



# Comprehensive Plan 2008

## Bridgewater, Virginia

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# Comprehensive Plan 2008

## Planning History

The Town's first Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1977, was used by Town officials to guide growth and development until 1987 when a revised Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The 1987 Plan reiterated the 1977 joint Town-County planning goal which recognized Bridgewater as a County growth center.

As a result of changing conditions and the desire to undertake a more thorough analysis of town needs, the Bridgewater Town Council initiated an update of the 1987 Plan in 1990. The Town hired Land and Community Associates to assist in the preparation of the updated Town Plan, which was adopted in 1993. In 2000, the Planning Commission updated the 1993 plan, which is the current Comprehensive Plan.

## Authority to Plan

Article 3 of Chapter 22 of Title 15.2, of the Code of Virginia, 1950 (as amended) outlines requirements and objectives concerning comprehensive planning by local jurisdictions. Every local government is required by state law to adopt a comprehensive plan. The Town of Bridgewater Planning Commission is charged with preparing a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the Town for consideration and adoption by the Town Council. State law requires the Commission to review the plan every five years to evaluate the need to amend the plan.

The Commission is required to evaluate existing conditions and growth trends and determine probable future requirements for future growth and land development. The



*Change often occurs without us realizing it. For example, a file photo shows Dinkel Avenue as it looked around 1948 with a comparable view of the same area today. This Comprehensive Plan is designed to anticipate growth such as this and establish guidelines that will meet future requirements for a prosperous community.*

purpose of the plan is to guide and accomplish a “coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development 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 plan must consider such items as the characteristics of existing developments and use of land, natural resources and conditions, population, employment and economic factors including future requirements, existing public facilities and utilities, housing needs, and other matters relating to the purposes of the comprehensive plan. The plan also is required to examine and recommend methods for implementing plan goals, objectives, and recommendations.

State law also requires that the comprehensive plan be general in nature, designating “the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan” and indicating “where existing lands or facilities are proposed” to be altered or changed in use. The law requires that long-range recommendations be formulated for the general development of the areas covered by the plan. The law further states that these recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ The designation of areas of various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreation, public service, floodplain and drainage, and other areas.
- ◆ The designation of a system of transportation facilities.
- ◆ The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests,

schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal and waste disposal areas, and the like.

- ◆ The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal.
- ◆ An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance, and zoning district map.

The law requires that the plan "designate the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan" and that development and subdivision requests must be "substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan."

State law also provides for the study and inclusion of adjacent unincorporated territory within a municipal comprehensive plan. Planning recommendations for unincorporated territories also must be adopted by the governing body of the county before they can be considered to be an official plan for these areas.

## *The Purpose of Planning*

In addition to meeting the legal requirements for community planning outlined in the Code of Virginia, major purposes of the comprehensive planning process include:

- ◆ Encouraging citizens to develop a collective vision for the future that promotes the interests of the entire community rather than those of individuals or special interest groups.
- ◆ Identifying, protecting, and preserving important features of the built and natural environment that collectively define the character of the community.
- ◆ Establishing guidelines and standards for new development and redevelopment to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive, and harmonious community.

- ◆ Establishing policies and procedures for evaluating short-term actions within the context of long-range community goals and objectives.
- ◆ Creating a framework for providing an efficient and coordinated system of public services, facilities, and utilities to the community.

Planning is a dynamic process of formulating goals, objectives, and standards to guide community growth and development. Planning also is a means of identifying strategies and techniques for achieving goals and objectives. The comprehensive plan provides guidance in balancing the long-term best public interest of the overall community with the interests of private property owners. The comprehensive plan can help prevent uncoordinated individual actions that may produce undesirable cumulative effects.

## Using the Comprehensive Plan

The Bridgewater Comprehensive Plan reflects the input and collective best judgment of town residents, elected and appointed officials, and town staff. The Town Plan provides a framework for achieving long-term community goals, but it is also designed to be flexible enough to respond to changing conditions or unexpected events. The Plan should be reviewed by town officials and citizens on a periodic basis to ensure that the policies it contains reflect the current needs of the community.

Once the Plan has been approved and adopted by the Town Council it becomes the official public document used to guide decisions on future development. The Town Council and Planning Commission use the Plan to evaluate rezoning and subdivision requests, review development proposals, determine road and public facility locations, and to develop capital improvement programs and budget recommendations. All policy decisions considered by the Town Council should be evaluated within the context of the Plan.

The various policy maps contained in the Plan illustrate the goals, objectives, and policies of the Plan text. Maps and other graphics illustrate the approximate locations considered most desirable for public facilities.

The Future Land Use map provides a guide for determining the desirable location for and relationships between various types of activities such as residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

The Comprehensive Plan and policy maps are general in nature and are for community planning purposes only; in some instances individual parcels or lots may not be clearly delineated and consequently may not be properly represented within general land use categories.

The Planning Commission and Town Council have the responsibility of interpreting the policies and standards contained in the Plan to determine specific location decisions for land uses, public facilities and utilities, and roadways. Analysis and recommendations prepared by Town staff, and sometimes officials of state or federal agencies, assist the Town Council in reaching decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan guides the Town Council and Planning Commission in establishing or modifying techniques used to implement planning goals and objectives. Zoning and subdivision regulations are methods typically used to carry out the policies of the Plan. These ordinances determine where various types of land uses may occur and establish standards for development. A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is another tool used to implement the Town Plan. Since the CIP determines the location and timing of capital projects, such as roads and utilities, it is an effective mechanism to guide the direction and rate of future growth.



*Creating a “sense of community” is one goal of a Comprehensive Plan. The annual town-sponsored Labor Day “Summer’s End” Festivities brings thousands together each September and helps build a stronger community.*



*Comprehensive Plan Organization*

Town of  
**BRIDGEWATER**

Town  
Streets

AMBER LANE.....	F4
ASHBY STREET.....	C4
BANK STREET, EAST.....	C5
BANK STREET, WEST.....	B5
BARBEE CIRCLE.....	B4
BARBEE STREET.....	B4
BREEZEWOOD TERRACE.....	B4
BRAIN AVENUE.....	D5
BRIDGEPORT DRIVE.....	F4
BROAD STREET.....	C5
BRUCE STREET.....	C4
CON LITEN FWY.....	F6
CANNERY WOODS DRIVE.....	D2
CHERRY LANE.....	D5
CHESAPEAKE AVENUE.....	C4
CHESTER'S WAY.....	E4
CRUDE LANE.....	D5
CLIFF CUSTER COURT.....	D5
COLLEGE STREET, EAST.....	D6
COLLEGE STREET, WEST.....	B5
COLLEGE VIEW DRIVE.....	D6
COLLEGE WOODS DRIVE.....	D6
CRAIG LANE.....	E3
DEPOT STREET.....	D4
DICE STREET.....	B5
DINKEL AVENUE.....	D6
DOGWOOD DRIVE.....	D7
DRY RIVER ROAD.....	C4
FIRST STREET.....	C5
GREEN STREET.....	C4
GROVE STREET.....	C5
HICKORY LANE.....	E7
HIGH STREET.....	B5
HILLCREST DRIVE.....	B4
HILLVIEW STREET.....	A4
HOLLY HILL DRIVE.....	A4
HOMESTEAD DRIVE.....	C3
HOMEVIEW DRIVE.....	C5
JANET LANE.....	E4
JOSEPH COURT.....	F3
JOYCE DRIVE.....	E3
KLING COURT.....	B5
KNIGHTS VIEW.....	F2
LEAVEL COURT.....	E6
LIBERTY STREET, NORTH.....	C5
LIBERTY STREET, SOUTH.....	C5
LOUISE DRIVE.....	E3
MAIN STREET, NORTH.....	E3
MAIN STREET, SOUTH.....	B5
MAY COURT, NORTH AND SOUTH.....	B4
MCGUFFIN AVENUE.....	C5
MEADOW LANE.....	D5
MELISSA COURT.....	F3
MELVIN CIRCLE.....	E4
MILESTONE COURT.....	F4
MILK DRIVE.....	A5
MIRANDY COURT.....	E4
MOUNTAIN VIEW DRIVE.....	D7
MT. CRAWFORD AVENUE.....	D4
NAOMI LANE.....	D5
NORTH RIVER ROAD.....	C4
NORTHSHORE DRIVE.....	D7
NOVER DRIVE.....	B5
OAK MEADOW DRIVE.....	E6
OAKWOOD DRIVE.....	E4
OLD RIVER ROAD.....	D3
PARKSIDE DRIVE.....	D5
PENNIE LANE.....	D4
PITTLIS LANE.....	E4
PLACID PARKWAY.....	D5
PLAZA DRIVE.....	E3
POPE STREET.....	B4
PRICE DRIVE.....	E3
QUALITY STREET.....	D4
RAINBOW DRIVE, EAST AND WEST.....	D5
RANGER LANE.....	F2
RICHARD COURT.....	F4
RIVERSIDE DRIVE, EAST.....	C6
RIVERSIDE DRIVE, WEST.....	B5
ROSEWOOD CIRCLE.....	D5
ROUNDHILL DRIVE.....	B4

SANDSTONE CIRCLE.....	C3
SANDSTONE LANE, NORTH.....	C3
SANDSTONE LANE, SOUTH.....	C3
SECOND STREET.....	C5
SPRUCE LANE.....	C4
STEPHEN CIRCLE.....	D5
SUNBRIGHT DRIVE.....	F4
SYCAMORE COURT.....	F4
THIRD STREET.....	C6
TIFFANY DRIVE.....	E4
TURNER ASHBY DRIVE.....	E3
VICTORIA DRIVE.....	E4
VICTORY STREET.....	C4
VIRGINIA AVENUE.....	C5
VOLUNTEER DRIVE.....	C6
WASHINGTON STREET.....	D4
WAYSIDE DRIVE.....	D5
WEeping WILLOW LANE.....	F4
WEST AVENUE.....	B5
WEST VIEW STREET.....	B4
WHEATLAND DRIVE.....	E6
WILDWOOD DRIVE.....	D2
WILL LANE.....	D5
WYNANT PLACE.....	C6

