

TOWN OF WASHINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

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I INTRODUCTION

A) Purpose of the Plan

The Code of Virginia requires that every locality prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan § 15.2-2223. It further states that the plan “shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.”

The Code states that the “Comprehensive Plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.”

The Code further provides that comprehensive plans may include “the designation of areas for

various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas” and may include “the designation of historical areas.”

A useful Comprehensive Plan enables local government officials and citizens to anticipate and deal constructively with the changes occurring within the community. It reflects the needs and desires of its citizens, tempered with the recognition that conditions change and that a Comprehensive Plan must periodically change with those conditions.

A Comprehensive Plan recognizes the values of the past and their importance in the lives and hopes of the citizens; but it also recognizes the responsibility of government to deal with changes and the demands of the future. The use and development of land are exercises of private property rights that have public consequences. A Comprehensive Plan attempts to balance the interests of private landowners with the greater public good as applied to the use and development of land.

Further that while a Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for the use and development of land and the provision of public services, reflecting the needs of the community, desires of the residents, a respect for the past, and expectations as to the future, it is advisory only and does not have the force of an ordinance. It bases its goals and objectives upon an understanding of the past, the present situation, and the expected future directions and needs of the community.

§ 15.2-2223 - 2229 of the Code sets forth the requirement and authority for the Town Council and the Planning Commission to adopt and formulate a comprehensive plan, the matters to be considered in the formulation of the plan, guidelines for amendment and review of a comprehensive plan, and the procedures to be followed in the adoption of a comprehensive plan.

This Comprehensive Plan was formulated and adopted pursuant to and in compliance with the provisions of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended. It will be applied in accordance with the requirements of the Code and may be amended and reviewed as provided in the Code.

§ 15.2-2230 of the Code requires that the local planning commission review the Comprehensive Plan at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

It is the purpose of this Plan to set forth the findings, goals, and decisions regarding the future land use and development of the Town, and to provide criteria to guide decisions, not only with respect to land use, but also with respect to planning for the provision of services, capital expenditures and financial considerations. These findings, goals and criteria are attuned to the trends of change, are reflective of them, and are at the same time mindful of the value of the Town’s history, so that the Town can have a future that is safe, healthy, non-discriminatory and economically sound.

The first Comprehensive Plan for the Town was adopted August 21, 1986. Following adoption, the ordinances, which implement the plan, were reviewed and amended as necessary to ensure they were consistent with and supportive of the principles and goals of the plan. The Town Council amended the Plan on September 8, 1999.

This update of the Comprehensive Plan is the third major revision to the plan. Members of the Town Planning Commission prepared this update during the winter and spring of 2016-17, and included numerous public meetings as well as several public forums to provide the opportunity

for public discussion, brainstorming, and deliberation prior to a formal public hearing before the Town Planning Commission and Town Council.

B) Timetable of Planning Process

Planning Commission members began a review in the late spring of 2015 after attending a series of seminars by Mike Chandler on municipal planning. This was extremely helpful to Planning Commission members.

The Avon Hall property partition, listing, and eventual sale of a major portion of the property took up much of the next year's time, but as part of that process, there were two public forums in the summer of 2015 to garner public feedback. These forums also proved extremely helpful to members of the planning commission.

Throughout the later half of 2015 and the first half of 2016, the Planning Commission met to discuss aspects of the comprehensive planning process.

Chair Gary Schwartz stepped down from the Planning Commission at the end of September and Gail Swift and T. Allan Comp came on as new members.

On October 1 and 3, 2016, there were two public forums, guided by Milton Herd, to gather opinions, thoughts, and dreams for the Town of Washington.

At the October 24 meeting, the Planning Commission agreed to undertake a re-writing of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Timetable:

By the end of December 2016: collect data, review other comprehensive plans to assess content and format;

By the end of February 2017: write first draft;

By March 13, 2017: present first draft to Town Council for its review and feedback and to the public;

By April 10, 2017: present second draft to Town Council at joint session at which public input and feedback will be garnered;

At June 12 Town Council Meeting: present preliminary final draft to public and Town Council members;

By the end of July: write final Comprehensive Plan document;

By August 14 Town Council Meeting: present final Comprehensive Plan to Town Council for public comment and Town Council approval.

C) Overarching Goals of Process:

In undertaking this process, the Planning Commission and the Town Council wished to emphasize three key influences on the process. The first was *inclusivity*. The public officials sought at every turn to involve the public through forums, letters of update, public meetings, and open work sessions. The Town Council and Planning Commission also sought the involvement of the Town's near neighbors and Rappahannock County citizens in general through these public discussions and work sessions. Finally, the Town's public officials coordinated with their like members in the County's administration, including the County Administrator, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.

The second key influence on the Planning Commission was to be *anticipatory*. The Commissioners, with the support of the Town Council, concluded early in the process that this comprehensive planning process should not be merely an update of the existing plan. This planning process should anticipate where the Town and County might be in the next five-to-ten years and incorporate those views gleaned from data trends, public feedback, and organized visioning processes.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan needed indeed to be *comprehensive*. The Planning Commission sought as much as possible to look at every issue that would impact the Town in its future, to assess every possible future need of the Town. Members of the Planning Commission spent hours collecting and evaluating data, talking with members of the Town to glean their perspectives, listening to members of the public at public sessions, and processing and documenting this collective view of the Town's future.

D) Past Comprehensive Plans

1) Driving Issues

(a) 2007 – *need for infrastructure (water & sewer)*

(b) 2012 – *short-term future (Avon Hall sale, funds acquisition)*

II HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE & CONTEXT

A) Summary:

Legend says that on July 24, 1749, George Washington, then a young surveyor, and his two chainmen John Lonem and Edward Corder laid out a town on the east slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains as part of their contract with Lord Fairfax, who owned vast acreages in what was then the frontier. Officially established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1795/6, the town was named Washington, the first town in the new nation to be named after the famous general and president. Today, Washington still has the same grid of streets laid out by Washington and his assistants, a small town in Rappahannock County in the eastern foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, adjacent to Shenandoah National Park and 67 miles southwest of the city of Washington, D.C. Located on the site of an Indian trading post that served frontier families, hunters, and members of the Manohoac tribe, four of the streets in Washington bear the names of the men who owned land on which the town was founded: Wheeler, Calvert, Jett, and Porter. The Town of Washington is described by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as “the best preserved of county-seat communities in the Piedmont.” [National Register Historic District nomination]

On 8 February 1833, an Act passed by the General Assembly of Virginia created the new county of Rappahannock from within the boundaries of the county of Culpeper. Commissioners were appointed to ascertain the most proper place for the County seat. They concluded that the courthouse should be located in the town of Washington, “a village with a population of 300 souls ... a populous and productive neighborhood already numbering sixty houses ... and a place of some mercantile capital and business. Its advantages of waters, wood, and fuel are unsurpassed by any other place in the County. Although it is not situated on any leading thoroughfares, it is accessible by good public roads from any point of the county.” Several of the County's current public buildings were built during the ensuing two years after the Town was recognized as the county seat.

Many of the structural evidences of the Town's earlier days survive to this day. Six of the seven

log cabins said to be standing during colonial times remain, as do many private homes and public buildings from the early 1800's through the Victorian Era and to World War II. An early example of a tavern and inn is the 1802 Mrs. Cox's Tavern, now the Inn Tavern Shops, which stands on Main Street across from The Inn at Little Washington. It was here that county officials met before the county buildings were completed, and legend has it that George Washington attended a dance at the Washington House. The 1834 County Courthouse, located on Gay Street, is part of a complex of early administrative buildings for the County that are still serving their original purpose.

In 1835, the *Gazetteer* disclosed that the village contained one academy, fifty-five dwelling houses, four mercantile stores, two taverns, one house of public worship free for all denominations, four blacksmiths, four carpenters, two saddlers, one hatter, one tanner, two wagon makers, three tailors, four shoemakers, one cabinet maker, one silversmith, three milliners, one plasterer and bricklayer, and two large flour mills.

Nearly a hundred years later, Franklin Clyde Baggerly's *The History of the Town of Washington, Virginia* indicated that the Town population was nearly 500 (the US Census lists 250 in 1930) and that there were "... 5 Churches in the Town; 2 Auditoriums; 3 General Mercantile Stores; National Bank; Hotel; 2 Wayside Restaurants; 10 Tourist Homes; 3 Garages, with Ladies' Rest Rooms; County Court Buildings; Masonic Hall; Washington High School, with a daily attendance of over 200; Barber Shop, and many other business places and professional offices."

Although no Civil War battles were fought in Washington, a large Union encampment occupied what is now the Rappahannock County Library and grounds with more than 45,000 Union soldiers in the fields surrounding the Town. Middleton Miller, whose home built in 1840 survives along with the summer kitchen, smoke house and slave quarters, designed and manufactured Confederate Army uniforms. The home is now the Middleton Inn. The fourth floor of The Meadows on Main and Porter Streets, a private residence, was used as a surgery for the Union Army after the battle of Cedar Creek.

Washington was little impacted by the urban-industrial development of the 19th Century and the town in 2017 is still a place early inhabitants might recognize. At the start of the 20th Century, the population reached nearly 300 and supported multiple local businesses including three garages and a barbershop. The first cement sidewalks were poured in the 1920's, many of which were replaced by the Virginia Department of Transportation in the past thirty years. The last private bank in the United States was the Stuart Bank on the corner of Main and Calvert Streets (Blue Ridge Avenue, now Harris Hollow Road). This frame building on Main Street later housed the Washington Cash Store and hosts the Virginia Department of Health and some rental apartments.

In the spring of 1950, the Town made national news when it elected a reform-minded all-women Town Council. This particular Town Council over the next several years accomplished a great deal to improve the quality of the Town, freed the Town water system from a long-held debt, and enacted the Town's first zoning ordinance. Unfortunately, beginning in the late 1940s, some of the Town's distinguished buildings with galleried porches were demolished. Shocked at the loss, residents and Town Council members began efforts to recognize and preserve the Town's architectural treasures. By 1975 the entire Town was listed as a National Register Historic District and in 1985 the Town passed a Historic District Ordinance, creating the Architectural Review Board to help protect and maintain the architectural integrity of the historic district.

