will coordinate with the County in the same manner on any transportation improvements that may impact the County.

Policy T.5 County/Town Transportation Study Area

The Town shall initiate action on the joint transportation study area with Hanover County.

Rail Transportation

The CSX National Gateway Corridor, the north/south rail line through Town, is an important transportation resource for Ashland and the region. Owned by CSX Transportation, the primary use is freight transport with an average of 38 freight trains passing through Town every day. The daytime track speed limit is restricted to 35 mph within Town limits. Rail traffic is spread out throughout the day. This line is also used by Amtrak for its Northeast Corridor line to provide passenger rail service between Washington D.C./points north and Richmond/points south. A total of eight Amtrak trains stop in Ashland every day (four traveling northbound and four traveling southbound.) Amtrak's Auto Train also passes through Ashland on its way from Florida to Lorton, VA.

As the railroad continues to be a source of pride for the Town, part of this good relationship can be attributed to the quiet zone allowed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). A quiet zone is a section of a rail line that contains one or more consecutive public crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded. The continuation of the quiet zone is based on a calculation of a FRA formula and the number of accidents that occur at crossings within the zone.

Policy T.6 Rail Crossing Improvements, CIP Project #TR-019

The Town shall work to ensure the safety of all rail crossings within the Town boundaries to insure the continuation of the quiet zone designation. This shall be accomplished with the installation of new rail crossing signals and double guards (arms). For instance on England Street, the crossing already has an older version of constant warning time technology, so the Town would need to add a second gate on each side to disallow the possibility of passage through the lowered guard arms. This rail crossing improvement project should be undertaken in a phased approach completing each crossing individually, as financially feasible.

As mentioned in Land Use, Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation (VDRPT) included the Ashland station in a statewide in-depth station planning and land use analysis. The study was conducted for several reasons including the usefulness of market assessments to predict the scale of future development and recommendations for future planning for the redevelopment of station areas, specifically the use of transit oriented development. Recommendations made in this study, such as the inclusion of Mixed-Use zoning in the Downtown area, have been included within this Comprehensive Plan.

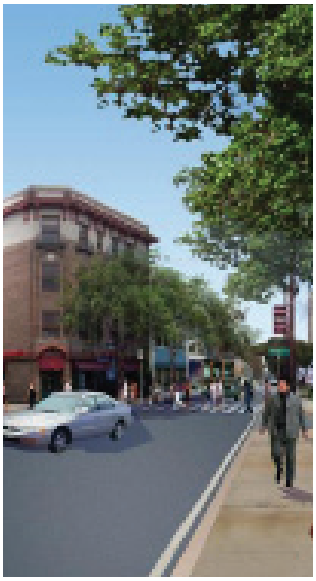
The future use of the CSX line for local commuter rail or high-speed rail continues to be considered by the region. Planning is still ongoing to determine the feasibility of these potential transportation services. At this time, the exact parameters of these services are not known. Continued coordination is needed to determine how the Town may benefit from these services. A full-service station will be needed to accommodate these future transportation services. The historic station facility, located in the downtown area just north of England Street offers minimal services and is only a “whistle stop” for Amtrak. Alternate station sites were identified in the consultant study: 1) at its current location (downtown), and 2) on the north end of town. Each station site (the current site and the alternative) will need to be evaluated once the nature and level of the high-speed rail service has been better defined.

Policy T.7 Train Station

The Town shall work with CSX, Amtrak, VDRPT and other entities to promote use of the current train station to meet future uses. Initial needs for the station appear to be a need for an overnight parking area and a ticket vending machine.

As part of the high speed rail initiative for the Richmond region, the Acca Rail Yards in Richmond will need to be modified. The Acca Yard serves as a switching yard where the freight trains are sorted. This can cause a bottleneck effect and a delay of 20 to 30 minutes or more of pas-

senger trains. The Town continues to support high speed rail and adjoins itself with the regional support of Acca Yard improvements. The rail yard improvements are necessary to improve and continue passenger service through Ashland and will be critical in accomplishing the goal of bringing higher speed rail to the region and through the Town.



Transit Services

Because public transit services have been a persistent concern in Ashland and the Richmond region for a number of years, numerous studies and several plans have been completed. A plan completed in 2002 by Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) and VDRPT, proposed an express route and two local routes with detailed routing, scheduling, cost and ridership estimates. This plan was not implemented due to financial constraints.

In 2008, a *Richmond Regional Mass Transit Study* was conducted by the Richmond Area MPO. This included Ashland in a comprehensive study of the potential need, development and implementation of a regional mass transit system for the Greater Richmond region. Service recommendations were made for commuter bus or rail service along the I-95 Corridor terminating in Ashland and local bus service on the Route 1 Corridor also terminating in Ashland. A recommendation was also made that Ashland be included in demand-responsive paratransit services for the transportation of disabled individuals.

In 2008, the *Town of Ashland Transit Services Plan* was completed with VDRPT as consultant. The purpose of the planning study was to develop a transit route and service plan to devise a public transit program to connect residents and students with employment, shopping, entertainment, health care, and other destinations within the Town limits. Through thorough examination of Town demographics, existing need, public opinion and peer examples, a recommendation was made for the

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implementation of an Ashland Transit Circulator. Continued partnerships with VDRPT, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and GRTC are necessary to access various funding sources and for potential expansion to serve commuter needs into Richmond.

The common theme throughout these studies is the general lack of public transportation options in the outlying areas of the Metropolitan region, including Ashland and Hanover County. This includes transport needs of dependent populations of senior citizens, persons with disabilities and low-income workers traveling to employment locations.

Policy T.8 Public Transit

A continued working relationship with VDRPT, VRE, GRTC and related transportation organizations is necessary for continued support to create a public transit system in the Town of Ashland. The Town shall continue to attempt to obtain sufficient funding through grants and other sources to implement a local transit circulator, as suggested by the *Town of Ashland Transit Services Plan.* The Town shall also encourage additional services from GRTC to link the Town to the rest of the Richmond and Washington areas.

7.3 Roadways

Town maintains all roadways and receives funding from VDOT annually for maintenance. This maintenance includes snow removal, restriping, paving, sidewalks, etc.

Table T-1

Roadway Designations
Principle Arterials
Interstate 95
Minor Arterials
U.S. Route 1
Route 54
Ashcake Road
Henry Street
Archie Cannon Drive
Collectors
North and South Center Streets
Taylor Street
Berkley Street
College Avenue
Hill Carter Parkway
Myrtle Street
Pleasant Street

Policy T.9 New Roadways

All roads shall be built to a minimum of VDOT standards. Utilities should be placed underground when new roads are built or existing ones are replaced.

Policy T.10 Interstate 95

Of all roadways within the Town, the Town has the least influence regarding the maintenance and operation of this corridor; however this roadway most likely has the highest amount of economic impact of all roadways in the area. With coordination from VDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Town should endorse a specific design for a new exit ramp off Interstate 95 at the Route 54 exit, as shown on Map T-2 (page 7-7), and require dedication of the land required for the reconstruction of said interchange when adjacent properties develop.

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are corridors providing longer distance trips from area to area within the region. Access to Principal Arterials should be limited to ensure that through movement is prioritized.

Principal Arterials consist generally of four to six lanes, with a median, and should fit within a 110-140 foot right-of-way.
Access to major arterials should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 300-400 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 650-800 feet
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 1000-2000 feet.

Minor Arterials

Minor Arterials are corridors providing shorter distance trips from destination to destination within the town, as well as some longer distance regional trips. Minor Arterials do not penetrate into neighborhoods. Access to Minor Arterials should be limited, yet still provide sufficient access to adjoining lands.

Minor arterials consist generally of four lanes, with median separation, and should fit within a 90 foot right-of-way. Access to minor arterials should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 250-300 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 400-500 feet.
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 650-800 feet.

Collectors

Collectors are shorter roadways that penetrate neighborhoods, collect traffic and direct it to the arterial network, especially distributing traffic between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Access to Collectors should provide sufficient access to adjoining lands, while still maintaining efficient flow.

Collectors are generally three to four lanes, with or without median separation, and should fit within a 60 to 90 foot right-of-way, depending on the number of lanes, and whether a median is utilized. Bike lanes should be encouraged along minor collector routes.

Access to collectors should be limited to:

- Right-in/right-out movements every 150-250 feet
- Median breaks for full access movement every 200-450 feet.
- Signalized intersections shall be no closer than 400-700 feet.

(Note: Spacing standards along the Route 54 Corridor between U.S. 1 and the downtown area may not be applicable due to the densely developed character of the area.)

Access for individual residential driveways should be discouraged along collectors, as access should be provided from local streets. (Note: This is not intended to promote the practice of having homes back up to the collector roadway.)

Local Streets

Local Streets are all other streets, not classified on the Transportation Plan Map. These streets are intended to provide direct access to properties. Through traffic should still be possible on local streets, as they are intended to supplement the higher-order streets with alternate routes as needed. Through streets should be laid out so as not to direct an overwhelming amount of through traffic onto any single local street.

Local streets should be designed so as to provide traffic calming measures, particularly by not being excessively wide and providing on-street parking on both sides. Sidewalks wide enough for two persons to walk side-by-side (approximately 5 feet in width) should be included on local streets.

7.4 Connectivity

Policy T.11 Street Grid Network

As the Town grows, the existing street grid network should be expanded. Opportunities for expansion to the network should be provided via stub streets at appropriate locations. Cul-de-sacs shall continue to be strongly discouraged. The use of existing 'paper streets' to serve new developments is encouraged. Paper streets are streets that have been planned by the Town and for which the dedicated right-of-way has been acquired, but no improvements have been made.

Policy T.12 Shared Access

Street access for adjacent commercial parcels should be shared. Additionally, connections between adjacent commercial parcels via private access should be encouraged to allow trips between adjacent sites without requiring a vehicle to use the public roadway.

Residential access can be shared through the use of alleyways and shared driveways. As is mentioned in Community Character & Design, the Town desires that all garages should be located to the rear of residential structures. The use of alleyways is encouraged as a method to avoid attached front loaded garages. To limit access points onto roadways, the use of shared residential driveways is encouraged.

Non-Motorized Transportation

As stated in the Guiding Principles, a valued quality of Ashland is the walkability of the community and the access to national bike routes. This is valued not only in Ashland, but statewide. The 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey found that walking for pleasure is the most popular recreational pursuit in the state. Ashland's natural setting and hospitable climate makes the Town an ideal destination for recreational activities.

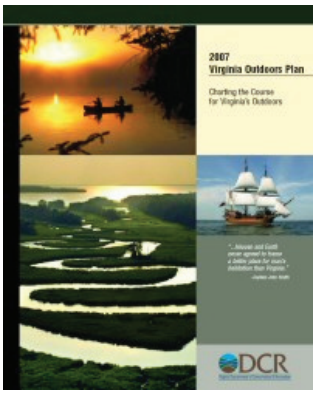
In addition to being a healthy lifestyle pursuits, walking, along with cy-

cling also have economic benefits. A study conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Georgia found that the Virginia Creeper Trail (VCT) users spent approximately $2.5 million over the study period (2003-2004) on recreational visits related to this trail. The VCT is a 35-mile scenic trail in Southwestern Virginia. Non-local visitor spending generated $1.6 million in economic impacts and supported close to 30 jobs. This is but one example of the economic impact potential of scenic trails. Recreational travelers passing through the area on long distance trips may be interested in camping sites, bicycle supplies or dining opportunities while in Ashland.

East Coast Greenway

Trails are most valuable when part of a regional connection. The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a long-term trail project that aims to connect all of the major cities on the east coast from Maine to Florida utilizing mostly off-road routes on traffic-free trail segments. While this project is large in size and scope, the Greenway is more than a quarter of the way to linking these traffic-free trail segments. An interim travel route, composed of carefully chosen and field-checked on-road linkages, has been defined and mapped, allowing experienced cyclists to use the entire route. An on-road portion has been mapped through the Town of Ashland. The Route enters the Town on North James Street, turns on West Patrick Street, and follows Center Street out of Town. The identification process for the off-road trail sections through Ashland is a work in progress. Possible trails for inclusion are Railside Trail and the Ashland Trolley Line.

East Coast Greenway



Policy T.13 Regional Trails

In addition to improving and completing the Town's network of trails, the Town should continue to work with Hanover County and other regional partners, including the East Coast Greenway Organization to develop a connected trail system.

The Town's most recent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was created in 1998 with the purpose of establishing a vision and framework for developing the trails, sidewalks, and other improvements that address the needs of Ashland residents. The plan defines long term goals for development and provides criteria for prioritizing improvements. It is intended to be an ever evolving document that adapts to the changing needs of the community and complements the Town's Park and Recreation Master Plan. The updating of this plan is addressed in policy PR.6.

Policy T.14 Bikeways

The *2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan* suggests that "State and Local agencies should enhance and maintain signage along the Interstate Bike Route 1 and Bike Route 76 through the region. When road improve-

ments are made, a bike lane should be added, and facilities for bicyclists should be made available along the route." This reiterates the new VDOT standard that all new and improved roads should include bike/pedestrian accommodations. This new standard should be incorporated into the updating of the 1998 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as well as any transportation planning that occurs in the future.

Additional information is provided in Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation, relative to bikeways.

Roadway Markings

The Federal Highway Administration has published a new Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which contains a number of newly established uniform standards that apply to bicycle facilities. One addition is the inclusion of Shared Lane Marking also known as sharrows. A sharrow is a pavement marking installed on streets that are too narrow for conventional bike lanes. The sharrow is marked 11 feet from the curb, or approximately 4 feet from parked cars. It is intended to indicate where cyclists should ride to avoid traveling within the door zone of parked cars. It also alerts motorists to share the road with cyclists and conveys that the road is a preferred bike route. The sharrow's main purpose is to give bicyclists freedom to move further to the left within travel lane, rather than brave the door zone, squeezed between moving and parked cars. Without such markings, bicyclists might seek refuge on the sidewalk or travel in the wrong direction. The overall goals are: to improve the position of bicyclists and motorists on roads without bike lanes, reduce aggressive motorist behavior, encourage correct bicycling behavior and increase the comfort of (and therefore the number of) bicyclists on shared roads.

Policy T.15 Sharrows

The appropriateness of shared lane marking or sharrows should be investigated within the Town. If found to be a useful addition, the application of these road markings is recommended, the application of these roadway markers should be considered and prioritized as funding becomes available.

Policy T.16 Pedestrian Access

The Town considers pedestrian safety a top priority. The Sidewalk Improvement Plan shall continue to be updated on a regular basis. Several methods to be considered for implementation to create safer intersections are:

- Use "Pedestrian Crossing" warning signs with pedestrian-actuated flashing beacons, which alert oncoming traffic to pedestrians in the crosswalk;
- Move the vehicle STOP line farther back from crosswalk and add

stop here for pedestrians sign;

- Improved crosswalks markings;
- For greatest effectiveness, include curb ramps or curb extensions;
- Preserve sight distances at intersections (limit landscaping and fencing in the sight triangle)
- Install bulb-outs at intersections to reduce pedestrian crossing distance;
- Create curb ramps to provide a safe transition from sidewalk to street and create an environment easily assessable to persons with disabilities.

Downtown Sidewalks

The Town wishes to repair and reconstruct various sidewalks throughout the Downtown areas. One impediment to this task is the location of some property lines in the Town. It is frequently the case that the property line is located within the existing sidewalk. As noted in Community Character and Design, Policy CD.11, the Town will work to establish a test project on a half or whole block within Downtown. The desired result of this project is to show that Downtown sidewalk repair and reconstruction can be completed with little or no disruption to the building occupants and no damage to the buildings.

Safe Routes to School

The National Safe Routes to School Program was founded in order to assist local communities to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school, to improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to school; and to facilitate projects and activities that will reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools. The goal of the Town is to provide additional sidewalks and cross walks, and adult supervision to create a safe environment for biking and walking. Educational programs for “sharing the road” would include safety information for drivers, pedestrians and bikers.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs enable community leaders, schools and parents across the United States to improve safety and encourage more children to safely walk and bicycle to school. In the process, programs are working to reduce traffic congestion and improve health and the environment, making communities more livable for everyone.

More children biking and walking to school would also result in fewer vehicle trips, therefore lowering the exhaust emissions and reducing the impact on the environment. It would prevent overcrowding on school busses and shorten bus routes. Through this program, the Town has

received grant money to complete several sections of sidewalks around town. The first sidewalk set for construction is Hanover Street between South James Street and Sneed Street. Provided funds are available the next section constructed will be South James Street from Thompson Street to Hanover Avenue. The Town has applied for another round of SRTS grant funding to fund work on pedestrian improvements on the Maple Street sidewalk, North James Street trail, Duncan Street sidewalk, and the Stebbins Street sidewalk. New Street, South Taylor Street and Pleasant Street have been completed with Town of Ashland funds.

Wayfinding

A successful transportation system is marked by good signage. A wayfinding system has been developed by the Town with the assistance a group of stakeholders and VHB Landmark. As stated in policy CD.34, new street signs meeting the updated design standard should be used throughout Town.

7.5 Parking

Parking has been an issue of concern within the Downtown area due to the relatively high residential, commercial, and institutional density. A study for this area is needed, but with continued encouragement to develop mixed-use residential space, additional parking needs will arise and should be addressed on a case by case basis.

Policy T.17 Downtown Parking

Special issues are often associated with downtown areas where people converge to work, shop and visit. Lack of parking is sometimes cited as a reason for the declining vitality of a downtown business district. While parking is not the sole solution, it is important to serve the needs of the various users of the Downtown area. Concerns have been raised in Ashland over a perceived lack of parking in the Downtown area. For this reason, a parking study and plan should be completed for the Downtown area including from the Route 1 intersection on England Street to the James Street intersection on Thompson Street. This study should analyze walking patterns, driving access patterns, employee parking needs, a predicted total demand by the customers for all the businesses located here and an apparent lack of signage. The average amount of time each space is occupied should be noted to determine the turnover rate.

Recommendations to address Downtown parking challenges are located in Community Character & Design Policy CD.12. One of the recommendations is shared parking. This is a tool through which adjacent property owners share their parking lots and reduce the number of parking spaces that each would provide on their individual properties. In these locations, with shops and restaurants lining the sidewalks, people often park in one

spot and then walk from one destination to another. The effect is that the various uses share the same parking spaces. If adjacent land uses have different peak hours of parking demand, then they can share some of the same parking spaces.

Randolph-Macon College parking has an impact on the areas surrounding the College. In order to reduce the impact of a potential increase in student parking, R-MC is required to submit a parking plan for all new site plans to the Town Council for approval.

7.6 Transportation Funding

The Town will utilize existing funding methods and procedures for the development of new and the maintenance of exiting multi-modal transportation systems.

Public Road Maintenance

Maintenance of public roads within the Town, for example repairing of pot holes or repaving of streets, is completed by the Ashland Public Works Department. However, VDOT provides funds for the maintenance of public roads utilizing a statewide formula based upon population and number of miles of road.

Policy T.18 Long Term Projects

Continue to work with the Richmond Metropolitan Planning Organization and VDOT to fund large expansion and new construction road projects by getting projects on the Six-Year Improvement Program and the Transportation Improvement Program.

Policy T.19 Available Funding Sources

When feasible, work to obtain funding through federal, state, and regional funding sources for all transit improvements.
Possible sources for VDOT Funding are:

The Urban Maintenance Program provides payments to cities and towns in the urban system for maintenance, construction and reconstruction. Payments are based on lane miles and functional classification of the roadways within the Corporate Limits. These funds are used primarily for maintenance activities or expansion of facilities, such as adding sidewalks within the existing roadway network.

The Urban Construction Program is based on Section 33.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia which provides that 30 percent of the combined federal and state funds available for construction are apportioned to qualifying municipalities based on population. These funds are typically for the roadways classified as Arterial, and projects are a part of the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP).

Other funding sources are through an application process through VDOT, even though some have federal financial support:

The Transportation Enhancement Program fosters more choices for travel by providing funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, and the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails. Many communities also use the program to acquire, restore and preserve scenic or historic sites. The program offers many opportunities to enhance our travel throughout Virginia.

The Revenue Sharing Program provides additional funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct or improve the highway systems within such county, city, or town, with statutory limitations on the amount of state funds authorized per locality. Locality funds are matched with state funds for qualifying projects.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program assists localities, schools, and non-profit organizations by funding SRTS programs (non-infrastructure) and safety improvement projects (infrastructure).

The Metropolitan Planning Organization makes recommendations to VDOT on funding requests from localities for projects in the SYIP.

To Do List

1. Conduct study as preparation for Transportation Plan 2020 update for the following areas:

2. New Interstate 95 off-ramp

3. North Hill Carter Parkway

4. Vaughan Road Extended

5. Maple Street Extended

6. Update existing policy regarding right-of-way dedication and make the policy part of the Town Code to ensure that adjacent right-of-way dedication to the ultimate right-of-way width occurs at the time of site plan or subdivision approval. Additionally, this policy should note under which circumstances a developer would be responsible for building a segment of roadway shown on the plan, or when a cash proffer may be appropriate.

7. The Town shall coordinate with Hanover County to ensure that appropriate connections occur across the Town boundaries. A detailed thoroughfare plan should be created jointly for all areas surrounding the Town.

8. The Town shall work to ensure the safety of all rail crossings within the Town boundaries to insure the continuation of the quiet zone designation. This shall be accomplished with the installation of new rail crossing signals and double guards (arms).

9. The Town shall work with CSX, Amtrak, VDRPT and other entities to promote use of the current train station to meet future uses.

10. A continued working relationship with VDRPT, VRE, GRTC and related transportation organizations is necessary for continued support to create a public transit system in the Town of Ashland.

11. All roads shall be built to a minimum of VDOT standards. Utilities should be placed underground when new roads are built or existing ones are replaced.

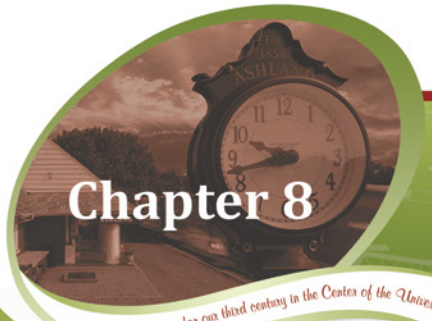
12. The Town should endorse a specific design for a new exit ramp off Interstate 95 at the Route 54 exit and require dedication of the land required for the reconstruction of said interchange when adjacent properties develop.

13. The Town should continue to work with Hanover County and other regional partners, including the East Coast Greenway Organization to develop a connected trail system.

14. The use of sharrows should be investigated within the Town.

15. The Sidewalk Improvement Plan shall continue to be updated on a regular basis.

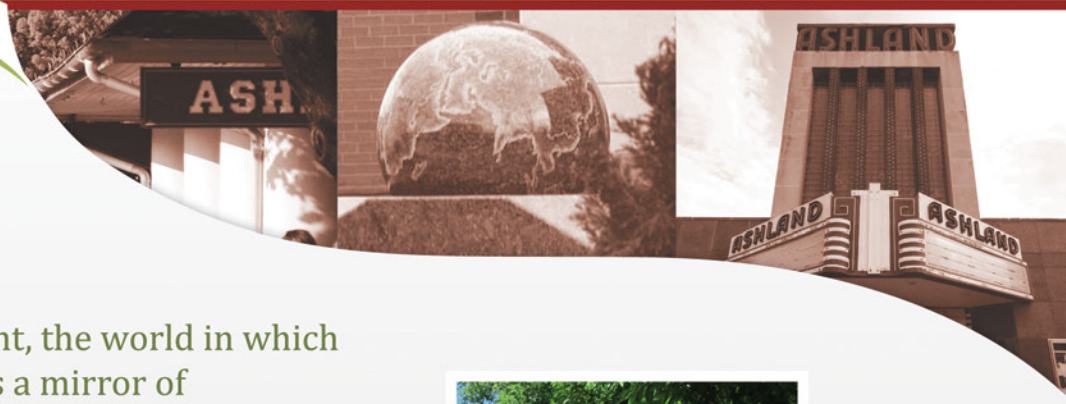
16. A parking plan for the Town should be created from Route 1 to James Street which addresses the lack of signage directing visitors to the available parking areas in the Downtown area.



Chapter 8

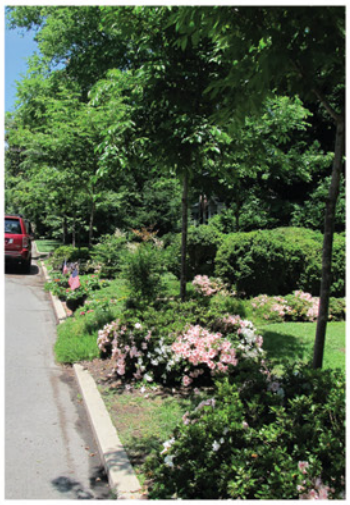
Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe

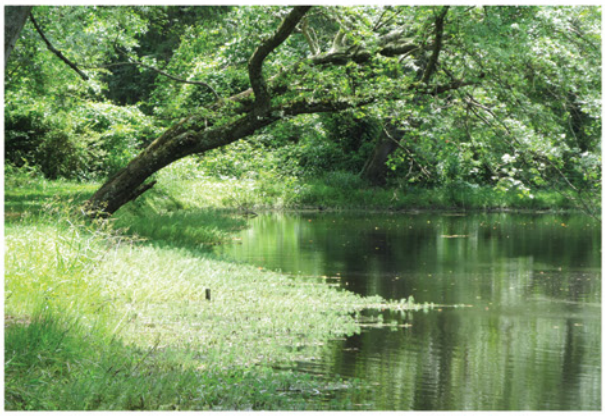
ENVIRONMENT



Our environment, the world in which
we live and work, is a mirror of
our attitudes and expectations.

Earl Nightingale





8.0 ENVIRONMENT

Abstract
Environmental stewardship plays an integral role in guiding how the Town accommodates growth and provides services. Recognizing the private sector as an equal partner in environmental stewardship, the Town can lead by its own behavior in delivering services, operating its facilities and managing its land in an environmentally sustainable manner.

With the Environment chapter, the Town seeks to ensure the protection, preservation, and improvement of the natural environment by:

- *Protecting and enhancing Ashland's tree canopy through installation, replacement, and maintenance of trees.*
- *Continuing the Town's high standard of environmental quality.*
- *Maintaining the compact, walkable form of Ashland to reduce vehicle trips, improve air quality and preserve open spaces.*

An important goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect the environment while enhancing Ashland's natural beauty. The Plan demonstrates that the Town recognizes that local government and the private sector are equal partners in environmental stewardship. The Town is committed to meeting and exceeding applicable environmental standards, and to the pursuit of innovative practices. The Town wishes to lead by example.