County  
Roads

CANNERY WOODS DRIVE (RT. 737).....	D2
DINKEL AVENUE (RT. 257).....	F6
DRY RIVER ROAD (RT. 738).....	C2
HERRING LANE (RT. 746).....	F2
MT. CRAWFORD AVENUE (RT. 1310).....	E5
OAKWOOD DRIVE (RT. 704).....	G4
VISTA HEIGHTS ROAD (RT. 1311).....	E7

Places

SCHOOLS	
BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL.....	C5
BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE.....	D6
JOHN WAYLAND ELEMENTARY.....	E2
TURNER ASHBY HIGH SCHOOL.....	F3
CHURCHES	
BRIDGEWATER BAPTIST CHURCH.....	D5
BRIDGEWATER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN.....	E6
BRIDGEWATER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.....	C5
BRIDGEWATER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.....	C5
NORTH RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH.....	D5
CENTERS	
COMMUNITY CENTER AND TOWN OFFICES.....	C4
FIRE DEPARTMENT.....	C5
NORTH RIVER LIBRARY.....	D4
POST OFFICE.....	B3
RESCUE SQUAD.....	F6
PARKS	
BRIDGEVIEW PARK.....	B5
COOKS CREEK ARBORETUM.....	F4
EDGEBRIER PARK.....	B6
HARRISON PARK AND LAWN PARTY GROUNDS.....	C4
HARRISONBURG/WARM SPRINGS TURNPIKE PARK.....	D3
OAKDALE PARK.....	D4
SANDY BOTTOM PARK AND GOLF COURSE.....	D7
SEVEN BRIDGES PARK.....	B5
WILDWOOD PARK.....	A5
WYNANT PARK.....	C5

Legend

TOWN LIMITS.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANNEXATION PERMETER.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Plan is organized around the following six topics that affect the future of the Town of Bridgewater:

- ◆ Natural Environment
- ◆ Population and Housing
- ◆ Employment and Commerce
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Public Services
- ◆ Land Use

The Plan contains a separate chapter concerning each of these topics; each chapter contains the following subsections:

**Background.**

This section provides a brief explanation of the component and its relationship to the comprehensive planning process.

**Inventory and Analysis.**

Documentation and analysis of existing conditions are necessary to fully understand future implications of existing trends.

**Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations.**

Specific goals and objectives that provide the basis for establishing policy and a framework for making future decisions are identified. Goals and objectives also are used to interpret the general policies illustrated by the Future Land Use map.

# Profile of Bridgewater

## TOWN HISTORY

The first settlers in the area now known as Bridgewater arrived in the 1740's and were of Scotch-Irish descent. They were soon followed by German settlers. The area became known as McGill's Ford around 1759 because John and William McGill owned approximately 350 acres on either side of the North River. Several early families built mills along the North River and the settlement came to be known as Bridgeport since it was a port for flatboats to ship products down the river.



*Bridgewater had five mills to grind flour and meal: George W. Berlins' mill at Berlinton; Isaac Marshall's mill east of the bridge; Farmer's Mill and Natural Falls Mill at Wildwood; Dry River Mill built by Adam R. Hollen in 1872.*

Around 1800, John and Jacob Dinkle arrived with their families and started a sawmill, gristmill, cording mill, and stave mill. Jacob Dinkle's tavern, built in 1815 on South Main Street, and John Dinkle's two-story brick house, built around 1820 on Wynant Place, are still standing. The settlement soon became known as Dinkletown.

On February 7, 1835, the settlement was chartered as the Town of Bridgewater. The name

was derived from its proximity to the North River and the bridge that was built there in 1820. The original land area within the town was approximately twenty acres.

Bridgewater grew as a location of trade during the 1800's due to its proximity to major transportation routes. The Warm Springs-Harrisonburg Turnpike, which passed through Bridgewater and North River, was navigable by flatboats as far upstream as the town. By 1850, Bridgewater had two gristmills, two cabinet shops, several general stores, a tavern, and a hotel. Bridgewater College was chartered in 1880.

The town also continued to grow in land area. After an election held by local citizens, the area known as "Old Town" annexed the area known as "New Town" in 1854. A new Town charter was granted in 1884 which extended the boundaries to include an additional 100 acres on the southeast side of town. The new charter also provided that a mayor and six councilmen be elected to govern town affairs. Annexation initiatives took place in 1895 adding approximately 300 acres on the southeast, northeast, and southwest sides of town. Further annexations took place during the 1980's and 1990's adding land to the east and north.

The Town of Bridgewater presently encompasses approximately 2.4775 square miles (about 1586 acres). The Town continues to serve as an area for trade and commerce with government and professional offices, banks, restaurants, and a variety of retail establishments. The Town also is an employment center with several major industries located within its borders. Bridgewater College, a private educational institution, Bridgewater Home, a

private nursing care facility, and the Bridgewater Retirement Village are also located within the Town.

The Town of Bridgewater is located along the northern edge of the North River near the southern border of Rockingham County. The City of Harrisonburg, the county seat, is located approximately five miles to the northeast. Other nearby urban areas include the City of Staunton (25 miles southwest), the City of Charlottesville (60 miles southeast), and the City of Winchester (75 miles northeast). The Washington D.C. and Richmond metropolitan areas are within a two and one-half hour drive.

Six Town Council members and the Mayor form the governing body of the Town

of Bridgewater. The Mayor and all Council members are elected at large. The Town Superintendent oversees the day-to-day management of town operations and coordinates long-range planning and budgeting activities.

A seven member Planning Commission appointed by Town Council oversees planning activities within the town and reviews requests for rezoning and amendments to Town ordinances pertaining to zoning and land development activities. A court-appointed Board of Zoning Appeals considers requests for variances from Zoning Ordinance requirements.



*Churches held oyster suppers, ice cream socials and strawberry festivals. Sunday School picnics and rallies were major events. This is a picture of one such gathering.*



*Today Bridgewater residents as well as the surrounding community enjoy get togethers through town-sponsored events like "Spring Yard Sale Day", "Summer Concert in the Park" series and Labor Day.*

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Background

Physical and natural features have helped to determine the pattern of development that has taken place in Bridgewater. Sensitive features of the natural environment are identified and incorporated into community planning activities in order to provide a pleasant and safe environment for residents. Growth and development should be sensitive to natural drainage systems, steep slopes, and soil characteristics to avoid leaving problems for future generations to correct.

section of the town to offer flood protection. Major floods also occurred in 1985 and 1996. Due to the existence of the levee, the resulting damage of these floods was minimal with the exception of properties located along the bank of North River.

Floodplain maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicate 100-year floodplains of 750 to 1,500 feet in width along the Dry River and 40 to 1,500 feet along the North River. The levee along the Dry River protects adjacent residential areas from 100-year flood events. The North River 100-year floodplain along the southern border of town extends into areas of residential and commercial development.

## Inventory and Analysis

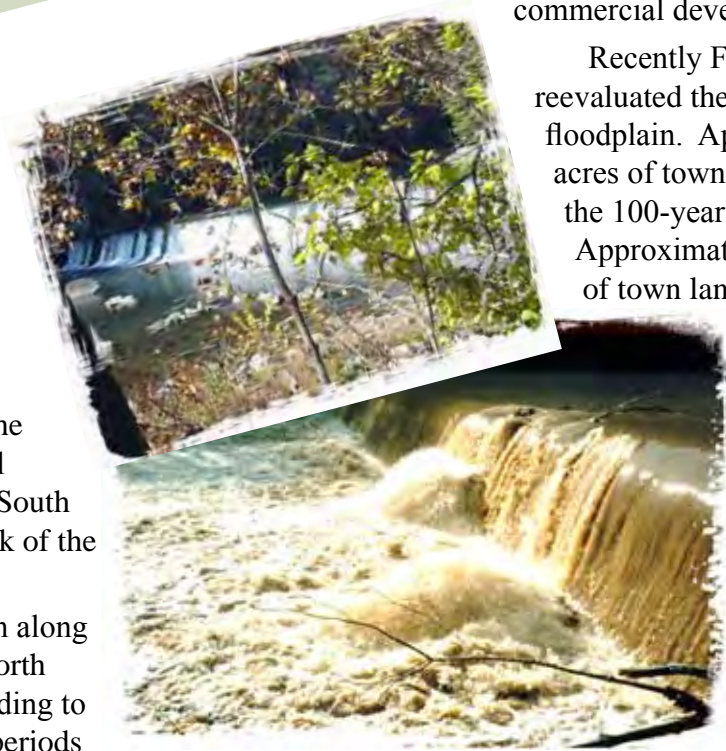
### Drainage.

The majority of town land lies within the Dry River-North River drainage basin. A small northeastern segment of the town drains into Cooks Creek, which empties into the North River southeast of Bridgewater. The North River flows south until joining with the Middle and South Rivers to form the South Fork of the Shenandoah River.

The location of the town along the edge of Dry River and North River results in periodic flooding to portions of the town during periods of heavy rain. A major flood in 1949 resulted in the loss of three lives and in substantial damage to property within the town. An earthen levee was built in 1951 in the northwestern

Recently FEMA reevaluated the 100-year floodplain. Approximately 200 acres of town land lie within the 100-year floodplain. Approximately seven percent of town land is within the 100-year floodplain.

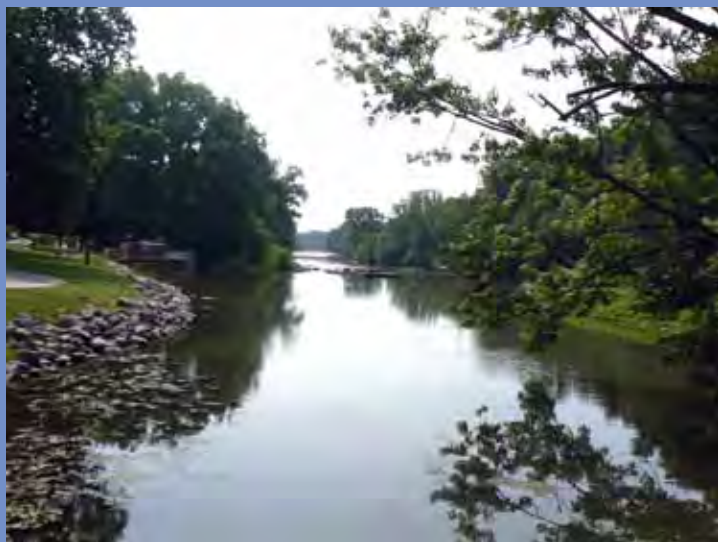
Areas that lie within the 100-year floodplain are not suitable for development. These areas generally are suited for recreational purposes, agriculture, or limited use as parking areas.