As a modern town that maintains its rural charm, Washington, Virginia, has recognized that it must increasingly take on responsibility for its own future. The creation of Shenandoah National Park in the 1930s, which includes the entire western edge of Rappahannock County, and the widening of Highway 211 to a four-lane divided highway in the 1970s, dramatically increased tourist traffic and greatly improved automobile access to the County and the Town. The opportunities and challenges presented by increased access and a growing tourist population have both had significant impacts on the Town and those impacts are not likely to decrease in the future.

In January 1978, perhaps the most recent influential event that shaped the look and future of Washington, Virginia occurred with the opening of The Inn at Little Washington. Starting in a converted former garage constructed around 1895, the transformation of the building to what is now The Inn created a whole new brand for the Town and a lot of publicity ever since. Although the term “little” Washington had been used often during the Civil War to distinguish it from Washington, D.C. on maps, the term is now used often as the name of Washington, Virginia. International acclaim for The Inn brought growing success, and today The Inn occupies ten buildings in the center of the Town, and is partly responsible for bringing increased attention to the need to maintain the historic integrity of the Town as a National Register Historic District and the important role of the Architectural Review Board.

The Inn at Little Washington attracts patrons from around the world, and largely due to this influence, the Town has a flourishing bed & breakfast industry as well as several other businesses, particularly art galleries and a few restaurants. While The Inn contributed significantly to bringing visitors to the County as well as the Town, it is also the largest private employer in the County, the leading employer in the Town (counting roughly 140 of the 250 people who work in the town), and the largest source of tax revenue for the Town through the Meals and Lodging tax.

The General Assembly of Virginia re-chartered the Town on March 14, 1985 and granted the Town much broader powers than it had previously enjoyed. Following this, the Town adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in August 1986. It also significantly revised the Zoning Ordinance in 1986, breaking down its one zone into four zones.

Today, the Town of Washington is a village with a unique blend of village/agricultural character and historic significance: it is truly a real place with deep roots. The location of the Town, almost next to the Shenandoah National Park, enables its citizens to enjoy panoramic views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Washington's mixture of open spaces, village-style commerce, historic residences both large and small, cultural offerings, and local government activities is fundamental to its economic, historic and aesthetic character.

The State of Virginia's Historic Landmarks Commission recognized the Town's historic significance by approving a revision of the Town's Historic District, extending the period of significance to 1945 and approving a Historic District Ordinance. Since the establishment of the Historic District and the Architectural Review Board, the Town reflects an ever-growing commitment to maintaining the historic integrity of the district in the ten buildings owned by The Inn, in several other bed and breakfast establishments in the town that have maintained their historic structures and in many individual homes that have been maintained and/or restored as well. Local estimates are that within the last ten years, more than 13 million dollars have been spent on historic building restoration, an important accomplishment and a significant contributor

to the local economy.

The Town's predominant service economy is supported by its status as a county seat, a tourist destination and a community/cultural center for residents and the surrounding county.

The Town of Washington, Virginia, the “first of them all”, remains a safe and quiet community where residents and visitors can comfortably walk to most activities while it also serves as the center of county government, hosts many cultural activities for a vibrant county and provides a source of tourist interest that is often recognized in the national and international media. While a decreasing population and the challenges of providing community services to ever-smaller numbers of residents remain, the Town of Washington remains an idyllic historic jewel nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Historical Population

Census	Pop.	%±			
1880	254	—	1960	255	2.4%
1890	252	-0.8%	1970	189	-25.9%
1900	300	19.0%	1980	247	30.7%
1910	235	-21.7%	1990	198	-19.8%
1920	233	-0.9%	2000	183	-7.6%
1930	250	7.3%	2010	135	-26.2%
1940	245	-2.0%	Est. 2015	128	-5.2%
1950	249	1.6%			

U.S. Decennial Census

III VISION FOR TOWN OF WASHINGTON

A) Guiding Principles

In writing this comprehensive plan, the Planning Commission, based on comments received from the public through interviews and public forums, kept in mind several guiding principles. These tenets directed the Planning Commission’s work and thought processes:

- 1) *Maintain the unique character of town:* The Town has a rich history dating back to the 18th century, and signs of that early period still exist. The central street grid and many of its buildings reflect that history, and the Town benefits from having the County’s historical society reside in the Town. In the center of Town is the world famous, two-Michelin star restaurant and inn called The Inn at Little Washington. It

- attracts visitors from around the world, benefiting both the Town and the County. The Town's character also demonstrates a small-town sense of community. There are local meeting places such as the post office, three restaurants, churches, businesses, entertainment venues, and theaters – all accessible by walking. There is a diverse and interesting population consisting of lifelong residents, business and government leaders who retired to the area, citizens with wonderful and fascinating backgrounds – all of whom have opportunities to know one another because of the small number of citizens in the community and the opportunities to interact. Most of the Town benefits from having water and sewer as well as high-speed Internet, health facilities, and other amenities that allow for an ease of living. A critical component of the town is its walkability. While County residents are able to find parking in the town in order to enjoy the Town's amenities, the grid of streets, low traffic, and sidewalks and wide street shoulders allow residents and non-residents to easily walk around and enjoy the Town. All of these threads in the Town's richly woven fabric create an idyllic community in which history and contemporary activities comfortably blend.
- 2) *Ensure the human vitality of town:* Having lost a significant portion of its population over the last five decades, the Town needs to retain a diverse population of old and young, singles or couples and families of all life styles, those with substantial means and those with modest net worth, and to retain and attract new residents, hopefully more of them full-time owner-occupants, to the Town.
 - 3) *Celebrate diversity in architectural style and scale:* There is a diversity of architectural styles throughout the Town. While many old and historic buildings were lost by the mid-20th century, several far-seeing and worthy individuals helped to initiate an effort to preserve the Town's remaining historic structures. The Town must continue to preserve the diversity in architectural style while also welcoming new, compatible, architectural styles where appropriate. The Town has an Architectural Review Board to ensure the integrity of the Historic District that includes virtually the entire Town, maintaining the unique historic fabric of the village as embodied in the standards and guidelines to the Historic District Ordinance. There should also be a broad selection of different scales of building in the Town so that people of different means can live within its boundaries. Residential housing should be available for singles, couples, and families.
 - 4) *Retain a sense of totality for the various town parts:* The Town is a single entity consisting of diverse parts. It is imperative that the Town retains its sense of community, no matter the growth in size demographically or geographically. The Town should always take steps to pull together all of the aspects of the community into a sense of one entity. The Town should always focus on and facilitate community, walkability, accessibility, and the integration of the Town's center with its outlying areas. The Town should support the establishment of businesses and public amenities that nurture these traits.
 - 5) *Incorporate County planning into the process:* The Planning Commission recognizes that the Town is an integral part of Rappahannock County and therefore its planning process should integrate with the County's planning process and goals. The two entities must coordinate because the Town is (and wishes to continue to be) the County seat, each entity's Comprehensive Plan affects the other (for example, the current County Comprehensive Plan designates the Town as one of the villages targeted in the County for housing development and population growth). The Town and County may entertain boundary adjustments, so the importance of continued, strong working relations between the two governments is always important.

- 6) *Appreciate the impact of The Inn at Little Washington*: Since its arrival in 1978, The Inn at Little Washington has become intertwined with the fortunes of the Town. Despite initial attempts by several town members to prevent its success, The Inn quickly flourished, grew, and gave back to the Town. With its growth, The Inn acquired neighboring properties that were beautified, offered employment for an increasing number of Town and County citizens, and currently provides most of the Town's annual revenues through the meals and lodging tax. The townspeople in general now appreciate the enormous positive impact The Inn has had on the Town community. The Inn shares a vision to maintain the integrity of the Historic District, to maintain the Town as small community with scenic viewsheds, a quiet atmosphere, well-kept buildings, and a welcoming location for visitors - a vision shared by the Town's inhabitants. While there is always a tension that exists between any municipality and a single, dominant business within that municipality, it has served the Town and The Inn well to find means for collaboration and coordination, hopefully facilitating long-term planning for both The Inn and the Town. The recent beautification efforts in the center of town attest to this ideal.
- 7) *Recognize the Town of Washington as a "Brand"*: The Town has the opportunity through this Comprehensive Plan and other efforts to establish more strongly its brand – what kind of town it chooses to be for the next 5-10 years. Branding is the process involved in creating a unique name and image in consumers' minds, emphasizing a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers. It is important to emphasize how idyllic and unique this town is and what a rare treasure it is. The Town's residents and businesses need to be conscientious about what the Town is, what its historic character requires, and what image it wishes to present. The Town must be proactive and collaborative in this incremental process rather than letting others characterize, define, and label the Town. This Comprehensive Plan is merely one step in the Town's conscious and ongoing community branding process.

B) Vision

The Town of Washington has a vision of its future over the next 5-10 years. Through a consensus formed by expressing views in public forums, written letters and interviews, the citizens of the Town and the surrounding county have been involved in the formation of that vision. In the briefest and simplest of terms, the consensus was that the Town should be a “good place to live,” a welcoming community of diverse interests and backgrounds with a common center in the historic Town of Washington.

More specifically, it should be a vital community that seeks to improve its infrastructure, walkability, and community amenities. There should be services that enhance the Town's livability. While some respondents identified the need for such amenities as a coffee shop, a pharmacy, a grocery/general store, a bookstore, and businesses that help promote and sustain upscale tourism, this Plan recognizes the reality of market economics in a very small community of roughly 130 people. The participants recognized that the population would have to grow in order to provide the economies of scale for such businesses to thrive. There could also be public restrooms for visitors' use, something that might be developed with County support. The vision suggests the possible development and promotion of more light craft industries and other businesses in the Town to attract people who would live *and* work in the community. The Town would promote local tourism, agribusiness, eco-business, and local services. Finally, as part of continuing the Town's vitality, it would continue to serve as the seat for Rappahannock County.

The community should be walkable, and there should be nature and history trails integrated into the fabric of the Town. The history trails, like the existing Civil War Trail, would provide a story of the area's history, reinforced with historical markers at important and noteworthy sites. The nature trails would provide markers highlighting local flora and fauna. Residents would be comfortable walking from one end of Town to the other end. The Inn at Little Washington has already established a three-eighths of a mile circular trail for town resident and visitor use, a model for future trails throughout the community. The vision also embodies ample parking for residents and visitors alike. Where possible, there should be common green spaces for the residents in general and in various parts of the Town.