This chapter contains policies related to the protection, preservation, improvement, and treatment of the natural environment. The policies address the community's environmental values, regulatory framework and the public's role in advocating environmental stewardship. The chapter will designate responsibility for environmental stewardship through approaches that require minimum tree canopy and landscaping, water quality and stream protection (both locally and for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed), air quality, noise and light pollution, greenways, green building codes, and green infrastructure.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - The Maintain and enhance parks and green spaces throughout the Town.
   - Continue to develop and maintain facilities that enhance the walkability and bike-ability of the community.
   - Set standards for private landscapes that will improve the appearance and beauty of the public streets and places.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Continue the Town's status as a Tree City USA community by maintaining the Tree City USA standards.
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Add landscaping to all public areas of the Town including England Street and Route 1.
   - Seek partnerships with State, Federal, other local government, charitable, and private entities to protect environmentally sensitive areas, and improve areas that were degraded as a result of development that took place before better environmental practices were the standard.
   - Encourage responsible, reliable and sustainable innovative approaches to environmental protection and improvement. These may include, but not be limited to, low impact design (LID), and energy-efficient and "green" building construction.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety**
   - Plant a variety of plant and tree species to avoid canopy destruction through disease.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Consider environmental concerns and economic considerations with equal weight in decisions regarding land use and development.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**
   - Lead by example by adhering to the best available environmental practices in its own building and development programs.
   - Actively apply and enforce relevant federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

8.1 Tree Canopy & Landscaping

As reflected in the Guiding Principles, the tree canopy and green quality of Ashland are very important to the Town residents. This importance is demonstrated in the Town of Ashland's designation as a Tree City USA community for the past two decades. The Tree City USA Program is sponsored by The Arbor Day Foundation in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. This program

provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for community forestry programs as well as a positive public image, and citizen pride. The Town meets or exceeds the requirements for Tree City USA recognition which ensure that qualifying communities have a viable tree management program and plan.

In addition to the aesthetic benefits for the Town, native trees and landscaping have positive effects on the air quality. Trees renew the air supply by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen. Ambient air temperatures can be reduced by the evaporation of water in tree leaves. Shading by trees can reduce energy usage in buildings. Low maintenance landscaping can be established through the use of drought tolerant and water-wise planting techniques in both public and private developments. The use of low maintenance vegetation not only reduces the amount of water necessary but can reduce mowing, thereby reducing emission and noise levels associated with maintenance.

Although the tree canopy is a valuable and admired Town resource, it is lacking in some areas. Through the continued use of a tree installation and maintenance program, portions of the Route 54, Route 1 and England Street corridors will be enhanced by an increased tree canopy appropriate for the specific land use designations.

Policy E.1 Tree Canopy

As a benefit of the Tree City USA Program, the Town of Ashland has received a grant to have a tree canopy survey completed by the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). A condition of this grant is the requirement that the Town commit to increasing the existing tree canopy. The Town shall increase the tree canopy by 5% within 20 years from study completion. The Town shall also continue to utilize the resources provided by VDOF and Virginia Cooperative Extension. The tree canopy is shown on Map E-1.

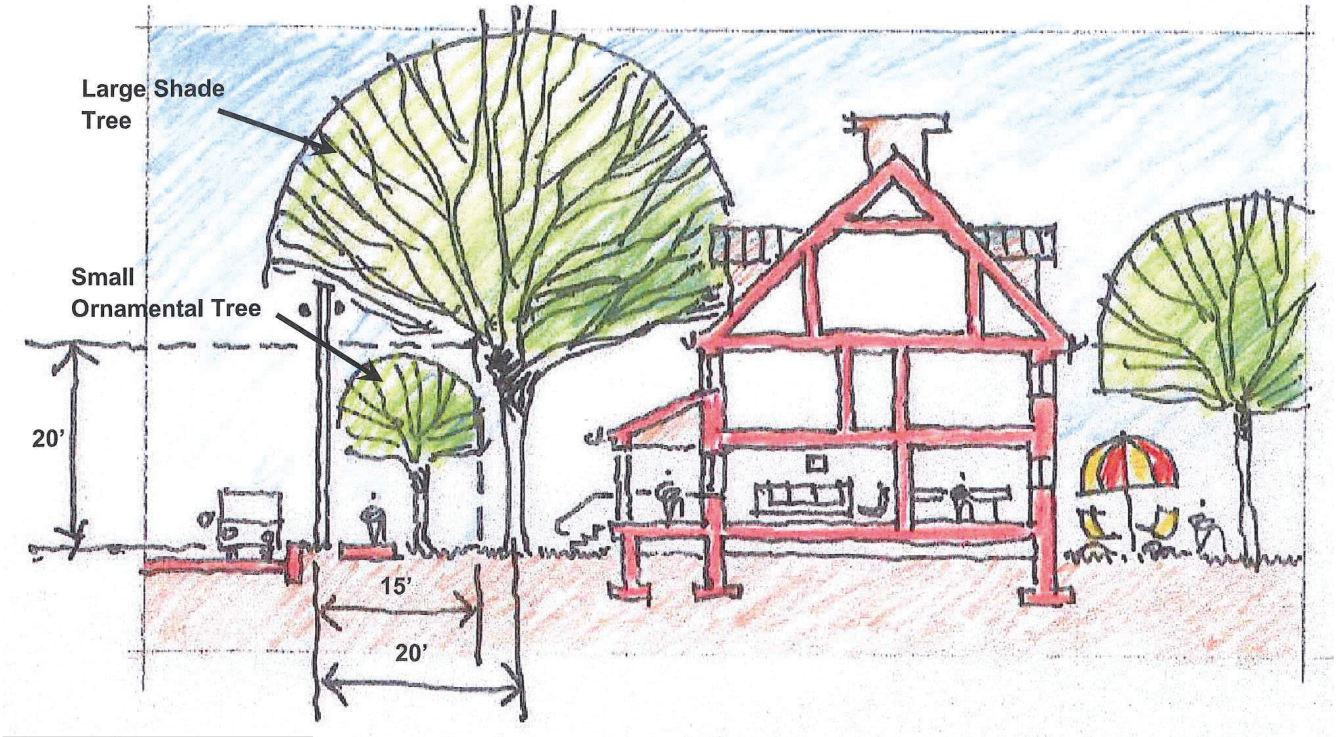
Policy E.2 Street Trees

The Town shall continue a program for the installation, replacement, and maintenance of trees in public right-of-ways. This program should focus on the planting of appropriate trees for a given location and the training of staff to provide the proper maintenance for the Town's trees. A certified arborist should be hired for pruning of trees and for training maintenance personnel.

The Town may find it useful to utilize the concepts as established by the Virginia Department of Forestry's Municipal Tree Restoration Program (MTRP). The mission of MTRP is to reduce tree/utility line conflicts through educating, influencing and encouraging people to recognize the conflict, remove potential hazards and plant appropriately in situations where utility lines are present. The Town has a landscaping matrix with

a priority list of possible street trees for planting within the public right-of-way. This list of trees is categorized by size (small, medium, large). This list-by-size should be used to determine appropriate locations for planting to limit interference with utility lines.

When maintaining street trees, it is important to consider the height of limbs that extend over travel lanes. The tree limbs should be trimmed high enough to allow trucks and equipment to drive under without hitting the lower branches. If left untrimmed, limbs may be torn from the tree by passing trucks causing irreparable damage. A suggested minimum height for limbs extending over streets is 13 feet 6 inches.

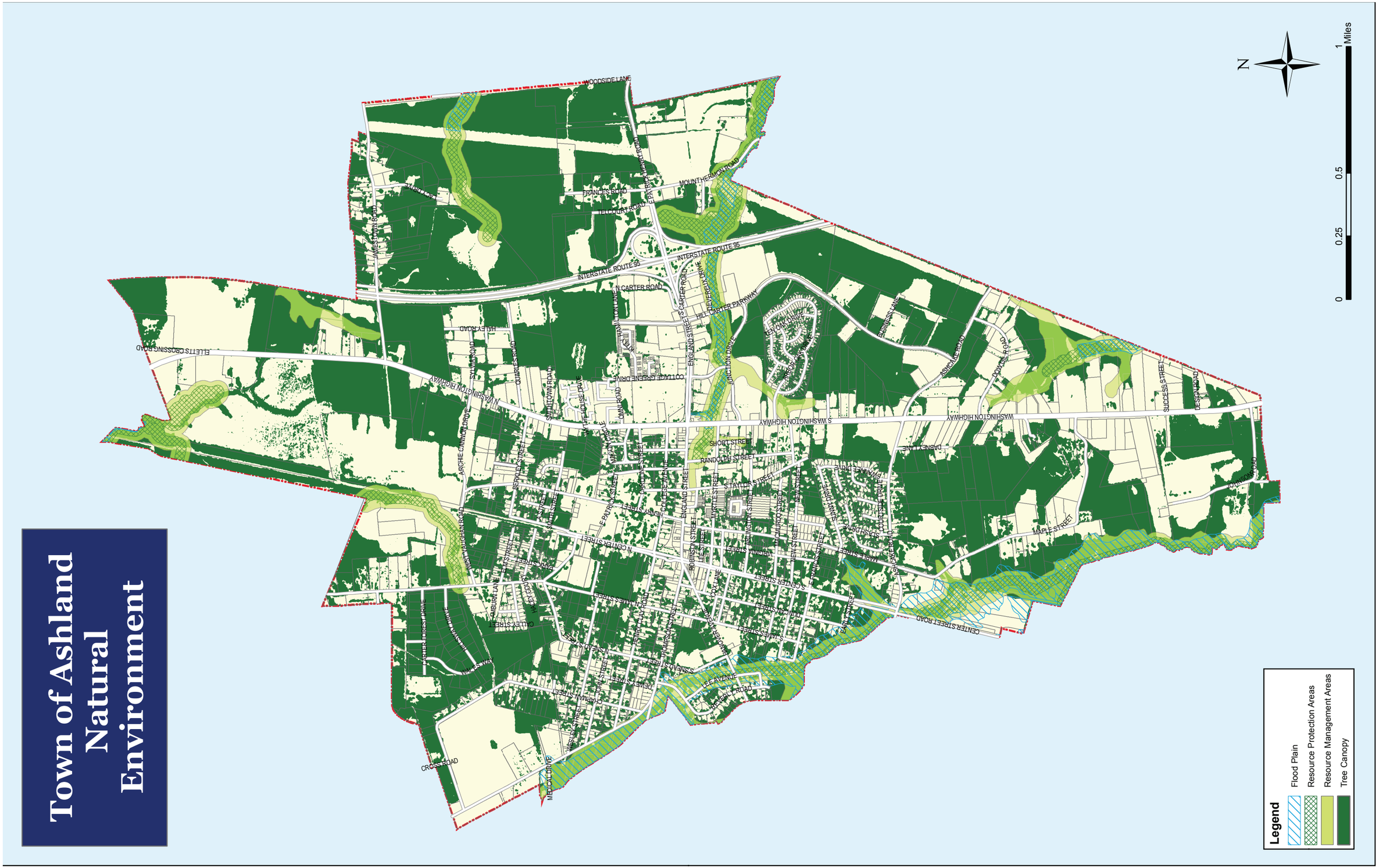


Desired Spacing for Street Trees. This sketch shows the desired distance for planting large trees in the presence of overhead wires. Although not necessarily in the public right-of-way, this location is desirable for creating the appearance of tree lined streets.

Policy E.3 Clearing of Existing Trees

In all development, trees shall be selectively removed, and only when necessary. Clear-cutting or removal of all trees shall not be allowed. In accordance with the Town Zoning Ordinance, all development shall provide within their site plan for the preservation or replacement of trees on the development site such that the tree canopy percentage 20 years after development will meet a certain percentage as dictated by zoning and/or density. The Town should provide incentives to encourage builders to preserve exiting trees. The following minimum development standards should be met:

- Large developments shall be phased in order to maximize preservation of mature trees.
- Trees cut for removal should be chipped/mulched and reused on-site instead of hauled away or burned.



MAP E-1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SHOWING TREE CANOPY & CHESAPEAKE BAY PRESERVATION AREAS

- No trees shall be removed within Chesapeake Bay RPA's or within close proximity to public streets.

Policy E.4 Landscaping Requirements

The Town shall continue to implement its landscaping ordinance in coordination with the development of new residential and commercial sites. The Town shall amend its ordinance so that it takes full advantage of the legislative authority relative to tree planting and the minimum tree canopy coverage allowable.

8.2 Water Quality

The Town is subject to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA) and the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP), and works with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to ensure compliance with State regulations. Along with an annual review, DCR requires localities to adopt and enforce ordinances to ensure water quality. In addition, CBPA and VSMP also require that the Comprehensive Plan address strategies relating to policy and implementation of water quality control measures.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the regulatory purpose of the Clean Water Act as, "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water (hydrology) at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation (hydrophytes) typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions (hydric soils). Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas." To constitute wetlands, the area must meet three criteria 1) hydrophytic vegetation; 2) hydric soils; and 3) a hydrology typical of a wetlands system. Hydrophytic vegetation is vegetation adapted to living in water saturated conditions. Hydric soils are soils with characteristics that are produced under water saturated conditions. A typical wetland hydrology is characterized by soil that is saturated by water at a frequency and duration that supports hydrophytic vegetation and produces hydric soils.

Wetlands are protected through federal regulations administered by the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the EPA. Wetlands have economical, ecological, and aesthetic value. Wetlands can perform valuable functions in flood control by intercepting and storing stormwater runoff, which decreases water velocity, and delays and reduces peak flows. Wetlands act as discharge points for groundwater. Wetlands also decrease bank erosion along streams due to the roots of wetland vegetation. Wetlands protect water quality by slowing flow

velocities and allowing suspended soils and pollutants to settle out of the water. Some of these pollutants are used by wetland plants while others are broken down into less harmful substances. Finally, wetlands are an important component of the food chain, and they act as fish and wildlife habitats with diversity that often exceeds surrounding areas.

Only nontidal wetlands exist within the Town. Wetlands mapped by the Town include nontidal wetlands that are elements of resource protection areas (RPAs), as defined in the Town's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area ordinance. Map E-2, shows both the wetlands and the potential wetlands within the Chesapeake Preservation Area.

Policy E.5 Wetlands: General

Natural wetlands play a significant role in absorbing runoff and filtering contaminants. Wetlands should remain undisturbed, and should be incorporated into open space, passive recreation areas, buffers or other landscape amenities. Given the pervasiveness of wetlands in Ashland, however, the Town recognizes that disturbance and mitigation is sometimes necessary. The Town shall place an emphasis on wetland identification and preservation of wetlands during development review. Efforts should be taken to minimize wetlands mitigation, and to ensure that protected wetlands are not disturbed.

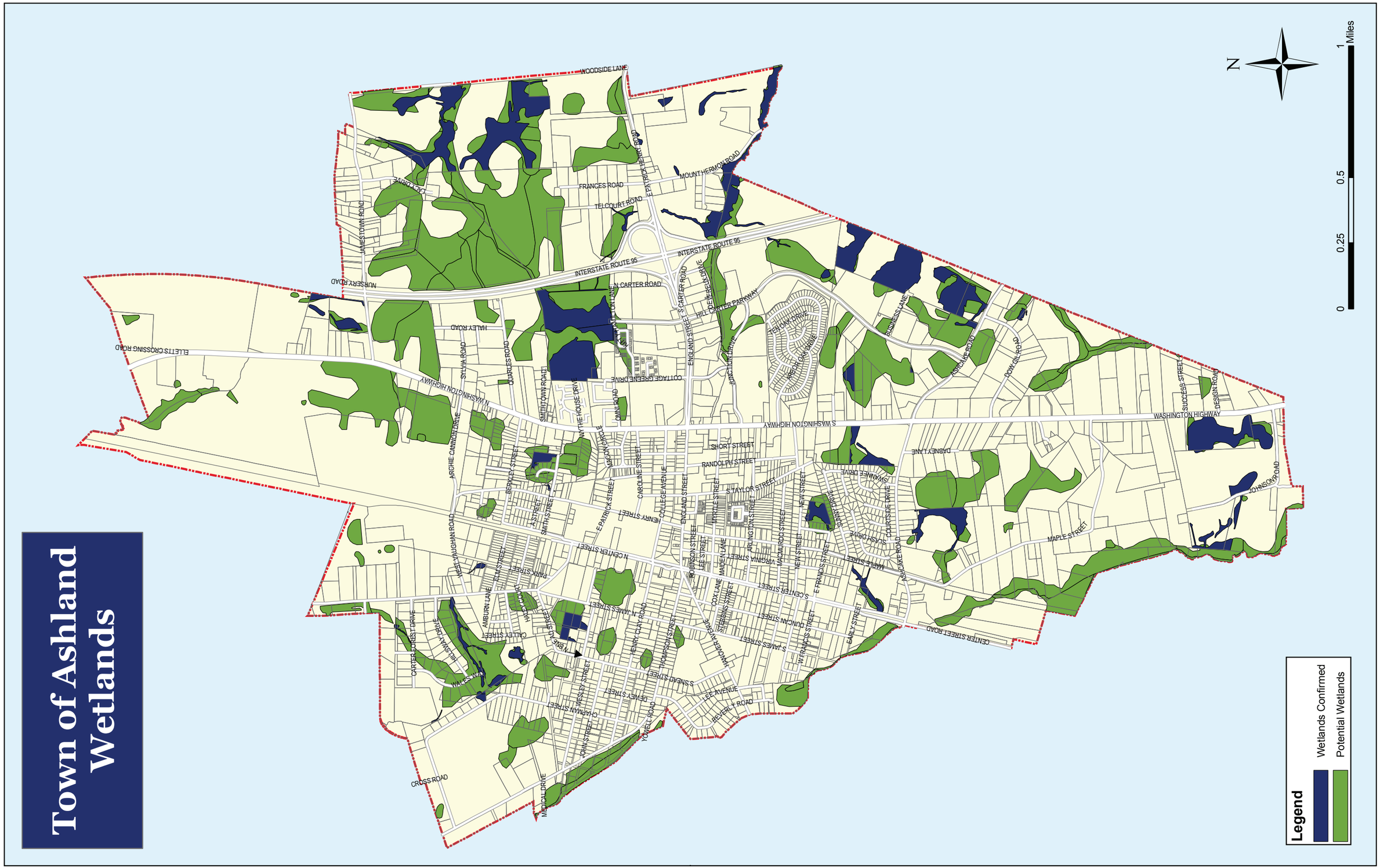
Policy E.6 Wetlands in Residential Development

Residential developments should be planned so as to preserve wetlands in separate conservation areas. In general, wetlands should not be located on individual building lots. If wetlands are present on individual building lots, such wetlands should be appropriately mitigated, whether they are disturbed or not. Exceptions may be made where small pockets of wetlands exist outside of the principal building envelope. Steps must be taken to alert homeowners of the presence of wetlands on individual residential lots.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Regulations

The Chesapeake Bay is America's largest estuary (i.e., a body of water where the fresh water from the rivers and streams mixes with the salt water from the ocean) and one of the world's most productive. The Bay drains an area of 64,000 square miles, which reflects the various land uses and activities of approximately 15 million people. Due to the importance of this natural resource both environmentally and economically, the Virginia General Assembly enacted the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act in 1988.

The CBPA is designed to reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve water quality in the Bay watershed by minimizing the effects of human activity through the use of best management practices (BMPs). The CBPA



MAP E-2 WETLANDS

charges local governments to identify and protect certain lands called Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas. These areas incorporate two elements: the Resource Protection Area (RPA) and the Resource Management Area (RMA). Both RPAs and RMAs are shown on Map E-1 on page 8-5.

As defined by the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Division Regulations, an RPA "consists of sensitive lands at or near the shoreline that have an intrinsic water quality value due to the ecological and biological processes they perform or are sensitive to impacts which may cause significant degradation to the quality of state waters." RPAs are the landward component of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area. The buffer formed is important as it filters out nonpoint source pollution, controls erosion, and retards runoff. RPAs are sensitive environmental corridors that should be preserved in a natural condition. The RPA includes:

- Tidal wetlands;
- Nontidal wetlands connected by a surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or tributary streams; and
- A buffer area not less than 100 feet in width located adjacent to and landward of the components listed above, and along side of any perennial tributary system.

There are four nontidal wetland areas within the Town of Ashland that meet the conditions of an RPA as part of the CPBA.

The first RPA in the Town is along the Stony Run Creek, which forms part of the western boundary of Town. The second RPA is along Mechumps Creek, just south of Route 54. The third is along Slayden Creek in the northeastern section of Town, bounded by Route 54, Interstate 95, Jamestown Road, and the Town boundary. The fourth RPA is located at the very northern boundary of Town along Falling Creek. These are shown on Map E-1 on page 8-5.

Also included in the CBPA are RMAs. These include land types that if improperly used or developed, have a potential for causing significant water quality degradation or for diminishing the functional value of the RPA. RMAs include:

- Floodplains;
- Highly erodible soils, including steep slopes;
- Highly permeable soils;
- Nontidal wetlands not included in the RPA; and
- A 100' buffer either side of the RPA.

The Town has designated RMAs around the periphery of each of the RPAs as well as one RMA located in the southeast quadrant below Dow Gill Road along Licking Hole Creek.

In addition to the provisions of the CBPA, the Town of Ashland has also adopted a water quality protection ordinance incorporating all land within the Town outside the RPAs and RMAs. The purpose of the adopted ordinance, found within the Code of the Town of Ashland (Chapter 4.1, Environmental Protection), is multifaceted. The intent of the ordinance is to protect the existing high quality state waters and restore other state waters to higher quality to promote aquatic life. The ordinance intends to reduce existing pollution and minimize the potential for increase in pollution. The final intent of the ordinance is to promote water resource conservation in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future citizens of the Town. This water quality protection ordinance affects all development and redevelopment within the Town exceeding 2,500 square feet of land disturbance. Development and redevelopment that meet this threshold are subject to a certain performance standards. These standards include the limitations of land disturbance, the preservation of existing vegetation, the compliance with erosion and sediment control requirements, and appropriate stormwater management. The Water Quality ordinance is intended to meet and exceed CBPA requirements.

Policy E.7 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act

The Town of Ashland is subject to the CPBA, which is intended to improve water quality by regulating runoff into creeks, streams and rivers that enter the Chesapeake Bay. The CPBA distinguishes between RPAs – the 100 foot buffer along perennial streams where land disturbance is prohibited – and RMAs – where development is limited and subject to certain regulations. The Town seeks to exceed the current standards for water quality set forth by the CPBA. The Town shall, therefore, continue to require water quality measures on a Town-wide basis, not limited to areas defined by the State as RPAs or RMAs.

Policy E.8 Improve Water Quality

The Town of Ashland is comprised of several local watersheds, all of which drain to the Chesapeake Bay. The Town is required by law, and is obligated by its own principles of environmental stewardship, to protect and improve the quality of water in its various watersheds. The Town shall, therefore, maintain its robust ordinance and continue to require responsible development practices to protect and improve water quality.

Floodplains

A floodplain is the area of land adjacent to a river, stream, or body of water that may become submerged by floodwater. Floodplains are usually represented as 100-year floodplains. A 100-year flood is the flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This is the regulatory standard also referred to as the 1 percent

chance or base flood. The National Flood Insurance Program, coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is intended to limit development in these 100-year floodplains through a combination of education, zoning, and regulations.

The Town, in cooperation with the FEMA, has produced maps showing the inventory of known 100-year floodplains within the Town. An ordinance was created in 2008 to restrict development activity within the 100-year floodplains. In most cases, 100-year floodplains should be viewed as a constraint on development and should be used for recreational and/or conservation purposes. The floodplains within the Town's boundaries are shown on Map E-3, page 8-15.

Policy E.10 Septic Tanks

The installation of new septic tanks in the Town shall be prohibited, except for single-family construction on existing lots, when Hanover County does not require public sewer connection, and when appropriate soils exist. The Town shall continue to monitor septic tank systems and maintain a program to alert property owners of their obligations to periodically pump septic tanks located within areas regulated by the CBPA. Individuals will be encouraged to connect to public sewer where available. Developers of new projects will be required to extend public services to the site.

Policy E.11 Groundwater Resources

The installation of new well-water systems within the Town shall be prohibited, except for single-family construction on existing lots, when Hanover County does not require public water connection, or if used for irrigation. The Town, in cooperation with Hanover County, will adopt a Regional Water Supply Plan, as mandated by State authorities. The plan will address water supply and quantity concerns. Extension of public water service to existing developed sections of the Town that are not served by public water should be encouraged.

8.3 Soils

Soil is the top layer of the Earth's surface where rocks have broken down into small particles through biological, physical, and chemical processes. Soil information for the town has been mapped and classified by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The NRCS has grouped the numerous types of soils into four different hydrologic soil groups.

- Group A – Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist of mainly deep, well drained to excessively drained sands or gravelly sands. These

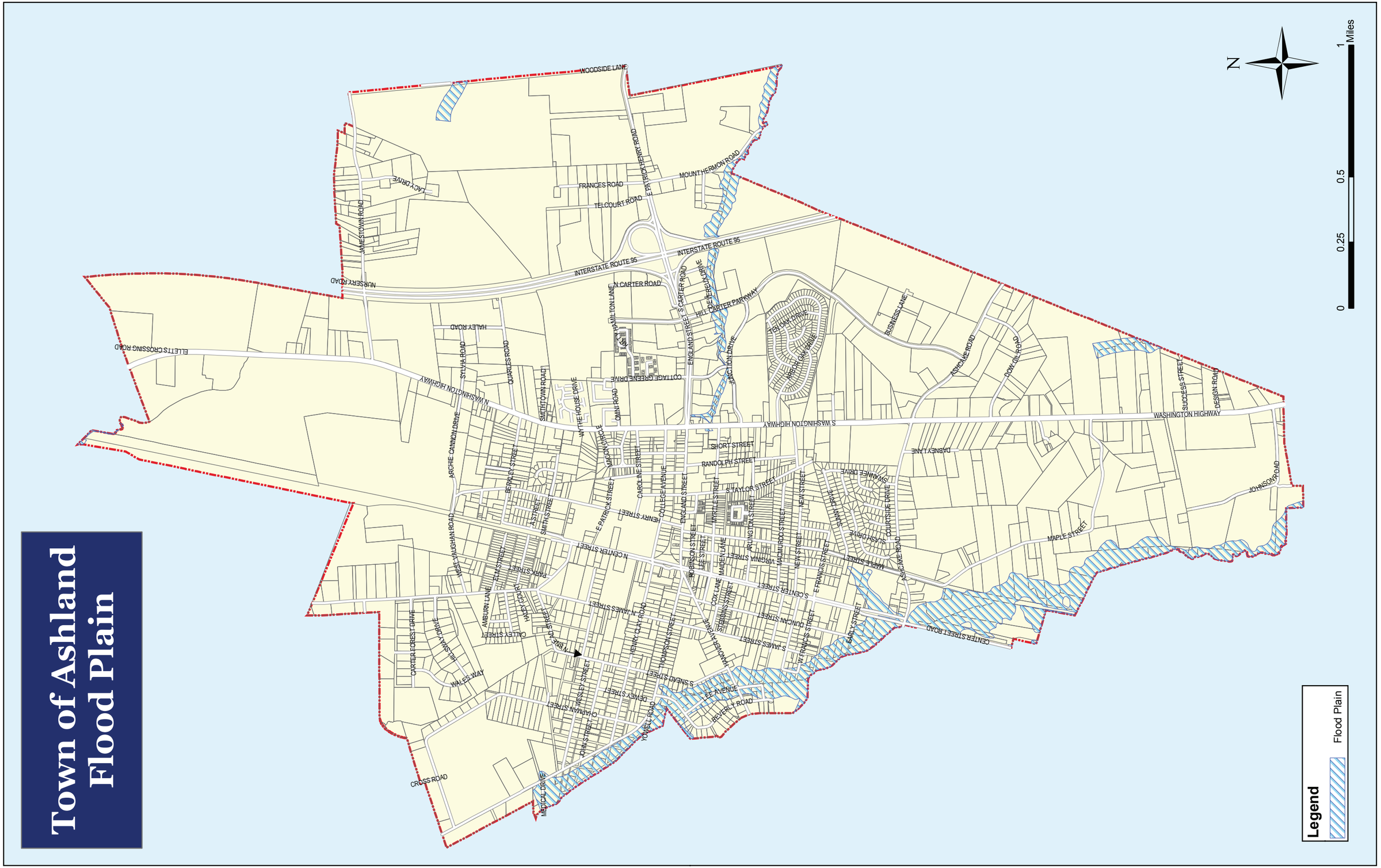
soils have a high rate of water transmission.