*When a destructive hurricane passes through the Shenandoah Valley, Wildwood Park, located on the North River, can quickly change from peaceful and serene to chaotic and dangerous.*

### Topography.

The town lies along the banks of the North and Dry Rivers within a small valley formed by low ridges along its eastern, northern, and western edges. The Dry River, and its associated floodplain, create a small gap among these ridges at the northwest corner of town. Elevations above sea level range from a low of 1,160 feet along the North River and a high of 1,300 feet in the area of Breezewood Terrace. The majority of the town lies at an elevation of approximately 1,190 feet.



*North River frames the southern boundary of the Town of Bridgewater. This view is from Wildwood Park looking east toward the Rt. 42 bridge.*

The majority of land within the town is characterized as level to gently rolling with slopes of less than 15%. Slopes greater than 15% are located along the banks of the North River and on the western edge of the prominent ridge line associated with the eastern and northern town limits.

Approximately 38.5 acres of land within the town limits has slopes of 15 - 25%. Approximately 16 acres of town land has slopes that exceed 25%.

Areas with slopes between 15 - 25% generally pose limitations to development but can be considered suitable for development if proper site design and engineering practices are followed. Slopes of 25% or greater pose serious constraints to development

and are generally considered unsuitable for building purposes. Grading for roads, utilities, and other land clearing activities on steep slopes (25% or greater) can lead to accelerated rates of soil erosion, possible slope failure, and increased volumes and rates of stormwater runoff.

### Soil Characteristics.

The United States Soil Conservation (SCS) has compiled information on soil characteristics for the Bridgewater area.

The soils within the Town of Bridgewater pose very few development constraints. Approximately 85% of the town is classified by the SCS as having Class I or II soils. These soils are well-drained and are generally suitable for development and placement of structures. The remaining soils within the town are characterized by poor drainage or excessive wetness, shallow depth to bedrock, and are prone to water and wind erosion. These soils are generally associated with floodplains and steep slopes.

Some areas of Town contain shrink-swell soils. When this condition is identified, special construction requirements need to be considered.

### Vegetation.

The Town of Bridgewater has planted more than 2,000 trees since 1990. A portion of this expense was funded by the Virginia Department of Forestry and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Mature trees and woodlands are found along the banks of North and Dry Rivers. Small woodlands also exist near Mount Crawford Avenue and College Woods Drive. The majority of trees and vegetation in Bridgewater are associated with single-family homes and public development.

## Goal, Objectives & Recommendations

**GOAL: Preserve and enhance the natural resources of Bridgewater and surrounding areas to the greatest extent practical.**

### Objective 1: Identify and preserve sensitive or fragile environmental features.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue existing policy discouraging development of areas within the 100-year floodplain.
- Ensure that all flood plain regulations continue to conform to the model regulations developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- The Town should continue enforcing soil and erosion regulations as established by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Bonding is currently required of all developers. This practice should continue.

### Objective 2: Encourage innovative site planning techniques to protect sensitive environmental areas.

#### Recommendation:

- Future development should be encouraged to cluster buildings and dedicate permanent open space to the Town.

### Objective 3: Maintain a healthy and attractive balance between the built and natural environment.

#### Recommendations:

- The Town should continue its practice of planting trees and encouraging developers to do so through the Green Law. A mature tree canopy will not only make for a more attractive town, it will reduce energy costs and buffer extreme, summer temperatures.
- Continue to work with our legal staff to develop landscape standards.



*Bridgewater has consistently followed a policy of buying floodplain land as it becomes available and develop it into public parkland which is much less vulnerable to costly damage when flooding occurs.*

- Town ordinances should expand landscaping requirements to include planting of trees for all multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- The Town should continue its policy of planting trees along new streets.
- Develop a comprehensive beautification and enhancement program for its central business district and vehicular entrances.
- Revise the sign ordinance so that it ties into the beautification objectives of the Town.

### Objective 4: Preserve and enhance the quality of the North River.

#### Recommendation:

- Continue our policy of weekly street sweeping to prevent the discharge of sand, gravel, grit, and petroleum products into the North River.
- Limit withdrawals from the North River during times of drought.

# POPULATION AND HOUSING

Background

A community’s health and vitality is determined by the characteristics of its existing population and the ability to attract new residents. Availability, cost, and condition of the housing stock also are major factors in helping to determine the composition of the community’s population. Bridgewater’s housing stock is a prime asset in ensuring the future vitality of the community.

Inventory and Analysis

**Population.**

Bridgewater experienced a steadily increasing rate of population growth over three decades. From 1970 - 2005 population nearly doubled. This is an indication that Bridgewater is fulfilling its role as a growth center as envisioned in both the Town and County Comprehensive Plans. The following table illustrates the growth that has occurred over this time period.

<b>Bridgewater Population Growth</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Population</b>	2,828	3,289	3,918	5,203	5,413
<b>Increase</b>		461	629	1,285	210
<b>Percentage</b>		16.30%	19.10%	32.80%	4%

*During the period 2000 - 2005 growth slowed due to a lack of building lots.* Unless this pattern changes, growth within the Town will stop. In both 1985 and 1997 the Town responded to a limited supply of developable land by completing an agreement with the County to annex additional land.

*Economic trends for expansion are positive.* The Wal-Mart Distribution Center opened in 2006 and will employ up to 1,000. This new employer, coupled with expansion of existing facilities, ensures that the market for Bridgewater housing will remain strong. In addition to this, Bridgewater is considered a desirable place to live due to a low crime rate, moderate weather, physical attractiveness of the community, and the existence of Turner Ashby High School within our borders.

**Housing.**

Our largest decade of growth occurred in the 1990’s. During that time 485 new housing units were constructed. Housing in Bridgewater can be broken down into three main categories: single family detached, single family attached (such as townhouses and duplexes), and multi-family (such as apartments).

So far this decade 213 new housing units have been or are in the process of being constructed.

<b>Residential Building Permits by Type of Dwelling Unit 2000–2006</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Single-Family Detached</b>	<b>Single-Family Attached</b>	<b>Multi- Family</b>
2000	21	7	0
2001	20	5	0
2002	18	5	0
2003	15	30	0
2004	23	5	0
2005	23	6	0
2006	12	23	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>

One unique aspect of the Town is Bridgewater Retirement Village, which is affiliated with Bridgewater Healthcare. Apartment and duplex residences are available to retirees who do not need the regular nursing care of supervised residential care environments. Nursing care facilities are available at Bridgewater Home to these residents if needed in the future. This facility has shown the need for expansion in the recent past. Bridgewater Retirement Village has proven itself to be a desirable place to live.

The varied mixture of dwelling unit types in Bridgewater provides a variety of housing choices for town residents. Apartments and other rental units provide housing opportunities for young people just entering the job market and beginning careers. It is also appealing to older citizens seeking reduced housing maintenance costs and smaller living spaces. Townhouses, duplexes, and four-plexes can also provide affordable housing opportunities for families or individuals.

The housing stock in Bridgewater is relatively young with approximately 75% of the housing units being built after 1960. The Town has virtually no buildings in substandard condition.



*Maple Terrace is a popular addition to Bridgewater Retirement Community. Independent apartment-style housing is available here with in-house amenities like a restaurant, bank, library, hair salon, etc.*

## Goal, Objectives & Recommendations

**GOAL: The Town should strive to stimulate steady growth throughout the next century.**

**Objective 1: The Town should continue to develop an appeal to residents of all ages.**

### Recommendations:

- Town officials should ensure that Bridgewater remains an attractive, comfortable, and safe place to live through the provision of public services and maintenance activities.
- Town officials should keep current ordinances in place that prevent residential growth in industrial areas and restrict it to special use provisions in business areas.
- Town officials should anticipate the return of rapid growth and put in place the ordinances and agreements necessary to accommodate this growth.

**Objective 2: The Town should recognize single-family detached dwellings as the primary housing unit. However, housing diversity should be accepted.**

### Recommendation:

- Town zoning provisions should continue to permit a diversity of housing configurations to encourage construction of a variety of dwelling types.

**Objective 3: Recognize the neighborhood as the basic organizational unit within the town and promote future development designed to create new neighborhoods.**

### Recommendations:

- Existing single-family residential neighborhoods should be protected from incompatible types of development and inappropriate conversions of buildings into multi-family or nonresidential uses.
- Developers building single-family housing in an R-2 or R-3 zone should proffer covenants limiting such housing to single-family use only.
- Town land development regulations should recognize a hierarchy of streets and roads to encourage residential neighborhoods that are free from unwanted commercial traffic.

**Objective 4: Identify adjacent land areas appropriate for new residential growth to continue providing adequate choices and availability for new residents.**

### Recommendation:

- The Town should identify sites within the annexation area which are best suited for residential development, taking into account topographic conditions, traffic circulation, and the extension of municipal services.

# EMPLOYMENT & COMMERCE

## Background

A diversity of commercial, industrial, and quasi-public employers provides a stable tax base for the Town and a broad choice of employment opportunities. Tax revenues from these employers assist in providing public services and amenities to Town residents.

To provide a meaningful economic analysis, it is necessary to look at the economy of the combined Rockingham/Harrisonburg/Bridgewater community, since the economics of the three jurisdictions are highly intertwined. Many of the City's/Town's employment centers, and some of their most important taxable properties, are directly related to agribusiness which flourishes in the County. Likewise, County residents benefit from the convenience of having commercial and service centers centrally located in the City and Town.

Growth in the area economy during the last decade has been generated by increases in the poultry processing industry, the growth of James Madison University and Bridgewater College, and a surge in the services sector. Area growth has been aided by easy access to the interstate highway system, proximity to major metropolitan markets, and the availability of water resources.

Because of its diversity and its large agricultural base, the area economy is strong and generally less affected by national economic fluctuations than more urbanized areas.



*Harrisonburg is the regional retail center in Rockingham County. Their newest commercial development, Harrisonburg Crossings, draws from a broad market area including Bridgewater and surrounding localities.*

## Inventory and Analysis

### Employment.

Rockingham County plays a major role in the agricultural economy both of the Commonwealth and of the United States. It is the leading agricultural county in Virginia by a wide margin. In fact, the second leading agricultural county, Augusta, produces less than one-third of the volume shown by Rockingham County.