The future Town of Washington would be an even more attractive venue that embodies its history and character. It would have its phone lines and cable lines buried, the street lighting would be sufficient while being environmentally conscientious. The buildings would be well maintained, architecturally diverse, and represent different scales of size. Water and sewer services would be extended where feasible. Where appropriate, there might be clustered housing that was reasonably priced, offered ample green space, and was built on compact lots so that the Town could maintain its compactness and walkability. Working closely with the County, the viewsheds of the nearby mountains and farmland would be preserved, and new growth would not affect these viewsheds. Zoning densities set by Council would be consistent with Town values.

A community is wealthier if it has a population with different viewpoints, different means, and different backgrounds. In the Town's vision, the population would be more diverse, with a greater breadth of ethnicity, age, background, and socio-economic basis. There would be more families and more full-time residents.

IV COMPONENTS OF THE TOWN

A) Population

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town of Washington was established as a Town by the General Assembly in 1796 by having the necessary population of 200 persons. The first census of the Town placed the number at or possibly slightly more than 200 persons. With the establishment of the Town as the County Seat in 1883 it was reasonable to expect that the Town would continue to grow as businesses and government located here. That was reflected in the 1880 census recording of 254 persons in the Town.

Since that time the population has only exceeded that number in the 1900 census when 300 persons were reported to be residents of the Town of Washington. This slight increase of just 46 people may have been for any number of reasons that may be associated with the turn of the century and the speculation and prospects of a greater economic boom around all population centers, regardless of size, i.e. village, town, city.

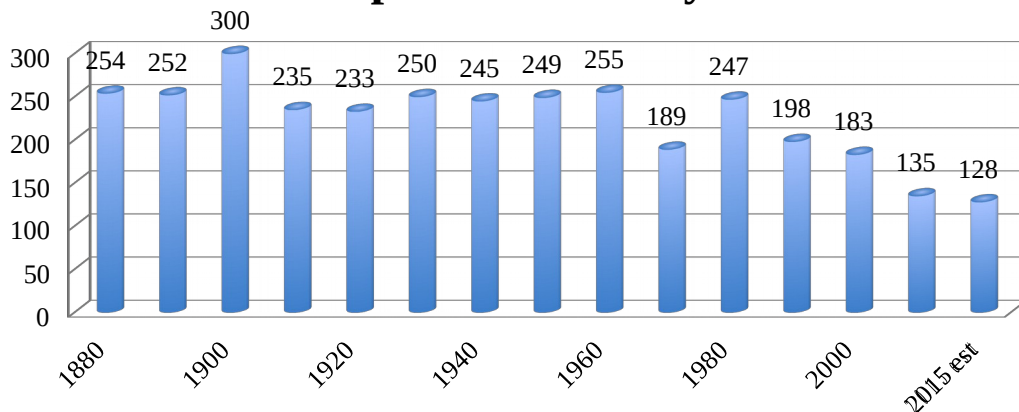
From 1900 forward through the 1960's the population of the Town fluctuated around 230 to 250 persons, after which time it began a continued population decline between each ten-year census, with the exception of 1980 which showed an increase in the population to 247 persons from the prior count of 189 persons. An in-depth study of the makeup of this 58-person increase would be necessary to understand if this was due to an increase of the number of families or persons

related or unrelated occupying the available residences within the Town. This increase from 1970 to 1980 was nearly eliminated by the subsequent decline between 1980 and 1990 by 49 people.

The population of the County at large declined over the period of 1850 to 1970 from 9,782 to 5,199 persons and then rebounded to 6,622 by 1990. This paralleled the Town's decline in population and the slight uptick in the Town's population. While the County population may have increased contrary to the Town's decline this is likely attributable to people building new homes throughout the county.

If the population growth and decline of the Town of Washington and Rappahannock County are compared to those of neighboring Culpeper and Fauquier counties, it can be acknowledged that both Culpeper and Fauquier have experienced continued growth percentages that exceed those of Rappahannock and the Town of Washington.

Town of Washington Population History



In 2000 14% were under 18 years of age and 20% were over 65 years of age; in 2010, 7% were under 18 and 26% were over 65 years old. In 2000, 15% of the population was of black or Hispanic origin, while in 2010 this population was down to 7%. These numbers clearly show an aging population and a declining minority population.

Understanding the reasons for the decline on the Town's population can be attributed to simple factors such as households that had children. Those children reached adult age and left the home. As an example, a household of two adults and three children reduces to two adults once the children leave. This represents a 60% decline of population in just one household. Some households had more persons than this so the decline was more pronounced.

When examining the population trends numerically over time, particularly since the 1980s, this "aging out" of children in the home is a key element, especially if the owners of the home continue to own the home, thus a new family does not occupy the home with the potential to increase the population with the birth of children. Further compounding the population decline is if one of the two remaining spouses passes away and the surviving spouse continues to remain in the house.

Another factor in the change of the population of the Town of Washington is the conversion of some homes to alternative uses such as a B&B, rental property, guest rooms, or purchase by absentee owners that use the property for weekend use and are not full time residents of the Town.

When residential properties are sold they are not likely to be sold to those with a family that intends to move full time to the Town. In today's world young families are generally tied to larger communities where there are more amenities available for the children and even the adults. Generally the move by a young or established family to the Town would be by those that have made the conscientious decision that they wish to live and raise their family in a rural community. The town has not seen this type of prospective buyer of those properties that have come available in the Town in recent years.

Within the Town boundaries only one new residential property has been built since the last census, and it has two occupants. Another notable property in the Town, Avon Hall has been sold to new owners that will only increase the Town's population by two, whereas years ago the property had a family, and the adjacent house had full time occupants. Only the new owners of Avon Hall know the plans and potentials to add residents to that house.

There are growth projections for the County; however, those growth figures are not likely to be significant to the Town's growth. That growth will be across the County with the construction of new homes as noted earlier.

The Town has a limited number of infill properties that could possibly be built out with residences or some combination of commercial and residential space. It is difficult to speculate on how many potential residents could be welcomed to the Town based on this build-out and whether it would be individuals, couples, or families. Even if new residential space is built it could be held by persons that are not full time residents and that reality continues the issue of available residency without actual in-town residents. Further increase in the number of residents could possibly come through the sale and development of a very limited number of parcels the Town still controls.

The only significant opportunity for the Town to grow in population is if it expands the Town's boundaries to land and properties that are adjacent to and within the natural geographical boundaries surrounding the Town and that land is then developed primarily into residential properties.

Meaningful population forecasts are not available for the Town due to the small size of the Town and limited population. An in-depth trend forecast for the Town and the County would be beneficial if it can identify the possible growth patterns and needs as well as some specifics on the type of housing that would be needed to meet the growth and population needs based on age or other factors. Such a forecast could identify the need for multi-unit housing for a multi-generation population or properties such as assisted living. Any such development could change the population numbers significantly due to the current small base population.

Without adoption of plans to increase available housing that meet the needs of a wider age range of families, the Town is likely to continue to experience a decline in its population.

2) Issues of Concern

No official population forecasts are available for the Town, and because it is such a small area with a small existing population, a trend forecast based on building development activity would not be very useful. One large development project near the Historic District could increase the Town's size by half within only a few years. On the other hand, if no new residential units are constructed and the Town boundaries remain the same, the demographic trend of decreasing household size would suggest that a decline in the Town's population would continue to occur. While this Plan does not contemplate immediate changes, some changes or revisions as well as development standards for any new multi-unit development ought to be studied. Without adoption of plans to increase available housing that meets the needs of a wider age range or of families, the Town is likely to continue to experience a decline in its population.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Continue being an attractive destination with a culture of hospitality welcoming to visitors.

Develop priorities for the Town to encourage its culture of hospitality and to welcome new inhabitants.

Address the need for a small increase in population while maintaining the spirit of a small town community and its culture of hospitality.

Examine current Town zoning and its relationship to residential and business development to identify any possible actions by the Town.

B) Businesses & Governmental Agencies

1) Inventory & Analysis

Government activities bring many people to the community on an almost daily basis. Washington houses the Courthouse for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Court, the General District Court, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Associated offices, including the office of the Clerk of the Court, are clustered around the Courthouse as are the offices of the Treasurer and Commissioner of the Revenue for Rappahannock County.

The Town is the home of the County Sheriff's office, the County E911 Office, the Zoning and Administration Office, the County departments of Health and Social Services, the Voting Registrar, and other County offices. The Commonwealth of Virginia maintains an office for the Cooperative Extension Service. There is also a US Post Office location with a postmaster.

There are a number of merchants in the Town who support the local community as well as the tourist trade. Included are gift, art, craft, furniture and wood crafting, restaurants and galleries. Nevertheless, with an excellent County road network, much of the community's day-to-day shopping is done in the larger cities of neighboring counties.

The Town has several restaurants catering to people who come into the Town each day as well as the tourist population. The most well known is The Inn at Little Washington, which brings a great number of visitors to the village. The Inn also brings very positive and valuable publicity to the Town through its international reputation and marketing and promotion. Overnight accommodations are provided by The Inn and by several other bed-and-breakfast establishments. Because the meals and lodging tax is the Town's primary source of revenue, these businesses are

a critical Town industry. In 2016, The Inn began a fresh air market on Sundays that attracts a large number of visitors to the Town during the late spring, summer, and fall.

The Town also serves as the cultural and entertainment center of the County. Several theatrical and musical groups perform in Washington and regularly present plays, lectures, and musical events. The Theatre at Washington, Virginia on Gay Street and the RAAC Theater host several plays and other events throughout the year. Many artists and craftsmen display their work in galleries and shops as well as in their own studios. These are part of the annual County-wide RAAC Art Tour each November. Additionally, there is a regular series of movies presented at the Theatre. The Town has several art galleries, antique shops, and gift shops that serve residents and visitors.

There are approximately forty special activities that occur in Town on an annual basis. These support fundraising for local non-profits as well as generate commerce for the local businesses. Here are some examples: The 10K Fodderstack Race in the spring begins in Flint Hill and finishes in front of the Courthouse. This attracts runners from the neighboring communities. In October, the Trinity Episcopal Church sponsors a House Tour to support the Church's fundraising activities. The homes displayed are throughout the County. The annual RAAC Artisans Tour opens the Town and County galleries and studios to tourists in November. The annual Christmas in Little Washington, which includes a parade and other family-oriented events, occurs each December.

