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LEXINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040

City of Lexington, Virginia
Amended
July 18, 2024

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07/18/2024

Resolution 2024-09

A RESOLUTION BY THE LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL TO AMEND THE LEXINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040, TO CORRECT THE DESIGNATIONS ON THE CITY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF EIGHT PARCELS LOCATED ALONG THE SOUTHEAST END OF MAPLE LANE

WHEREAS, the current Lexington Comprehensive Plan 2040 was adopted on November 5, 2020; and

WHEREAS, it was recently discovered that eight parcels containing single family residences, located at 5 Maple Lane (TM# 28-13-3), 7 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-13), 9 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-14), 11 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-15), 13 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-16), 15 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-17), 17 Maple Lane (TM# 29-17-18), and 19 Maple Lane (TM# 28-17-19), were designated as "Commercial Center" and "Opportunity Area" on the Future Land Use Map – designations that were likely made in error and that are incompatible with the remaining parcels on Maple Lane and inappropriate for the stable, residential Maple Lane neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment is to change the future land use designation for the subject parcels to "Traditional Neighborhood" and to remove them from Opportunity Area #5; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lexington Planning Commission, after full compliance with all state code public hearing notice requirements, held a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Lexington Comprehensive Plan 2040 on June 13, 2024, and **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL**; and

WHEREAS, the Lexington City Council, after full compliance with all state code public hearing notice requirements, held a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Lexington Comprehensive Plan 2040 on July 18, 2024.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED this 18th day of July, 2024 that the Lexington City Council does hereby **APPROVE** the amendment to the Lexington Comprehensive Plan 2040 (CPA #2024-01) in regular session on July 18, 2024, to a) amend the future land use designation for 5 Maple Lane (TM# 28-13-3), 7 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-13), 9 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-14), 11 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-15), 13 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-16), 15 Maple Lane (TM# 28-14-17), 17 Maple Lane (TM# 29-17-18), and 19 Maple Lane (TM# 28-17-19) from "Commercial Center" to "Traditional Neighborhood," and b) remove the same eight parcels from Opportunity Area #5.

Adopted:  Frank W. Friedman, Mayor

Attest:  Dani L. Hostetter, Clerk of Council



Acknowledgments

The City of Lexington thanks the following people for their efforts in the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

Citizens, businesses, and organizations of the City of Lexington and surrounding region

City Council

Frank W. Friedman, Mayor
Marylin E. Alexander, Vice-Mayor
Dennis W. Ayers
Michele F. Hentz
David G. Sigler
Charles "Chuck" Smith
Leslie C. Straughan

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The Berkley Group
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission



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Local Organizations

50 Ways Rockbridge Racial Justice Issue Group
Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
Chamber of Commerce
Kendal at Lexington
Local Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People
Main Street Lexington
Ministerial Association
Project Horizon
Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Rockbridge Area Relief Association
School Board
Social Services
Threshold Housing Commission
Tourism Board
United Way
Virginia Military Institute
Washington and Lee University

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The Plan at a Glance

1 About the Plan

Section 1 establishes the legal context for the Comprehensive Plan, describes the Plan's functional relationship to other planning efforts in Lexington and the region, and summarizes the community input process - a key component of drafting the content of this plan.

2 Planning Framework

Section 2 outlines the Planning Structure, overarching Vision Statement, and a series of interconnected Planning Values. These Values set the stage for the goals, objectives, and strategies contained within each Planning Element.

3 Planning Elements

Section 3 contains the policies and strategies to achieve the vision of the Planning Framework. The section is organized into nine Planning Element chapters. Through the development of the Comprehensive Plan, Lexington identified the following Planning Elements as important to the community:

- ▷ Historic Resources
- ▷ Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources
- ▷ Local Economy
- ▷ Arts & Culture
- ▷ Housing
- ▷ Land Use
- ▷ Transportation
- ▷ Community Facilities & Infrastructure
- ▷ Governance

Each Element includes an overarching goal, supporting objectives, and specific strategies.