The table to the right compares the gross farm income of the top ten agricultural counties in Virginia.

Ranking	County	Farm Income
1	Rockingham	\$446,663,000
2	Augusta	143,914,000
3	Accomack	109,133,000
4	Page	108,720,000
5	Shenandoah	69,658,000
6	Pittsylvania	54,593,000
7	Amelia	51,603,000
8	Washington	50,596,000
9	Fauquier	45,441,000
10	Northampton	44,192,000

*Source: Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service*

Maintaining agriculture as a viable economic activity has been an effective means of preserving the County’s rural character, which was identified by citizens as the County’s highest priority at public meetings held during the comprehensive planning process. A decision to maintain the role of agriculture has both economic and social implications. If successful, the County will continue to have a vigorous agricultural community, a rural lifestyle and a relatively low-density population. The viability of agriculture will depend to some extent on discouraging, or at least not encouraging, accelerated population growth and urbanization outside the Town limits.

**Commerce.**

Four of the top 25 employers are located in Bridgewater including: Marshalls (915), Perdue Farms (740 employees), Bridgewater Retirement Community (325) and Bridgewater College (300).

Harrisonburg functions as the regional retail center in Rockingham County, drawing from a broad market area which includes the Town of Bridgewater. Town residents and Bridgewater College students form the primary customer base for retail and service establishments in the Town. Most of these establishments are located along Route 42 (Main Street).

Recent population growth has created a community of nearly 5,500 residents. This increased size should provide the impetus for commercial development with more diverse shopping opportunities within the town borders. A major food market, clothing stores, and increased services should all be supportable in a community of 5,500 people.

Tourism is another potential revenue source which is currently underdeveloped. The housing of parents and guests of Bridgewater College students is limited to one bed and breakfast operation. The development of a small hotel/ motel or additional bed and breakfast operations would greatly enhance the possibility of tourist dollars coming to the Town.

**Largest Employers in Rockingham/Harrisonburg 2007**

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Employer</u>	<u># of Employees</u>
1	James Madison University	2,800
2	Cargill Turkey Products	2,000
3	Rockingham Memorial Hospital	2,000
4	Rockingham County Public Schools	1,800
5	Massanutten Resort	1,300
6	Pilgrim’s Pride	1,200
7	Wal-Mart	1,200
8	R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co.	1,100
9	Merck & Company, Inc.	970
10	Marshalls, Inc.	915
11	Perdue Farms, Inc.	740
12	City of Harrisonburg Public Schools	722
13	Walker Manufacturing Co.	720
14	City of Harrisonburg	690
15	Rockingham County	610
16	Virginia Poultry Growers Coop	530
17	Tyson Foods, Inc.	500
18	VA Mennonite Retirement Community	457
19	Graham Packaging Co.	440
20	Coors Brewing Co.	437
21	Sysco Food Services	420
22	Riddleberger Brothers, Inc.	400
23	Bridgewater Retirement Community	325
24	Eastern Mennonite University	315
25	Bridgewater College	300



*Marshalls ranks 10th in the Rockingham/Harrisonburg’s record of largest employers.*

*Goals, Objectives & Recommendations*



*Perdue ranks 11th in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham record of largest employers.*

**GOAL: Maintain and expand the strong employment base of the Town.**

**GOAL: Provide a range of goods and services to meet resident needs. Maintain the economic viability of the existing downtown commercial area.**

**Objective 1: Retain and strengthen present industrial establishments within the Town.**

**Recommendation:**

- Town officials should work with local industry representatives to ensure that adequate water and sewer capacity is available for future expansions. The transportation network in the industrial area should be improved to allow for easier access to and from local industries.

**Objective 2: Seek opportunities to expand and build upon the present employment base.**

**Recommendation:**

- Town officials should promote the idea of Bridgewater being a good place to locate or expand a business.

**Objective 3: Encourage employment development compatible with the character and environment of the Town.**

**Recommendation:**

- Properties planned or zoned for industrial use should be discouraged from commercial and residential development. Encroachment of these uses into areas anticipated for industrial growth will diminish the attractiveness of industrial sites and lead to land use conflicts in the future.

**Objective 1: Provide for a mixture of retail stores, business and government offices, restaurants, personal and professional services, financial services, and other related and appropriate uses within the Town.**

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure that town land-use regulations permit a variety of commercial and business uses to promote diversity and flexibility in business location decisions.
- Town officials should work with local business owners to help retain existing businesses and promote their expansion.
- Establish land development regulations for the Main Street commercial area from the North River to the Mount Crawford Avenue intersection which protect the existing character of the area. This area represents the traditional commercial activity center of the Town and has undergone a higher density and intensity of development than other areas.
- The northern Main Street commercial area, will continue to be a site for commercial and retail development.



*“Tis the Season” is a specialty shop on Main Street that could be attractive to tourists.*

## **Objective 2: Increase the perception of the Town as a desirable place to shop.**

### **Recommendations:**

- The Town should continue to improve the appearance of Main Street and seek the cooperation of local businesses in this effort.
- Town officials should seek out the types of businesses that would complement and expand the present mix of goods and services available to town residents.
- An inventory of vacant or underutilized commercial buildings should be completed to determine opportunities for business expansion or recruitment.
- The Town should establish more public parking downtown through the purchase of old, dilapidated property which could then be converted into attractive, landscaped parking areas.

## **GOAL: Diversify the existing tax base and current range of business activities.**

## **Objective 1: Promote and encourage tourism activities that might include such events as walking and driving tours of the area and historic house or garden tours.**

### **Recommendations:**

- Document the Town's historic resources, and other resources that might attract visitors, to create an awareness of these assets. Improve and preserve the appearance of historic structures within the Town. Encourage their preservation and adaptive use.
- Develop small "pocket" parks telling the history of Bridgewater.
- Hold special events celebrating the heritage and culture of the community to promote civic pride and attract visitors from the county and surrounding region.
- Permit and encourage the creation of bed and breakfast establishments and small inns in areas appropriate for such uses.
- Coordinate community promotional activities with events occurring at Bridgewater College and the Bridgewater Retirement Community.

## **Objective 2: Encourage creation of specialty retail or service clusters that address unmet demand in the area.**

### **Recommendation:**

- Explore the feasibility of creating a unique shopping destination built around a specific commodity. An example is a cluster of antique dealers with associated furniture makers, furniture restoration specialists, and furniture repair shops. Associated town industries could supplement such a cluster with a small outlet or seconds shop.



*Currently Bridgewater has two “pocket” parks that depict some of the town’s historical heritage. Warm Springs Turnpike (top) and Seven Bridges (bottom).*

# TRANSPORTATION

## Background

The local and regional transportation network is a vital component of any community. Commerce and industry must have access to highways, railways, and air transport to conduct business. Residents desire to be able to travel safely and conveniently from their homes to shopping and employment destinations. The community transportation network also includes non-vehicular forms of movement such as bicycles, horse and buggy, and foot travel. All of these means of transportation should be closely linked and properly related to land uses that generate transportation movements.

## Inventory and Analysis

In Bridgewater, Route 42 (Main Street) is a primary north-south byway while Route 257 provides vehicular access from I-81 to Rt. 42. Route 738 (Dry River Road), Route 704 (Oakwood Drive), Route 1310 (Mt. Crawford Avenue), and North River Road provide secondary means of access to the Town from surrounding County areas.

Main Street in Bridgewater carries the largest volume of traffic (per lane) of any town roadway in Rockingham County with the exception of Interstate 81. It is likely that the growth in traffic volume is due to both local and non-local travel destinations. Route 42 intersects with U.S. Route 250 in adjacent Augusta County, providing a convenient route to northern destinations such as Harrisonburg as well as convenient access to I-81 via Route 257. Route 42 also provides direct access from southern destinations to poultry processing facilities in nearby Dayton to the north.

Highway	Location	1980	1989	1997	2005	% increase since 1980
Route 42	North limit	10,065	12,980	17,000	17,000	69%
Route 257	Main St.	2,045	3,655	7,200	8,100	296%

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

Route 257 carries a little less than half of the traffic volume of Route 42 with 8,100 average vehicle trips per day in 2005. This volume represents a dramatic increase since 1980. An increase in the number of students and staff at Bridgewater College has contributed to this number, but much of the traffic can be attributed to industrial growth in the area.

There are four signalized intersections within the Town. The first is at the intersection of Main Street and Dinkel Avenue (Routes 42 and 257) where heavy traffic volumes warrant



regulation of turning movements. The second signalized intersection is at South Main Street and College Street. College Street serves as an important east-west connector for residential areas. A traffic signal is also located at the entrance to Turner Ashby High School near the edge of the town limits on North Main Street. The fourth is at the intersection of Main Street and Oakwood Drive.

The intersections of Old River Road and North River Road with North Main Street present problems for motorists. Tractor trailers entering onto North Main Street must block traffic both directions in order to make turning movements north and south. Traffic attempting to enter Main Street during peak use hours is often backed up for significant amounts of time. The location of several industrial complexes in this area suggests traffic conflicts can be expected to continue or increase in severity.

Many roadways within the Town were constructed to rural-road standards prior to annexation by Bridgewater. The older roadways lack curb and gutter, and some are built to narrower widths than urban road standards, and lack sidewalks. The majority of town roadways have good pavement conditions. More recently constructed roadways designed for new development have been built to greater widths and use curb and gutter but do not include sidewalks. A plan establishing bike lanes throughout town has been approved by the Town Council.

The Town is currently responsible for maintenance of approximately 35.91 lane miles of secondary and 12.60 lane miles of primary highways.

Amtrak service is available in Staunton, approximately twenty-five minutes south of town. Railway freight services are available in Harrisonburg. Commercial passenger air services are available at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport in Weyers Cave, approximately fifteen minutes southeast of Bridgewater. A small private airstrip lies adjacent to the Town across the North River.