With the many government activities, there are associated professional services provided by several law offices in the Town. Other professional services for the community include a medical office, a health spa, and several small consulting firms. The *Rappahannock News* is also located in the Town. Several realty, construction, and mechanical services also maintain offices here.

The Town is the home for several churches that provide services on Sunday and support numerous ongoing community activities. The Town hosts numerous fundraising activities organized by local community groups such as the Washington Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the Child Care and Learning Center, and the Benevolent Fund. The Town also has special events that occur throughout the year that were cited previously and several private residences in the Town host fundraisers for many county charities.

2) Issues of Concern

A huge benefit to the Town is the fact that it is the home of the world-renowned Inn at Little Washington; but there is also a concern that the Town relies heavily on this single commercial enterprise both as a source for guests in the Town and as a source of Town revenue. The many employees who work in county offices make an important contribution to the life of the Town.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Build a more diverse mix of residents and businesses while retaining the welcoming spirit of the Town.

Build on the Town's high-speed Internet and water and sewer access (not present in most of the County) to recruit a larger and more diverse mix of residents and businesses, thereby attracting more tourists. In all, it would provide more jobs for the local community.

Consider the appointment of an economic group/business council, creation of a business development office, and/or the marketing of business opportunities in the Town

Goal: Work to retain current businesses and examine ways the Town might encourage new businesses.

Encourage state and county offices to stay in the Town

Work with state and county governmental offices to assure Town support for their efforts, including the maintenance and preservation of their many historic buildings in the Town.

C) Visitor and/or Resident User-Friendliness

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town of Washington does not have its own signage along Route 211 because the Town boundaries do not extend to the highway. The only Town signage on 211 is VDOT signs. Several local businesses have tourism-based blue VDOT signs as well. There is a welcome sign at the Town line for each of the three entrances into the Town from Route 211. There are handsome, uniform street signs in the Town.

There is on-street parking available throughout the Town, and the old Washington School and the fields adjacent to the Washington Volunteer Fire and Rescue serve as overflow parking for large and special events. The sidewalk system in the Town is old but serviceable, in need of repair, or non-existent. There are no painted crosswalks in the Town. Some portions of the Town population have spoken against the construction of new sidewalks and crosswalks, feeling that it would detract from the Town's rustic nature. There are handrails on most steps (with more than three risers) accessible to the public as well as handicap-accessible parking and entry ramps for most public buildings. There are no public restroom facilities in the Town.

There is appropriate street lighting throughout the Town on the main streets and several side streets. There is a sensitivity in the larger community to light pollution, and this should be at the forefront of any planning for street light renovation.

The entryways to the Town from Route 211 are a mix of presentations. The views at the entrances from the South Main Street and Mount Salem Avenue into the Town are rural and residential, respectively, and both are attractive. The primary entrance into the Town from Warren Avenue is not very welcoming, although there are attractive points along this entryway, with several landscaped residences on either side of the road, the one on the south side including a pond and a beautiful portico on the residence.

2) Issues of Concern

The signage for the Town on Route 211 is non-existent, except for the highway department's green directional signs. Some of the existing sidewalks are in disrepair and could be dangerous because of cracking or uneven surfaces. There are busy streets in the Town (namely, Main Street) that do not have sidewalks. There are no public restrooms. Finally, the Warren Avenue entryway into the Town is the least attractive of the three main entryways, yet it is the one most often used by visitors.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Maintain and enhance a safe, user-friendly Town environment for residents and visitors alike.

Whenever possible, improve the infrastructure of the Town, maintaining street lighting, street signs, sidewalks, and landmark signage.

Improve public access to parking and add employee parking where possible.
Examine parking options.
Consider formalizing event overflow parking with volunteer parking guides and perhaps a parking fee.

Improve the signage on Route 211 where possible, including adding lighting.

Encourage owners of dilapidated properties along the primary entryway to the Town to improve their historic properties.

D) Environment of Town & Surrounding Region

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town of Washington, Virginia is located in a rural county dominated by forestry and agriculture. It is adjacent to the Shenandoah National Park and the Skyline Drive, and there are trailheads into the park located throughout the County. This natural treasure attracts thousands of visitors to the area each year and specifically to the Town.

Although it is a residential community, up to two-thirds of the 152 acres in the Town are devoted to fields, gardens, small orchards and similar open spaces. Cattle, llamas, horses and sheep graze within the borders of the Town, and there is a portion of the Town still devoted to agricultural production.

Because of its 67-mile proximity to Washington, DC, the Town and surrounding County have seen a dramatic increase in their weekend and retirement-aged population. This leads to an older-trending population and a sizeable proportion of the Town residences being empty throughout the week.

While change has seemed to occur gradually in the Town of Washington, change has in fact occurred, continuously. Although not many new buildings have been constructed in recent years, the use of many buildings has changed in response to changes in ownership and in the population and economy. The Inn has refurbished a number of buildings as well as partnered with the Town to beautify the town center and stub street. Since 2010, \$12-\$14 million has been spent on the renovation of upwards of 35 buildings in the Town. On Main Street alone, there have been renovations to thirteen buildings by both businesses and private owners. There will continue to be pressure for some growth, in order to meet the number of residents necessary to sustain services the population seeks and because the County's planning funnels growth to the Town of Washington and five other villages in the county.

Relatively little development has occurred at the edges of the Town or outside the corporate limits. Future land use in these areas will have a critical impact on maintaining the traditional, historic, visual character of the Town's setting, which is highly valued by local citizens as well as by visitors and thus serves as an important underpinning of the local tourist economy. Although

the County has taken steps through its ordinances to limit development in these adjacent areas, the long-term future of surrounding properties is uncertain.

Construction in the Town has primarily been confined to the streets around the original four blocks and the roads leading in and out of the Town. An eclectic mixture of commercial, government, religious and residential use has been the historic nature of the Town. Gay Street provides an example of this mixed use. Government and law enforcement facilities dominate the southern end of Gay Street, mixed with two churches, a medical clinic, real estate offices, a gallery, several craft and woodworking shops, a bed and breakfast, a restaurant, office buildings, and several residences. The northern end of Gay Street remains primarily residential, except for the Town Hall, located in an early historic church. Main Street is residential at its northern end and largely commercial (except for a scattering of residences) through the central and southern areas. The Town has an Architectural Review Board on which the Town depends to maintain the architectural integrity of the Town as a National Register Historic District.

The properties adjacent to the roads accessing the Town remain largely residential. The County in its Comprehensive Plan has encouraged development in or near the County's town and villages, and that puts pressure on the Town to accept this population increase and to plan for it accordingly. County zoning around Washington currently requires two- to five-acre lots in the proximity of Town. These immediately adjacent areas are also important to the Town if it wants to retain the vistas that are so vital to the quality of life and the historic setting of the Town.

Despite the diversity of uses of structures in the Town, Washington takes great pride in retaining a large number of 18th and 19th century structures in the Town and in having a mixture of 20th century buildings of quality dispersed throughout. Around 1950 several of the older structures were demolished and commercial structures built in their place. To provide control of such changes in the future, the Town established itself as a National Register Historic District. Today, the Town strives through the Historic District Ordinance and the Architectural Review Board to maintain the integrity of the Historic District. In doing so, the continued use of existing structures for commercial and residential purposes is encouraged and any new structures must be built to be compatible with the Historic District design guidelines.

2) Issues of Concern

The underlying forces of land economics often determine the use of land. If market pressures were to raise substantially the value of the adjacent rural land for residential purposes, only the goodwill of the owners or permanent mechanisms such as conservation easements would likely be able to preserve the land in agriculture and open space uses in the long term. There is also a concern about the destruction of the historic integrity of buildings within the Town or the threatening thereof.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Recognize and protect the social and economic environment of the Town as an Historic District and the contributing visual qualities of lands adjoining the Town.

Maintain the integrity of the Historic District and the strength of the Architectural Review Board.

Work with the County to preserve the character of areas just outside the Historic District.

Maintain a balance between residential and business growth.

E) Economy & Employment

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town relies on three key elements to support its economy. One is its role as the County seat, which attracts economic activity associated with the courts and County government and other related activities that benefit from being located in the County seat. The second is the tourist industry that is supported by and depends on the historic architectural character of the Town, the scenic and historic landscape of the surrounding County, and the significant marketing of local businesses. The third is the town's role as the cultural and entertainment center of the County. These three activities provide the foundation for the Town's economic life.

While tourism and local government are the fundamental economic sectors, they generally do not produce high levels of individual income. There are 250 people who work daily in the Town, most of them for the County or at The Inn. Note that this is not a measure of "at-place" employment, or the jobs located within the Town, but rather how residents of the Town are employed, regardless of where. However, it is likely that many of these residents do, in fact, work within the Town.

The table below shows income values for the town and surrounding regional communities. There is a difference between "family" and "household". The Census Bureau defines a **household** as one or more persons living in the same house, condominium or apartment. They may or may not be related. A **family** has two or more members who live in the same home and are related by birth, marriage or adoption.

Median Income 2010

<u>Town</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Household</u>
Culpeper	\$76,303	\$63,509
Gordonsville	\$51,957	\$41,532
Madison	\$65,164	\$56,608
Orange	\$59,940	\$53,939
Remington	\$75,313	\$62,734
The Plains	\$69,583	\$60,625
Warrenton	\$83,594	\$64,931
Washington, VA	\$103,592	\$52,083

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census

Despite the current and future uncertainties of the economy, the Town government's finances are in sound condition. This condition is especially impressive given the fiscal difficulties that many

other small jurisdictions face. In large part, the strong financial position of the Town is due to its determination to get the water and sewer system costs borne by the users and by the Town's reliance on the meals and lodging tax for most of its revenue, since this is a tax that is borne largely by tourists and other visitors, rather than by Town residents.

2) Issues of Concern

There is not enough diversity in forms of revenue and employment with the Town. The Town's reliance on the County government, the district court, and The Inn at Little Washington for employment means that the Town is extremely vulnerable should something happen to any of the three. Moreover, the Town is vulnerable to financial swings in the tourist industry overall since it is so reliant on that industry for a sizeable majority of its revenues.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: While recognizing the economic reality of a very small rural community, seek to build and grow a diverse employment base.