4 Implementation Plan

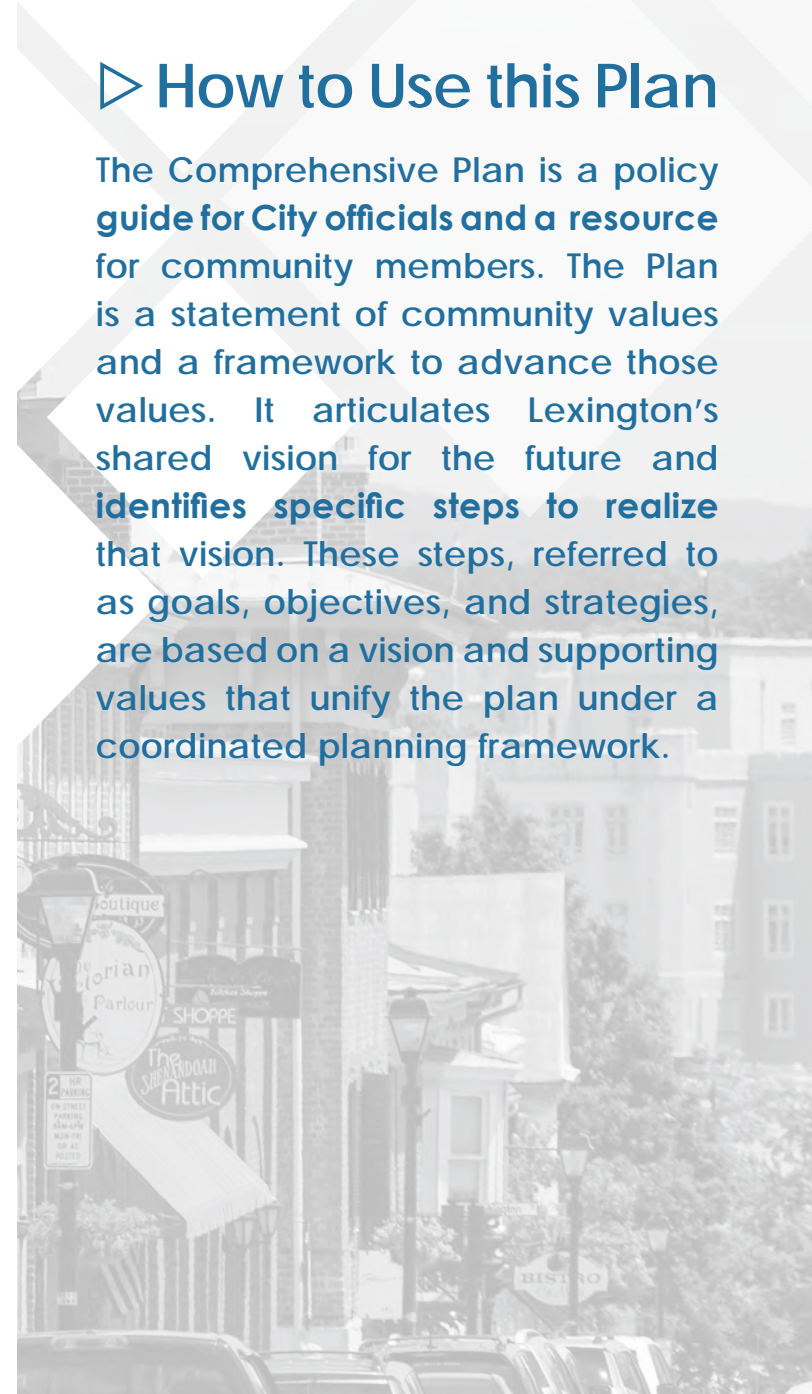
Section 4 brings the Comprehensive Plan to life. The Implementation Plan sets timelines for the strategies from each Planning Element and provides accountability by assigning responsibility for each strategy. The Implementation Plan provides specific guidance for decision-making and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor progress towards Lexington's vision for the future.