*Regular maintenance is key to keeping our town looking great. On any given day you will see members of the town crew pouring sidewalks, painting crosswalks and curbs or installing curb and gutter.*

## Goal, Objectives & Recommendations

**Goal:** Promote a balanced, safe and efficient transportation system serving the town.

**Objective 1:** Maintain and upgrade the roadway system as needed to accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

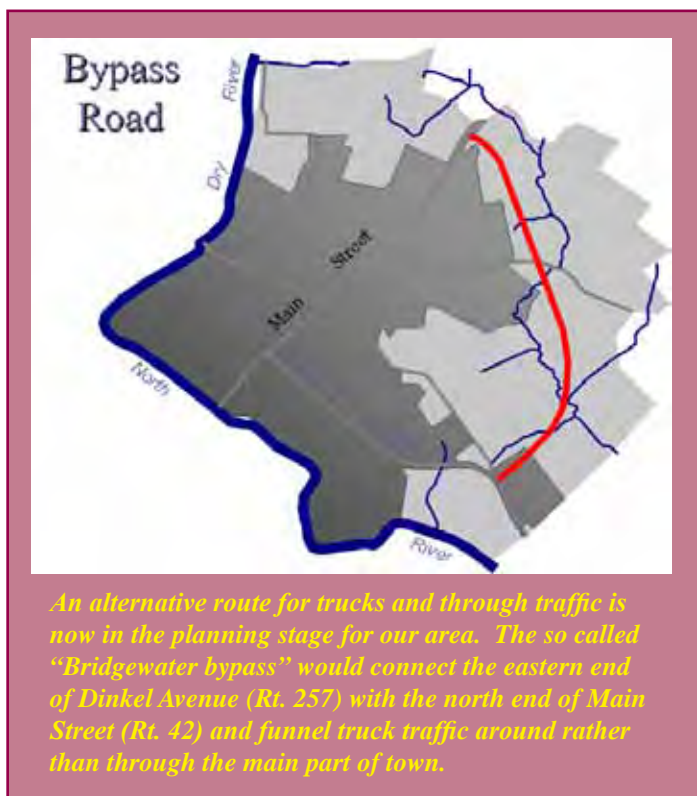
### Recommendations:

- Town officials should identify needed improvements to existing roadway widths and construction of sidewalks. Priorities for improvements should be established and coordinated with long-range highway improvement plans and Town capital improvement budgets.
- Redesign selected intersections to promote safe and efficient traffic flow, particularly in the industrial section of Town.

## Objective 2: Promote safer and more efficient truck access to industrial sites.

### Recommendations:

- Town officials, local industry representatives, VDOT officials, and local residents should work together to obtain the construction of a connector road between North Main Street (Route 42) and Dinkel Avenue (Route 257).



- VDOT officials should assist in the study of key North Main Street intersections to determine the need for roadway widening, signalization, or other improvements.
- The Town should work with Perdue and Marshalls to close Quality Street and reroute truck traffic to Old River Road. A traffic signal and appropriate turning lanes should be installed at this intersection to allow easy truck access to and from the industrial sites.

## Objective 3: Ensure that new development includes roadways designed to serve anticipated traffic volumes and pedestrian needs.

### Recommendations:

- Town roadway standards should include, at a minimum, VDOT urban design standards for roadway widths, entrances, and construction specifications. Town officials should perform

construction inspections on a regular basis, or require certification that roadways were built to all specifications, to ensure that new roadways will not require public expenditures to correct deficiencies.

- The Town has adopted a policy of providing a sidewalk on one side of the main street in new developments. This should be continued and expanded, if possible.
- The Town should discourage developments from exacerbating traffic problems which occur when excessive entrances onto heavily traveled streets are created.

## Objective 4: Promote regional transportation improvements through cooperation with County officials and the Virginia Department of Transportation.

### Recommendation:

- Town, County, and VDOT officials, in conjunction with local residents, should explore and propose alternatives for reducing non-local vehicular traffic on Routes 42 and 257. Origin-destination studies should be undertaken by VDOT officials to determine the volume of non-local traffic and suggest routes appropriate to meet driver's needs.

## Objective 5: Encourage alternatives to vehicular use to reduce the level of demand on existing road networks.

### Recommendations:

- Town officials, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater Retirement Village, and other interested groups or citizens should explore the need for designated bicycle lanes and trails within the Town. Standards should be developed for incorporating bike lanes in suitable areas designated for roadway improvements or new roadway construction. This should be done in conjunction with special attention to providing safe bicycle and walking trails to local parks.
- Town officials should continue to work with VDOT to establish bike trails between Bridgewater and Harrisonburg. This trail could also be used by horse and buggy to get from one community to another, thereby reducing the chance of an accident on public streets.

**GOAL: Promote a transportation system that preserves the quality of existing neighborhoods and districts.**

**Objective 1: Protect existing and proposed residential neighborhoods from excessive traffic volumes.**

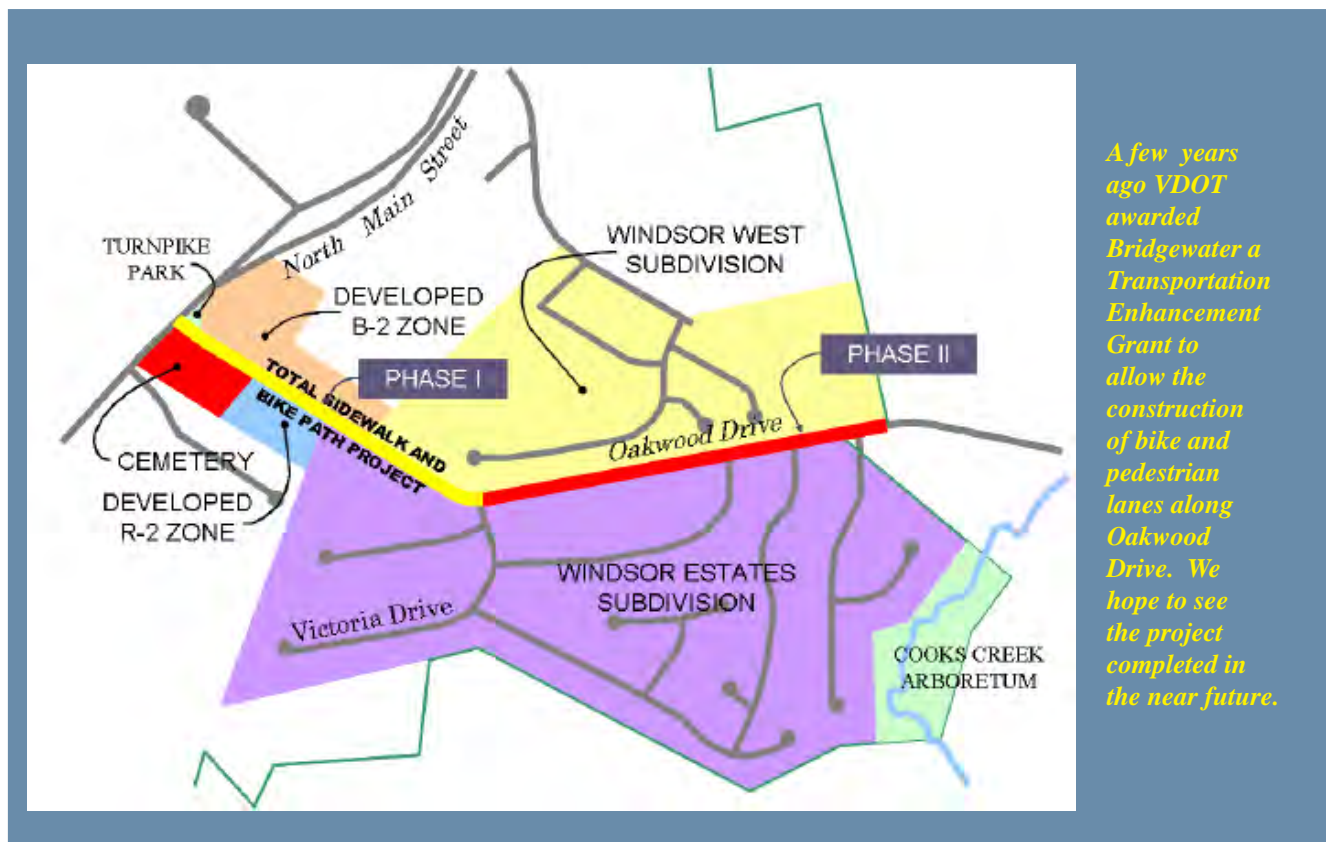
**Recommendation:**

- Town land development regulations should promote a transportation system that creates a hierarchy of streets. Local streets should be designed for low traffic volumes and speeds, providing primary access to residential properties. Secondary collector streets should funnel local traffic to primary collectors and main highways while also providing access to residential properties. Primary collectors and main highways should provide limited access to individual properties, using reverse shared entrances and other techniques to reduce multiple entrances and driveways.

**Objective 2: Ensure that new growth and development is compatible with available transportation facilities.**

**Recommendations:**

- Requests for rezoning should include a traffic impact analysis designed to identify any deficiencies that might exist in the existing transportation network. The analysis should also identify measures and costs associated with correcting such deficiencies. Town officials should require private sector funding of roadway improvements brought about and necessitated by the rezoning request.
- Town officials should work closely with County officials and VDOT representatives to ensure that growth in adjacent areas does not create traffic conflicts and excessive traffic volumes within Bridgewater.



*A few years ago VDOT awarded Bridgewater a Transportation Enhancement Grant to allow the construction of bike and pedestrian lanes along Oakwood Drive. We hope to see the project completed in the near future.*

# PUBLIC SERVICES

## Background

Public services and facilities help determine residents' quality of life. Public services add to residents' convenience and safety and help make the community a desirable place to live and work. The provision of various services, especially public water and waste water systems, is a key distinction between rural and urban environments. These services promote efficient use of available land and help attract commerce and industry.

## Inventory and Analysis

### Public Utilities.

The Town of Bridgewater owns and operates a water treatment and distribution system located on Green Street near its intersection with Breezewood Terrace. At one time all of our drinking water was taken from North River, treated and distributed to Bridgewater household. However, in 1996, the Town completed the drilling of a well rated at 1.5 mgd. In 1998, this well was brought on line. Today this water is mixed with that from North River, treated at the water treatment facility and distributed to nearly 2000 Bridgewater households. The current rated capacity for treatment and distribution is 1.5 million gallons per day (mgd) with an average daily demand of 0.9 mgd in 2006. System storage capacity is 1.09 mg.