Provide more employment opportunities in the Town and nearby in the County.

Balance business development with residential space.

Define more specifically the kinds of uses/businesses allowed in the zoning ordinances.

Attempt to attract more reasonably priced housing in the Town.

F) Finance

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town of Washington, Virginia was originally chartered by the General Assembly in 1894 and operated under that charter until March 14, 1985. The new charter granted the Town broader powers and increased responsibilities. Since 1985, the Town's ordinances have been brought up to date and a Planning Commission, a Board of Zoning Appeals and an Architectural Review Board have been established. With the increased burden for services, the budget for the Town has increased significantly.

As a Town, Washington remains part of Rappahannock County. The latter exercises the broadest range of powers granted to local governments by the General Assembly, while the Town is granted only specific powers. The County provides education, solid waste disposal, law enforcement, criminal justice or detention, and other services to the Town. To help finance the County-provided services, Town residents pay real estate and personal property taxes to the County. The Town could impose real estate and personal property taxes, but these would be in addition to similar taxes imposed by the County. Instead, the Town, by resolution and public hearing, instituted a 2½ percent meals and lodging tax, in preference to a real estate or personal property tax. The rationale is that it is desirable to pass, as much as possible, the tax on to visitors to the community, rather than levying the cost of government services and capital expenses on the local citizens. This continues to be a source of concern with only a single major source of meals and lodging taxes.

The Town has a single operating budget with three major portions: the Town budget, Washington Water Works budget, and Washington Wastewater Works budget. The general fund covers the

operations of the Town. The budget has increased substantially since the 1985 charter was enacted. More than 90% of the operating budget comes from the meals and lodging tax. The balance comes from building permits, fines, and revenue from the Commonwealth, which includes sales taxes and ABC profits. In 2016, the Town sold a major portion of the Avon Hall property it held and used the funds to help build up capital reserves and pay off outstanding loans.

The major expenses of the Town are administration, capital programs including water and sewer, contributions, employee expenses, maintenance, operations, and professional services. The expenses in these categories include the following:

Administrative: advertising, billing supplies, computer supplies, dues, electric & heat, equipment leases, insurance, interest on Town Hall building, office supplies, postage, printing, and telephone;

Capital Expenses: Principal on Town Hall building, water storage tank, wastewater treatment facilities, machinery and equipment over \$200, and Town lighting;

Contributions: Town promotions, Washington Volunteer Fire Department, Town kiosk, and Town brochure;

Employee Expenses: Payroll, withholding taxes, mileage, etc.;

Maintenance: Off-site & on-site repair, equipment repair, materials, service, and other items deemed necessary by the Town Council;

Operations: Electricity, gas, oil, and lube, shop tools under \$200, contract work, and other items deemed necessary by the Town Council;

Professional Services: Auditor, Town attorney, and other items deemed necessary by the Town Council.

The major expense of the Town is for the maintenance of its water and wastewater systems, especially since the Town chose to utilize an accelerated repayment schedule for the cost of implementing its sewer system.

The Town's water works are funded separately under a proprietary fund called the Washington Water Works. Revenues come from water sales and connection fees while expenses for operations include those for administration, capital programs, employee expenses, maintenance, operations, and professional services.

The Town performed an upgrade to the water system that was financed through the Rural Development Administration. The loan-grant package consists of \$439,500 in low interest loans and \$424,100 in grant funds. The loans have been repaid and there is no outstanding debt.

The Town's wastewater works are funded separately under a proprietary fund called the Washington Wastewater Works. Revenues come from wastewater usage as derived from water sales and connection fees while expenses for operations include those for administration, capital

programs, employee expenses, maintenance, operations, and professional services. The expenses in these categories include the following:

As indicated earlier, the residents of the Town pay to the County taxes on real property and personal property.

In 1990, the Town had almost 3% of the County population (198 of 6,622) and a land area only 0.086% of the County, approximately 152 of 176,750 acres. In 2016, the Town population was approximately 1.9% of the County (Town est. 135 and County est. 7,200). However, the Town landowners paid 2.6% of the County taxes based on County assessments of \$2,133,343,400 and Town of \$56,603,400. Nevertheless, the residents of the Town pay a disproportionate share of the per-capita tax burden in the County for the following services:

- Schools
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Law Enforcement and Detention
- Courts and Records Maintenance
- Welfare and Other Services
- Building Administration

It is important to note that the significant increase in the Town's operating budget that has followed the increased mandate by the state for the Town government activities has been primarily funded through a tax on food and lodging. This has resulted in a critical dependence of the Town on the tourist industry for its routine funding.

2) Issues of Concern

The Town has a small revenue stream, coming primarily from the meals and lodging tax. The anticipated costs of the sewer and water works were higher than projected, specifically the cost of system maintenance, and there was a smaller increase in users than originally planned. While the public works have been a boon to the Town and helped ensure the Town's health and future, the cost of maintenance and service would be better apportioned if the Town population were closer to the sewer system's optimum capacity of 250 users. There has also been some consideration some time in the future of a plan to undertake a "phase II" expansion of the service area for the wastewater system.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Work to optimize and rationalize all Town expenses as much as possible while also striving to grow the population base in the Town to better support water and sewer costs.

Optimize the use of existing Town resources and revenues.

Identify alternate revenue sources to ensure the financial stability of the Town.

Explore the impact of an increase in population of Town resources.

G) Natural Features

1) Inventory & Analysis

The Town of Washington is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with the surrounding land characterized by rolling hills, some of which are fairly steep and heavily

wooded. The Rappahannock County Comprehensive Plan characterizes the Town's land and much of the land in the immediate vicinity as being prime land for agriculture. A 1961 soil survey defined the soils as being shallow/moderately deep, well drained/somewhat rapidly drained, and sloping/gently sloping soils on dissected Piedmont uplands.

The Town originally consisted of a two-by-five street grid as originally laid out in 1749. These blocks have remained virtually unchanged, although some of the lots originally established have been divided into smaller lots. In addition to the original six blocks, residents constructed additional housing along the six roads leading in and out of the Town.

The surrounding vistas from the Town are of the Blue Ridge Mountains and its foothills, forests, and agricultural spaces. These viewsheds are evident from many points within the Town and along five of the six entryways. Warren Avenue is the one entryway that does not have these views, due to its lower elevation and its surroundings. These vistas are part of the attraction of the Town to visitors and residents alike.

Being principally a residential community without large commercial businesses or any heavy industry, the Town does not present a significant environmental impact and does not draw heavily on natural resources. Day-to-day activities of the residents do not pose major adverse affects on the quality of air and water. Historically the Town has operated a water system for Town residents, and in April 2010 completed a municipal wastewater treatment system to protect the surface and ground waters from contamination by failing septic systems, which had been the method of sewage treatment.

Based on the history of the Town's activities and the projection that the Town will continue to be principally a residential community with a few hospitality related businesses, there is little expectation that the Town will exert significant demand on local resources such as the water and wastewater systems.

Any expectation of reduced air pollution from vehicles is not reasonable for the Town. Many of the employment opportunities and necessary services are outside of the Town so it necessitates the significant use of private or personal transportation. There is no public transportation available other than individual ride sharing. The diversity of work and service locations makes the use of a public transportation system impractical.

The Town should consider the impact of any growth in residential housing or businesses such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, office space, or others on the water and wastewater treatment systems. Any development in the Town should be considered on a basis of how it would impact the Town's services and utilities as well as look to the larger picture of what the growth would mean in terms of the need for energy and associated pollution from energy generation.

Potentially the Town could and should look at energy and utility conservation to protect its resources. It should encourage businesses and residents to reduce energy use and water consumption (the major utility provided by the Town), and consider making the integration of these practices a requirement in any future growth.

By endorsing these practices the Town improves its visibility in protecting the lifestyle, charm, and environment of the Town of Washington and surrounding Rappahannock County. Such

practices could also lower the cost of services provided by the Town, thus preserving its financial strength.

2) Issues of Concern

The viewsheds of the Town could be threatened by potential new and unplanned development. The Town of Washington needs to consider the impact of changes to the immediate village, those outside of the Town and to other portions of the state and beyond. Close collaboration with County leadership will continue to be critical. The Town should also be aware that demands and pressures from other communities could impact growth in the Town of Washington.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Strive to maintain the original grid of streets and lots in the Town while allowing more flexibility in areas visually separate from the Townscape while also working with County government and other interests to protect the open spaces of the County that surround the Town.

Coordinate with County leadership and other interests regarding open space preservation.

Maintain the grid of streets and lots existing within the Town/historic district while also allowing flexibility in new development not impacting on that grid.

H) Land Use

1) Inventory & Analysis

The open space in Town is mostly open pasture and hay fields, in keeping with its traditional, rural nature, but not typical of most modern towns. The eclectic mix of commercial and residential uses and the presence of agricultural activities within the Town are some of the many land use characteristics that give the Town its historic character and significance, yet make land use planning for the future a particular challenge. Nevertheless, these features are ones that must be respected if the goal of preserving the Town's character and qualities, as expressed by citizens, is to be achieved. A special note on land use within the Town boundaries is that 50+ acres of current open land are in conservation easement.

While change has seemed to occur gradually in the Town of Washington, that incremental change has nevertheless occurred continuously and the Town continues to lose population. Although not many new buildings have been constructed in recent years, the use of some buildings has changed in response to changes in ownership, purpose, population trends, or the economy. Because many sites in the Town have multiple uses on a single tract and even in a single building, defining precise acreage of major land uses is not practical. For example, bed & breakfast establishments could be mapped as residential uses or as commercial uses. With that in mind, an estimate of approximate acreage of the major land uses is shown in Table 4 below. Although the data below is from 1998, due to small amount of new construction in the Town in the intervening years, it is not expected that this land allocation has changed significantly.

Existing Land Use in the Town of Washington (approximate acreage estimates)

<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
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Residential	22	15%
Commercial	8	5%
Public / Semi-Public	7	5%
Agriculture / Open	115	75%

Source: Herd Planning & Design, Ltd.; figures are rounded

The underlying forces of land economics often eventually determine the use of land. If market pressures were to substantially raise the value of the adjacent rural land for residential purposes, only the goodwill of the owners or permanent mechanisms such as conservation easements would likely be able to preserve the land in agriculture and open space uses in the long term. At the same time, there is potential for some growth within the Town boundaries and significant public interest in seeing that growth occur.