- Group B – Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist of moderately deep or deep, moderately well drained or well drained soils that have moderately fine texture to moderately course texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.
- Group C – Soils having a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of soils having a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine texture or fine texture. These soils have a slow rate of water transmission.
- Group D – Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These soils consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a permanent high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.

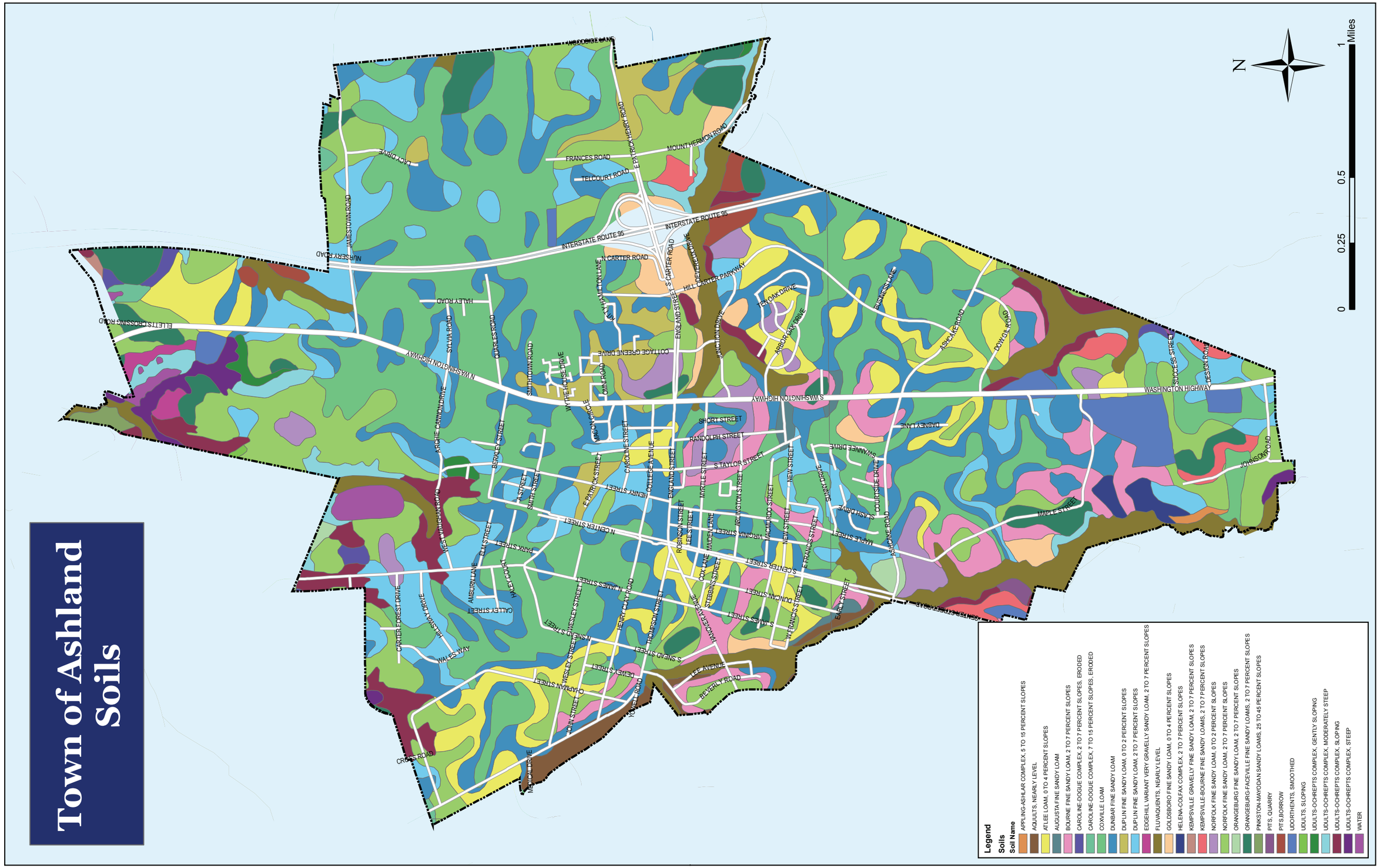
Most of the soil types in Town can be classified as group C and D hydrolic soils (Map E-4, page 8-17). The Town must maintain development standards for soils of this type, especially soils with a high shrink-swell potential. A shrink-swell soil is defined as a soil that shrinks when dry and swells when wet. This constant shrinking and swelling can damage roads, building foundations, and other structures as well as plant roots. At this time, the Town has not encountered any instances of problems with shrink-swell soils. During the construction process, the Hanover County Building Inspector's office reviews the footings and foundations of a building.

Hydric soils are found extensively throughout the Town. Hydric soils are defined as a soil formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part (Federal Register, July 13, 1994). In Ashland, three soil types have been identified as hydric soils: Coxville loam, Aquults, and Fluvaquents. Coxville loam is found extensively through the Town. Both the Aquults and Fluvaquents are found along the western border of Town. These soils are primarily found along Stony Run.

Hydric soils create severe limitations for the construction of dwellings, commercial buildings, septic tank absorption fields, roads and streets, playgrounds, and lawns and landscaping. Soil suitability for septic tank use is not a significant issue for the Town, but may pertain to areas on the fringe of the Town. The Town is served almost entirely by a central wastewater treatment system which is operated by the County of Hanover. Coxville soil has moderate shrink-swell potential, low strength, a seasonal high water table (usually spring), low natural fertility, and is strongly acid to very strongly acid. Coxville soil is suited to trees, particularly those



MAP E-3 FLOOD PLAIN


Town of Ashland Soils
N
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Legend
Soils
Soil Name
APPLING-ASHLAR COMPLEX, 5 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES
AQUULTS, NEARLY LEVEL
ATLEE LOAM, 0 TO 4 PERCENT SLOPES
AUGUSTA FINE SANDY LOAM
BOURNE FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
CAROLINE-DOGUE COMPLEX, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES, ERODED
CAROLINE-DOGUE COMPLEX, 7 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, ERODED
COXVILLE LOAM
DUNBAR FINE SANDY LOAM
DUPLIN FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 2 PERCENT SLOPES
DUPLIN FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
EDGEHILL VARIANT VERY GRAVELLY SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
FLUVAQUENTS, NEARLY LEVEL
GOLDSBORO FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 4 PERCENT SLOPES
HELENA-COLFAX COMPLEX, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
KEMPSVILLE GRAVELLY FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
KEMPSVILLE-BOURNE FINE SANDY LOAMS, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
NORFOLK FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 2 PERCENT SLOPES
NORFOLK FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
ORANGEBURG FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
ORANGEBURG-FACEVILLE FINE SANDY LOAMS, 2 TO 7 PERCENT SLOPES
PINKSTON-MAYODAN SANDY LOAMS, 25 TO 45 PERCENT SLOPES
PITS, QUARRY
PITS, BORROW
UDORTHENTS, SMOOTHED
UDULTS, SLOPING
UDULTS-OCHREPTS COMPLEX, GENTLY SLOPING
UDULTS-OCHREPTS COMPLEX, MODERATELY STEEP
UDULTS-OCHREPTS COMPLEX, SLOPING
UDULTS-OCHREPTS COMPLEX, STEEP
WATER

suited to wet conditions, and wetland plants. Aquults are wet or waterlogged typically in the winter, spring, and during prolonged wet periods, have moderate shrink-swell potential, and are strongly acid to very strongly acid. Fluvaquents are wet or waterlogged for periods in winter, spring, and summer and have moderate shrink-swell potential. Like Coxville soil, Aquults and Fluvaquents are suited to trees. Highly erodible and highly permeable soils are not found to any significant extent in the Town.

Policy E.13 Constrained Areas

The Town recognizes that land disturbance and development poses a significant threat to water quality. The Town therefore identifies the following as "constrained" areas:

- Wetlands, as delineated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Resource Protection Areas, as regulated by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
- Resource Management Areas, except as deemed necessary by the town manager or designee
- Floodplains, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

These areas are best left in their natural state. If such areas are incorporated into development, they are best used as open space or for passive recreation. Ordinances should be created to allow for clustering of development in order to preserve these sensitive areas.

8.4 Drainage and Stormwater Management

The Town of Ashland sits on primarily level terrain with soils having a slow to very slow infiltration rate. These two conditions create drainage challenges, and the Town continually works to improve the drainage conditions. Through stormwater management in new developments, restoration of natural drainage systems/streams, and improvement of drainage within existing developed areas, drainage conditions within the Town will continue to improve.

In addition to drainage issues, stormwater runoff is the primary source of nonpoint source pollution. State regulations require that stormwater runoff be treated prior to being released to natural streams and conveyances.

Management of stormwater quality and quantity in the Town is handled on individual sites, as opposed to regionally, with the cost borne by the private developer or landowner. This is done through the use of best management practices (BMPs), which are maintained by the individual landowner. These BMPs may include, but are not limited to, stormwater retention impoundments, infiltration practices, low impact development (LID), etc.

The Town continues to stay apprised of evolving stormwater laws, regulations and technology, and updates its ordinances and requirements in accordance with the latest requirements and standards.

Policy E.14 Drainage and Stormwater Management (Quantity)

The Town of Ashland is generally flat. It has poorly drained soils. In addition, much of Ashland was developed prior to current standards for stormwater management quantity control. As a result, areas of the Town experience drainage challenges. The Town shall continue to identify areas of existing development where drainage is of significant concern, and to implement a drainage improvement program where feasible. All privately developed sites, new streets and public facilities will be designed and constructed in accordance with current stormwater management standards. The Town requires that increased runoff from new development with increased impervious be mitigated on site to prevent off-site flooding. The Town will adopt ordinances to control stormwater runoff quantities that are consistent with the evolving State and Federal regulations.

Policy E.12 Impervious Surfaces

The Town seeks to reduce the amount of impervious surface area within its jurisdiction in order to allow increased infiltration of stormwater, thereby reducing runoff. In the redevelopment of existing improved areas, the reduction of impervious area is required by State law. The Town shall encourage additional reductions when possible; thereby further reducing nonpoint source pollution. The Town should encourage clustering of development and set maximum road pavement widths to preserve open space and reduce the amount of impervious surface required. The Town shall investigate alternative pervious pavement options as it applies to parking lot standards.

Policy E.15 Natural Water Courses and Stormwater Management (Quality)

Natural water courses, such as creeks and streams, should be documented and monitored to assure that they will be protected and allowed to function naturally. With the Town's adherence to State and Federal stormwater regulations and requirements, adverse affects of stormwater runoff related to quantity and quality will be mitigated, and hence natural water courses are expected to be protected, and perhaps improved. The Town is committed to its adherence to these regulations.

The Town will continue to promote the restoration of streams in the Town. This is evident by the Town's collaboration with Randolph-Macon College on the restoration of a portion of Mechumps Creek. This natural water course was degraded due to historic unmitigated stormwater runoff.

Policy E.16 Stormwater Management Facilities, Generally

Stormwater management facilities, often called best management practices or BMPs, are necessary to control the volume and rate of stormwater runoff, and remove contaminants. The Town encourages the use of innovative BMPs, known as low impact development (LID), that decrease runoff volumes, decrease impervious surfaces, and encourage use of vegetation to reduce flow velocity and filter water. LIDs must be reliable, sustainable and attractive. Responsibility for on-going maintenance and aesthetic quality should be a priority in selecting BMPs. The Town requires that the owner of a BMP execute a maintenance agreement to ensure long-term maintenance of the BMP. All BMPs shall be adequately landscaped and screened from public view unless incorporated into the overall development as an attractive water feature. A landscaped buffer not only screens the BMP from view but also protects the banks of the retention pond from erosion. There are other features that may be added to enhance the attractiveness of the BMP as the site allows, such as:

- "Providing pedestrian access to shallow pool areas enhanced with emergent wetland vegetation. This allows the pond to be more accessible without incurring safety risks.
- Providing side slopes that area sufficiently gentle to avoid the need for fencing (3:1 or flatter).
- Creating flat areas overlooking or adjoining the pond for seating that can be used by residents.
- Incorporating walking or jogging trails into the pond design.
- Including fountains or integrated waterfall features for privately maintained facilities.
- Providing visual enhancement with clusters of trees and shrubs that hinder or prevent access to the pond."

Policy E.17 Stormwater Management Facilities, Residential

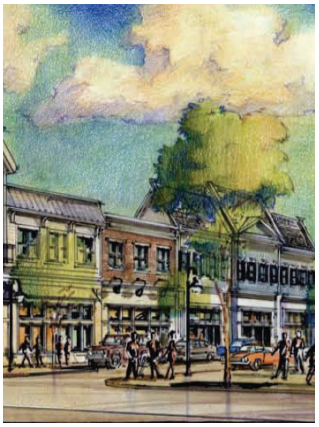
Where stormwater BMPs are required as part of new residential developments, such facilities should be designed in a manner that successfully enables on-going maintenance. Where possible, BMPs should be incorporated as prominent design features or landscape amenities, rather than located in marginal areas of the development with low visibility. Residential BMPs should be located on separate conservation lots, and should not be located on individual building lots. A developer must commit to forming a homeowners' association or establishing another entity that will maintain a BMP before the Town approves plans for a residential development if it includes a BMP.

Policy E.18 Erosion and Sediment Control

The Town shall continue to implement it erosion and sediment control program in accordance with state law.

8.5 Air Quality

Although Ashland does not have to contend with the significant amount of air pollutions associated with heavy industry, the development of land and dependence on the automobile have made this a concern for the Town. Air pollution can come from a number of different sources such as industry, vehicles and development choices as well as naturally occurring sources such as wind blown dirt. It is the Town's goal to continually improve the air quality by creating compact walkable development, offering alternative public transportation and maintaining walkable neighborhoods.



Policy E.20 Improve Air Quality

The Town plays an important role in preserving and improving air quality through its various land use regulations, economic development activities, and transportation projects. The Town shall pursue a compact land use pattern, preservation of open spaces, recruitment of clean industry, and implementation of transportation alternatives to reduce automobile emissions and other contaminants.

Policy E.21 Compact, Walkable Development

New development should occur near existing amenities to reduce vehicle trips. Infill, mixed-use, and redevelopment projects are preferred over remote green-site development. Noncontiguous or "leap-frog" development is discouraged. Increased density housing, while subject to other factors, should be considered in areas of immediate proximity to work, shopping, or other amenities, and should provide strong pedestrian connectivity to reduce vehicle dependency.

Policy E.22 Alternative Public Transportation

The Town recognizes that automobile dependency and increased traffic congestion pose a significant threat to air quality. The Town shall therefore take an active role in providing public transportation, as well as facilities for pedestrian and bicycle travel, as alternatives to automobile travel.

Policy E.23 Commuting

The Town recognizes that commuting for work is a significant contributor of automobile emissions. The Town shall therefore seek ways to reduce commuting by encouraging an appropriate mix of jobs in Ashland, and by partnering with other agencies involved in transit, carpooling, and other ride-share programs.

Policy E.24 Transportation Priorities

In establishing priorities for new transportation projects, the Town shall consider the project's impact on automobile emissions and air quality. Projects that reduce vehicle trips, reduce congestion, provide alternate modes of transportation, or otherwise improve air quality should be given high priority.

8.6 Noise & Light Pollution

Noise pollution generally refers to unwanted sound generated by human activities. In the Town of Ashland, this unwanted sound can be caused by the train, Interstate 95 and general nonresidential uses. Light pollution is the illumination of the night sky by artificial sources affecting the visibility of stars and other natural phenomenon. The Town will continue to maintain policies that reduce or remove the affects of air, noise and light pollution.

Policy E.25 Railroad Noise

The Town shall work with the Federal Railroad Administration to ensure that the Town remains a quiet zone.

Policy E.26 Nonresidential Generated Noise

Noise created by nonresidential uses shall be buffered from residential uses. This can be accomplished through retention of wide natural buffers or structural barriers to block any noise generated.

Policy E.27 Interstate 95

Generally, sound barriers should be discouraged along Interstate 95; therefore, any residential development should be buffered from the highway so as to eliminate the desire of residents to request a sound wall.

Policy E.28 Dark Sky Ordinance

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Community Character and Design, in order to stop the adverse effects of light pollution, including energy waste, harm to nocturnal ecosystems and poor nighttime ambience, the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) have created a Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) for public review. This ordinance is created in generic code language for easy adoption into the Town Code and is adaptable to any community situation. The Town should consider adoption of this MLO or a similar ordinance. Further, all Town-initiated projects, including street lighting, shall comply with these standards. Unnecessary glare from outdoor lighting, can cause unsafe driving conditions and affect quality of life.

8.7 Green Building Concepts

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Green Building is the process of creating structures that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building's life cycle. The intention is to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment. There are two nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction, and operation of high performance, low impact commercial and institutional buildings: 1) the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ and 2) the Earthcraft House Program. Through the use of Green Building techniques and LEED/Earthcraft Certification, the Town will encourage responsible building techniques wherever possible to affect positive impacts on the built environment such as the efficient use of energy, water, and other resources and the reduction of waste and pollution.

Policy E.29 Green Building Certification

The Town should seek LEED/Earthcraft certification for all new public buildings, to the extent that it is feasible. The Town shall also encourage private developers to seek LEED/Earthcraft certification for privately constructed or rehabilitated buildings.

Policy E.30 LEED Certification for Neighborhoods/ EarthCraft House Virginia

For new residential developments, the Town shall encourage the implementation of some of the standards contained in the LEED for Neighborhood Rating System or the EarthCraft House Virginia Program as applicable. Where the Comprehensive Plan opposes the criteria contained within these program standards, the Comprehensive Plan criteria shall bear greater weight.

8.8 Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the strategically planned and managed interconnected network of green space, natural systems and ecological processes that provide clean water, air quality and wildlife habitat. Green infrastructure sustains a community's social, economic, and environmental health. The key is maintaining the connections between landscapes through both natural and restored habitats. A green infrastructure assessment is an inventory and mapping of natural resources and conditions within the landscape that will instruct a green infrastructure plan. This assessment will let the Town know what the assets and opportunities are. Without this knowledge, the assets cannot be protected and it may not be noticed when the assets disappear. The assessment highlights the importance of how land use planning decisions affect the natural environment and will guide decision makers in the future.

Policy E.31 Green Infrastructure Plan

The Town should consider a Green Infrastructure assessment to be completed in the near future in partnership with Hanover County. A completed Green Infrastructure assessment prepared by Richmond Regional Planning District Commission is designed to inform the current activities as well as future comprehensive plans and can provide tools that will aid in future development decisions. An assessment provides among other things: a map of assets and opportunities, better information for trail and park planning and site design and review, and information necessary to maintain the vitality and health of wetlands and the biodiversity of ecosystems. An assessment may introduce the possibilities for linking recreational trails with new developments and could proffer an easement for the trail connection into the greater trail network.

To Do List

1. Tree City USA standards--Confirm existence of
   - A Tree Board within the Planning Department
   - A Tree Care Ordinance
   - A Community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita
   - An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

2. Complete tree canopy survey by US Forestry Department & increase tree canopy within specific time frame.

3. Continue program for the installation, replacement, and maintenance of trees in the public right of way.

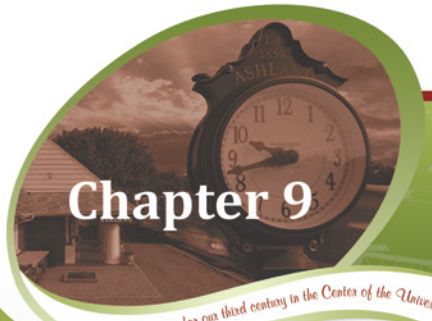
4. Implement the Municipal Tree Restoration Program or demonstration project with signage with assistance from the VA Department of Forestry

5. Zoning Ordinance changes
   - Add canopy requirement for HE
   - Increase tree canopy requirements for all zones as allowable by state code §15.2-961.1.
   - Enhance tree ordinance to include appropriate species for residential, shopping, and 'parkway' streets, plus maximum size for tree removal and tree sizes and utility lines
   - Are wetlands addressed adequately?
   - Are water quality measures up to date?
   - Are septic tanks covered? Well-water systems?
   - Are there any BMP standards that must be met including attractiveness, maintenance and performance standards?
   - Address 'Dark Sky Ordinance.' -- all Town-initiated projects, including street lighting, shall comply with these standards
   - Create and Adopt a Pedestrian Lighting Ordinance

6. Programs
   - Prioritize and implement programs to improve water quality in watersheds and streams that have become degraded
   - Continue to implement a comprehensive, Town-wide drainage improvement program to identify areas of existing development where drainage is of significant concern, and to correct drainage problems where feasible
   - Continue to implement programs related to drainage, erosion, and sediment control, as required by state law
   - Take an active role in providing public transportation, as well as facilities for pedestrian and bicycle travel

- Seek ways to reduce commuting by encouraging an appropriate mix of jobs in Ashland, and by partnering with other agencies involved in transit, carpooling, and other ride-share programs

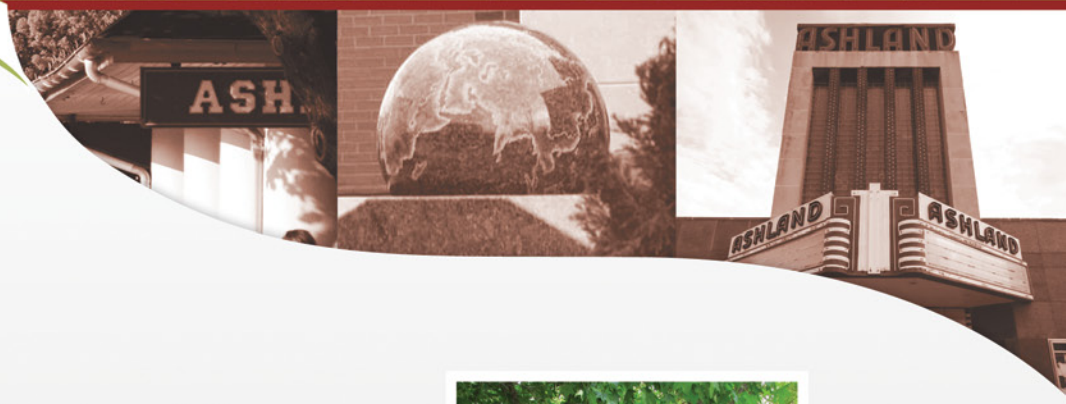
7. Complete Green Infrastructure Assessment in partnership with the County and the assistance of the RRPDC.



Chapter 9

PARKS & RECREATION

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



Shared and collective stewardship

9.0 PARKS & RECREATION

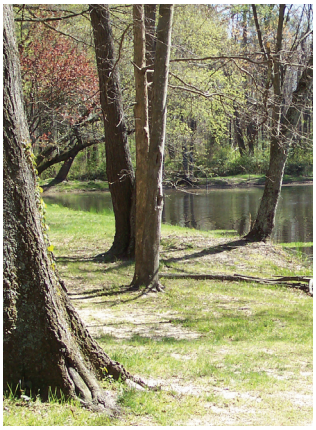
Abstract
The Town sees the value of open space and recreational facilities to enhance the quality of life for Town residents. This chapter provides the framework for a comprehensive system of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities that meet the needs of a diverse and changing population and take advantage of the natural beauty of Ashland.

In Parks & Recreation chapter, the Town works to effectively provide recreational opportunities for the present and future residents by:

- *Providing a balanced and varied system of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities which keep pace with community growth and changing community needs.*
- *Planning for a diversity of active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.*
- *Ensuring that a level of service is maintained within the park system to meet the needs of the ever-changing population.*
- *Provide recreational facilities that are accessible to all members of the public regardless of age or disability.*

The Town of Ashland seeks to be an attractive community for people of diverse backgrounds to live, work, shop and play, with play being an important factor in the health and happiness of Ashland's residents. Ashland's parks, open spaces, and natural areas lend life and beauty to our Town. The shared and collective stewardship of these essential assets connect people to the community and to each other. Residents treasure Ashland's small town quality of life, tree-lined streets, walkable neighborhoods, and scenic beauty, and recognize the responsibility to care for this legacy by preserving a natural setting for future generations.

This Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for a comprehensive system of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities that meet the needs of a diverse and changing population. The Plan establishes Guiding Principles for the protection and management of the natural environment; sets goals for a desired mix of parks, trails, facilities and programs; gives direction for the development of new parks and recreational amenities; and establishes benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of the parks system.



Current open space and recreational amenities within the Town boundaries include:

CARTER PARK is located between South Center Street and Maple Street Extended and consists of approximately 13.5 acres, most of which is heavily wooded. Carter Park is the centerpiece of the Ashland park system. It contains a junior Olympic size swimming pool, one-half basketball court, a picnic shelter and picnic area, a playground and gravel trails through the woods.

DEJARNETTE PARK is eight acres in size and located on Stony Run. It is bordered by residential uses on both sides. Access to the park is at the end of Beverly Road and at the end of Race Course Street. A one-acre, fully stocked pond underwent rehabilitation in 2006. The site remains largely in a natural state.

PUFFERBELLY PARK is approximately two acres in size and is located behind the Ashland Police Station on Randolph Street between England and Myrtle Streets. There is playground equipment, a village green, and a skate park.

RAILSIDE PARK is a one acre park located at the northern end of North Center Street. The park connects to Vaughan Road by a one-third of a mile long path along the rail tracks. The site remains largely open space with one picnic table and three benches that allow for watching trains pass by.

SOUTH TAYLOR STREET PARK is a one-half acre park located at the extreme end of South Taylor Street (725 South Taylor Street). Existing facilities include a picnic shelter, tot lot, rebound wall, and one-half basketball court.

ASHLAND TROLLEY LINE is approximately a one-mile section of the historic Ashland-Richmond Trolley Line located at the intersection of the Trolley Line and Gwathmey Church Road. Hanover County has designated this trail as a greenway. The corridor has been cleared and maintained as a natural surface trail and a greenway to be used by the public at large. The trail is accessible by trailhead at Gwathmey Church Road. This section of trail is a logical location for the future off-road portion of the East Coast Greenway. There is potential in the future that this trail could connect through Henrico into the northern part of Richmond.

NORTH ASHLAND PARK is the name for a future park to be located at the front of the existing twenty-nine acre Town-owned site on West Vaughan Road. The property has five to six acres available for recreational use fronting on West Vaughan Road. This site is home to an existing County-owned sewage facility plant and the Town maintenance and material storage areas.

STONY RUN TRAIL runs toward DeJarnette Park along Stony Run Creek

with access points at Ashcake Road and South Center Street. The trail remains largely in its natural state and does not currently connect to DeJarnette Park.

Map PR-1 showing the inventory of the Town parks is included on page 9-5.