An agreement exists between the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County for the purchase of water during emergencies. Valves can be opened during a crisis such as a major fire that will allow water from the Rockingham County system to enter Bridgewater's distribution system.

During the past four decades, the Town has taken steps to replace undersized and inadequate water lines. More than one-third of the water distribution system has been installed since 1980. A comparison of treated versus metered flow indicates a very low system loss of less than five percent. System pressure is good throughout the Town. There are still isolated locations within the Town where water lines are undersized or have begun to function inefficiently such as some areas along Main Street. Town officials have identified these problem areas and are preparing plans to address improvements.

### Waste Water Collection and Disposal.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority (HRRSA) operates the waste water treatment plant providing service to town residents. The rated treatment capacity of this plant is 16.0 mgd but this capacity is sometimes exceeded during storm events due to inflow and infiltration problems. An upgrade of the plant is currently in the planning stages. The HRRSA provides wastewater treatment services for the City of Harrisonburg, the Towns of Dayton, Bridgewater, and Mt. Crawford, and nearby areas within Rockingham County.



*Although HRRSA maintains a state-of-the-art water treatment facility, meeting the Chesapeake Bay goal requirements by 2010 will require another major and expensive upgrade.*

The Town is responsible for maintenance of the wastewater collection system. This system includes more than 70,000 feet of terra cotta, PVC, and cast iron pipe as well as one pump station located adjacent to Riverside Drive near the Bridgewater College athletic field.

The Town has been replacing old terra cotta waste water lines with PVC pipe as part of a comprehensive inflow/infiltration abatement plan. More than one-third of the waste water collection system has been installed since 1980. Many of the old brick manholes have been replaced to reduce inflow and infiltration problems.

### Electricity and Natural Gas.

Dominion Virginia Power provides electric service to most residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Bridgewater and the surrounding vicinity. A few are served by Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. Natural gas service is available in some sections of town through Commonwealth Gas.

### Solid Waste Collection and Recycling.

The Town provides curbside collection of solid waste to its residents for a monthly fee. Nonresidential collection charges are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Refuse is deposited in the County Landfill or the City of Harrisonburg's Steam Generation Plant. A curbside recycling program has been established as well as vegetation collection.

### Cable Television.

Comcast provides cable television service in the Town of Bridgewater.



*Town crews respond to sewer backup problems.*



*Bridgewater offers its citizens curbside collection of trash and recycling.*



*Police service is provided around the clock, seven days a week.*



*Turner Ashby High School is one of four educational facilities located in or near Bridgewater.*



*North River Library, the Bridgewater branch of Massanutten Regional Library, provides a broad range of library services to town citizens.*

### Police and Emergency Services.

Bridgewater has nine full-time police officers that provide 24 hour coverage of the Town. These officers have use of five police vehicles for patrol duties. Police offices are located in the first floor of the Town Community Center at 201 Green Street.

Volunteer fire and rescue stations are located within the municipal limits and serve both town residents, and nearby Rockingham and Augusta County areas. The Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department is located at 304 North Main Street. The Bridgewater Rescue Squad is located at 10 Volunteer Drive.

### Health Facilities.

Rockingham Memorial Hospital is located approximately seven miles away from Bridgewater. General medical and related services are available in Bridgewater from physicians, dentists, and other medical personnel. The Bridgewater Retirement Village, an elder care facility, is located in the Town.

### Educational Facilities.

The Rockingham County School Board operates Turner Ashby High School and John Wayland Elementary School in town. Wilbur Pence Middle School is located in Dayton. Blue Ridge Christian School, a private religious-based school, is located in the old Bridgewater Elementary School building. Bridgewater College, founded in 1880, is a private co-educational institution providing four-year post secondary education. James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University, located in Harrisonburg, also provide post secondary education.

### Library Services.

North River Library provides the main library service to the Town. Bridgewater College's library is also available as is the Massanutten Regional Library in Harrisonburg. Most local churches have libraries as do the public schools and the Bridgewater Retirement Village.

## Public Recreation

Bridgewater owns and maintains ten public parks totaling approximately 89 acres. More than half of this recreational space was acquired since 1984.

**Oakdale Community Park**, adjacent to Mt. Crawford Avenue, is the largest park with an area over thirty-five acres. Approximately nine acres are leased to the Bridgewater Little League which maintains six ball fields and operates a clubhouse/concession stand. Three picnic shelters have been constructed with one having public restrooms. A playground for children provides a variety of recreation activities. This park is also the home for the summer concerts program and the annual “Labor Day Celebration” which are both sponsored by the Town and provided free to area residents.

**Harrison Park**, also referred to as the Lawn Party Grounds, is located at the corner of Green and Grove Streets and encompasses approximately fifteen acres. The majority of this park is leased to the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department and serves as the site of their annual fund-raising lawn party. This park also includes two indoor tennis courts, a basketball court, and several items of playground equipment. Horse shows and other special events are sometimes held at Harrison Park.

**Sandy Bottom Park**, located near East Riverside Drive, is the former site of the town dump and sewage treatment plant. Approximately fourteen acres in area, the park lies adjacent to the North River and presently is developed as a par 3 golf course.



*Oakdale Community Park is probably the busiest of the ten public parks found in Bridgewater.*



*Indoor tennis courts are available to town residents free of charge.*



*Sandy Bottom is a great place for young golfers to hone their skills.*



*Wynant Park, East College Street, offers a quiet place for children to play.*



*Cooks Creek Arboretum presents a walking trail where a variety of song birds can be seen.*

**Wildwood Park** is a ten acre site adjacent to the North River on West Bank Street. A dam in the river provides a pool for fishing. This park contains picnic tables, playground equipment, restrooms, and a picnic shelter. The park provides both wooded areas and grassed open spaces for recreation and exploration.

**Wynant Park** is a small (0.83 acres) park adjacent to East College Street containing trees and grassed areas as well as playground equipment.

**Edgebriar Park** is located on the banks of the North River along East Riverside Drive. The park has a large well-landscaped water garden and will soon have a fishing pier that is handicap accessible.

**Cooks Creek Arboretum** consists of eight acres of green space located along the banks of Cooks Creek. It contains several picnic tables as well as a walking path.

**Harrisonburg/Warm Springs Turnpike Park** is a small (.13 acres) park which commemorates the history of Route 42, formerly known as the Harrisonburg-Warm Springs Turnpike.

**Bridgeview Park** (2.58 acres) includes exercise stations, a walking path and playground equipment. It is located on West Bank Street.

**Seven Bridges Park** (2.23 acres) is located next to the bridge crossing North River and contains a gazebo as well as plaques telling some of the history of Bridgewater during the Civil War.

A five-member Recreation Commission is charged with establishing rules and regulations for park use and planning future facilities and improvements. Town personnel provide supervision and maintenance of all park facilities.

Both Rockingham County and Bridgewater College provide recreational programs that are available to the public during certain hours. The Ashby Recreation Association operates a private swimming pool.



*Bridgewater Community Center where the municipal offices are housed.*

At present there are no pedestrian trails or bicycle paths providing connections between the various parks. Opportunities may exist to link together the parks located along the North River.

**Public Buildings**

The Bridgewater Community Center, located at 201 Green Street, houses offices for the Police Department, Town Treasurer, Public Works, and Town Superintendent. A large community meeting room, named Arey Assembly Hall, offers space for community events as well as wedding receptions, family reunions, etc. The Town owns two sites that serve as municipal garages for vehicles and equipment. One is located at the end of East College Street in Sandy Bottom Park. The other is on Volunteer Drive.

The Town also owns the former Town Hall building on South Main Street. It is currently leased to “Codi’s Cookies and More”.

*Goals, Objectives & Recommendations*

**GOAL: Preserve and enhance the natural resources of Bridgewater and surrounding areas to the greatest extent practical.**

**Objective 1: Ensure that all residents continue to receive quality police, fire, rescue, and waste collection and disposal services.**

**Recommendations:**

- Town officials should monitor regularly the volunteer fire and rescue squads and offer technical and financial assistance as needed to ensure that these vital services meet state requirements and residents' needs. Future population growth and development may place a strain on the all-volunteer departments and staffing levels should be monitored to ensure that services are available when needed.
- Town officials should continue to provide police services to its residents on a 24-hour basis. Officers should continue to exceed the minimum training requirements mandated by the state.

Town officials should ensure that officers are provided with vehicles and other equipment necessary to meet job demands.

- Solid waste collection and disposal should continue as a town service to residents and businesses.

**Objective 2: Ensure that public buildings provide adequate space to support town departments, services, and staffing needs.**

**Recommendation:**

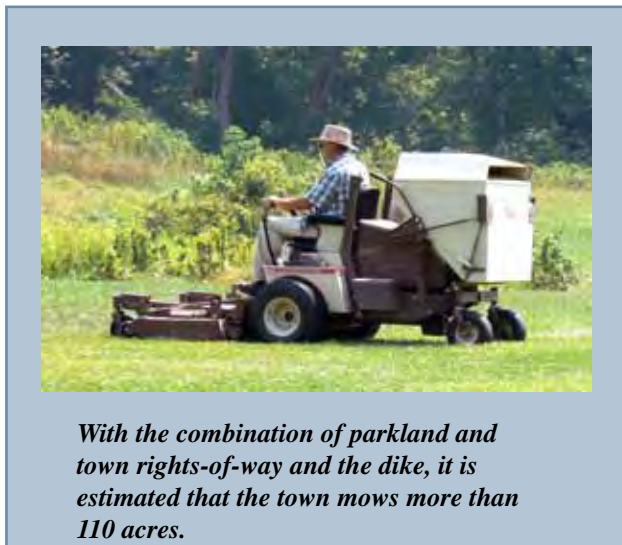
- The Town should examine the feasibility of consolidating all Public Works operations at one site to improve efficiency of operations and reduce site maintenance costs as well as removing the existing structures from the floodplain.

### **Objective 3: Provide adequate community facilities and services for all town neighborhoods.**

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Town should monitor closely the demand for water services and ensure that sufficient capacity is available to meet residents' needs. The Town should continue its program of waterline replacement and upgrades to improve the efficiency and reliability of the system.
- Town officials should work closely with the Harrisonburg- Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority to ensure that sufficient capacity is reserved to meet anticipated town demands.