2) Issues of Concern

Virtually all residents acknowledge the need for an increase in resident population in the Town. There exist several vacant lots available for residential development within the Town. In addition, the Town owns additional acreage behind Avon Hall and other land parcels within and adjacent to the town have multiple lots already platted but as yet undeveloped. Relatively little new development has occurred at the edges of the Town outside the corporate Town limits; however, circumstances exist for growth to occur. Future land use in these areas will have a critical impact on Town population and character. Maintaining the traditional historic and visual character of the Town's setting, highly valued by local residents as well as by visitors, also serves as an important underpinning of the local tourist economy. Although the County has taken steps through its ordinances to limit dense residential development in these adjacent areas, the Rappahannock County Comprehensive Plan also calls for residential development to be encouraged in and around the six villages of the County (which includes the Town of Washington), so the long-term future of open lands surrounding the Town is uncertain. While the county zoning regulations are relatively strict in the way they limit development, zoning is a legislative mechanism that is subject to change by the County Supervisors.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Assure that the Town and any necessary and appropriate adjustments to its boundaries continue to uphold the basic mix of residential, commercial, agricultural and open spaces valued by residents while also bringing new residents to the Town.

As stated elsewhere, zoning designations need to be clarified to assure residents of continuity in the Town.

Seek outside expertise to assist the Town in developing more consistent and coherent zoning designations and definitions.

The Town should undertake a thorough assessment of the impact of the Town growing to 250 residents (the capacity of the sewage treatment system), including any potential impact on the services and administration of the Town, where any boundary adjustments might occur and how such growth would be managed.

Consider all adjoining parcels within rational geographic/visual boundaries so that a clear sense of the Town as place is maintained.

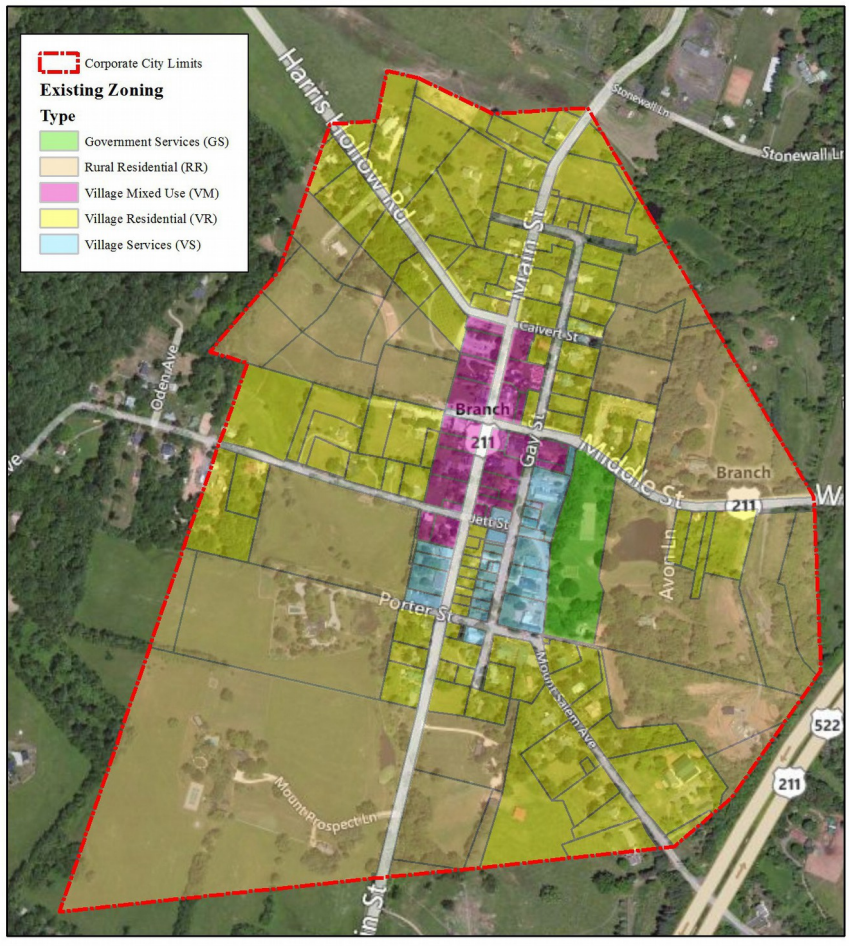
Lands considered for boundary adjustment should include all three entries from Highway 211, Harris Hollow Road, Piedmont Avenue, and Fodderstack Road to the Rush River.

I) Zoning

1) Inventory & Analysis

Like other Towns in the Commonwealth, the Town enacted Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to provide a framework for development in the Town. In addition, to further and preserve the historic fabric of the Town, the entire Town being a state designated Historic District, the Town enacted a Historic District Ordinance that provides a process of review and also guidelines for architectural compatibility of new construction and changes to existing structures. Preserving the historic character and fabric of the Town is the guiding principle for zoning and subdivision actions. At the same time, the Town government is cognizant the Town should be an ongoing attractive venue for residents, visitors, businesses and new residents and businesses. These considerations are not accomplished by static development and zoning standards. The Town encourages creative uses and reuses which could be accomplished by responsible adjustments to the zoning and/or subdivision ordinances, provided such adjustments are consistent with, and further, the historic character and fabric of the Town.

The location of districts is shown below:



Town of Washington, Virginia
Existing Zoning



3/16/2012

(Note: Lines and boundaries are approximate.
 This does not equal a legal survey)
 Imagery Source: Bing Maps 2010



Village Residential (VR): This is essentially a residential district, which allows the various by-right and special use permit uses that are defined as being allowed in all four districts. Approximately one third of the Town is within the VR district.



Village Mixed Use (VM): This is mainly a residential district, but also allows limited retail sales in existing retail spaces. It also allows a wider variety of uses by Special Use Permit (SUP), including multi-family dwellings, larger retail uses and bed & breakfast establishments. Approximately three percent of the Town is designated VM.



Village Services (VS): This district allows limited retail uses similar to the Mixed Use District, as well as small office buildings and public buildings. It allows a list of uses by special use permit similar to the VM district, and permits slightly larger office buildings and larger commercial signs by Special Use Permit (S.U.P.) Approximately three percent of the Town is within the VS district.



Rural Residential (RR): This is essentially a residential district, but it also permits a wider range of agricultural activities than the other districts. A little over half of the Town's land area is within the RR district.



Government Services (GS): This district allows particular government uses.

The minimum lot area is 0.5 acres in each district except the RR district, for which it is 1.8 acres (which may be reduced to 1.5 acres if public wastewater supply is provided).

The ordinance also provides for minimum building setbacks, height limitations, additional standards for special use permits, various administrative procedures, and the other essential items normally contained in Zoning Ordinances in Virginia.

These regulations are conventional "Euclidean" zoning standards and do not necessarily match the actual existing development patterns of the historic streets and structures in terms of setbacks, lot sizes and uses.

During the preparation of previous plans, an analysis was made of potential "build out", or the maximum density that is permitted under the then current zoning regulations. The amount of development the Town ultimately experiences should be compatible with the existing historic character of the Town and not destroy the qualities of the Town that give it such great historic significance.

In addition to the base districts, the Town has adopted a Historic District Overlay District that encompasses all of the land within the Town boundary. This Overlay District requires that all new structures or additions to existing structures, receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Town's appointed Architectural Review Board. This is to ensure compatibility with the architectural character of the Town's historic district. Demolition or moving of any building also requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The County designates most of the land surrounding the Town as either an Agricultural or Conservation zoning district. Both of these districts permit a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 25 acres. However, there are several smaller tracts zoned R-2 and RR-5 which permit lots of two acres and five acres in size, respectively.

2) Issues of Concern

In part because the Town is one of only two villages in the County with water and sewer, there is a concern that aggressive levels of development could threaten the Town’s economy, which is enhanced and promoted by the integrity of its Historic District, its streetscapes, viewsheds, and architectural character, which also results in increased property values. There is a concern that it may become necessary, before significant development occurs, to re-evaluate the allowed zoning densities so as to prevent over-development or development that would adversely affect the historic integrity of the Town, a material basis of its economy and property values.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Carefully review the Town zoning to assure compatibility with current values and allow some appropriate, controlled growth in the future.

Rationalize the zoning structure so that it makes sense, meets state standards, is accurate and clear, and serves the Town.

Encourage a revision of zoning regulations if necessary to encourage population growth and business development in a measured, planned manner.

Facilitate future build-out of the Town by assessing and revising the zoning ordinances to focus on in-fill and cluster neighborhood development.

Work closely with County officials on any plans for the current “government services” zone and evaluate the utility of adding the current Gay Street buildings to this zone.

J) Housing

1) Inventory & Analysis

The 1990 Census indicated that there were 81 occupied housing units in the Town of Washington, 59.3% of which were owner-occupied. There were an additional sixteen units that were vacant. The 2000 Census showed that there were 88 occupied units out of a total of 117 units and thus 29 units were vacant. Sixty-one of the occupied units were owner-occupied (69%). The current inventory conducted for this Comprehensive Plan counted only 42 owner-occupied residences, at least 7 vacant and buildable lots and 28 rental units in the Town:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2017</u>
Owner-Occupied	42	45
Vacant Residential	N/A	9
Rental Units*	15	28
Commercial	39	50
Vacant Lots**	N/A	7

* In 2009, residential units were counted by whole building; in the 2017 inventory, the count was by individual unit.

** 2017 notes: Vacant lots and vacant residential lots were not in 2009 inventory. Not included in this number currently are the remaining Avon Hall lots owned by the Town and the parcel of four acres owned by the County between Gay Street and Avon Hall Pond that is within the Town boundaries.

In 2000, the median value of owner-occupied units had increased to \$195,000, a 49% increase. However, the median family and household incomes in the Town increased even more, to \$61,250 and \$53,125 (1999 figure), respectively. This is nearly a 70% increase in family income and a 150% increase in household income. Using the same method described above, the monthly payments would be approximately \$1,100, or about 22% of the median gross monthly household income. This reflects a combination of a substantial increase in local household incomes relative to the cost of housing, as well as the current low interest rates for mortgages. Regardless, by this measure, housing affordability in the Town has increased during the past decade.