Other public recreational facilities in and around Ashland, but not owned or operated by the Town include:

Poor Farm Park is located approximately two and one-half miles west of Town at 13400 Liberty School Road. This 254-acre park has three picnic shelters, trails shared by bicyclists and hikers, tot-lot, horseshoe pits, beach volleyball courts, lighted soccer fields, an amphitheater, open play areas, a seasonal concession stand with restrooms, two lighted softball fields, two lighted baseball fields, and a football field.

Taylor Park is located approximately one mile east of Town at 13017 Taylor Complex Lane. Taylor Park is a 53-acre passive park that contains open space and picnic tables. It is also the location of the Hanover Animal Control Dog Park offering opportunities for exercise and agility training.

Washington Lacy Park is a 222 acre Hanover County park located both in and outside the Town boundaries. Phase 1 of the park (77 acres) is located in the county, adjacent to the Town on the eastern boundary. The park entrance is located at the intersection of Jamestown Road and Woodside Lane (13400 Woodside Lane). Phase 1 has picnic tables and approximately one and one-half miles of wide, multiuse trails through a forested area. The trails are intended for shared use by horses, hikers, and bicycles. The balance of the park (145 acres), located within the corporate limits of the Town, has been approved for future park development.

Henry Clay Elementary School is operated by Hanover County and located at 310 South James Street. The school offers a playground, basketball courts, and a gymnasium with a stage that can serve as a public meeting space. Hanover Parks and Recreation offers summer programs for elementary students at this location.

John M. Gandy Elementary School is also operated by Hanover County and is located at 201 Archie Cannon Drive. The school offers a playground, basketball courts, and a gymnasium. Hanover Parks and Recreation offers summer programs for elementary students at this location as well.

Randolph Macon College allows the Town residents use of its tennis courts and walking/jogging trail. Priority is given to College-related users of these facilities. The college also hosts summer sports camps in activities such as competitive swimming, baseball, basketball, soccer

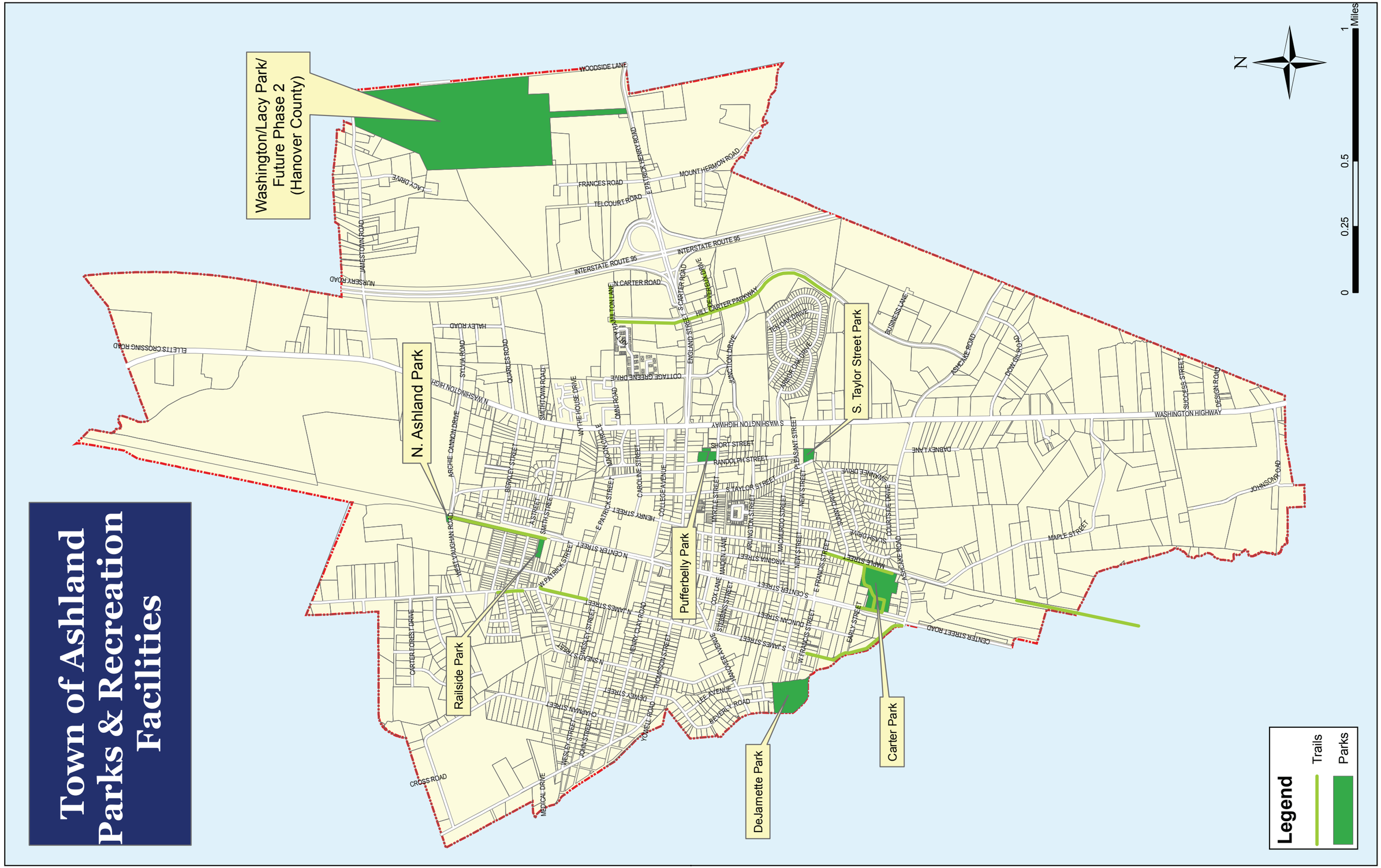
and lacrosse. These camps are open to youth from around the region.

There are numerous private facilities and organizations, which complement the Town and County's recreational offerings. These activities include fitness and weight training, roller skating, and youth athletic leagues. An example of one of the private facilities is the **Patrick Henry Family YMCA**. The YMCA is located at 217 Ashcake Road on approximately 24 acres in a new facility completed in 2010. This expanded facility has an indoor pool, community rooms and youth athletic fields. The YMCA offers a full-range of fitness and wellness programs focusing on families and their needs. Membership is open to all.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter supports the Plan's Guiding Principles as follows:

1. **Preserve Ashland's Small Town Character**
   - Provide opportunities for all ages, incomes, and ability levels to engage in recreation, play, relaxation and solitude in a natural setting through a comprehensive parks system.
2. **Protect Ashland's Unique Features**
   - Capitalize on Ashland's location at the crossroads of two interstate bike routes: Route 76 and Route
3. **Manage and Enhance Our Green Town**
   - Enhance the livability of Ashland by ensuring the provision of natural areas, open spaces, parks and other recreational amenities for the enjoyment of residents.
   - Preserve natural areas and open spaces as they are finite resources. Once developed, such resources are costly and difficult to reclaim.
4. **Encourage Continued Variety in Ashland**
   - Recreation and entertainment opportunities should be provided for people from all walks of like.
5. **Promote Continued Economic Development**
   - Promote Ashland as a recreation destination.
   - Take measures to ensure that future park development meets the needs of future development and growth within the Town.
6. **Provide a High Level of Government Services**
   - Continue long-range planning through maintenance of the Parks and Recreation Plan.



MAP PR-1 PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

9.1 Responsibilities

Policy PR.1 Public Sector's Role

The Town of Ashland seeks to be a leader in the protection and management of the natural environment, and to establish a reputation as a community with outstanding parks and recreational amenities. The Town recognizes that natural areas, open spaces, parks, and other recreational amenities enhance Ashland's livability and help make the Town an attractive place to call home. The Town shall provide and maintain a comprehensive system of parks and recreational facilities that are accessible to all. The Town is responsible for ensuring that such amenities keep pace with a diverse and changing population. The Town should invest responsibly in new parks and recreational facilities in anticipation of future needs.

Policy PR.2 Private Sector's Role

It must be recognized that the development of land reduces the amount of natural area and open space in the community. It is therefore the responsibility of private development to protect the natural environment where possible, and to provide open space and/or recreational amenities in proportion to the development's size and impact in accordance with the Town Code.

Policy PR.3 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Town should update and maintain the 1997 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Comprehensive Plan should continue to offer specific guidance as to the location and programming of parks and recreational facilities, and should be used by both the Town and private developers to anticipate parks and recreation needs and opportunities. Maintenance of the Parks and Recreation Plan allows for continued long-range planning to ensure that the social and communal benefits derived from parks, recreation, open space, and leisure opportunities are available for current and future residents.

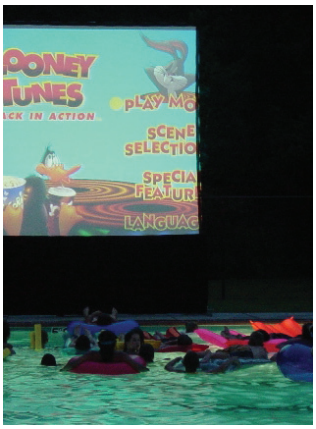
Policy PR.4 Future Parks and Recreation Needs

As part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a metric should be established to assist the Town in determining the appropriate amount of park space needed as the Town population grows. Although guidelines have been established by the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, it is important to remember that each locality's resources are unique as are the needs of each community. The established guidelines should be followed but with the metric modified to the resources, issues and needs of the Town. A few of the basic categories important to this planning process are guidelines regarding area, space, capacity and maintenance. The basic level of service is described in greater detail in the following

section. To create the metric, these standards should be applied to the population numbers and participation rates of the Town to aid in determining if the Town resident's recreation needs are being met. The availability of funding for maintenance and park staff should be considered in future planning. Adjustments to size and space recommendations will be made as needed in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

9.2 Criteria for Outdoor Recreation Planning

An ideal parks and recreation system should consist of a mix of the following types of facilities:



- Neighborhood Playgrounds, which are intended to serve the needs of small concentrations of residents in a neighborhood setting.
- Community Parks, which are intended to serve two or more neighborhoods, and which require more space than can be accommodated in a neighborhood setting.
- District Parks, which are intended to serve the entire community with intense recreational offerings, and must therefore be carefully and centrally located.
- Regional Parks, which are intended to draw users from multiple communities.
- Greenways, which serve as linear parks linking open spaces together, and connecting people to centers of activity.

Policy PR.5 Level of Service

The Town of Ashland should strive to provide complete circuits of greenways, at least one district park, several community parks, and a host of neighborhood playgrounds and pocket parks as part of a desirable comprehensive system. Provision of a regional park should be considered in conjunction with Hanover County.

The following park area standards are adapted from the *2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan*. These recommendations represent a minimum acreage that should be exceeded when possible as space permits. Another important consideration is the unique function of each park and recreation area and the trends in participation rates specific to Ashland. The future planning should consider accommodating as many types of activities and opportunities as possible to meet the range of needs of our citizens.

Neighborhood Playground

Neighborhood playgrounds, often referred to as pocket parks, are important in creating a sense of neighborhood identity, character and cohesion. Neighborhood playgrounds may include play equipment for young children, impromptu playing fields, formalized open spaces, or informal

natural areas. Neighborhood playgrounds should be one-quarter acre or larger. Neighborhood playgrounds should be located within a five-minute walk, or one-half mile of the target population.

Community Parks

Community parks provide recreation for sub-communities within the Town, and provide recreation for the whole family. Community parks may include playing fields, courts, picnic areas and other active recreation opportunities. Due to the potential for noise and other issues associated with more intense activity, Community parks should be carefully located so as not to infringe on the tranquility of neighbors. Community parks should range in size from five to twenty acres, and should be provided at a ratio of three acres per 1,000 residents (400 households.) Community parks should be located within a 20-minute walk, or one mile of the target population.

District Parks

District parks provide intense recreational activities intended to serve the entire Town of Ashland. Due to their size and the potential for noise, lighting, and other issues associated with intense use, district parks should be carefully planned to provide adequate buffering against residential areas. District parks include formal playing fields and courts capable of handling Town-wide recreational events. District parks generally contain five or more acres, and should be provided at a ratio of one acre per 2,000 residents (800 households.) District parks should be centrally located, with good automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility.

Regional Parks

Regional parks provide recreational opportunities that are unique to the region, and draw visitors from multiple communities. Due to their size, intensity, and accessibility requirements, Regional parks should be contemplated as part of a broader economic development strategy between the Town and the County.

Greenways

Greenways serve as linear parks, providing pedestrian and bicycle access in areas that are separate from vehicular travel. Greenways often follow creeks and other riparian corridors, but may also include sidewalks and designated trails alongside public streets. Greenways connect parks and open spaces to each other, and connect people to centers of activity. The Town should strive to develop a comprehensive system of greenway circuits, with frequent trailhead access. An ideal greenways system should provide trailhead access within a 15-minute walk, or three quarter of a mile distance, from 75 percent of the Town's population.

9.3 Accessibility and Safety

Policy PR.6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The promotion of healthy lifestyles is an essential goal of the Town's parks and recreation program. In addition to promoting a healthy lifestyle, the use of bicycles and walking works towards preserving Ashland's small town character. People walking and bicycling get to know their neighbors and strengthens the activity and liveliness within communities. Parks, trails, open spaces and other recreational facilities should be located within easy walking and bicycling distance of a majority of the Town's population. Parks and pathways should connect throughout the Town, linking key locations such as schools, recreational facilities, and bike parking areas.

To ensure this is a continued consideration in future planning, the 1998 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be updated and maintained. This Plan established a vision and framework for developing the trails, sidewalks, and other improvements that address the needs of Ashland residents. Future work on this plan should consider a complete network of bicycle and pedestrian routes and paths, including strategically located, safe crossings on Route 1 and other major roads; sidewalks and bike routes in commercial areas; and a mix of pathways in residential areas. It should be made clear that the pedestrian has priority on residential streets.

Policy PR.7 Barrier-free and Accessible Recreation

The Town's parks and recreational facilities should be accessible to people of all ages and ability levels, including the physically disabled and seniors. The Parks and recreational facilities should be designed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Policy PR.8 Public Access

Use of Town-owned parks and recreational facilities shall be available to the public at large, and is not restricted to residents of the Town. The Town discourages the establishment of private recreational facilities such as neighborhood pools, courts, or other "gated community" amenities that are restricted to use by members of an exclusive neighborhood.

Policy PR.9 Public Safety

Public safety shall be of paramount importance in the provision of parks and recreation facilities. The Town shall ensure that its parks, open spaces and other recreational facilities are safe and well-maintained. The design and management of parks and recreation facilities should comply with recognized standards for public safety, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED.)

9.4 Ashland as a Recreation Destination

In July 2010, Ashland's Town Council passed a resolution stating its support for trails, bikeways, paths, and greenways and its active support for a safe, viable, and active transportation network for its citizens making the Town a more bikeable and walkable town. The resolution also voiced a commitment to working on connections of trails, paths bikeways and greenways with neighboring localities.

Ashland is located at the crossroads of two interstate bike routes; the TransAmerica Route/US Bike Route 76, which runs from Yorktown, Virginia to Astoria, Oregon and Interstate Bike Route 1, which runs from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. These two routes attract cyclists from around the globe. In addition to these existing routes, the Town is being considered for inclusion in the East Coast Greenway, a unique, national off-road bike and walking path which will run from Maine to Florida. Map PR-2 showing the East Coast Greenway and Bike Route 1 & 76 is included on page 9-13.

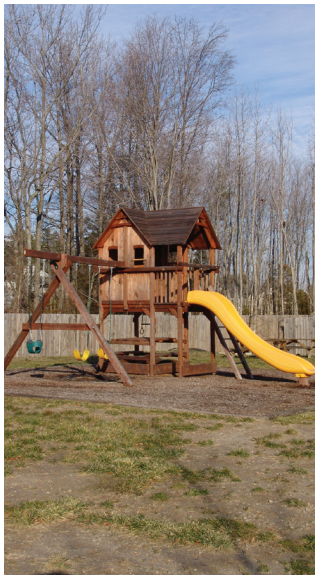
The Town of Ashland is the site a large number of recreational events, including several annual cycling and running events. These events are held primarily during the fall season, and attract many participants from around the region. Many of these events not only serve as fundraisers for various local organizations, but also attract participants from a wide radius, drawing a great number of people into the Town. Local businesses often participate in these events as sponsors.

Policy PR.10 Promoting Ashland as a Destination

Considering the wonderful natural setting, the unique geography, the hospitable climate, the excellent topography, and the nearby historic sites, the Town makes an excellent location for a weekend getaway or a stop on a cross country bike trip. There are numerous routes of varying lengths originating in Ashland making a weekend stay worthwhile. The town should include the idea of Ashland as a recreation destination in its tourism promotions. This information can be included on the Town website and at the Visitor's Center.

Both traditional lodging and camping should be promoted in the area. Often, cyclists on long routes prefer camping as a lodging alternative. At the time of this writing, the campsite used by most cyclists is AmeriCamp on Air Park Road in Hanover. The Town should consider the possibility of opening Carter Park to primitive camping for cyclists.

East Coast Greenway



9.5 Contributions from New Development

Policy PR.11 Responsibility to Provide

New residential developments are responsible for providing parks, open spaces, and recreational amenities in proportion to the size or impact of the development. Where specific parks or recreational amenities have been identified in advance by the Town, the development should contribute toward the establishment of such facilities.

Policy PR.12 Location and Prominence

Parks, open spaces and other recreational amenities provided by new development should be situated in prominent locations, with good pedestrian and bicycle accessibility from within and outside the development. High visibility is important in ensuring proper maintenance and safety. Parks and recreational facilities should be designed and celebrated as community amenities.

Policy PR.13 Maintenance

Parks and recreation facilities provided by new developments may be privately-maintained, or may be dedicated to the Town subject to certain criteria and agreements. In the case of private maintenance, the responsible parties must demonstrate a financial ability to perform on-going and sustainable maintenance.

9.6 Anticipation of Need

Policy PR.14 Projecting Future Needs

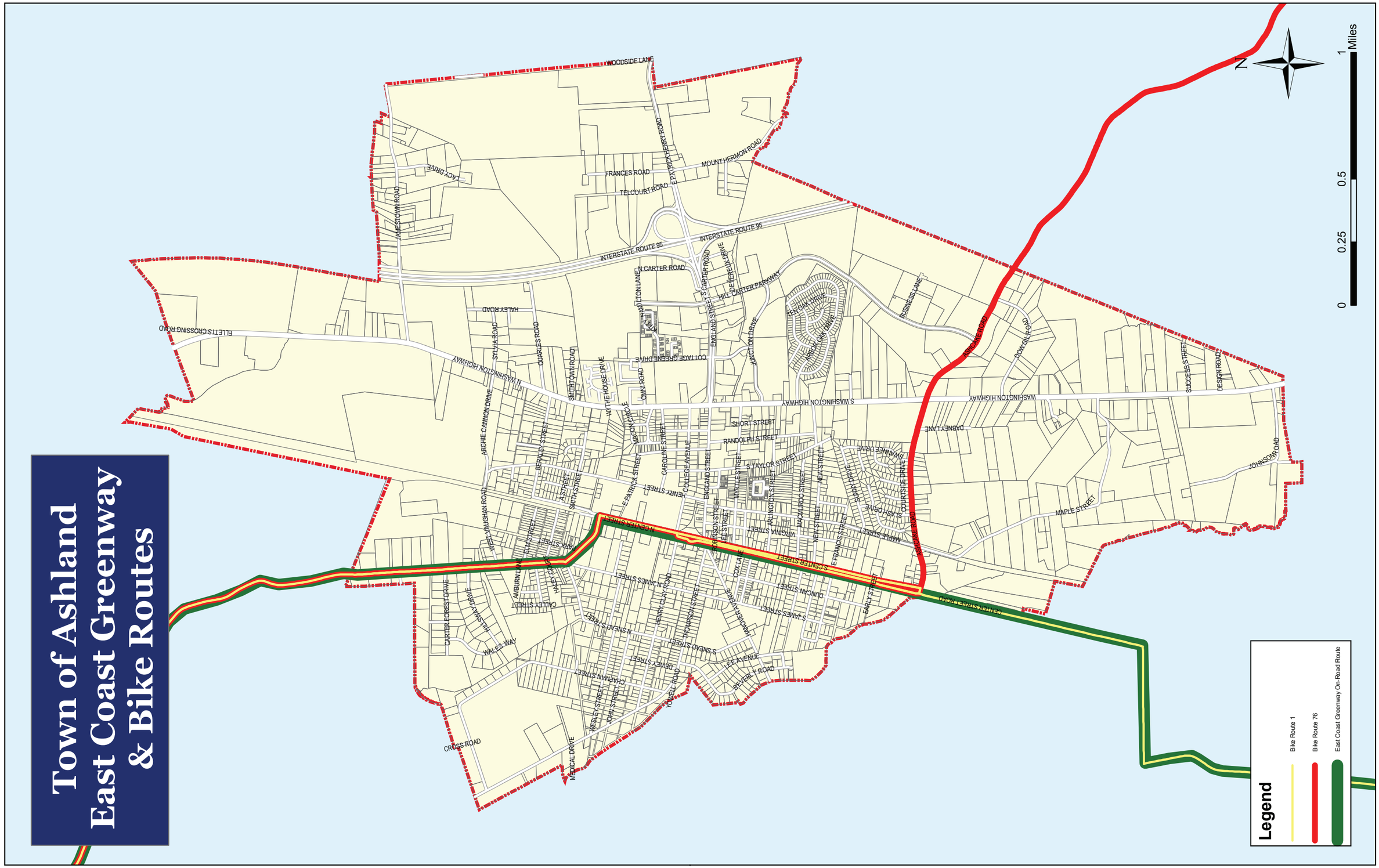
The Town recognizes that it is the responsibility of the entire community to preserve natural settings and provide outdoor enjoyment for future generations. Using the metric created as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Town should closely monitor the rate of development and population growth within and surrounding Ashland, and take steps to ensure a commensurate level of parks and recreation facilities.

Policy PR.15 Parks and Recreation Monitoring System

An evaluation method should be developed that measures the physical and social conditions within the park system. Benchmarks should be established for evaluating the effectiveness of the parks system to ensure that the needs of the population are being met.

Policy PR.16 Land Acquisition

The Town should maintain an accurate inventory of parkland and undisturbed natural areas, and take appropriate and responsible steps to secure land for conservation or future park development. Where practical, the Town should actively acquire and bank land for future park needs.



MAP PR-2 EAST COAST GREENWAY & BIKE ROUTES

The Town should also seek private partnerships and facilitate private conservation efforts.

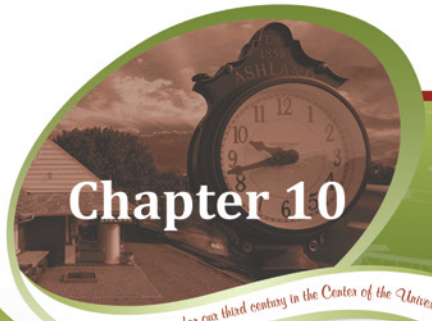
Policy PR.17 Funding

Planning strategies must acknowledge the ongoing financial and staff resources required to sustain facilities. The Town should aggressively seek funding for parks and recreation development, by setting aside funds on an annual basis through the Capital Improvements Program. In addition, the Town should aggressively seek grant funding where available.

TO DO LIST

1. Update 1997 Parks and Recreation Plan including:
   - Investigate potential for pocket park along Hill Carter Parkway
   - Investigate the creation of a Greenway along Mechumps Creek and consider access on both sides of the highway
   - Explore the possibility/need for partnering with Hanover County to add programming to parks within Ashland's borders.
   - Prioritize the completion of the trail connection between DeJarnette and Stony Run Trail
   - Develop a railside trail on the eastern side of the rail north of Berkley Street, on existing Town owned property. This is in future plans pending funding.
   - Provide a formal connection from the trail between Elm and Linden Streets to West Vaughn Road

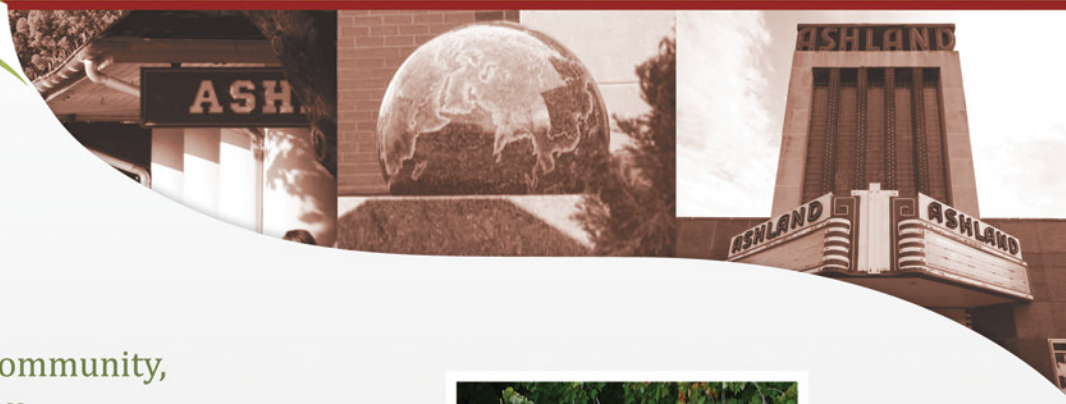
2) Update the 1998 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:
   - Improve pedestrian mobility and create bike lanes



Chapter 10

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Planning for our third century in the Center of the Universe



If you support the community,
they will support you.

Jerry Greenfield

10.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Abstract
Well maintained public services and facilities promote health, safety and an enhanced quality of life for all members of this community. Community facilities, such as schools, are integral parts of the physical and social structure of our community. In addition to adding to the quality of life, these facilities provide strong marketing tools for the Town.

Through the Community Facilities chapter, the Town works to continue the quality of public facilities that contribute to the quality of life in the Town by:

- *Ensuring community safety through the provision of efficient and effective emergency services.*
- *Working with the School Board and County to enable our schools to remain an integral part of our unique community and a source of public pride.*

The Town of Ashland, along with Hanover County, and the private sector to some degree, maintains facilities to provide services to citizens. The Town strives to maintain a cohesive system of community facilities that reflects the changing needs of the residents of the Town of Ashland. For the purpose of this comprehensive plan, community facilities include all properties and buildings owned by and/or providing a service to the Town. This includes elements such as libraries, schools, parks and recreation facilities (parks are addressed in detail in previous chapter), public safety, public utilities, and infrastructure. Community facilities are integral parts of the physical and social structure of our community. These facilities provide services that promote the well-being of the community, in addition to providing an additional level of core services that are generally not available to surrounding rural areas. In this sense, these facilities are not only valuable socially to the Town but provide strong marketing tools as well. The following policies provide guidance for the development and maintenance of these core services as they relate to the Town and its surroundings.

10.1 General

Policy CF.1 Design

Any new facilities intended for use by the public shall be highly visible, and shall be constructed as to form a strong focal point for the community, while retaining an appropriate scale and character in respect to the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy CF.2 Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) represents a plan to meet the capital needs of the Town's government and its citizens based on the Comprehensive Plan, stormwater drainage priority projects, the Transportation Plan 2020, and the Parks and Recreation Plan. The CIP indicates how the Town proposes to fund the identified capital improvement needs for a five (5) year time period. In accordance with State code, the Town shall maintain and update the CIP on an annual basis. Funding, when available, should be directed to the highest priority projects as recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Town Council.