### **Objective 4: Ensure that all public facilities are attractive, well designed, and properly maintained.**



#### **Recommendation:**

- The Town should continue to provide a high level of maintenance of all its facilities. Well maintained buildings, attractive site design, and landscaping contribute to create a positive image within the community and sets a standard for other property owners to follow.

### **Objective 5: Expand passive and active recreational opportunities.**

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Town Recreation Commission should work to identify both short and long-term community recreation needs. A Master Plan should then be developed for the town park

system that prioritizes needs and identifies funding sources. County officials should be solicited for financial support for those facilities that meet regional needs.

- Town parks should be linked together wherever possible by a system of pedestrian and bicycle trails. Town officials should explore the feasibility of creating a trail along the entire frontage of the North and Dry Rivers as part of a comprehensive trail system.
- Consideration should be given to the development of a linear park and trail system within the 100-year floodplain of Cooks Creek as development of the annexation area occurs.

### **Objective 6: Develop a long-range plan for funding, construction, and maintenance of community facilities to keep pace with anticipated growth.**

#### **Recommendation:**

- Town officials should prepare and adopt a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that identifies future capital expenditures required to meet community goals and objectives. The CIP would identify and prioritize capital needs and identify proposed funding mechanisms. Schedules for initiation and completion of projects should be included.

### **Objective 7: Maintain proper fiscal integrity to preserve favorable bond ratings.**

#### **Recommendation:**

- Per capita bond debt should not exceed guidelines developed by the state. The use of bonds to finance capital projects should be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure that bonded debt does not become an excessive financial obligation that precludes adequate financing of public services and activities.

### **Objective 8: Ensure revenues for all services match the costs of providing those services.**

#### **Recommendation:**

- Town officials should closely monitor the costs of providing services and ensure that connection fees, user fees, and other assessments are adequate to provide both present and future needs of the Town. Regular, small periodic adjustments in fee structures should be made to avoid large, sudden increases that may cause financial difficulties for residents and businesses.

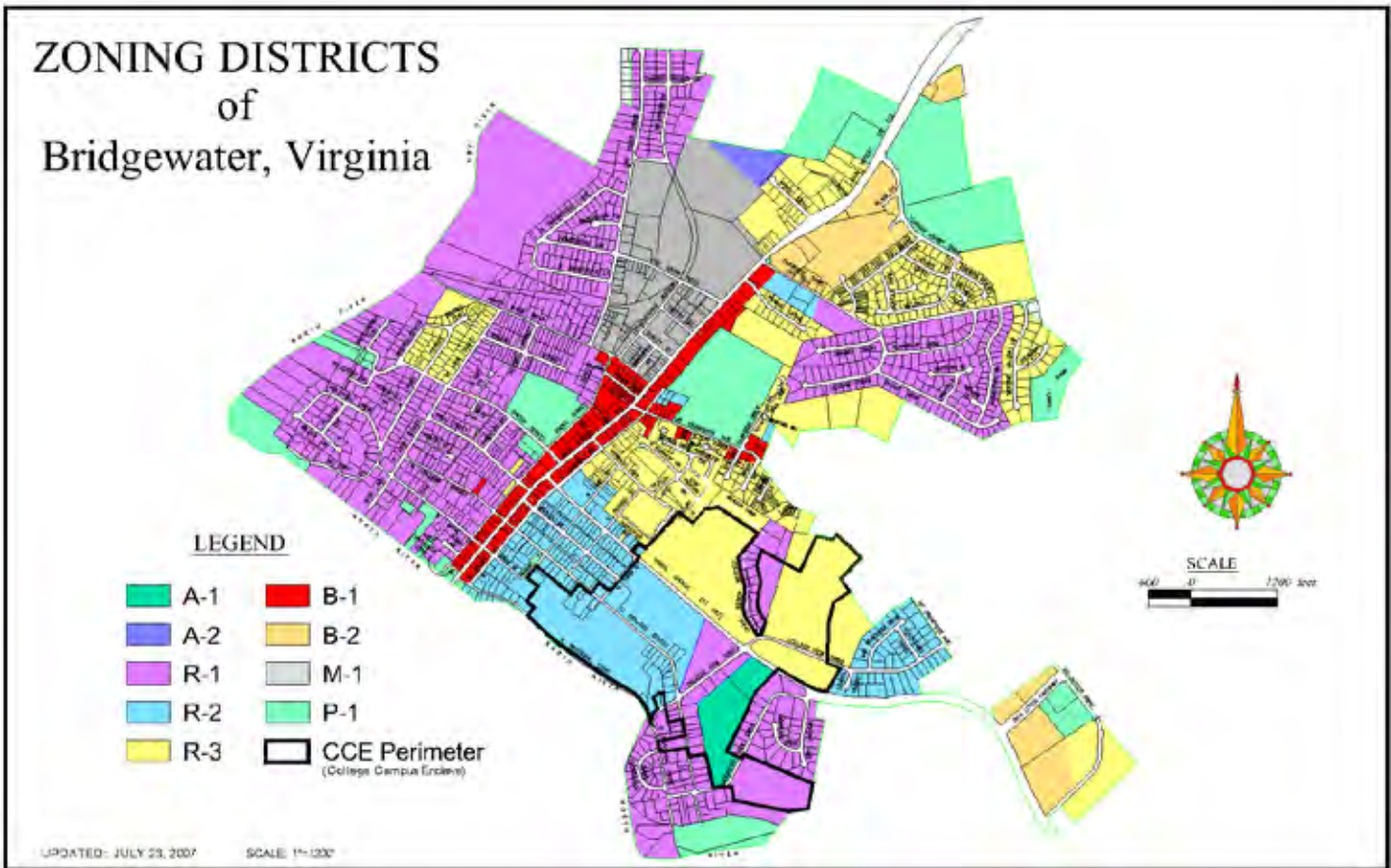
# LAND USE

## Background

Land use patterns in a community contribute significantly toward defining the character of the community and the quality of life enjoyed by the residents. The main force behind the development and growth of Bridgewater has been the commercial and industrial development along the Route 42 corridor. Over time, the development of Bridgewater College and residential growth has helped to form the present community.

Historically, Bridgewater has had an insufficient residential base to support a large commercial center. Most large commercial enterprises have tended to locate in Harrisonburg, which has long served as the urban center for Rockingham County. Recent residential growth, much of it experienced in the 1990's, has increased the population to more than 5,500 residents. This population should be large enough to support an increased commercial sector.

The biggest challenge to the community in the next decade will be to find a suitable location for a commercial center while maintaining the viability of the Route 42 corridor and providing improved access for the industrial enterprises located in the center of town.



A=Agricultural; B=Business; R=Residential; M=Manufacturing; P=Public Use; CCE=College Campus Enclave

## Inventory and Analysis

It is clear from an analysis of existing land use that the lack of available land for development will have a negative impact on the current rate of growth, particularly residential growth. Future Town growth is most likely to occur in the annexation perimeter. At the present, little land is available for development. If we could maintain the present rate of residential growth it would have a positive impact on drawing commercial services for the community. If we can't maintain steady residential growth, it limits the possibility of commercial growth.

There is also limited land available for industrial and employment growth within the existing Town boundary. Two locations have been identified within the annexation perimeter, which appear suitable based upon topography and transportation access. The first is the area surrounding the proposed intersection of existing Route 257 and Don Litten Parkway. The second area is further north where an extension of Oakwood Drive (Route 704) is projected to intersect with the Route 257 bypass adjacent to Cooks Creek. Both of these locations offer easy access to the major road network and the topography is suitable for the construction of large buildings. All of the land in the annexation area, with the exception of a few scattered residential lots, is now in active agricultural use. The land within the annexation area which immediately surrounds the proposed location of the Route 257 bypass constitutes a designated growth area which has been found to meet the intent of the Code of Virginia, section 15.2-2223.1

## Goals, Objectives & Recommendations

**GOAL: Encourage efficient and orderly land development patterns which integrate residential, commercial, industrial, and public use in the town.**

**Objective 1: Ensure Town zoning is in conformance with the Town Plan.**

**Objective 2: Maintain the integrity of existing residential, commercial and industrial areas.**

**Objective 3: Encourage land development patterns that are compatible with the transportation network, community facilities, and planned infrastructure improvements.**

**Objective 4: Promote balanced growth through land use planning that encourages a diversity of land use activities and balance the tax base with the demand for public services.**

**Objective 5: Reduce conflicts between adjacent, incompatible land uses.**

**Objective 6: Promote mixed-use development incorporating residential, commercial, and employment uses.**

**GOAL: Maintain and promote a visually pleasing town image and seek to retain the special features that define the existing town character.**

**Objective 1: Encourage compatible building and site design for new development.**

**Objective 2: Encourage creative urban design through flexible design standards, which incorporate incentives and bonuses.**

**Objective 3: Improve the appearance of the Town as a whole, its central business district, and its major entrances.**

**GOAL: Identify, preserve, enhance, and promote the town's historic and cultural resources.**

**Objective 1: Develop an increased understanding of the Town's historic resources. Establish archives to document this history.**