The affordability picture for rental housing is more mixed, however. The 2000 Census showed that 38% of rental units had gross rents of less than 25% of household income and 50% of rental units had rents of 35% or more of income.

Despite the desirability of the Town and the increasing property values, the vacancies in the Town are indicative of the fact that real demand at the Town's cost level remains limited, despite increasing pressures of urban spread. The national housing market crashed in 2008, setting the stage for a deep and relatively long recession. In 2016, the broader market is showing signs of recovery. However, only a few houses were built new in the Town in the decade of the eighties, the one put on the market was slow to sell, and new construction within the Town remained very limited.

The 2000 Census showed that the average household size of owner-occupied dwellings was 2.26, and 1.67 for renter-occupied dwellings. In 2010, the numbers were 1.74 and 1.92, respectively.

2) Issues of Concern

Most of the single-family residences in the Town register primarily at the upper end of the real estate market, making it difficult for many families and individuals who might wish to live in Washington to do so. There is also a perceived lack of diversity of scale in housing. There is also a perception that there are few buildings left in Town that are available for rehabilitation. Finally, apparent trends in population suggest a need for a broader mix of housing types/costs as well as a more diverse economic population mix. The dynamic in the Town (and in the County generally) is that people move to the Town in middle age as weekenders and only become fulltime residents when they retire.

Without available assisted living options in the County, elderly residents do not have a choice but to stay in their residences far longer than they wish rather than sell them to new buyers (who likely will represent a greater number of residents). This adds to the downward population trend and number of residents per house in the Town.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Create a Town with a strong sense of community built on diverse housing costs, mixed income levels and a welcoming residential population.

Encourage a greater diversity of housing options for prospective and current residents.

Consider incentives to develop assisted living and other housing options to meet the needs of senior citizens.

Explore ways for the Town and its citizens to create a welcoming environment for potential new residents and those that actually move to the Town.

Explore reduced water and/or sewer hookup fees for new construction.

Work closely with County building inspectors and other officials to assure clear direction for new residents.

K) Transportation Services

1) Inventory & Analysis

Rappahannock County and the Town of Washington benefit from an excellent road network. The state converted Route 211 to a divided, dual-lane highway extending from Sperryville, six miles west of the Town of Washington, to Warrenton, thereby providing easy access to Northern Virginia for the large number of Town and County residents who commute to work each day or come to the County to enjoy their weekends. Other well-maintained highways extend to Front Royal and Winchester, Luray and Shenandoah National Park, Culpeper, Madison, and Charlottesville.

While the County is no longer served by any form of public transportation, the excellent road network and the increased availability of personal automobiles have significantly affected the way of life in the County. With several larger towns in adjacent counties within half an hour's drive and major commercial centers an hour away in Northern Virginia, Charlottesville and Winchester, the County has grown more and more dependent on its neighbors for most of its needs. Food, automobiles, appliances, clothing, full service medical needs, and other needs are almost exclusively obtained from other locations and only specialized stores and a few general markets remain in the County.

When Route 211 was initially converted to four lanes, it was built to bypass the Town of Washington, thus easing the burden of heavy fall traffic through the Town to and from Luray and the Skyline Drive. Although the Town is less noticeable to the casual tourist driving by, Washington has not turned into a sleepy country town. As the center of County government, many cultural events, and a variety of other activities, Washington's main roads remain very busy each day. Both routes 622 and 628 serve as primary paths from the countryside to the main highways and pass through Washington in the process.

Although Washington continues to handle a sizeable traffic load on occasion, its streets remain fairly narrow as dictated by much of the older building construction that borders closely on existing roads. While this is somewhat constricting, traffic remains light and it is clear that the existing roads and the pattern of streets laid out in the survey of 1749 are inherent and critical parts of the Town's historic character. Thus, the Town seeks to retain such roads in the face of any changes the Town might undergo. The Town also wants to ensure that if any new roads are constructed or existing roads improved, they should be generally compatible with the scale and character of the historic streets.

An increase in the number of cars in the Town places a demand on parking and compounds the issue of narrow roads. The issue is especially relevant when the court meets in the Town, but the day-to-day activities of the Town (including attendance at shops, restaurants, the post office, government offices and cultural events) occasionally strain the Town's parking capacity.

2) Issues of Concern

There is a lack of public intra-town and inter-town transportation available. There are also various concerns revolving around parking issues and safety. For example, the narrow streets make parking on both sides (while allowing two lanes of traffic) hazardous. There is a limited availability of parking on the streets. Many businesses don't have parking associated with their lot – either on the street or through off-street parking.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Work to improve transportation options for Town residents.

The Town should be involved in discussions on County transportation issues.

The Town should take steps to ensure that the Town is pedestrian friendly.

The Town should develop intelligent, rational parking policies.

Consider designated parking spaces or increased public parking.

Encourage discussions occur with prospective businesses about developing rational parking solutions.

Develop an implementation plan to ensure that this issue is addressed.

L) Community Facilities & Services

1) Inventory & Analysis

Utilities: The only utility services currently provided by the Town are the treatment and delivery of water and the collection and treatment of wastewater.

The original water distribution system was initiated from a spring in 1935 and supplemented by a well in 1939. From that date until 1958 bondholders controlled the system. Because of deterioration, the Town again took control and later supplemented the spring and well with a new well in 1981. Because of limitations placed by the Virginia State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water, the Town discontinued use of the spring as a public water source in December 1991. As part of a plan for overhauling the water system and to satisfy state regulations, two new wells and a filtration treatment facility were completed in 1991.

A major, multi-decade Town project was the renovation of its water system. The ancient pipes routinely caused a major loss in the water distributed to the Town and required a continuous maintenance program. The Town upgraded the water system with a new, larger capacity water storage reservoir of 225,000 gallons in 2006. In addition, the Town's water capacity benefits all users both commercial and residential. However, the Virginia State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water has mandated that the Town establish a new well and possible treatment facility in an alternative location from its current well.

Construction of the wastewater treatment system began in January of 2009 and ended in April of 2010. Design peak capacity is now 60,000 gallons per day (GPD). First two year's average use was 17,000 GPD and peak use was 23,000 GPD. The very large cost of the system, spread across a very small population at present, should not go unnoticed. Bringing the use of the current system up to something close to its capacity of 60,000 GPD would significantly enhance the ability of the Town residents to carry the costs of the system.

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative provides electricity to the Town. The poles and overhead lines used for this distribution have been a concern of Town residents for many years; recent efforts by The Inn to bury its many electrical and other lines provide a clear model for others. Any new multi-building development should be required to place such utilities underground.

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative has long supported the Town lighting through the maintenance of lighting fixtures on their poles. As these fixtures became old and parts were no longer available, the Town replaced these lights with fixtures more in keeping with the historical character of the Town.

CenturyLink and Comcast provide telephone service to the Town. Distribution is on the same lines used by the electric company and is subject to similar criticism.

Several dealers provide bottled gas and heating oil to the community from cities in neighboring counties and most new construction includes burying any required tanks.

At its meeting in August 1990, the Town Council approved an ordinance to authorize cable television franchises. Comcast Cable now provides cable television; both Comcast and CenturyLink provide Internet service to Town residents.

Solid Waste Disposal and the Recycling Program: The Town utilizes the County's Solid Waste Transfer Stations. In support of the State's recycling goals as mandated on the County, Washington initiated its own recycling program of monthly pickups in early 1990. That was actively supported by the Town, but was heavily dependent on volunteer efforts of a few and therefore was abandoned. Recyclables are voluntarily collected at the two county transfer stations.

Education: In the 1990 census, the Town had thirty-three children between the ages of five and seventeen. The 2010 census indicated the Town had only six children between the ages of five and seventeen. Education is provided through the Rappahannock County Elementary School and High School that are located a couple of miles west of Town.

Health Services: The Virginia Department of Health maintains an office in Washington. The Town of Washington has nearby private medical clinics (one in the Town itself) that offer services to the community. Planning District 9 provides guidance and counseling services in the Town. Hospitals are available in each of the adjacent counties within half an hour's drive.

Public Safety: The Rappahannock County Sheriff's Office is located in the Town. It maintains twenty-four hour service and the E911 center for the County. The highways adjacent to the Town are additionally patrolled by Virginia State Police who can provide services when necessary.

The Washington Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad, located just to the east of the Town, services Washington. This organization additionally supports adjacent areas of the County. The Town strongly supports this organization through direct contributions. The fire department and rescue squad is also partially supported through the county fire levy tax.

Recreational Facilities: The Town itself offers no public recreational facilities, but is near the County recreational park just to the east on Route 211. The park provides a diverse mix of recreational opportunities, including frontage on the Hughes River, as well as seasonal public bathrooms and a clear opportunity to link to the Town by a walking/biking trail.

Government Services and Offices: As the center of government activities for the County, Washington is the location of many offices providing services and benefits needed by residents. These include the Commonwealth of Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, the US Post Office, the Building Office, the County Administrator, the Clerk's office, the Magistrate's office, the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney, the Commissioner of the Revenue, the Treasurer's office, the Voters' Registrar, the Welfare Office, the Mental Health Center, the Food Stamp Office and the Zoning and Administration Office.

2) Issues of Concern

The water system is fragile; there is a need for a new well in a different location. The emergency services available on a volunteer basis to Town residents are unsustainable. There are no recreational facilities in the Town.

3) Goals & Objectives

Goal: Assure that community facilities and services are adequate, timely and responsive.

Assure the town has an adequate water supply.

Develop clear alternatives for a new well above the flood plain acceptable to the state EPA.

Begin budget preparations and examine alternative funding sources.

Assure all residents are fully informed as this process moves forward.

Goal: Coordinate closely with Rappahannock County on all shared services.

Develop consistent quarterly consultation with the county on all shared services.

Work with the County on proposed improvements or upgrades.

Explore better Town access to the County Park and possible joint development of a tourist rest and information stop at the County Park.

Goal: Create and maintain recreational opportunities appropriate to the town and its visitors.

Consider and plan a public trail system throughout the town I cooperation with private property owners.

Encourage use of the trails by visitors through rack cards and other information.

Goal: Assure that the town has adequate and dependable staff support.

Develop a clear list of needs and aspirations for town services from both residents and businesses.

Consider a part-time assistant for the Town Clerk.