Policy CF.3 Approval of Community Facility Projects

A procedure shall be developed to ensure the location, character, and extent of all proposed community facilities are in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with § 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia.

Policy CF.4 Cash Proffers

For all new residential zoning cases in the Town, the Town shall follow the County's policy for acceptance of cash proffers, whenever those proffers are for County services that are generally used by Town residents and services that are not also offered by the Town (i.e. parks and roads).
The Town shall consider developing a cash proffer policy for the acceptance of cash proffers, to offset the demands created by new growth, relative to parks, transportation improvements, and other projects listed in the CIP.

Policy CF.5 Citizen Satisfaction

Surveys can be a powerful tool for a municipal government. A survey is a cost-effective method for gathering important information and for identifying and diagnosing problems and opportunities, but only if survey results are acted on. It sends a message to citizens that their opinion is valued and raises expectations that action will be taken on survey responses. As a method of gauging citizen expectations and satisfaction with government services, a citizen satisfaction survey should be conducted annually by the Town.

10.2 Town Facilities

Public Safety

The Ashland Police Department, headquartered at 601 England Street, is a full service law enforcement agency providing 24-hour professional law enforcement, traffic control, crime prevention and community awareness.

Emergency fire and rescue services are provided to the Ashland residents by the Ashland Volunteer Fire Company and Ashland Volunteer Rescue Squad, which has been an all volunteer organization for over 60 years.

Policy CF.6 Municipal Campus

The Town shall maintain its administrative offices in downtown Ashland. The Town shall plan for future municipal office expansion in such a manner that it can maintain its presence in the downtown area.

Policy CF.7 121 Thompson Street Property

The Town should utilize the property at the corner of Duncan and Thompson Street (121 Thompson Street-formerly the Duke House) across from Town Hall to fulfill Town Hall space needs as the Town Hall Annex.

The 121 Thompson Street property shall be developed in such a manner that Duncan Street will be recognized as the core of the Municipal Campus. The construction of any municipal buildings on this property shall ensure that the buildings form a clear gateway to the downtown area from the west while respecting the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The development of the 121 Thompson Street property should consider public-private partnerships, such as providing professional office space for lease if the Town cannot justify filling the entire space at the time it is constructed. Additionally, this property should be utilized to provide additional parking for the Town Hall and downtown areas as well as additional storage.

Policy CF.8 Farmer's Market

The Ashland Farmer's Market operates on Saturdays, May through October from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and is located on the Town Hall Annex property at 121 Thompson Street. This Market is a grower's-only market allowing the sale of items such as locally grown produce, plants, eggs, cheese, honey, and baked goods. The Farmers Market should be considered with any future development plans for the Town Hall complex. Further, a formal market area and covered structure, similar to Farmer's Markets in other localities, that does not require the closing of Duncan Street should be considered.

Policy CF.9 Old Fire Station Number One

The Fire Station No. 1 Building, located at 201 Duncan Street, formerly housed the Ashland Volunteer Fire Department. It is owned by the Town and is being used for Public Works offices. Future use of the building should be explored. Consideration should be given to the future space needs of the Rescue Squad, the Town, downtown office or retail space needs, and its proximity to residential areas. This space should also be considered for a public/private partnership opportunity for a varied use such as a museum or theater space.

Policy CF.10 Public Works Facilities (Town Shop)

The Town Shop facilities on West Vaughan Road shall not have a negative visual impact on adjacent residential areas or roadways, or the proposed North Ashland Park site.

The relocation of the entrance to this site toward the west should be considered when appropriate, to allow for the eventual construction of a grade separated crossing of the CSX tracks at Vaughan Road as well as the proposed North Ashland Park.

A facility for surplus storage, currently located at the Lumpkin House (506 Myrtle Street), could be constructed at the West Vaughn Road facility. Other storage locations could be the old Fire Station Number One, or the future Town Hall Annex at 121 Thompson Street.

Policy CF.11 The 506 Myrtle Street Property

The property located at 506 Myrtle Street should no longer be used as a storage or office facility for the Town. Options should be explored for other uses of this property, including removal of the building.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

The Town is a member of and contracts with Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA) for collection from single-family residences in Ashland. One weekly collection is provided, in addition to household waste, includes bulk items such as furniture and appliances. Service is also contracted with CVWMA for weekly curbside recycling for materials including plastic, glass bottles, tin and aluminum cans, bimetal cans, paper, newspaper and magazines.

Brush up to three inches in diameter and bagged grass clippings are collected by the Town. Raked leaves are collected each fall according to a schedule published by the Town. Both yard clippings and leaves are delivered to a Town-owned compost area, where the leaves are composted and yard waste is recycled into mulch for use in plantings on public property. This mulch is also available for free to Town residents on a first come-first served basis. Christmas trees are collected every January.

Removal of snow and ice from Town roadways is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. When major snow events occur, Public Work's staff works around the clock to clear and treat roadways.

Policy CF.12 Future Government Services Corridor

The Town should work toward the acquisition of a portion of the Holland tract on the north side of Archie Cannon Drive between Henry Street and North Washington Highway. This property should be maintained for a future government use with possibility of a school site if necessary.

10.3 Hanover County Facilities

The Town recognizes that it does not control the facilities owned and operated by Hanover County that are located within the corporate limits, however, the policies within this subsection are intended to clearly state the Town's position relative to the future direction of these facilities that are located within the Town.

Policy CF.13 Schools

The Town is home to Henry Clay and John M. Gandy Elementary Schools. Both schools are the center of a great number of community activities whether it is for the education of school children, recreational programs or public meeting space. Both schools are accessible by biking and walking from most neighborhoods in Town. By establishing these schools as neighborhood centers, this results in a greater participation of neighborhood residents with respect to issues that affect the public school system. The preservation of Henry Clay and Gandy Schools is essential to maintaining the strong sense of community within Ashland. The Town shall work proactively with the School Board and the County toward maintaining neighborhood-based schools within its boundaries.

The Town should work with the School Board to ensure that all Ashland students will track through the same school feeder system. The Town desires not to be split up amongst multiple school districts.

Policy CF.14 Hanover County School Board

The Town should encourage Hanover County School Board to continue to be headquartered in Ashland.

Library

The Richard S. Gillis, Jr. / Ashland Branch Library is a defining structure in the Downtown Ashland landscape. It is part of the Pamunkey Regional Library System which serves the counties of Goochland, Hanover, King and Queen, and King William. The library is open sixty hours per week and provides circulation, reference, reading and study space, regularly scheduled children's programs and special programs for adults. The li-

brary also offers a multi- purpose room available for public use. The Richard Gillis Branch Library is an important anchor to downtown Ashland.

Policy CF.15 Water and Sewer

Connection to the water and sewer system shall be mandatory for all new commercial development and subdivisions. If water and sewer service is unavailable for new single-family dwellings on existing buildable lots then it may not be required.

Extensions of public water and sewer by private property owners to existing developed areas that are not currently served by Hanover County Department of Public Utilities water and sewer should be encouraged by the Town and County. Hanover County has adopted a Facilities Master Plan, which incorporates the needs of the Town. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Economy, Policy E.15, the Town, County and private sector should work together to improve and increase availability of connections to the public utility system.

Policy CF.16 Sanitary Sewer Pump Stations

Any new or renovated pump station(s) should be designed to fit architecturally within neighborhoods.

Policy CF.17 Human Services Facilities

The Human Services Facilities Building located at 12312 Washington Highway houses the Department of Social Services, Department of Community Resources, the Community Services Board and the Hanover Health Department, which is the local district headquarters for the Virginia Department of Health. These services should continue to operate at this location in Ashland. Any future building needs for these organizations should consider the needs of citizens in other areas of the county, so as to not centralize all of the delivery of these services within one location. The County, with assistance from the Town, should find solutions to meet the transportation needs for the users of these facilities.

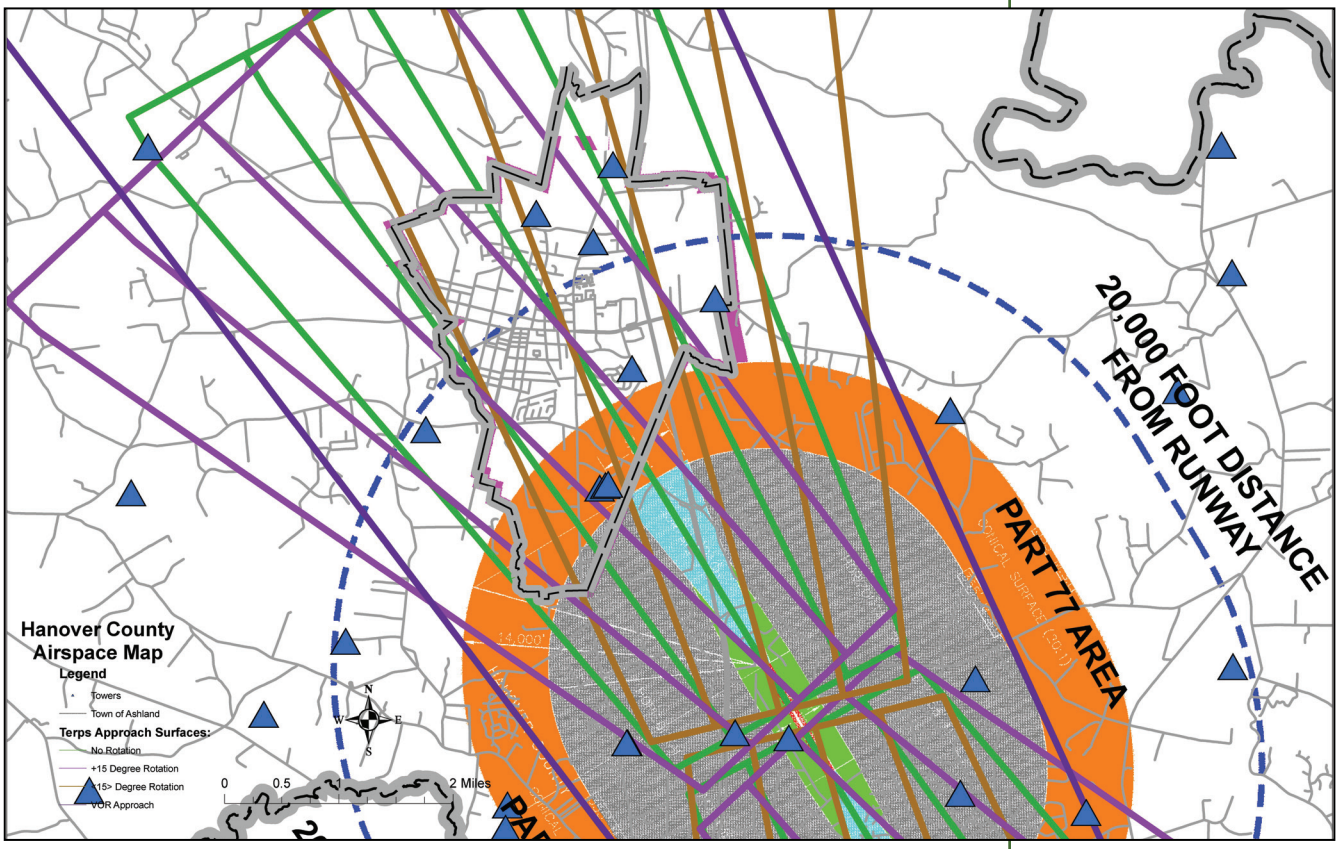
10.4 Miscellaneous Facilities

Policy CF.18 Telecommunications Facilities

Wireless telecommunications facilities shall be co-located onto existing improvements wherever possible. Wireless telecommunications facilities shall be located and designed so as to minimize visual impacts on existing and future areas of development. These facilities shall be discouraged adjacent to planned or existing residential development and grouping of facilities shall be encouraged in undeveloped or industrial areas.

All structures that exceed one hundred and forty feet above ground level or are within 20,000 feet of the Hanover County Airport and exceed a 100:1 surface slope from any point on the runway shall be required to

submit to the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) an Obstruction Evaluation and Airport Airspace Analysis, Form 7460-1. No towers shall be approved if it is determined that they will cause a hazard within the Hanover County Airspace area as shown on the attached map.



Map CF-1 Hanover County Airport Airspace Map

Visitors Center

The Ashland/Hanover Visitor's Center is located in a 1920's train station in the heart of the Historic Downtown on North Railroad Avenue. The Visitor's Center provides information about Ashland, Hanover County and the Richmond region through brochures, maps and general information. Most visitors stop in during the summer months and in 2009, over 17,700 visitors signed the guest book. Along with serving as a source for tourism information, there are several Ashland Walking Tours held during the summer and fall for which the Visitor's Center serves as the starting point.

TO DO LIST

1. Develop a procedure to ensure the location, character, and extent of all proposed community facilities are in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan

2. Develop a cash proffer policy for the acceptance of cash proffers, to offset the demands created by new growth, relative to parks, transportation improvements, and other projects listed in the CIP

3. Create and conduct a citizen satisfaction survey annually

4. The development of the 121 Thompson Street property should consider public-private partnerships, such as providing professional office space for lease if the Town cannot justify filling the entire space at the time it is constructed. Additionally, this property should be utilized to provide additional parking for the Town Hall and downtown areas as well as additional storage. The Farmers Market should be considered with any future development plans for the Town Hall complex

5. Study Future use of the old Fire station #1 building

6. Options should be explored for other uses of the property located at 506 Myrtle Street.

7. The Town should work toward the acquisition of a portion of the Holland tract on the north side of Archie Cannon Drive between Henry Street and North Washington Highway for a future government use.The Town shall work proactively with the School Board and the County toward maintaining neighborhood-based schools within its boundaries.

8. Work together with the County on a comprehensive plan for extensions and improvements of public utility services.

9. The Town should work with the County to find solutions to meet the transportation needs for the users of the Human Services Facilities.

Town of Ashland

Comprehensive Plan Appendix

Approved by Town Council
December 7, 2011

Appendix A Administration

This section contains general policies related to the administration of the Comprehensive Plan. These policies outline the purpose and scope of the Plan; prescribe the elements that are contained in the Plan; instruct how to maintain and amend the Plan; and provide guidance on how to use the Plan with respect to decision-making.

Legal Basis for the Comprehensive Plan

The State Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2223 mandates that every county, city and town "shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory under its jurisdiction." The plan must include transportation and future land use chapters and must address affordable housing within the Town. The plan is created with the purpose of guiding harmonious development.

Intent and Interpretation

Intent of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to depict a desired image of the community in the future, and to guide decision-making on matters related to physical change over time. The Plan is intended to reflect enduring community values, which form the rationale for decisions related to the physical development of the community.

Intended Audience

Public officials should consult the Plan whenever faced with decisions that could affect the physical development of the community. Residents and property and business owners should be able to rely on the Plan as a reasonable predictor of future change. Investors and developers should use the Plan to guide their investment decisions. All users of the Plan should read it carefully and in its entirety.

Interpreting the Plan

The Plan is a guide to decision-making. It is not a zoning ordinance, although it should guide the development of subsequent ordinances and regulations. The zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance are tools to implement the policies and recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town's zoning and subdivision ordinances should be amended as needed to effectively implement the Plan. Departing from the precepts of the Plan should always be possible – although not necessarily easy. To deviate from a policy or recommendation of the Plan should require an argument as convincing as the one that created the original policy or recommendation. The Plan should be interpreted in a comprehensive manner. Decisions shall be supported by a wide range of policies and recommendations, rather than by isolated excerpts from the Plan.

Geographic Specificity

The Plan's recommendations are geographically contextual and are not site or dimensionally specific, unless clearly stated to be site or dimensionally specific. In cases where the Plan is geographically unclear, the decision-maker should consider the immediate context of the proposal and the impact of the proposal on adjoining properties.

Scope and Timeframe

Scope of the Plan

The Plan applies to all areas within the political boundaries of the Town of Ashland. In addition, the Plan contemplates change in areas beyond the Town's boundaries, where such change would have a significant impact on the quality and character of Ashland. For areas outside the Town's jurisdiction, the Plan serves to advise property owners, developers, and other governmental agencies of the Town's values and desires, and forms the basis of the Town's cooperative planning relationship with Hanover County.

Definition of Planning Area

The Plan contemplates a planning area that includes the corporate limits of the Town of Ashland.

In addition to areas within the corporate limits, surrounding areas in Hanover County are suggested for study. A sphere-of-influence around the Town should be studied to suggest a desired land use pattern and transportation grid beyond the Town limits. The intention is to state the Town's expectations prior to development occurring around Ashland's perimeter. These recommendations are made in Chapter 3 Community Character and Design, Chapter 4 Land Use and Chapter 7 Transportation.

As noted on the map on the following page, there are two areas that would benefit from joint-jurisdictional planning. Area 1 is a primary area of interest, consisting of areas immediately adjacent to the Town where development would be contiguous with established or developed areas of the Town. Planning efforts in this area should focus on both transportation impact and character of development. Area 2 is a secondary area of interest, consisting of outlying areas that are adjacent to undeveloped areas of the Town, but where development would have a significant impact on Ashland. Planning efforts in this area should focus on transportation impact.

Planning Time Horizon

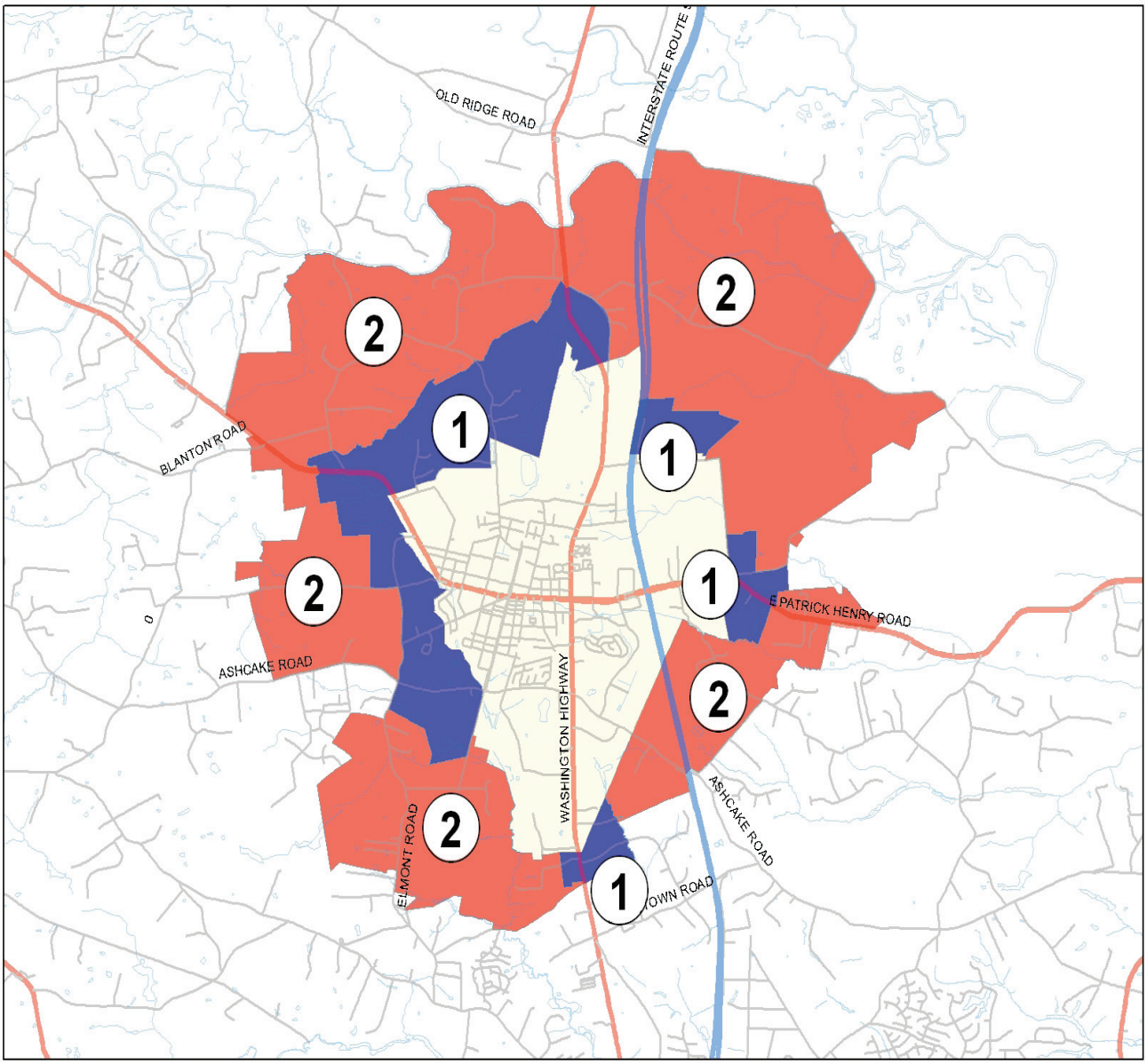
The Plan envisions the full build-out of the Town's existing jurisdiction for the purpose of understanding long-range needs and impacts. However, the Plan does not call for or desire full build-out within any specific time horizon. Some actions could take place immediately, such as the new Zoning Code and new Design Guidelines. Others will take longer, such as specific landscape improvements in shopping areas, or the creation of new roads and trails. Some of these could be completed in a few years; others may take twenty of more years. This Plan is therefore based on both optimism and patience about its ultimate accomplishments and successes. Additional, more specific, guidance related to the timing and sequencing of the development is found in the Land Use chapter within the Phasing of Development section of the Plan. A To-Do list is included at the end of Chapters 3 through 10 with a list of tasks to be completed.

Structure of the Plan

Elements of the Plan

The Plan shall consist of three primary elements: 1) Policies; 2) Maps; and 3) Recommended Actions. Any change to the text or maps of these elements requires the approval of the Town Council. The Plan shall also contain an Appendix, which may include an index, glossary, historical information, supporting data and graphics, and procedural notes, among other items. All information contained in the Appendix,

as well as any supporting graphics or illustrations found throughout the Plan, are included for explanatory purposes, and may be updated without requiring formal approval by the Town Council.



Possible Joint Jurisdictional Planning Areas

Adopted Maps

The Plan shall contain the following adopted maps:

- Future Land Use Plan Map
- Phasing of Development Map
- Transportation Plan Map
- Economic Development Zone Map

- Parks & Recreation Facilities Map
- Utilities & Infrastructure Map
- Floodplain & Natural Environment Map

If a new map is proposed for adoption, it must also be added to this master list of adopted maps.

Recommendations & Implementation

The Plan shall include recommendations for specific actions, as necessary to achieve the Plan's desired outcomes. Recommended actions may consist of text, annotations, or graphic depictions shown on any of the adopted Comprehensive Plan maps. A master list of all recommended actions shall be maintained separate from the Plan maps, and shall include priorities and assignment of responsibility for each action.

Plans Adopted by Reference

The Plan shall include a list of all other plans and studies that are adopted by reference. Any plans or studies adopted by reference shall be given the full weight and consideration accorded to the Comprehensive Plan.

Changes to the Plan

Periodic Review & Update Required

The Plan shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Town Council, at a minimum, every five (5) years, as required by the Code of Virginia. As part of the five year review, the Planning Commission and the Town Council shall determine whether any changes are necessary to any of the Policies, Maps, or Recommended Actions contained in the Plan. When possible, it is desirable to synchronize the Town's Review and Update of the Comprehensive Plan with the scheduled review and update of the Hanover County Comprehensive Plan. In an effort to remain current with the review of the Plan, the Planning Commission shall review five chapters annually.

Updates May Be Initiated on a Limited Basis

The Town Council may establish Semi-annual Update Periods for the purpose of receiving comments and suggestions for changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Suggested changes to the Plan that are received outside of the established Semi-annual Update Period may not be considered until the next Semi-annual Update Period. This provision shall not apply in scheduled Plan Review and Update years, nor shall it apply for time-sensitive matters, which would have a significant economic impact on the Town.

Amendments to the Plan

The Plan may be amended only during an established Semi-annual Update Period, with the exception of scheduled Plan Review and Update years. Amendments that may be considered during the Semi-annual Update Period include:

- Adoption of new plans or studies incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference;
- Minor changes or clarifications of policy statements;
- Changes to road classifications or alignments;

- Changes to adopted maps involving less than ten (10) contiguous acres, unless recommended by a plan or study incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference;
- Changes to any portion of the Plan as necessary to implement an adopted plan or study incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference.

These provisions shall not apply to time-sensitive matters, which would have significant impact on the Town. All other changes or amendments may be considered only as part of a scheduled Plan Review and Update.

Consistency with the Plan

Development proposals that would result in a land use that is not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan Map or that would deviate from a specific recommended action contained in the Plan may not be considered without first amending the Plan. No such amendment may occur outside of an established semi-annual legislative season, with the exception of scheduled Plan Review and Update years.

Plan Adoption

Upon adoption by the Town Council, this new plan supersedes the 2002 document.

Appendix B—Town of Ashland Demographic Fact Sheet

Table 1: Population			
Year	Population	Change	% of change
1920	1,299	-----	-----
1930	1,297	-2	0.2
1940	1,718	421	32.4
1950	2,610	892	51.9
1960	2,773	163	6.2
1970	2,934	161	5.8
1980*	4,640	1,706	58.1
1990	5,864	1,224	26.4
2000*	6,619	755	12.9
2010	7,225	606	9.2

Source: US Census Bureau

* includes annexation

Table 2: Population by Race		
One Race	7,040	
White	5,137	71.1%
Black / African American	1,606	22.2%
American Indian & Alaska Native	31	0.4%
Asian	84	1.2%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	4	0.1%
Some Other Race	178	2.5%
Two or More Races	185	2.6%
Total	**7,225**	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	341	
Not Hispanic or Latino	6,884	
Total	**7,225**	

Source: US Census 2010

Table 3a: Population by Age		
Age Category	Population	
Total population	**7,225**	
Under 5 years	406	6%
5 to 19 years	1,475	20%
20 to 34 years	1,839	25%
35 to 49 years	1,176	16%
50 to 64 years	1,255	17%
65 and over	1,074	15%

Source: US Census 2010

Table 3b: Population by Gender and Age		
Age Category	Gender	Population
Under 5 years	**Male**	219
	Female	187
5 to 19 years	**Male**	732
	Female	743
20 to 34 years	**Male**	922
	Female	917
35 to 49 years	**Male**	550
	Female	626
50 to 64 years	**Male**	576
	Female	679
65 and over	**Male**	375
	Female	699
Total population		**7225**

Source: US Census 2010

Table 4: Housing Units					
	Occupied	Owner	Renter	Vacant	Total
Ashland	2,282	1,368	914	163	2,445
		56.0%	37.4%	6.7%	
Hanover	31,121	26,233	4,888	1,075	31,196
		81.5%	15.2%	3.3%	
Source: US Census 2000					

	Occupied	Owner	Renter	Vacant	Total
Ashland	2,670	1,455	1,215	193	2,863
		50.8%	42.4%	6.7%	
Hanover	36,589	30,171	6,418	1,771	38,360
		78.7%	16.7%	4.6%	
Source: US Census 2010					

Table 5: Housing Data			
	Ashland	Hanover	Virginia
Media Home Value	$190,500	$269,300	$247,100
Median Household Income	$44,609	$76,926	$60,316
Average Household Size	2.2 people	2.7 people	2.5 people
Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2008 estimates			

Appendix C History

Historic Ashland

Purchased by the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad Company (RF&P) as a mineral springs resort in the late 1840's the original 462 acres adjacent to the tracks was used to provide the railroad with lumber and fuel. Originally named Slash Cottage, in 1855 it was renamed Ashland after Henry Clay's estate in Kentucky. The Town consisting of one square mile was incorporated in 1858. Ashland is a town of small neighborhoods. Developing over time, the neighborhoods are distinguished by their architecture. Houses of the antebellum period (1850-1860) can be found along Center and Virginia Streets. The late Victorian era (1870-1890) is in evidence on Race Course, South Center and South James Streets and in a smaller neighborhood on Henry Clay Road.