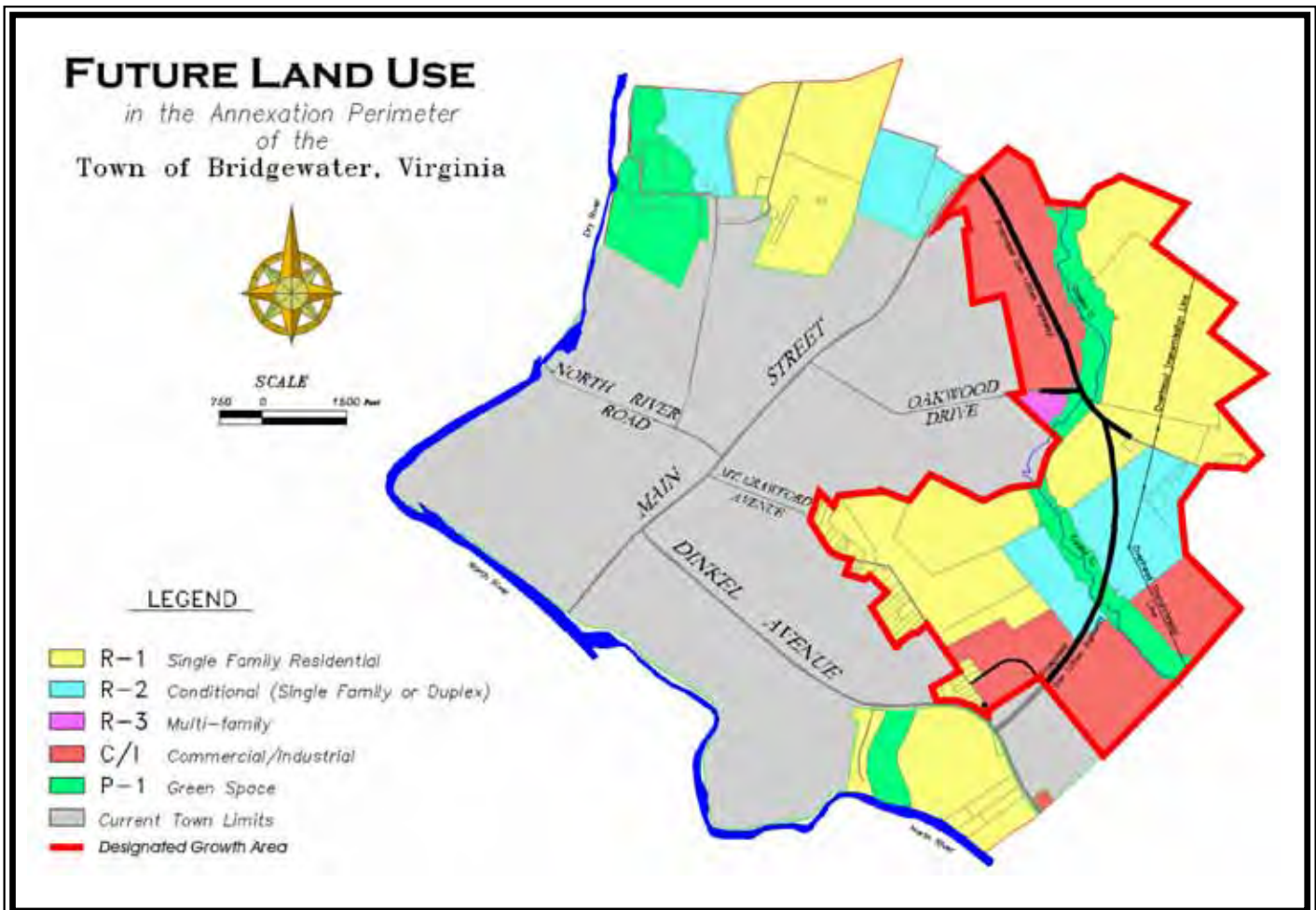
**Objective 2: Encourage events and activities that recognize, promote, and celebrate the Town's heritage.**

**GOAL: Coordinate land use decisions in the annexation area with Rockingham County officials and appropriate agencies.**

**Objective 1: Identify adjacent County land areas suitable and appropriate for future residential, commercial, and employment growth and work with County officials to coordinate land use planning, utility expansions, and infrastructure improvements.**

**Objective 2: Ensure that the Town of Bridgewater and Rockingham County planning efforts reflect Town land use and utility plans.**

The Future Land Use map illustrates recommendations to guide future land use and development decisions. Proposed locations are identified for critical residential, commercial, and employment center uses. The Future Land Use map is meant to be general in nature while providing a useful guide to Town officials, residents, property owners, and developers. Beginning on the next page, recommendations are provided to supplement the information provided on the Future Land Use Map.



- Town Council decisions on land use proposals should be in substantial agreement with the suggestions provided by the Future Land Use map and the Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Reliance on the Comprehensive Plan provides a rational, defensible basis for decision-making and provides continuity to actions taken over time.
- The Town should continue its review of regulations, ordinances, and policies affecting land development activities within the Town to determine their suitability for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, making revisions as necessary.
- The Town should consider making zoning districts consistent with the future land use proposals of the plan.
- Town and County officials should coordinate their respective land development procedures, zoning, and standards for the areas adjacent to the municipal boundaries to eliminate any conflicts or inconsistencies that exist between the two jurisdictions.
- Town officials should work closely with officials from the County to develop detailed long-range plans and procedures for regulating the location of new development.
- The Town and County should pay special attention to the highway gateways into the Town and develop special design considerations to protect and enhance these areas. Attractive signs and landscaping can help make a positive impression on residents and visitors while also projecting a positive image to potential commercial and industrial prospects.



*This entrance sign on the northern end of Main Street has been an attractive addition to our town.*



*Townhouses, such as this one in Windsor West Subdivision, is a great place for young couples starting out or retired people looking to downsize.*

- Flexible and creative development standards should be developed in both the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to permit innovative alternatives for site design and development.
- Continued maintenance and improvement of public areas should be encouraged to provide attractive and comfortable settings for recreation and other outdoor activities.
- Medium and high density housing should be located within close proximity to goods and services and linked by sidewalks and pedestrian paths to reduce reliance upon the automobile and reduce traffic congestion on town streets and highways.
- Standards for the provision of open space should be developed. Open space should include undisturbed natural areas as well as areas designed and intended for passive and active recreational activities. The nature and extent of required open space should be correlated to the density of associated development.
- Multi-family development should provide both common open space and active recreation areas for resident use. Revision of the Town Zoning Ordinance should require a minimum amount of open space contingent upon the density and number of dwelling units. Open space should be provided for developments containing more than 10 dwelling units.
- Zoning Ordinance revisions should include districts designed to promote long-range planning and development for large tracts that are incorporated into the municipal limits, particularly for proposed employment centers.
- Distinct single-family neighborhoods should be protected from inappropriate infill development and conversion of existing residences.

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The “CIP” or Capital Improvements Plan is an integral part of a comprehensive plan. This list of capital projects helps guide the Town Council towards the goal of meeting community needs. Based on surveys of citizens, board members, and staff, it was determined that the following projects should become a part of the 2008 Capital Improvements Plan.

*Ranked from highest priority to lowest:*

## 1. **Main Street Redevelopment/Beautification.**

Improve the attractiveness and economic viability of Main Street through the continued enforcement of the Green Law, the establishment of public parking, placing utilities underground, and other measures deemed necessary to enhance our main thoroughfare.

## 2. **Main Street/Mt. Crawford Avenue Intersection Improvements.**

Work with VDOT to improve the safety of this heavily traveled intersection. Included in any such project will be a traffic signal, turning lanes and sidewalk extensions.

## 3. **Industrial Access Road.**

This project will connect Route 257 (Dinkel Avenue with Route 42 (North Main Street). When completed, it will greatly reduce the amount of traffic on Main Street. It is proposed that this route be designated a “limited access” route which means that traffic will only enter and leave the new road at designated intersections.

## 4. **Industrial Entrance/Quality Street.**

It is recommended that 1st Cities Funds be used to develop an industrial entrance and traffic signal at the intersection of Main Street and Old River Road. Further, it is recommended that Quality Street be closed and that all truck traffic be routed to the Old River Road intersection.

## 5. **Water Filtration Plant & Storage.**

The continued upgrade and expansion of the Water Filtration Plant is encouraged.

## 6. **Traffic Calming on Dinkel Avenue.**

It is recommended that 1st Cities Funds be used to provide traffic calming measures on Dinkel Avenue, particularly in the section passing through Bridgewater College.

## 7. **Amphitheater.**

It is recommended that the Town Council work with Bridgewater Retirement Community towards the construction of an amphitheater to be located adjacent to Oakdale Community Park.

## 8. **Centralized Maintenance Shop.**

Both maintenance shops are located in the floodplain and received damage in both the 1985 and 1996 floods. It is recommended that a central site be selected above the floodplain with a new maintenance shop constructed.



*A new maintenance shop was constructed in 2003 on the east end of town. It is out of the flood plain and provides space for town equipment and supplies.*

### 9. Underground Utilities.

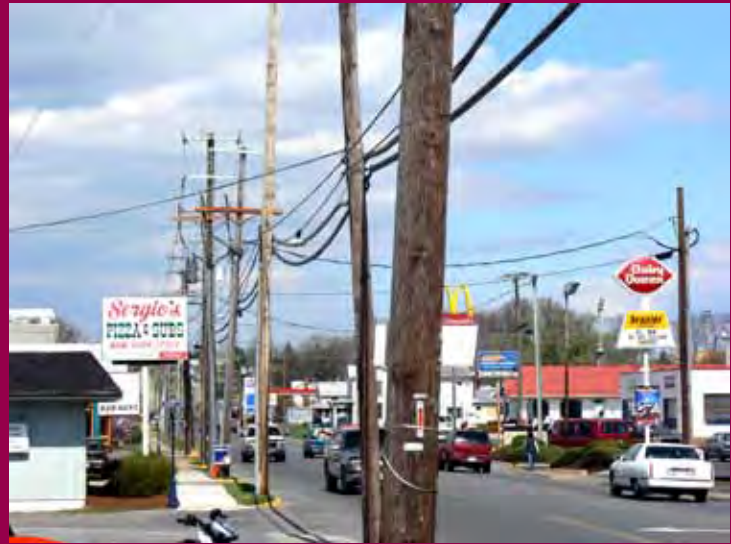
It is recommended that the Town Council continue to work towards underground utilities on both Main Street and Dinkel Avenue. Even though this will be on a piecemeal basis, the end result will be a more attractive town. The current policy of cost sharing with new businesses should be continued.

### 10. Bike Paths.

This is the highest rated recreation need by both our citizens and officials. It may be desirable to make this a regional project with the path connecting Bridgewater, Dayton, and Harrisonburg. It has been suggested that the path be wide enough to accommodate horse and buggy traffic as well.

### 11. Community Center.

It is recommended that Bridgewater, Dayton, and Rockingham County work together to construct and operate a community center that will serve both communities as well as the surrounding area.



*Although exorbitantly expensive, the town officials continue to seek creative ways to eliminate power poles particularly along Main Street.*



**Credits**

***Bridgewater Planning Commission***  
*Clockwise from right top. Glenn Suter,  
Jane Fulk, Myron Rummel, Bob Stickley,  
Bob Runion, Mike Harvey, Fontaine  
Canada.*