Consider a permanent, half-time maintenance and water-meter reader position.

Consider a grant writer on retainer.

Goal: Develop working relationships among Town leadership and the management of companies and agencies involved with the Town's infrastructure (REC, VDOT, etc.).

Goal: Initiate studies of infrastructure improvements.

Assess the feasibility of placing existing overhead wiring underground.

Study means to improve efficiencies of street lighting.

V SUMMARY OF GOALS & OBJECTIVES

A) Population

Goal: Continue being an attractive destination with a culture of hospitality welcoming to visitors.

Develop priorities for the Town to encourage its culture of hospitality and to welcome new inhabitants.

Address the need for a small increase in population while maintaining the spirit of a small town community and its culture of hospitality.

Examine current Town zoning and its relationship to residential and business development to identify any possible actions by the Town.

B) Businesses & Governmental Agencies

Goal: Build a more diverse mix of residents and businesses while retaining the welcoming spirit of the Town.

Build on the Town's high-speed Internet, water and sewer (not present in most of the County) to recruit a larger and more diverse mix residents and businesses to attract visitors and residents and provide more jobs for the local community.

Consider the appointment of an economic group/business council, creation of a business development office, and/or the marketing of business opportunities in the Town.

Goal: Work to retain current businesses and examine ways the Town might encourage new businesses.

Encourage State and County offices to stay in the Town.

Work with State and County governmental offices to assure Town support for their efforts, including the maintenance and preservation of their many historic buildings in the Town.

C) Visitor and/or Resident User-Friendliness

Goal: Maintain and enhance a safe, user-friendly Town environment for residents and visitors alike.

Whenever possible, improve the infrastructure of the Town, maintaining street lighting, street signs, sidewalks, and landmark signage.

Improve public access to parking and add employee parking where possible.

Examine parking options.

Consider formalizing event overflow parking with volunteer parking guides and perhaps a parking fee.

Improve the signage on Route 211 where possible, including adding lighting.

Use appropriate Town abilities to encourage owners of dilapidated properties along the primary entryway to the Town to improve their historic properties.

D) Environment of Town & Surrounding Region

Goal: Recognize and protect the social and economic environment of the Town as an Historic District and the contributing visual qualities of lands adjoining the Town.

Maintain the integrity of the Historic District and the strength of the Architectural Review Board.

Work with the County to preserve the character of areas just outside the Historic District.

Maintain a balance between residential and business growth.

E) Economy & Employment

Goal: While recognizing the economic reality of a very small rural community, seek to build and grow a diverse employment base.

Provide more employment opportunities in the Town and nearby in the County.

Balance business development with residential space.

Define more specifically the kinds of uses/businesses allowed in the zoning ordinances.

Attempt to attract more reasonably priced housing in the Town.

F) Finance

Goal: Work to optimize and rationalize all Town expenses as much as possible while also striving to grow the population base in the Town to better support water and sewer costs.

Optimize the use of existing Town resources and revenues.

Identify alternate revenue sources to ensure the financial stability of the Town.

Explore the impact of an increase in population of Town resources.

G) Natural Features

Goal: Strive to maintain the original grid of streets and lots in the Town while allowing more flexibility in areas visually separate from the Townscape while also working with County government and other interests to protect the open spaces of the County that surround the Town.

Coordinate with County leadership and other interests regarding open space preservation.

Maintain the grid of streets and lots existing within the Town/historic district while also allowing flexibility in new development not impacting on that grid.

H) Land Use

Goal: Assure that the Town and any necessary and appropriate adjustments to its boundaries continue to uphold the basic mix of residential, commercial, agricultural and open spaces valued by residents while also bringing new residents to the Town.

As stated elsewhere, zoning designations need to be clarified to assure residents of continuity in the Town.

Seek outside expertise to assist the Town in developing more consistent and coherent zoning designations and definitions.

The Town should undertake a thorough assessment of the impact of the Town growing to 250 residents (the capacity of the sewage treatment system), including any potential impact on the services and administration of the Town, where any boundary adjustments might occur and how such growth would be managed.

Consider all adjoining parcels within rational geographic/visual boundaries so that a clear sense of the Town as place is maintained.

Lands considered for boundary adjustment should include all three entries from Highway 211, Harris Hollow Road, Piedmont Avenue, and Fodderstack Road to the Rush River.

I) Zoning

Goal: Carefully review the Town zoning to assure compatibility with current values and allow some appropriate, controlled growth in the future.

Rationalize the zoning structure so that it makes sense, meets state standards, is accurate and clear, and serves the Town.

Encourage a revision of zoning regulations if necessary to encourage population growth and business development in a measured, planned manner.

Facilitate future build-out of the Town by assessing and revising the zoning ordinances to focus on in-fill and cluster neighborhood development.

Work closely with County officials on any plans for the current “government services” zone and evaluate the utility of adding the current Gay Street buildings to this zone.

J) Housing

Goal: Create a Town with a strong sense of community built on diverse housing costs, mixed income levels and a welcoming residential population.

Encourage a greater diversity of housing options for prospective and current residents

Encourage a diversity of ages.

Consider incentives to develop assisted living and other housing options to meet the needs of senior citizens.

Explore ways for the Town and its citizens to create a welcoming environment for potential new residents and those that actually move to the Town.

Explore reduced water and/or sewer hookup fees for new construction.

Work closely with County building inspectors and other officials to assure clear direction for new residents.

K) Transportation Services

Goal: Work to improve transportation options for Town residents.

The Town should be involved in discussions on County transportation issues.

The Town should take steps to ensure that the Town is pedestrian friendly.

The Town should develop intelligent, rational parking policies.

Consider designated parking spaces or increased public parking.

Encourage discussions occur with prospective businesses about developing rational parking solutions.

Develop an implementation plan to ensure that this issue is addressed.

L) Community Facilities & Services

Goal: Assure that community facilities and services are adequate, timely and responsive.

Assure the town has an adequate water supply.

Develop clear alternatives for a new well above the flood plain acceptable to the state EPA.

Begin budget preparations and examine alternative funding sources.

Assure all residents are fully informed as this process moves forward.

Goal: Coordinate closely with Rappahannock County on all shared services.

Develop consistent quarterly consultation with the county on all shared services.

Work with the County on proposed improvements or upgrades.

Explore better Town access to the County Park and possible joint development of a tourist rest and information stop at the County Park.

Goal: Create and maintain recreational opportunities appropriate to the town and its visitors.

Consider and plan a public trail system throughout the town in cooperation with private property owners.

Encourage use of the trails by visitors through rack cards and other information.

Goal: Assure that the town has adequate and dependable staff support.

Develop a clear list of needs and aspirations for town services from both residents and businesses.

Consider a part-time assistant for the Town Clerk.

Consider a permanent, half-time maintenance and water-meter reader position.

Consider a grant writer on retainer.

Goal: Develop working relationships among Town leadership and the management of companies and agencies involved with the Town's infrastructure (REC, VDOT, etc.)

Goal: Initiate studies of infrastructure improvements.

Assess the feasibility of placing existing overhead wiring underground.

Study means to improve efficiencies of street lighting.

VI FINAL THOUGHTS

A) Summation

This was a collaborative effort on behalf of many individuals within the Town of Washington and the County of Rappahannock. As members of the Planning Commission, we are grateful for all of the time and energy these individuals put into this effort.

The Town must always weigh several concepts when it considers its future. It must consider its financial needs in relation to its population capacity. There is room for growth – if managed and planned for intelligently and with the Town’s values and guiding principles in mind – and that growth may be necessary to sustain the whole Town’s economic vitality.

It is a small town, and it relies too heavily on too few people who volunteer or serve. There are opportunities for more citizens to become involved as volunteers in the administration of the Town through the use of more committees, commissions, and task forces.

Finally, there is the belief that any strong community forms along concentric circles, and the Town of Washington is no exception. The citizens of the Town are an inner circle, but they are related to outer circles of those residents in the 22747 zip code and, beyond that, those who live in the County generally. Decisions made at any level affect the citizens in all of the concentric circles and the communities in which they live.

VII APPENDICES

A) From the *Historic District Ordinance Statement of Intent*

The intent of this section is to implement the Comprehensive Plan goal of protecting our natural, scenic and historic resources and provide a means to recognize and protect the historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and artistic heritage of the community, and to promote and protect the health, safety, recreational, educational, economical and general welfare of the community through the identification, preservation and enhancement of buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, neighborhoods, landscapes, places and areas which have special historical, cultural, artistic, architectural or archaeological significance as provided by Section 15.2-2306 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, hereinafter the “Virginia Code”.

It is hereby recognized that the deterioration, destruction or alteration of said buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, landscapes, places and areas may cause the permanent loss of unique resources which are of great value to current and future generations of our community, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nation, and that the special controls and incentives are warranted to ensure that such losses are avoided.

The purposes for establishing historic district zoning are:

1. To protect the historic significance and integrity of the properties within the Historic District which are or may be recognized for having association with historic events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; *or* have association with significant persons; *or* possess distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; *or* have the potential to yield information important to prehistory or history.
2. To preserve and improve the quality of life and sense of place and community for residents by protecting familiar treasured tangible, visual elements in the area.
3. To promote tourism and other economic benefits by protecting historical, architectural, artistic, archaeological and cultural resources, including historic landscapes, attractive to visitors and thereby supporting local business and industry.
4. To stabilize and improve property values by providing incentives for the upkeep and rehabilitation of significant older buildings and structures and encourage appropriate land use planning and development that will enhance both the economic viability and historic character of the district while maintaining a viable community.
5. To educate residents, students and tourists about the local cultural and historic heritage as embodied in the Historic District through the preservation of our architectural and archaeological past that demonstrates the social and artistic development pattern of our predecessors.
6. To promote local historic preservation efforts and to encourage the identification and nomination by their owners of eligible individual historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
7. The promotion of harmony of style, geographical context, form, color, proportion, scale, height, width, spacing, setback, orientation, rhythm, traditional quality, appearance, texture, finish and material among buildings of historic design and those of more modern design.
8. To develop the historic areas, not in a vacuum, but as a vital area in which each succeeding generation may build with the quality and sensitivity of past generations.
9. To encourage sound stewardship and foster a sense of pride in heritage resources.

B) Land Use Plan & Sewer Service Area