The Twentieth century brought many changes to the styles of houses in Ashland. Smaller houses in the form of bungalows and ranch houses as well as colonial revival two-story houses began to develop along Beverly Road, College Avenue, Myrtle Street, Henry Clay Road, Berkley Street and Jamestown Road. The mid-twenties to late thirties brought the Thompson Street bungalows, and additions to the England Street commercial district.

The College

At the end of the Civil War, the resort and the railroad were experiencing financial difficulties. Due in part to their own declining financial situation, Randolph-Macon College in Boydton, Virginia chose to relocate to Ashland for access to the railroad and its central location between Richmond and Washington, D.C.

During the First World War, all Randolph-Macon students were involved in the Student Army Training Corps. During the Second World War, it became a preflight training center for the US Navy. At the end of WWII, the enrollment of Randolph-Macon swelled to more than 400 students, nearly half of whom were veterans returning to school on the GI Bill. The funds for construction of the first major building on the new campus were raised almost entirely by the students. This building is Washington and Franklin Hall, now a historic landmark was completely renovated in 1987.

National Register of Historic Places

The Town recognized the significance of the architecture represented in its downtown, and through the efforts of Council, Planning Commission and interested citizens, over 200 structures, including the three original buildings erected by the College, were identified as being eligible for placement on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The Ashland Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Land Use

Annexations

The Town remained the same in area for 119 years. In 1977, the Town annexed land from surrounding Hanover County and grew from one square mile to 4.2 square miles. The new boundaries stretched south of Ashcake Road and just north of Jamestown Road; east to Interstate 95 (I-95) and west to Chapman Street. The most recent annexation just a short 19 years later in 1996 increased the Town to 7.12 square miles and moved the boundary lines south to Johnson Road; east to Woodside Lane and North to Ellet's Crossing. At this time, the Town sold the water and sewer facilities to Hanover County.

Previous Future Land Use Plan

The Town's previous future land use plan consisted of two plans. The 1986 plan applied to the area within the 1977 Town limits and the 1996 plan applied to the area annexed into the Town on January 1, 1996.

The 1986 plan designated approximately 50 percent of the land area of the Town for residential use. Business and industrial uses were planned at a scale to support residential development in and near the Town. Commercial uses consisted of approximately 9 percent and industrial uses consisted of approximately 24 percent of the proposed land use.

The 1996 Plan altered the land use balance and potential physical form of the Town. The plan shifted the focus from residential uses to one of predominantly industrial and commercial. Approximately 53 percent of the Town's total land area was planned for industrial or commercial uses and 38 percent for residential.

In spite of the fact that the 1986 Plan discouraged strip commercial development along Washington Highway, a commercial character had resulted over time. While some of this development occurred prior to the Plan some was created by rezonings. This pattern of development resulted in the loss of land area that was designated for residential use.

Multi-modal Transportation

From Railway to Highway

Ashland was, and is, a train town. Following the incorporation of the Town an accommodation train between Ashland and Richmond brought tourists as well as permanent residents to the Town. In 1965, shortly after the construction of I-95, the Richmond train station was moved to its present location in western Henrico County, making the Richmond-Ashland commute impossible.

US Route 1, the original north-south connection, runs through the Town. Commercial development grew up along Route 1 creating a retail and general business district that was car-oriented as opposed to the train and pedestrian oriented downtown. This resulted in a shift of the commercial district from the center of Town to the Route 1 corridor.

The train, however, continues to bring people to Ashland. Amtrak trains provide service from points north and south. A total of eight passenger trains stop in Ashland, four traveling in each direction, providing transportation for college students and many visitors to the area. Although not a full service train station, the Ashland stop handles between 12,000 and 15,000 passengers a year.

Neighborhood Patterns

Residential Development

From the beginnings of the original resort along the railroad, the Town spread west toward the farmlands of Hanover County. Neighborhoods developed along Henry Clay Road, John Street, and Snead Street to the north and Beverly Road, North James and Snead Streets south of Thompson Street. Some of the development around the College provided housing for staff and dormitories for the students. With the 1977 annexation the residential neighborhoods spread further east. Slash Cottage was developed in the 1980's bringing almost 200 new residences to the Town. The later annexation in 1996 brought in more residential development along Vaughan and Jamestown Roads.

Commercial Development

The Town first centered its business district beside the tracks consisting of small retail and service oriented businesses. The development of the commercial district along Route 1 and the opening of Interstate 95 brought service stations, fast food restaurants and shopping centers to the area. Industrial-Business parks developed to the south of Ashland providing employment centers and excellent growth potential.

Ashland's Role within the County

Ashland's role will continue to be one of commerce. Meeting employment, retail and service needs for the western end of Hanover County. In the year 2000, job opportunities in Ashland exceeded the population of the Town by approximately 50 percent. Most of the jobs available in the Town are in the retail or service sectors.

Hanover County's plans to develop around the Town's borders will not significantly change the role of the Town. Ashland will continue to provide a core commercial district that will provide employment, and services for residents of both the Town and the County.
As the population of the Town and County ages, Ashland's role as a retirement community continues to grow. People of retirement age find the Town a convenient place to live due to the walkability of much of its downtown.

Population Trends

Growth Rate

The onset of the Civil War stopped growth and progress in the Town. In the late 1860's the opening of the College brought people back to the area and in 1890 the population had grown to 948 residents.

The Town continued to grow at a steady rate. Following World War II, the Census registered a population increase of 51 percent, due in part to the inclusion of Randolph-Macon students in the Census numbers. There was another increase after the annexation in 1977 that brought in approximately 1,800 new residents, in 1996 the population grew again with the addition of about 800 new residents.

In comparison to the County, between 1990 and 2000 the Town only saw a 13 percent increase where the County experienced its more normal 36 percent. Over the years, the Census has reflected that the Town has accounted for approximately 7 to 12 percent of the County's population. This held true for the 2010 census. Growth rates were down between 2000 and 2010 with the county increasing by only 16 percent and the Town by 9 percent.

Age Distribution

Between 1990 and 2000, the most notable age distribution trends in the Town were the increase in population of 45 years and older and the decrease in population between 0 and 4 years of age. These trends were also reflected in the County and the State.

Ashland shows a larger population of residents over the age of 65 than what is typically reflected in the County or the State. The decrease in residents from 0-4 years of age is in proportion to the County and the State. In 1970 the percentage of the Town's population over 65 was 8.4 percent; in 1990 it was 13.3 percent. (Source: Town of Ashland, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1997, page 4)
The school-age population, from 5-19 years of age is decreasing within the Town compared to the County.

Racial Distribution

In 2010 the non-white population (African-American and other races) totaled 2,088 or 28.9 percent of the Town. This compares to a figure of 13.3 percent for Hanover County. Over the past decade the racial composition of the Town has shown an increase in non-white residents by 2.8 percent.

Educational Attainment

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town maintained a higher percentage of persons aged 25 or older that did not complete high school than either Hanover County or the State. However, the Town also reflected a higher percentage of persons aged 25 or older that have obtained either a Bachelor's or Master's degree from a college or university.

Residence in 1985

The Census also evaluates migration patterns and compares the place of residence of the respondents. For the Town of Ashland the 1990 Census showed 37 percent of the respondents lived in the same place as they did in 1985. The statistics indicate a large in-migration as 42.3 percent or 2,311 residents living in the Town in 1990 did not live in the Town in 1985.

Appendix D--Community Participation

Citizen involvement is an essential part of writing a Comprehensive Plan. Several public forums were conducted to invite residents to comment on their vision for the Town. Below is a synopsis of each of the meetings that were held.

Kick-off meeting—January 28, 2008

This initial meeting was held in the Council Chambers to explain the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan and to receive comments from citizens. This meeting described the Comprehensive Plan as an official document adopted by the Council to guide and direct decisions regarding growth and development. The Plan is a statement about what the community is today and what it would like to be in the future.

Collecting Comments

Neighborhood maps were placed around the chambers so that each person could make specific comments about what they wanted to see in their neighborhood, or anywhere in Town, by placing a post-it note on the map in the area referred to in their comment. Along with the maps and post-its there were blank cards positioned around the room so that residents could write down their thoughts on development, drainage, traffic, or whatever their hot button topic was. These comments were recorded in a database to be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Take the Plan to the Community—April 10, 2008

The Comprehensive Plan went on the road and its first stop was St. James the Less Episcopal Church. The participants in this forum were randomly assigned to groups of 5 and were given a set of questions regarding various aspects of the Town.

Community Identity

What contributes to the best qualities of the identity of Ashland?

Many of the comments regarding the identity of Ashland were limited to the downtown area and included the train, the College, and the social gatherings that take place in the immediate area, such as the Street Parties and events sponsored by the Hanover Arts & Activities Center.

Ashland has many historic buildings that are still in use as homes and businesses today. The Town desires to maintain this character by avoiding cookie-cutter, homogenized subdivisions.

Ashland prides itself on being a caring and active community with many town-wide events that draw many people from the Town and surrounding areas. The Strawberry Faire, the Bluemont Concerts, and the Variety Show are all favorites among many of the Town's residents. They are concerned that if the Town is allowed to grow too quickly this small town atmosphere from a bygone era will disappear, as people may no longer get to know their neighbors.

Ashland Loves its Trains

Amtrak service figured prominently in all of the discussions at this meeting. Ashland owes its beginnings to the RF&P Railroad and it has remained a loyal train town since 1858.

Amtrak brings commuters, students and tourists to the Town. Many residents use the train for pleasure and business travel.

The centrally located train station is not only convenient; it provides an attractive centerpiece for the Town. It is one of the most photographed buildings in Ashland.

Ashland's Historic District, the College and the Town's geographic position in the County give Ashland a sense of place that many communities lack. One resident described it as "the prettiest place on Amtrak" and many people found Ashland for the first time because they rode through it on the train.

What can we do to maintain or get to the desired identity of Ashland?

There were many concerns that uncontrolled development around the Town would make Ashland a cut-through area as opposed to a destination place. It was believed that a good Comprehensive Plan and open communication with the County was needed to avoid this.

It is understood that growth will occur but responsible growth is needed to maintain a low crime rate and good Town services. The concern already exists that the identity of the Town is lost the further you move out from its core.

Many citizens were concerned with preserving their neighborhoods and believed this could be accomplished through design standards for both residential and commercial uses.

Redevelopment of vacant properties was recommended as a strategy for keeping a neighborhood vital.

New construction should not only reflect the neighborhood character but new street names should have a connection with the Town.

Ashland is a town within a county and even though the two work closely together there should be a geographic delineation of the two. The gateways and Town Center should be clearly defined to show the boundary lines of the Town.

What are threats to our identity?

Uncontrolled development was considered a threat to the identity of the Town.

The loss of Amtrak service would considerably alter the Town's identity as a train town and would result in loss of revenue for the businesses, restaurants and hotels.

Homeowners felt that an overabundance of rental properties affected the value of a neighborhood and that moving the schools out of the town would alter the character of the neighborhoods in which they were located.

Let Your Voices Be Heard

All of the participants in the meeting believed it was vital to continue these types of forums and neighborhood meetings, and to encourage others, especially the younger residents, to offer their opinions.

How do neighborhoods, the College, and the railroad contribute to Ashland's identity?

Collectively, they define the Town. The Town's traditional and cultural events have always been centered around the train and the historic neighborhoods. The College has contributed significantly to these events.

Key Resources

What are our key resources?

The people of Ashland were considered to be its greatest resource. The residents were described as people who care for their neighbors, their property and their Town.
The schools, The Hanover Arts and Activities Center, the College, and Ashland Coffee and Tea were among the cultural resources mentioned.

Government buildings, the street grid, and the Town pool were all resources that the residents believed were valuable to the Town's identity.

A much needed resource was recently added to the Town when a number of concerned citizens formed a free clinic in two local churches. The clinics are staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses and provide services for uninsured residents. A need still exists for medical specialists, urgent care facilities or a hospital.

Natural Resources

The Town has many passive parks and lovely old trees throughout the community. It is the residents desire to preserve as many of the older trees as possible.
It was pointed out that they needed to weigh trees and green space with economics. The town had to exist economically before it could exist physically, there had to be a balance.

What resources are missing?

Although there are many resources the Town does have, there are a few that are still needed. More senior housing close to downtown, museums, art galleries, an open-air amphitheater, community center and a conference center were among the items on this wish list.

It was agreed that there needed to be a balance of resources for all ages and that a retirement center as well as a venue for children's programs should be considered.

What are the threats to these resources?

Uncontrolled development is a threat to natural resources as well as producing increased traffic that threatens the walkability of the town. The residents were concerned that many small town traditions would disappear if the town grew too large.

Economic Vitality

What types of commerce would you like to see in Ashland?

There was an immediate request for a bowling alley and similar family entertainment. High-end clothing department stores and shoe repair were mentioned, as well as an active movie theater; hobby and art supply store, a large bookstore, and a high-end restaurant, pub or grill.

Some residents expressed a desire for boutique style shopping, art galleries and an outdoor dance and bandstand area.

Businesses and services that couldn't be found in Ashland included non-chain restaurants that offer family style dining, organic or specialty grocery stores, appliance and furniture stores, camera shops, children's stores and Senior Day Care.

It was suggested that if the office buildings on the tracks were redeveloped as retail some of these types of businesses could locate downtown.

The residents believed that appropriate industrial uses for the Town would be clean industries, small companies that were energy efficient and provided high paying jobs.

What types of commerce would you not want to see in Ashland?

The residents believed that adult uses, pawn shops, strip development, truck stops, and industrial uses that created pollution and heavy traffic did not fit the small town character of Ashland. They also did not want to see large malls, named subdivisions or cul-de-sac development occur, as they believed these types of developments segregate sections of the Town.

What's exceptional about Ashland?

Tradition gives a community sense of place

The events that are held every year put Ashland on the calendar and the map. The Strawberry Faire, typically the 1st Saturday in June, brings people from all over the state. Other events, although smaller, are just as significant. The Railroad Run that benefits the Hanover Arts and Activities Center, a non-profit organization that sponsors many of the Town's local events, drew over 400 people in 2008. The 4th of July non-motorized parade grows larger every summer, and the Holiday Parade, held the Sunday before Thanksgiving, features over 100 units each year.

Diversity in Housing Stock

The stately homes of the Victorian era interwoven with modern 20th century homes depict the Ashland of yesterday and today. The residents expressed their desire to see this diversity continue in the subdivisions and infill housing that develop over time.

What brought people to Ashland?

Walkability. The number one answer to this question was that Ashland is a small town and many shops, schools and parks are within walking distance from the residential areas. It was noted that there are very few other towns where you can walk to the train station.

Some people were already familiar with Ashland and some found it by chance. Others married someone who lived here and then made it their home as well. Some came as students or teachers at the College. No matter how they found it, they quickly came to love it. Some who left it for a while came back and settled here with their children. Ashland becomes a part of everyone it touches.

Iconic Places in Ashland

When asked to name a place where they would meet someone coming to Town, something that everyone would be familiar with, most of the answers centered around the tracks.

The train station for its central location, and the Ironhorse Restaurant for its large windows that looked out on the Town were the two most mentioned, Suzanne's Homemades, Ashland Coffee and Tea and the Town Hall Green were also mentioned as places that were immediately associated with Ashland. The Library Plaza, with its benches and fountain, makes an attractive meeting place and Andy's Restaurant was noted as being a favorite with many of the locals.

What features do residents value in Ashland?

The residents believed significant features included the Victorian architecture, the train, Cross Bros. Grocery Store, the Library, parks, trees, sidewalks and trails.

Residents would like to see more involvement from the College.

There was a desire to see the College become a more active partner in the community. It was suggested that the College be open to different types of students, a specific request was made to provide "Empty Nester" courses.

It was also suggested that Randolph-Macon should put more effort into publicizing the cultural activities and events they sponsor.

Can we grow without change?

It was recognized that change will occur and the Town will grow. Responsible growth, creative thinking, and paying close attention to what develops around the Town are essential to maintaining the Town's character.

Trying to never change may be as detrimental as changing too fast. The Town must stay current with transportation facilities, technology, services and amenities while phasing development to avoid too much pressure on an already expanding traffic network.

Where Are We Now? Defining Community Character

On Monday, September 29, 2008, a community workshop entitled "Where Are We Now? Defining Community Character," was held at Gandy Elementary School. The workshop drew more than 50 community residents.

A detailed description of the planning process was given that focused on ways in which the community's basic physical elements – open space, streets and buildings – affect its overall character. It was explained that the comprehensive plan would provide policy direction on how and where these physical elements could be enhanced or improved, with specific guidance on how future growth could be shaped in order to promote the desired characteristics of the community while optimizing economic development opportunities.

Participants then moved to facilitated breakout tables, sharing ideas on what they would want to preserve and what they would want to change within each of the Town's eight focus areas. At the conclusion of the evening, the entire group reconvened to review the comments from each table. General themes and ideas that were raised throughout the evening's discussions are summarized below.

Open Space: Preserve and enhance the Town's natural beauty and community gathering places.

- Add more green space, parks, and recreational space for people of all ages, especially children and teenagers.
- Preserve trees and tree canopies.
- Improve town-wide landscaping, streetscapes, and lighting.
- Connect parks and pathways throughout the Town, linked to key locations such as schools, recreational facilities, bike parking areas.

Streets: Create complete grid networks and promote the pedestrian.

- Maintain the existing dense, walkable grid in older neighborhoods; discourage cut-through trips by installing traffic calming devices and promoting alternate routes.
- Build interconnected street networks in newer areas to improve town-wide circulation and reduce traffic congestion.
- Build a complete network of bicycle and pedestrian routes and paths, including strategically located, safe crossings on major roads, sidewalks and bike routes in commercial areas, and a mix of pathways in residential areas. Make it clear that the pedestrian has priority on residential streets.

Built Environment: Design seamless visual and physical connections that link revitalized core areas with newly developing industrial, commercial, and residential areas.

- Downtown: Increase the density and mixture of the downtown business district with carefully designed infill, redevelopment, and parking systems that preserve small-town, historic character. Improve accessibility to downtown (make England Street the "red carpet") in order to promote it as a regional destination.
- Residential neighborhoods (old and new): Build and maintain neighborhoods that encourage a diverse mix of residents. Provide more multi-family options, particularly townhouses and condominiums. Encourage a mix of housing sizes within new residential areas.
- Emerging development areas: Establish local transportation networks that optimize the town's proximity to Interstate 95 and major regional roads, attracting more attract major employers and industries to emerging commercial areas while preserving the historic and scenic quality of rural areas on the fringe of town.
- Gateways: Draw travelers from large-scale developing areas and major corridors to the small-scale core of the town. Use public art, landscaping, signage and icons to reinforce these connections. Encourage redevelopment and improve the appearance of existing commercial areas such as Route 54 between Route1 and I-95. Use traffic control measures to manage arterial corridor congestion rather than widening roadways.

Where Are We Going? Generating Scenarios

On the evening of Wednesday, November 5, 2008, the Town of Ashland held its second workshop at Gandy Elementary School to give community members a chance to voice their ideas for channeling growth in Ashland for the update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The workshop drew over 20 community residents.

An overview of the planning process and a summary of the issues and opportunities identified at the previous community workshop were provided to begin the evening. Both consultants and town staff introduced the dot map game and described its use as a gauge of where community members would like to place future development. Participants then split into five groups and moved to facilitated breakout tables, each provided with a series of colored stick-on dots representing varying densities of commercial and residential development, and a large map of Ashland. Each group illustrated their goals for growth on their map before placing dots, to begin to establish consensus about where they thought growth was appropriate. Dots were then laid down to form a numeric illustration of each group's intent. Finally, group members "connected the dots," drawing new roads, bike paths, and greenways to improve

mobility and enhance the character of Ashland. At the conclusion of the evening, two group members from each table presented their ideas to the entire workshop. General themes and ideas that emerged among the groups throughout the evening's discussions are summarized below.

Western Ashland:

- Add some residential development; either single family homes or a retirement community
- Place limited retail or convenience stores near residential area
- Improve the scenic gateway into town

Downtown:

- Promote some mixed-use infill development, while still preserving Ashland's small-town character

Northern Ashland:

- Between Route 1 and the railroad tracks, develop either a mixed-use community or a suburban residential community similar to that directly south of downtown

Route 1 to I-95 corridor:

- Enhance light industrial or commercial uses.
- Promote destination retail or hotels
- Extend Hill Carter Parkway to enhance access to commercial and retail uses

Southern Ashland:

- Slightly increase density of commercial and clean industrial uses along Route 1

Eastern Ashland:

- Groups proposed a diverse array of options, including:
- Preserve or establish green space to support wildlife habitat
- Promote mixed-use development, including a potential retirement community
- Create a suburban neighborhood similar in scale to existing low-density residential areas

Where Do We Want To Be? Evaluating Scenarios

In February and March of 2009, the Town of Ashland held its Comprehensive Plan Update Focus Area meeting series to gather public input on four potential development patterns that the Town could implement to accommodate planned growth. The workshops were held in various locations throughout town, with each focusing on a different geographic area.

Each meeting began with an overview on the background and purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as an update on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan update. This was followed by a summary of the development scenarios, and the visual and physical characteristics of the place types used to populate the scenarios. Participants then moved to facilitated breakout tables, reviewing the development scenarios on a series of maps. Individual written surveys geared to determine the desirability of each scenario were also given to participants. At the conclusion of the evenings, the entire group reconvened to share comments and ideas from each table. General themes and ideas from the discussions, and survey results are summarized below.

Place Types and Scenarios

Overall, Scenario Two appears to be the most desired; however some groups noted that some aspects of the other scenarios would be appropriate in certain areas.

Comments included:

- The mixed-use nodes should be closer to existing built-up areas, if not possible then access to these areas must be addressed.
- Some groups were concerned that the new mixed-use nodes would compete with the existing downtown, or that the existing downtown should be built out prior to new mixed-use nodes.
- Ensure that open space is truly preserved, not just shown on the plan as open space, only to be developed later. Also, open space should be on high quality land where possible, not just leftover or undevelopable land.
- Higher density development is appropriate, so long as the small town character is maintained.
- Commercial development should be confined to existing corridors.
- Some property owners were upset that their land was shown as open space on all alternative

Low density Residential

- This place type was acceptable to some groups, while still considered too suburban for some.

Medium Density Residential

- Desirable, especially for infill.

High Density Residential

- Should be geared toward owner-occupancy units and senior living, as there is already an abundance of multi-family and rental property in Town.

Low Density Commercial

- Most stated that this was too suburban for Ashland.
- It was suggested that we seek to phase out the Low Density Commercial development that we currently have, seeking something more typical of medium density, as properties redevelop, even on Route 1 and 54.

Medium Density Commercial

- It was suggested that this should become the norm for commercial development outside of the downtown area.

High Density Commercial

- Mixed opinions on this place type. Some stated this would be appropriate for areas proposed for office uses.

Lower Density Mixed Use (Primarily Residential)

- Desirable

Lower Density Mixed Use (Primarily Commercial)

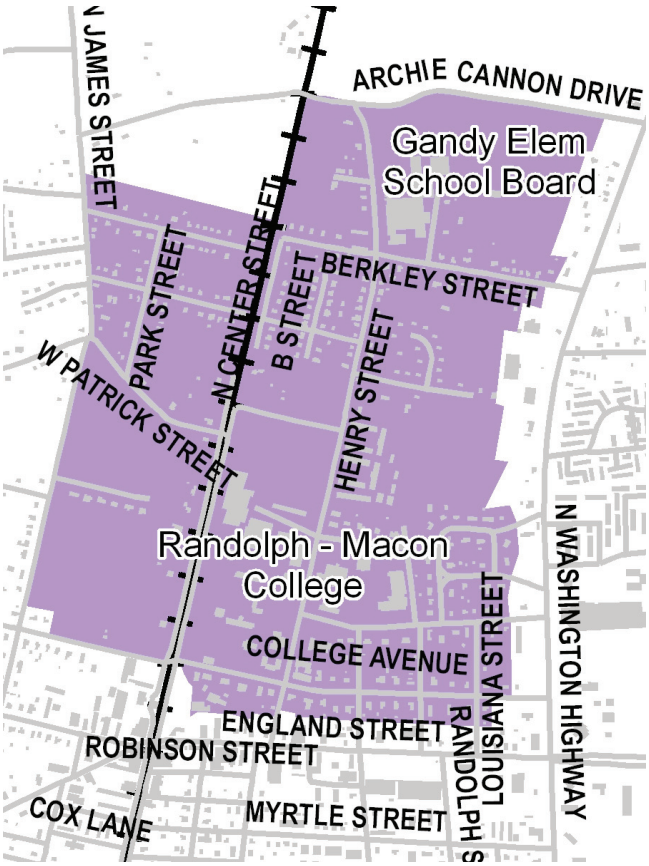
- Desirable

Higher Density Mixed Use

- Some felt that this category was much too urban for downtown Ashland.

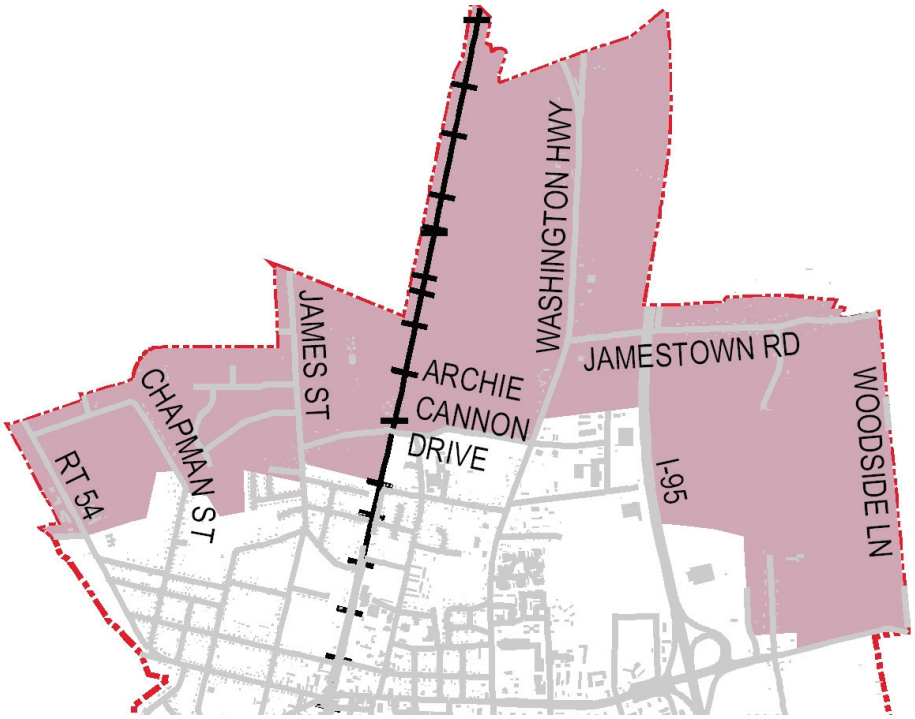
North Ashland

- Do not complete the extension of Berkley Woods Drive to U.S. 1, or mitigate cut-through traffic.
- Randolph-Macon students should live on-campus rather than living off-campus in single-family neighborhoods.
- In the Linden/Park/Elm area, provide streetlights, curb, gutter, and sidewalks.
- Enhance the Railside Trail; it is an asset to the Linden/Park/Elm neighborhood.
- Preserve and maintain existing alleys.
- Realign the intersection of North James, Patrick and Snead Streets.



Northern Fringe

- *Western Mixed-Use Node.* A variety of opinions were given regarding the mixed-use node at the western edge of Town, on Route 54:

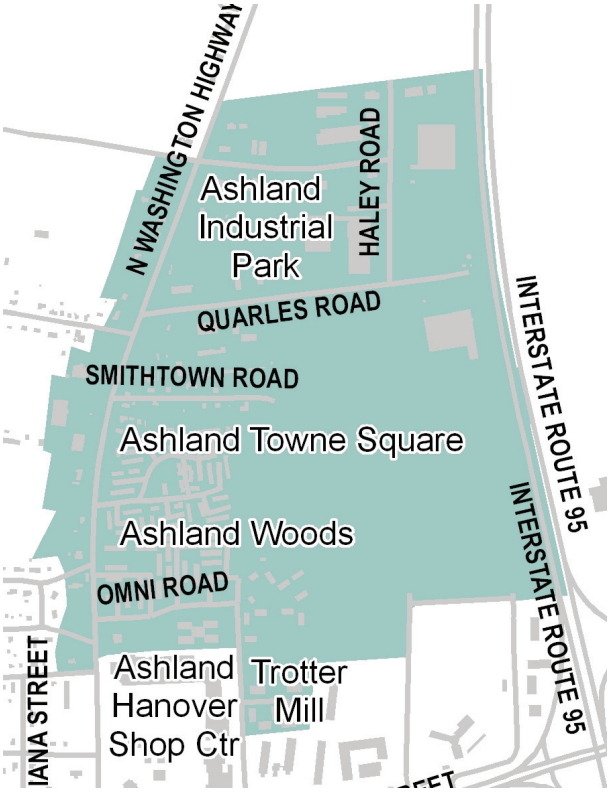


  - Some groups were accepting of a more compact mixed-use development in this area
  - Several preferred low-density residential in this area to provide transition prior to entering the county.
  - Some suggested this was an appropriate location for senior housing, and medical facilities.
  - There was dislike for the idea of commercial here, but some saw merit as it would intercept some trips that are currently made to use services on the east side of town.

- *Northern Mixed-Use Node.* Generally, mixed-use development in this area was accepted, however a few groups had some alternate ideas.
    - A few groups preferred low-density residential on this tract, with some higher-density commercial uses along U.S. 1.
    - Mixed-use would be more appropriate between U.S. 1 and I-95.
    - Residential uses should be buffered from U.S. 1.
    - Medium-density commercial is appropriate along U.S. 1.
    - Commercial uses along U.S. 1, with industrial behind would be a more appropriate treatment for this area.
    - Clean industry, medical uses, and higher end restaurants should be encouraged in this area.
    - Attractive light industrial uses should be located on the west side of U.S. 1, to be consistent with those across the road.
    - Heavy industry is not appropriate west of U.S.1.
- *East Ashland Mixed-Use Node.* There were not many comments made regarding the East Ashland area, however some other ideas were expressed:
    - Work/live units are appropriate in this area.
    - Since the East Ashland development is already approved, density should be increased in this development, and <u>not</u> implemented at all in the other suggested mixed-use areas.
    - Woodside Lane should be re-aligned to intersect Route 54 opposite from the proposed East Ashland entrance.
    - An appropriate gateway feature should be created on Route 54 at the eastern Town limits.
- *Land between Proposed Lacy Park/I-95/Route 54/Jamestown Road.* None of the scenarios suggested mixed-use development in this area, however one group noted that residential mixed-use may be appropriate here.

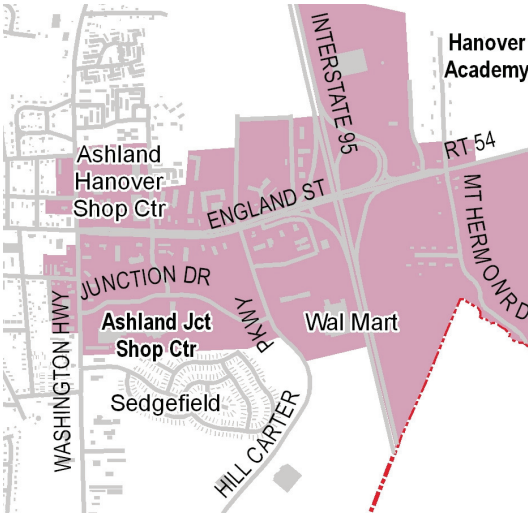
Route One North Corridor

- Pedestrian access is very difficult in this area. This is a high pedestrian area with the concentration of multi-family.
- Commercial uses should be concentrated on the vacant tract.
- Little input was received relative to the off-ramp shown on Southbound I-95 in Scenarios 1 & 3.



Regional Service Area

- Encourage higher density in this existing built-up area. Address pedestrian safety issues along U.S. 1, especially at the intersection of Route 54.
- Tractor-trailer traffic has a detrimental effect on our roads in this area.
- Limit access points and traffic signals on Route 54 east of I-95.



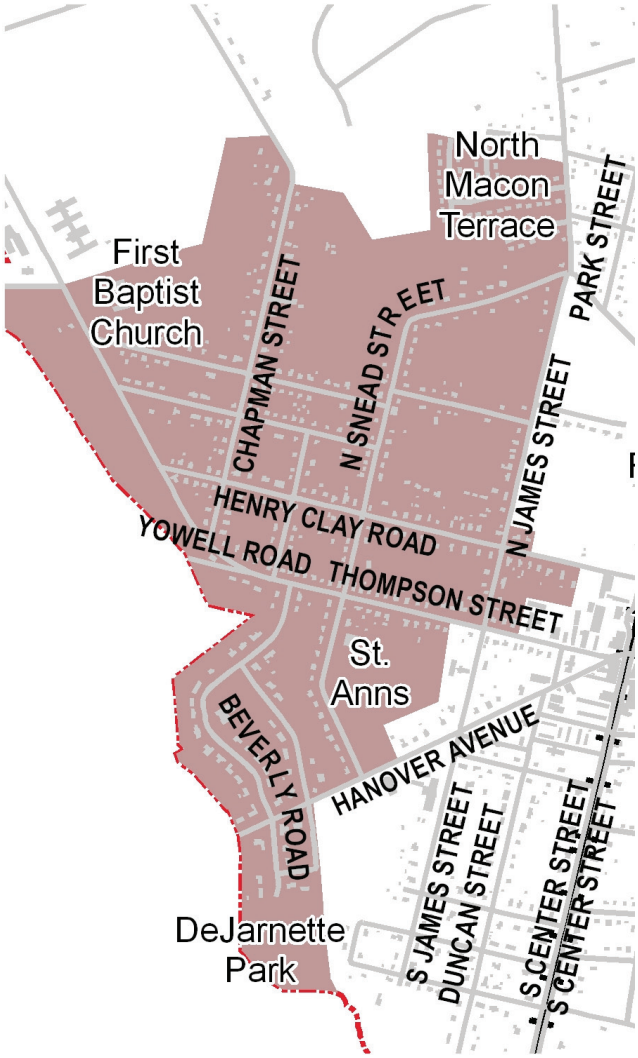
Southern Fringe

- *North of Ashcake Road.*
  - Large-scale commercial uses (i.e. big boxes) should not be on the west side of U.S. 1, adjacent to the residential areas. These should be located near Wal-Mart.
  - U.S. 1 lacks consistency in land use and character. Some suggested continuing existing development patterns in this area.
- *South of Ashcake Road.*
  - The mixed use node, shown on Scenario 3 would be more appropriate around the intersection of Ashcake Road and U.S. 1. Some felt that no additional density would be appropriate in the Southern Fringe.
  - The existing land use pattern is appropriate, however the aesthetics of this area must be improved.

Southern Fringe continued...

- Commercial uses along U.S. 1, with industrial behind would be appropriate.
- Light industrial and commercial east of U.S. 1 is appropriate.
- Fix alignment of Maple Street Extended.
- Preserve the 'rural hamlet' along Maple Street. Some additional low-density residential in this area may be appropriate.
- Additional residential density near the YMCA is appropriate.
- Provide bike trails along Maple Street Extended to U.S.1, and ensure that the connection to the Hanover County Trolley Trail is kept open.
- Provide water and sewer to encourage commercial reinvestment.
- Preserve buffers along Stony Run

West Ashland



- Specifically, Scenario 3 was preferred in the West Ashland area, as it had the least amount of infill suggested.
- Save the old BP station on Route 54. Suggested reuses included: restaurant, office, community center.
- There were concerns about the preservation of the wooded area between Stony Run and Route 54.
- Complete the extension of Snead Street northward to tie into the Vaughan Road Extension.
- Traffic cut-through concerns were expressed regarding the possibility of intense development at the western node in some of the Northern Fringe scenarios.

South Ashland

- Additional density is not desired, as shown on some of the scenarios.
- Slash Cottage's role in the Town is not well defined. Should it be an 'enclave' or integrated into the grid with the rest of the Town?
- Connect South Taylor Street to Ashcake Road.
- Generally, traffic calming is desired throughout this area.

Downtown

- Scenarios, Place Types, and Land Use.
  - Downtown should be filled in prior to the other mixed use nodes being built.
  - Overall, Scenario 2 received the most support. There was a mix of opinions as to whether higher density was appropriate all the way east to U.S. 1. (this is the most notable difference between Scenario 2 and 3)
  - The mixed-use suggested by Scenarios 2 and 3 at U.S.1 & Rt. 54 should not be too tall, also, outside space, such as a large court or patio should be encouraged at the corner.
  - Buildings should be two to three stories in height. There are varying ideas on whether or not four story buildings should be considered appropriate in the Downtown area, as opposed to the current maximum of three stories.

DOWNTOWN CONTINUED...

- England Street should have varying facades and setbacks, rather than all buildings abutting the street line. It was suggested that if taller buildings are desired, they should have an increased setback.
- Don't construct infill development on the R-MC parking lot at Center Street and Rt. 54. This is an attractive parking lot, and is needed.
- Professional office space should not be located at the street level. Retail should take over existing street level office space. Sufficient retail is needed downtown to make it a regional destination.
- Residential mixed-use development along Robinson Street is acceptable, but should be limited to two stories.
- Green space should be created within the downtown area.
- Do not allow commercial to spread further west along England Street or Hanover Avenue. Also, protect Virginia Street and College Avenue from commercial development.
- Downtown is appropriate for senior housing.
- Existing zoning at eastern edge of this area does not make sense.

- *Community Character*
  - All new buildings should be high quality, and the architecture should reinforce the surrounding small-town character.
  - Improve the appearance of existing buildings.
  - Overhead power lines downtown should be eliminated or hidden in alleyways.
  - Provide some green space and landscaping at the Henry Clay Shopping Center.
  - Parking should never be in front of buildings downtown.
  - Improve the maintenance of sidewalks and public spaces.
- *Parking. Parking is a constant point of discussion in the downtown area, and there is not consensus as to whether or not a perceived parking problem truly exists.*
  - Clear directional signage must be provided to parking areas downtown.
  - Parallel parking should be encouraged along England Street.
  - Remove parking on Railroad Avenue, and make it more of a pedestrian-oriented street.
  - Provide sufficient parking in the downtown area.
- Develop Downtown Ashland into a cultural arts destination.
- Relocate the Farmers Market from Town Hall to a more central location in the CBD.

Community Character and Design

- New development in Town must be the highest possible quality.
- Desire for an Architectural Review Board, and additional attention for historic preservation. (This was not mentioned at any of the meetings, except the Downtown meeting. Interestingly, every group independently came to this same conclusion)
- With infill development, there seems to be a concern about the inconsistency of new housing with the existing surrounding housing, as well as concern about 'cramming' houses onto smaller infill lots.
- Along commercial corridors, a consistent landscaped buffer, with no parking between streets and buildings, and harmonious building facades should be encouraged.

- An appropriate gateway feature should be created at town entrances.
- Industrial uses should not front on main corridors, also, it is not realistic to expect these uses to be as attractive as higher-profile commercial uses.
- 'Village Greens' should be provided in new developments.
- Some examples were given of development in other communities to serve as a model for Ashland:
- Potomac Yard, Alexandria
- Oak Park, Chesterfield County
- Businesses were concerned about not being able to use outside display.
- Ensure that surrounding development in Hanover County is compatible with the Town.
- Increased buffers and additional development standards should be developed for commercial development that abuts residential districts.

Transportation

- *Rail*
    - Ensure that passenger rail continues to stop in Ashland.
    - Begin to plan for the high speed rail planned through town.
    - Encourage a commuter rail stop downtown.
- *Streets*
    - Median strips are undesirable, as they make it difficult for some businesses.
    - Extend and enhance the street grid network.
    - Provide better connections with the road network on the east side of Town.
    - Provide a bypass around the town. This is not limited to the Vaughan Road extension, some suggested a route to the south.
    - Prioritize completing the Vaughan Road East-West Connector with a railroad overpass. Also, limit truck traffic from using the proposed Vaughan Road East-West Connector.
    - Keep Ashcake Road two lanes.
    - Prefer streets with parking available on both sides.
    - Use roundabouts.
- Desire for the proposed local transit system, especially for seniors, and along U.S. 1.
- *Pedestrian Improvements.*
    - Use a more holistic approach when installing new sidewalks. Currently, sidewalks appear to be implemented in a spotty manner without much reason.
    - Sidewalks should be placed where residents prefer them, as many have expressed desire not to have sidewalks on specific streets, especially those with lower traffic counts.
    - Improve pedestrian connections along U.S. 1.
    - Sidewalks should be no less than 5 feet in width, not just the ADA minimum.
    - Ensure that sufficient parking is provided for all uses.
- Desired trail connections
    - South Taylor Park to Slash Cottage.
    - Stony Run Trail to DeJarnette Park.
    - To Patrick Henry High School
    - Extend Trolley Line Trail to Elmont.

Uses

- No more strip retail (almost every group made this comment)
- Senior Housing options desired. (almost every group made this comment)
- Desire for Medical: i.e. specialists, urgent care.
- Provide manufacturing jobs in Town, however some suggested that heavier industrial uses are not appropriate.
- Set aside land for high quality professional offices.
- Desire for a community garden.

General

- Concerns about rising taxes to support the infrastructure that will be required of this new development.
- Concern about new outlying development (including the proposed mixed-use nodes) negatively affecting existing built up areas.
- Ashland should strive to be an economically self-sustaining community. (i.e. not dependent on Richmond for jobs)
- Physically, our schools are not the highest quality or newest schools in Hanover County, which may hinder higher quality residential development.
- Consult with Hanover County Public Schools on this plan, there is concern about the Town losing its schools.
- Drainage problems may increase with additional development.
- Currently there is insufficient code enforcement. Will this only get worse with additional development?
- How do we ensure that developers abide by design guidelines?
- Lower income housing should be as high quality as possible, and should be dispersed throughout the community.
- Encourage conversion of existing multi-family developments to convert to owner occupied condominiums or townhouses.
- The college is a major asset to the Town, however, there is concern about its expansion, and how it could affect the tax base, since it is tax-exempt.
- The Town should focus on branding and encouraging tourism.
- New construction should be LEED or EarthCraft certified.

Survey Results

Each survey asked:

Do you consider the place types shown as appropriate for Ashland?

1 = appropriate, 5 = not appropriate. [This was not asked at the first meeting]

	Residential			Commercial			Mixed- Use		
	HIGH	MED	LOW	HIGH	MED	LOW	HIGH	MED	LOW
Average	2.0	3.5	3.8	2.3	3.7	2.4	2.6	3.6	3.3

How do the scenarios rate compared to your vision for how the town as a whole should grow?

1 = worst, 5 = best.

AND

How much of the Town's overall development should be allocated to this focus area?

Focus Area:	Scenario				Desired allocation of:	
	Current	1	2	3	Residential	Commercial
Northern Fringe	2.4	2.5	3.7	2.5	50%	26-50%
Rt. 1 North Corridor	2.5	3.6	3.1	2.4	26-50%	25%
Regional Service	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	26-50%	26-50%
Southern Fringe	2.9	2.5	3.6	3.0	50%	26-50%
North Ashland	1.8	2.7	3.3	1.9	10-25%	10%
West Ashland	2.5	3.2	4.0	3.7	50%	10%
South Ashland	3.1	3.7	3.9	2.5	50%	10%
Downtown England St.	1.3	2.4	4.7	2.4	26-50%	51-75%
TOWNWIDE:	2.1	2.9	4.0	2.3		

The comments received with the surveys thus far have been consistent with, and supportive of the comments listed above.

This is What We Heard. Is This What You Said?

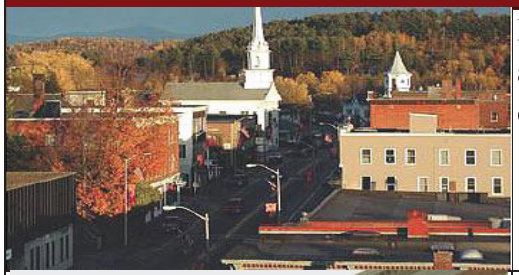
A community Open House was held in June 2008. The Guiding Principles created by the Planning Commission were posted around the room adjacent to correlating public comments that were received at the Focus Meetings. Community members were asked to review the comments and give their input as to whether they had been heard correctly.

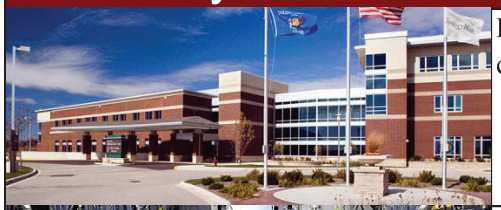
Guiding Principles	Y/N	Comments
Guiding Principle 1. Keep Small Town Character		
	Y/N	Comments:
Tree lined walkable streets		To desired destinations
Railroad		
Old Downtown		Restrict businesses to retail, no services, no manufacturing
Historic District	2 Y	The historic district provides the ambiance Expand historic district to include Hanover Avenue, S. James from Thompson south and related area.
Mix of housing stock- front porches, close to street, encourage community interaction	N	Physical design
Churches within the community		
Friendly, familiar, helpful neighbors		
Safe		
Community events		
Merchants know you		
Government accessibility within downtown		
		Light manufacturing and office park should be encouraged – better jobs. Don't call it "industrial."
		We need more crosswalks and they need better enforcement, especially Route 54, pedestrians who cross provide break in stream of cars allowing cars in side streets to cross Route 54.
		It is (illegible) that a large area of town west of the RR will have to depend on Farrington for fire fighting when trains are running through town. Many old historic houses.
		Ashland Needs nicer housing, higher property tax revenues and other benefits. Need more Oak Park (Chesterfield) developments with alleys, front porches and closer proximity to street.
		High quality

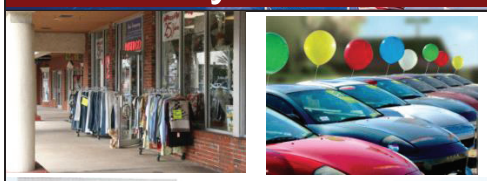
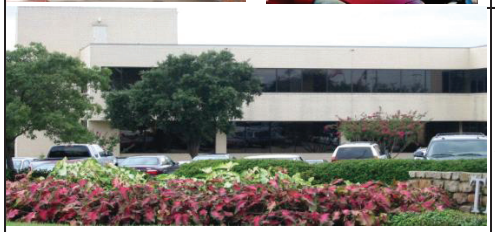
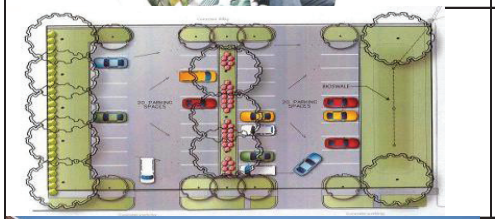
Guiding Principles	Y/N	Comments
Guiding Principle 2. Economic Vitality		
Variety/Diversity of small and large businesses and industry		
Merchants know you		
Continuity of businesses, family owned and passed down		
All needs should be met in Town (create a subset of needs that currently can't be met in town, such as appliances, clothing, etc.)		Lowe's, bookstore
Farmers Market		
Government support of new and existing businesses	Y	
Improve Rt. 1/54 intersection		
Sustainable businesses·		
Clean up Rt. 1 corridor		
Job Creation		
		The County needs to treat the Town better rather than dismissing it or drowning it in crappy development on its borders. Use the Town as an asset aid for economic development.
Guiding Principle 3. UNIQUE CHARACTER		
	Y/N	Comments
Railroad		
Downtown		
Not suburbs/Not Short Pump		
Sidewalks		Yes, I agree, sidewalks
Small neighborhood schools		
Diversity of people who all interact - Income, age, race, education, religions		
Randolph Macon College		
Mixed Housing Stock		
Trees		
Grid system		
Front porch interacting		
Historic District		
YMCA		
Bikers/Runners		
Library		
Post Office		

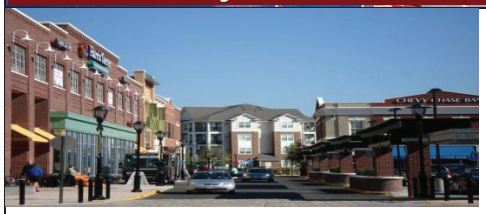
Guiding Principles	Y/N	Comments
Guiding Principle 4. Tree Cover		
	Y/N	Comments
Need to plant native/appropriate trees	Y	
Require buffers between residential and commercial areas	5 Y	
Continue corridor landscaping		
Maintain buffer between I-95		
Educate business owners and residents on landscaping maintenance, etc.		
Street Trees- Large shade trees of appropriate species for location		Don't use trees that have surface roots to break up sidewalkl like large shade trees better than little bushes. Easier to see, easier to maintain, creates a mega-landscapeWe need a list of what constitutes a shade tree- not crepe myrtle and little plums!
Preserve mature trees	Y	
		Work with Dominion Power on pruning
		We need (Power) lines in alleys, not along street. Best would be underground
		We need a tree ordinance
Guiding Principle 5. PRESERVING OUR GEMS		
	Y/N	Comments
Train Station		
Cross Brothers		
Randolph Macon College		
Railroad		
Downtown		
Historic District		We need official ARB and signs
Town Green		We need to recognize that HAAC is also a Town Green. It is used that way.
Plaza		
Library		
Post Office		
Historic District		
Ukrop's		
YMCA		
Trees		
I-95		
		Ashland Movie Theater, too.
		What about Town pool and parks

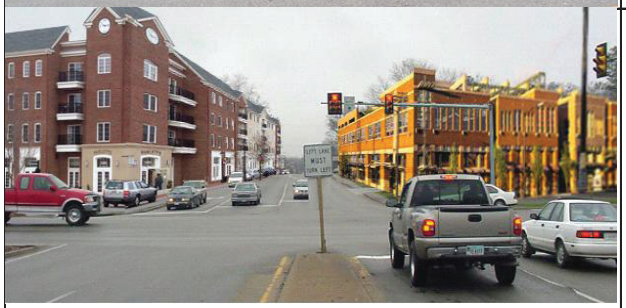
Guiding Principles	Y/N	Comments
Guiding Principle 6. PHYSICAL AND COMMUNITY DIVERSITY		
	Y/N	Comments
Housing - Lot size, style, architecture, design, setbacks, type		
Businesses - Size, scale, products - Absence of diversity in neighborhoods has led to undesirable business development		
People - Blending of new and old into community - New and lifelong citizens		
Guiding Principle 7. Government Services		
	Y/N	Comments
Brush pickup		Need more timely brush pickup
Trash pickup, Recycling		Sponsor community cleanup days on scheduled dates year round
Parks and pool - Distribution and location		They need to connect to residential areas
Police/Public Safety		
Sidewalks/Streets - Build new and maintain existing, Grid System, Walkable		Work on the planned (??) overpass now!
Snow removal		
Accessibility to government services and officials		
Familiarity with government staff		
Quick Response		
Planning		
Farmers Market		
Drainage		
		In moving back to Ashland I can't believe you are not providing fire protection west of the RR tracks, Bad Planning
		Provide fire fighting capability in the Town west of the RR tracks even if Town has to get back into fire business
		We need more 4-way stops in residential areas. Forget what VDOT says, it is traffic calming
		Yes, College and Calhoun (ref 4-way stop)

Guiding Principle 1. Preserve Small Town Character			Y/N	Comments
	Higher density development is appropriate, so long as the small town character is maintained.	North Ashland	Y	
	Downtown should be filled in prior to the other mixed use nodes being built.	Downtown	Y	But as you infill provide for breaks in facades and for open space.
	Since the East Ashland development is already approved, density should be increased in, and not implemented at all in the other suggested mixed-use areas.	N. Fringe		
	Improve the maintenance of sidewalks and public spaces.	Downtown		

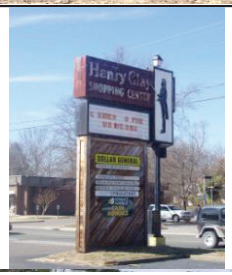
Guiding Principle 2. Economic Vitality			Y/N	Comments
	Desire for Medical: i.e. specialists, urgent care.	Town Wide	2 Y	We need urgent care and medical
	Provide manufacturing jobs in Town, however some suggested that heavier industrial uses are not appropriate	Town Wide		Don't rezone what exists - think Wal-Mart
	Set aside land for high quality professional offices.	Town Wide	3 N	
	Professional office space should not be located at the street level. Retail should take over existing street level office space. Sufficient retail is needed downtown to make it a regional destination.	Downtown		Large professional office buildings contradict the "small-town" feel
	Work/live units appropriate	East Ashland	Y	Partner with RMC on their 20 year plan. Suggest infill by RMC on tracks between their houses with residential 2nd floors and retail on street level to extend our Main Street Streetscape

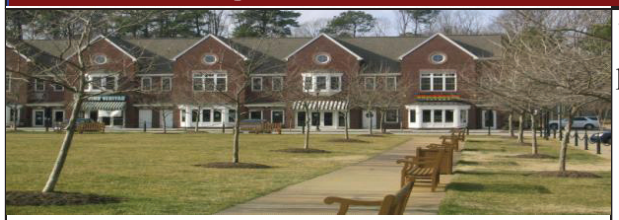
Guiding Principle 2. Economic Vitality			Y/N	Comments
	Businesses were concerned about not being able to use outside display.	Community Design		
	Industrial uses should not front on main corridors, also, it is not realistic to expect these uses to be as attractive as higher-profile commercial uses	Town Wide		Manufacturing should not be allowed within 2 blocks of RMC or the Historic District. Whatever is in the "downtown" area should be attractive. As long as they are not an eyesore The kind of light industry we should attract can and should be attractive
	The Town should focus on branding and encouraging tourism	Town Wide		That we are perceived as "cute" by outsiders has helped get train stop
	Ensure that sufficient parking is provided for all uses.	Downtown	Y	

Guiding Principle 2. Economic Vitality			Y/N	Comments
	Ashland should strive to be an economically self-sustaining community	Town Wide		
	Commercial development should be confined to existing corridors.	Town Wide		
	Some groups were concerned that the new mixed-use nodes would compete with the existing downtown, or that the existing downtown should be built out prior to new mixed-use nodes.	Downtown		
	Large-scale commercial uses (i.e. big boxes) should not be on the west side of U.S. 1, adjacent to the residential areas. These should be located near Wal-Mart.	Southern Fringe		Wal-Mart is in the area that we originally planned as office park – light warehouse, light manufacturing. Do we really want more retail jobs? Don't use up that area on big-box
				Rt. 1 should be correctly used as a commercial corridor within reason
SEE MAPS	Commercial uses should be concentrated on the vacant tract.	Rt. 1 North Corridor		

Guiding Principle 3. Unique Character			Y/N	Comments
	An appropriate gateway feature should be created at town entrances.	Town Wide		I like the signs – need more trees and raised medians at the entrances
	Preserve the 'rural hamlet' along Maple Street. Some additional low-density residential in this area may be appropriate.	Southern Fringe		Yes, leave it rural -open
	The mixed-use suggested by Scenarios 2 and 3 at U.S.1 & Rt. 54 should not be too tall, also, outside space, such as a large court or patio should be encouraged at the corner.	Downtown		Yes, do not want to feel claustrophobic
				Yes. Houses behind should not be overwhelmed with 3 & 4 stories looking into back yard (College Ave)

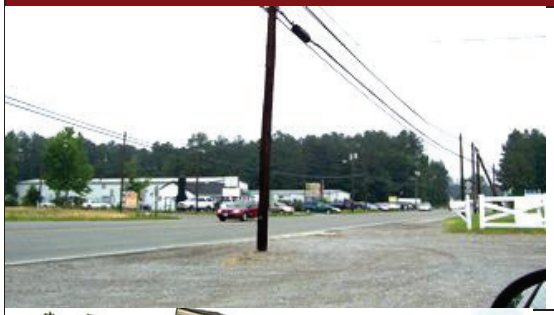
Guiding Principle 3. Unique Character			Y/N	Comments
	New buildings should be high quality, similar to existing buildings, and the architecture should reinforce the surrounding small-town character	Downtown	Y	Be mindful of access and parking
	Physically, our schools are not the highest quality or newest schools in Hanover County, which may hinder higher quality residential development	Town Wide	1 Y 1 N	Although Ashland doesn't build schools we should preserve/designate sites for a future elementary school so that Hanover County will not use "no place" as excuse to move out of town.
	Consult with Hanover County Public Schools on this plan, there is concern about the Town losing its schools	Town Wide	Y	

Guiding Principle 4. Tree Cover			Y/N	Comments
	Ensure that open space is truly preserved, not just shown on the plan as open space, only to be developed later. Also, open space should be on high quality land where possible, not just leftover or undevelopable land.	Town Wide	2 Y	We will benefit from proper open green space
			2 N	Don't take owner's right to use without compensation
	Green space should be created within the downtown area.	Downtown		
	Provide some green space and landscaping at the Henry Clay Shopping Center	Downtown	Y	Good idea

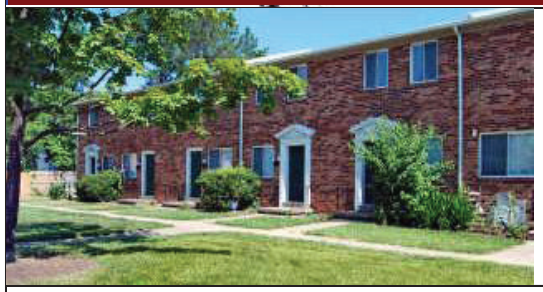
Guiding Principle 4. Tree Cover			Y/N	Comments
	'Village Greens' should be provided in new developments	Town Wide		
	New construction should be LEED or EarthCraft certified.	Town Wide	2 N	In the long run this saves HVAC, higher resale value, value, and uses less resources
			2 Y	Defeats concept of affordable housing partners, businesses need customers
				Will attract office and retail businesses that are compatible with Ashland

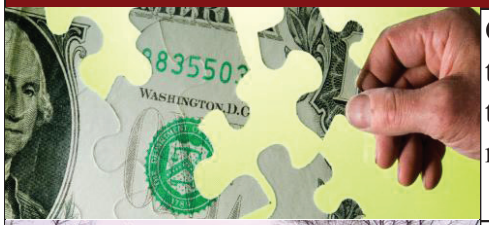
Guiding Principle 5. Protect Our Gems			Y/N	Comments
	Save the old BP station on Route 54. Suggested reuses included: restaurant, office, community center.	West Ashland	Y	Good area for a public park This is the west gateway to the town. it is also one of the last of this type in town. Can be restored in period style and still use as "adaptive reuse" as office or other. Must save.
	Ensure that passenger rail continues to stop in Ashland.	Downtown	2 Y	Agree Expand stop service especially north bound P.M. get Carolina trains to stop If we provide better parking downtown, we'd encourage commuters to use train and that would help downtown business
	Begin to plan for the high speed rail planned through town.	Downtown	Y	
	Encourage a commuter rail stop downtown.	Downtown	2 Y	

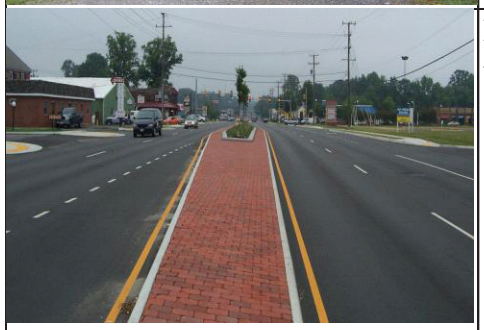
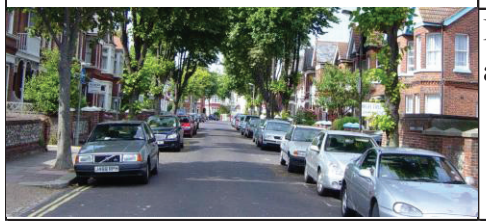
Guiding Principle 5. Protect Our Gems			Y/N	Comments
	Desire for an Architectural Review Board, and additional attention for historic preservation	Downtown	3 Y	ARB does not have to be restrictive. Can offer advice, give incentives, prevent destruction, etc.
				Can have a positive effect without being overly intrusive
				Just about all of the new residential construction in or around town has little or no character and destroys the town character
	The college is a major asset to the Town, however, there is concern about its expansion, and how it could affect the tax base, since it is tax-exempt	North Ashland		College is wanted but needs to utilize existing property
				We in the College Ave/Caroline Street area are very concerned but at the same time we love the college.
				Be sure adequate housing is provided on campus for college students
				I agree

Guiding Principle 6. Physical & Community Diversity			Y/N	Comments
	U.S. 1 lacks consistency in land use and character. Some suggested continuing existing development patterns in this area.	Southern Fringe	4 N	Rt. 1 is an unnecessary eyesore. No reason business district has to be ugly. Needs to change, more shade trees, smaller signs, shade trees in parking lots
	Lower income housing should be as high quality as possible, and should be dispersed throughout the community	Town Wide	2 N	Do not allow lower income housing built at the expense of existing homeowners. This adversely affects resale/appraisal values. We have our share of "Title 1 families- they should be disbursed throughout Hanover County.
				We have our share of Section 8. Should go elsewhere in County.
				Ashland has its share. Hanover's a larger area.
				Our new development needs to be small scale (1 or 2 blocks at a time) like in previous eras. That provides naturally for more diversity.
	Develop Downtown Ashland into a cultural arts destination.	Downtown	4 Y	It is happening slowly anyway, need to enhance

Guiding Principle 6. Physical & Community Diversity			Y/N	Comments
	Residential mixed-use development along Robinson Street is acceptable, but should be limited to two stories.	Downtown	N	Yes, 2 stories not 3 stories would over power existing development
	Randolph-Macon students should live on-campus rather than living off-campus in single-family neighborhoods	North Ashland	N	Yes, as per recent Herald Progress article, students/parents should be out of nearby neighborhoods look on Caroline Street.
				Yes, students have different lifestyles than families, parties, messy yards, parking in yard, etc.
	Senior Housing options desired.	Town Wide	3 Y	Senior housing would be a plus to neighborhood. It would give a needed balance
				Seniors need to be walking distance to Doctor, pharmacy, etc. so mixed-use

Guiding Principle 6. Physical & Community Diversity			Y/N	Comments
	Encourage conversion of existing multi-family developments to convert to owner occupied condominiums or townhouses	Town Wide	Y	Yes, owner occupied residences are better kept. Also allows for affordable housing. Ashland ratio of rental to owner is way off-balance, too much rental.
SEE MAPS	Slash Cottage's role in the Town is not well defined. Should it be an 'enclave' or integrated into the grid with the rest of the Town?	South Ashland		

Guiding Principle 7. Government Services			Y/N	Comments
	Concerns about rising taxes to support the infrastructure that will be required of this new development	Town Wide	Y	
	Drainage problems may increase with additional development.	Town Wide		Get into Federal Flood Insurance Program Flood Insurance? Better not to have floods and to require proper development
	Desire for the proposed local transit system, especially for seniors, and along U.S. 1.	Town Wide		I like this, would allow us to incorporate east of I-95.
	In the Linden/Park/Elm area, provide streetlights, curb, gutter, and sidewalks.	North Ashland		

Guiding Principle 7. Government Services			Y/N	Comments
	Preserve and maintain existing alleys.	North Ashland		Some alleys are barely passable
				Yes, save the alleys
				Save the alleys for utilities, trash, etc. Also allows some of us to access rear of properties
				Open some right of way, not (illegible) well defined
	Median strips are undesirable, as they make it difficult for some businesses.	Southern Fringe	1 Y	Need strips to stop folks from cutting across traffic
				Wrong! They make traffic safer, allow for green landscaping and u-turns. Read the research which proves that business climate actually improves.
	Prefer streets with parking available on both sides.	Town Wide	1 N	Yes, look at Main Street Fairfax. They put parking back on street and pedestrians returned

Town of Ashland Historic District Structures

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
205	Caroline St	7870-82-6110	166-1-1	1	1885
301	Caroline St	7870-82-9155	166-1-2	1	1920s
303	Caroline St	7870-92-0175	166-1-3	1	1920s
305	Caroline St	7870-92-2115	166-1-4	1	1925

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
206	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-11	0	1870, 1900
210	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-12	0	
211	N Center St	7870-82-0580	166-2	1 RMC	1876, Pace-Armistead Hall
304	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-13	1	1859
310	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-15	1	1895
312	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-17	1	1855
314	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-18	0	1955-60
318	N Center St	7870-73-2227		0	none, vacant
320	N Center St	7870-73-2227	166-1-19	0	1940s
500	N Center St	7870-73-8725	166-1-20	0	1890, demolished
502	N Center St	7870-73-7991	166-1-21	1	1920
503	N Center St		166-1-22	0	1890, demolished
504	N Center St	7870-74-7025		0	1920
506	N Center St	7870-74-7147	166-1-23	1	1880

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
403	S Center St	7870-70-3782	166-1-41	1	late 19th century
405	S Center St	7870-70-3782	166-1-42	1	ca 1910
407	S Center St	7870-70-3782	166-1-43	1	ca 1940
500	S Center St	7870-60-9649	166-1-44	1	1859, HAAC, formerly Ashland Baptist Church
501	S Center St	7870-70-3577	166-1-45	1	1906
503	S Center St	7870-70-3459	166-1-46	1	1885
505	S Center St	7870-70-3411	166-1-47	1	1860
600	S Center St	7870-70-0329	166-1-49	1	1875
601	S Center St	7870-70-2392	166-1-50	1	1875
603	S Center St	7870-70-2274	166-1-51	1	late 19th century
604	S Center St	7870-60-9265	166-1-52	1	1868
605	S Center St	7870-70-2128	166-1-53	1	1900-10

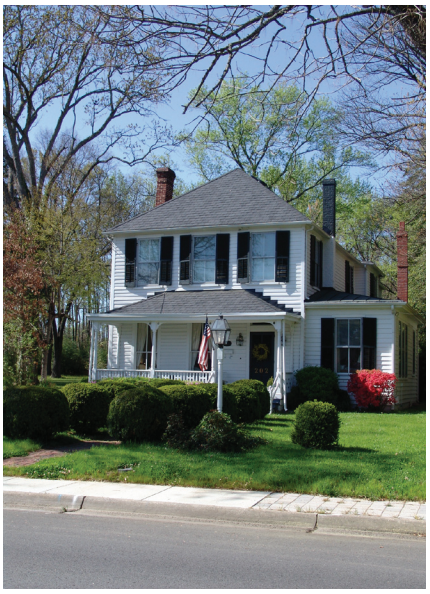
Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
700	S Center St	7870-60-9144	166-1-54	0	2009
702	S Center St	7870-60-8097	166-1-55	1	1858
703	S Center St	7870-70-2023	166-1-56	0	early 20th century
705	S Center St	7779-79-2970	166-1-57	0	1900
706	S Center St	7779-69-8956	166-1-58	1	1858
707	S Center St	7779-79-2802	166-1-59	0	1965
708	S Center St	7779-69-8842	166-1-60	1	1915
709	S Center St	7779-79-1774	166-1-61	0	1868
712	S Center St	7779-69-8618	166-1-62	0	1872, demolished
713	S Center St	7779-79-1601	166-1-63	1	1858, altered 1876
714	S Center St	7779-69-8527	166-1-64	0	1965
718	S Center St	7779-69-8408	166-1-65	1	1905-10
801	S Center St	7779-79-0425	166-1-66	1	1925
802	S Center St	7779-69-7380	166-1-67	1	1900-10
803	S Center St	7779-79-0317	166-1-68	0	1940s
804	S Center St	7779-69-7108	166-1-69	1	1880
805	S Center St	7779-79-0277	166-1-70	1	1880
807	S Center St	7779-79-0251	166-1-71	1	1890-1950
901	S Center St	7779-69-9095	166-1-72	1	1890-1900
904	S Center St	7779-68-6848	166-1-73	1	1887
905	S Center St	7779-78-0836	166-1-74	1	1900-10
1000	S Center St	7779-68-5631	166-1-75	1	DHR call this vacant lot
			166-1-76	1	1870, Oak Lawn
1005	S Center St	7779-68-9418	166-1-77	1	1900-10
1006	S Center St	7779-68-4379	166-1-78	1	1915-20
1008	S Center St	7779-68-5301	166-1-79	1	1910
1009	S Center St	7779-78-0223		0	
1010	S Center St	7779-68-3250	166-1-80	1	1870
1013	S Center St	7779-68-8087	166-1-81	1	1910
1014	S Center St	7779-68-3016	166-1-39	1	1888
1017	S Center St	7779-67-7847	166-1-83	1	1900

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
101	College Ave		166-1-225	0	1970s
100 block	College Ave		166-1-227	0	1960s, unknown
103	College Ave	7870-82-0580	166-1-226	0	1960s
104	College Ave	7870-82-0280	166-2	1 RMC	1872, Washington-Franklin Hall
109	College Ave	7870-81-0729	166-1-85	0	lost to fire
110	College Ave	7870-82-0580	166-2	1 RMC	1879, The Old Chapel
113	College Ave	7870-81-1776	166-1-228	0	1960s
114	College Ave	7870-82-0580	166-1-84	1	1914, Thomas Branch Dormitory
115	College Ave	7870-81-2755	166-1-86	1	1910-15
200	College Ave	7870-82-6110	166-1-87	0	1950s, actual 201 Henry
201	College Ave	7870-81-4701	166-1-88	1	1915-1920
202	College Ave	7870-81-5991	166-1-89	0	1940s
203	College Ave	7870-81-5701	166-1-90	0	1960s or 70s
204	College Ave	7870-81-6990	166-1-91	0	1930s
205	College Ave	7870-81-6700	166-1-92	1	none
206	College Ave	7870-81-7990	166-1-93	1	1925
207	College Ave	7870-81-7710	166-1-94	1	1898
209	College Ave	7870-81-8710	16601095	1	1900-10

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
300 & 302	College Ave	7870-91-0943	166-1-97	1	1927
301	College Ave	7870-81-9659	166-1-96	1	1885
303	College Ave	7870-91-0659	166-1-98	1	1915
304	College Ave	7870-91-1943	166-1-99	1	1912
305	College Ave	7870-91-1658	166-1-100	1	1907
306	College Ave	7870-91-2942	166-1-101	1	1931
307	College Ave	7870-91-2658	166-1-102	1	1907
400	College Ave	7870-91-4912	166-1-103	1	none
401	College Ave	7870-91-4608	166-1-104	1	1890-1900
403	College Ave	7870-91-5607	166-1-105	1	1915-20
404	College Ave	7870-91-5941	166-1-106	1	1935
405	College Ave	7870-91-5687	166-1-107	1	1900
406	College Ave	7870-91-6941	166-1-108	1	1910-15
407	College Ave	7870-91-6656	166-1-109	1	1910
400	Duncan St	7779-69-2434	166-1-110	1	1900
			166-1-112	0	20th century garages, 402?
402	Duncan St	7779-69-2300	166-1-111	1	1890
500	Duncan St		166-1-113	0	?? 201 Race Course ??
504	Duncan St	7779-69-1041	166-1-114	0	
505	Duncan St	7779-68-3927	166-1-115	0	

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
100	England St	7870-71-5551	166-1-229	0	1925, altered 2002
102	England St	7870-71-6535	166-1-230	0	1960
101	England St	7870-71-5430		0	mid-20th century
103	England St	7870-71-5430	166-1-232	1	1925
107 & 109	England St	7870-71-5491	166-1-232	1	1925, address inconsistency on DHR list
111	England St	7870-71-6394	166-1-233	1	1930s
112	England St	7870-71-7547	166-1-231	0	1950
117	England St	7870-71-6394	166-1-234	1	1925
201	England St	7870-71-8373	166-1-239	1	1950
202	England St	7870-71-8479	166-1-235	0	1950s
205	England St	7870-71-9371	166-1-239	1	1947
208	England St	7870-81-0534	166-1-236	0	1960s-70s
209	England St	7870-81-0307	166-1-239	1	1947
210	England St	7870-81-0574	166-1-237	1	1920s
211	England St	7870-81-0352	166-1-240	1	1938
212	England St	7870-81-1523	166-1-238	1	1908
214	England St	7870-81-1572	166-1-241	1	
216	England St	7870-81-2524	166-1-242	1	1892

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
126	Hanover Ave	7870-61-5155	166-1-116	1	1915
130	Hanover Ave	7870-61-4146	166-1-117	1	1911
132	Hanover Ave	7870-61-3136	166-1-118	1	1912
133	Hanover Ave	7870-60-3885	166-1-119	1	1889
134	Hanover Ave	7870-61-2045	166-1-120	1	1850
200	Hanover Ave	7870-50-9995	166-1-121	1	1910
202	Hanover Ave	7870-50-8972	166-1-122	1	1910
204	Hanover Ave	7870-50-7887	166-1-123	1	1923
206	Hanover Ave	7870-50-6872	166-1-124	1	1858



Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
101	Henry Clay Rd	7870-71-0944	166-1-125	1	1908
113	Henry Clay Rd	7870-61-9957	166-1-126	1	1900
115	Henry Clay Rd	7870-61-8939	166-1-127	1	1920
117	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-7048	166-1-128	1	1910
119	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-6053	166-1-129	1	1910
121	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-5075	166-1-130	1	1910
122	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-6361	166-1-131	0	
123	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-5104	166-1-132	1	1888
124	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-5374	166-1-133	0	1920
200	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-3399	166-1-134	1	1930
201	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-3178	166-1-135	0	1965, demolished replaced 2005
203	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-2167	166-1-137	1	1900
204	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-2433	166-1-138	0	
205	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-1169	166-1-139	1	1910-15
206	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-1456	166-1-140	1	1855
207	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-0261	166-1-141	1	1900-10
208	Henry Clay Rd	7870-62-0478	166-1-142	1	1900
209	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-9136	166-1-143	1	1900-01
210	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-9489	166-1-144	1	1900
211	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-8139	166-1-145	1	1870
212	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-9510	166-1-146	0	1910s
213	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-6282	166-1-147	0	
214	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-8513	166-1-148	0	1910
215	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-6333	166-1-149	0	1955-60
216	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-7535	166-1-150	0	1920s
217	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-5366	166-1-151	0	
218	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-6557	166-1-152	0	1920s
220	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-5579	166-1-154	0	1950
221	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-4461	166-1-153	0	1960-65

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
222	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-4681	166-1-155	1	1920
300	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-3685	166-1-156	1	1910
301	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-3422	166-1-157	0	1910
302	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-3607	166-1-158	1	1910
303	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-1496	166-1-159	0	1955
304	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-2454	166-1-160	1	1905-10
305	Henry Clay Rd	7870-52-2619	166-1-161	1	1910
204	Henry St	7870-82-0580	166-1-243	1	1922, Peele Hall
300	Henry St	7870-82-0580	166-1-244	1	1904, Mary Branch Dorm
104	Howard St	7779-69-6586	166-1-163	1	1910
105	Howard St	7779-69-5356	166-1-164	0	1963
106	Howard St	7779-69-5598	166-1-165	1	1910
107	Howard St	7779-69-4339	166-1-166	1	1910
108	Howard St	7779-69-5610	166-1-167	1	1910
110	Howard St	7779-69-4651	166-1-168	1	1910
200	Howard St	7779-69-3634	166-1-169	1	1910
202	Howard St	7779-69-2636	166-1-170	1	1920s
203	Howard St	7779-69-0472	166-1-171	1	1910
204	Howard St	7779-69-1639	166-1-172	1	1920s
205	Howard St	7779-59-9485	166-1-173	1	1910
206	Howard St	7779-69-0731	166-1-174	1	1920s
207	Howard St	7779-59-8593	166-1-175	1	1890s
208	Howard St	7779-59-9743	166-1-176	1	1910

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
112	S James St	7870-61-0072	166-1-249	1	1920s
301	S James St	7870-60-1478	166-1-191	0	demolished, rebuilt 2000
305	S James St		166-1-192	0	1900, unknown
307	S James St	7870-60-1323	166-1-193	0	mid-20th century
309	S James St	7870-60-1296	166-1-194	1	1890
311	S James St	7870-60-1118	166-1-195	0	mid-20th century
313	S James St	7870-60-1101	166-1-196	0	1910s
315	S James St	7870-60-0083	166-1-197	1	1910s
316	S James St	7870-50-4141	166-1-198	1	1880s
317	S James St	7779-69-0965	166-1-199	0	mid-20th century
318	S James St	7779-59-4965	166-1-200	1	1910s
319	S James St	7779-69-0845	166-1-201	1	1910
320	S James St	7779-59-7737	166-1-202	1	1910s
400	S James St	7779-59-4548	166-1-203	1	late 19th centutry
403	S James St	7779-59-8560	166-1-204	0	mid-20th century
500	S James St	7779-59-6229	166-1-205	1	1890
504	S James St	7779-59-6107	166-1-206	0	mid-20th century
505	S James St	7779-59-7079	166-1-207	0	
506	S James St	7779-59-5099	166-1-208	0	
600	S James St	7779-58-5968	166-1-209	0	

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
203	Lee St	7870-70-9946	166-1-245	1	1920s
100	Maple St		166-1-178	0	moved to 303 College Ave
			166-1-179	0	demolished for
			166-1-177	0	new US Post Office
200	Maple St		166-1-180	0	vacant lot
201	Maple St	7870-81-1096		1	1900
202	Maple St	7870-81-0027	166-1-246	0	1940s, 50s
300	Maple St	7870-80-0926	166-1-247	0	1960s or 70s
303	Maple St	7870-80-1961	166-1-181	1	1870
202	Myrtle St	7870-70-9897	166-1-248	0	1940s, 50s
203	Myrtle St	7870-70-9730	166-1-182	1	1900-10
103	Racecourse St	7779-69-6072	166-1-183	0	actual 105 Racecourse St
107	Racecourse St	7779-69-4038	166-1-184	0	mid-20th century
201	Racecourse St	7779-69-2123	166-1-185	1	1890
203	Racecourse St	7779-69-1145	166-1-186	1	1900-10
205	Racecourse St	7779-69-0158	166-1-187	0	mid-20th century
207	Racecourse St	7779-59-9189	166-1-188	1	1910-15
209	Racecourse St	7779-59-8280	166-1-180	1	mid-20th century
211	Racecourse St	7779-59-8213	166-1-190	1	1910s

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
100	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-2581	166-1-5	0	1960
102	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-3517	166-1-6	0	1960
104	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-2693	166-1-7	1	1919
112	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-442	166-1-8	1	1923, Ashland Train Depot
114	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-3706	166-1-10	0	1992 (replica of henry Clay Inn)
116	N Railroad Ave	7870-71-3836	166-1-9	1	1945
118	N Railroad Ave	7870-7-3985		0	none, vacant
100	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-3307	166-1-24	1	1900
102	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-2373	166-1-25	1	1870
104	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-2341	166-1-26	1	1901
105	S Railroad Ave		166-1-27	0	inconsistent DHR address
106	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-2228	166-1-28	1	1901
106 1/2	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-2285	166-1-29	0	1955
107	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-5324	166-1-30	1	1900
108	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-2206	166-1-31	1	1871
108A	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-1252	166-1-32	0	none, parking lot
109	S Railroad Ave		166-1-33	0	combined with 107 S RR
110	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-1175	166-1-34	0	inconsistent DHR address
111	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-5330	166-1-35	1	early 20th century, altered mid-20th c
113	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-4278	166-1-36	1	1900-10
301	S Railroad Ave	7870-71-3091	166-1-37	1	early 20th century
305	S Railroad Ave	7870-70-4925	166-1-38	0	none, vacant
307	S Railroad Ave	7870-70-4807	166-1-40	1	1910

Address		Gpin	DHR File #	Contributing Member Historic District	Date
211	Stebbins St	7870-60-1663	166-1-250	0	1950s
207	N Taylor St	7870-82-6110	166-1-210	0	1890, demolished
200	Virginia St	7870-71-6188	166-1-251	0	1940s, 50s
203	Virginia St	7870-71-8058	166-1-211	1	1855
204	Virginia St	7870-71-6130	166-1-212	0	1857, demolished
300	Virginia St	7870-70-6929	166-1-213	1	1858
301	Virginia St	7870-70-8937	166-1-214	1	1858
302	Virginia St	7870-70-6819	166-1-215	1	1858
303	Virginia St	7870-70-8858	166-1-216	1	1858
400	Virginia St	7870-70-6707	166-1-217	1	1900
401	Virginia St	7870-70-7792	166-1-218	1	1875
402	Virginia St	7870-70-5698	166-1-219	1	1920s-30s
403	Virginia St	7870-70-7676	166-1-220	1	1930
500	Virginia St	7870-70-5587	166-1-221	1	late 19th century
501	Virginia St	7870-70-7584	166-1-222	1	late 19th century
503	Virginia St	7870-70-7465	166-1-223	0	late 19th century

Please note, this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the historic structures within the Town boundaries. This list was compiled from information provided on the 1983 National Register Nomination Form. It is possible that there are homes that while not qualified in 1983, have reached the required age to be considered historic. Some inconsistencies were found during the process of matching the addresses used on the nomination form with the currently used GPIN identification system.

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