5 Appendix

The Appendix contains resources that explain and expand upon ideas contained within the Comprehensive Plan.

▷ How to Use this Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for City officials and a resource for community members. The Plan is a statement of community values and a framework to advance those values. It articulates Lexington's shared vision for the future and identifies specific steps to realize that vision. These steps, referred to as goals, objectives, and strategies, are based on a vision and supporting values that unify the plan under a coordinated planning framework.





► Welcome to Lexington

Lexington, Virginia, is a historic community in Virginia's Great Valley. Since its founding in 1778, Lexington has evolved from a small Valley settlement along the Great Wagon Road into a vibrant center for education, culture, and commerce. Today, residents, students, and visitors alike enjoy Lexington's vibrant Main Street, world-class institutions, scenic views, and ample recreation opportunities within the City and in the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains.

Lexington is situated on the Maury River approximately 50 miles north of Roanoke, Virginia, and 50 miles east of the West Virginia state line. Located at the intersection of historic US Route 11 and US Route 60 as well as Interstates 81 and 64, Lexington is the literal and figurative center of the Lexington-Buena Vista-Rockbridge County region. The region - covering approximately 610 square miles of land and home to over 36,000 people - is recognized for its many historic sites, outdoor recreation opportunities, and the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway. Lexington serves as Rockbridge County's seat and is home to both Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute. With a population just over 7,000, Lexington maintains a small-town feel mixed with nationally ranked academics, an eclectic arts culture, and deep historical roots.

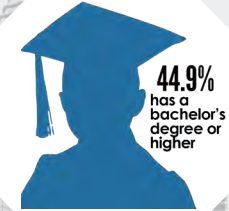
▶ Lexington Today

Lexington today is a remarkable city. But like any community, we face challenges and must define and measure our current successes and deficiencies. What are we getting right? Where are we falling short? By understanding the challenges and opportunities facing our community, we can decide what works and what we can do better. The Comprehensive Plan process allows us to assess our community and identify strategies to address any critical gaps. The following summarizes the key challenges and opportunities we face in making the Lexington of today the Lexington of 2040.

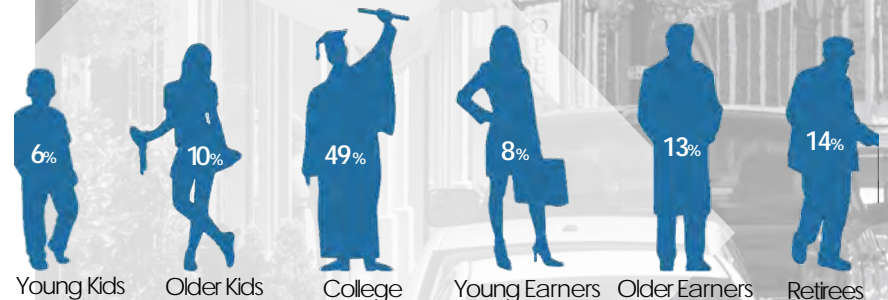
Lexington is one of the smallest cities in Virginia both in terms of area and population. Despite its size, it is a regional employment hub, and home to two major educational institutions and a wealth of cultural and recreational assets that support a thriving tourism industry. As a small, historic city that grew along traditional development patterns, Lexington does not have the major infill and redevelopment issues that larger more sprawling cities face. Rather, Lexington faces challenges due constrained city limits, little remaining undeveloped land, and aging infrastructure. As such, Lexington must employ forward-thinking land use and development policies to create more resilient infrastructure networks, meet market demands for shopping and housing, and provide for the needs of its residents.

The people of Lexington are perhaps one of the City's greatest assets - highly educated and generally supportive of innovative community planning policies. Nearly 45% of Lexington residents hold a bachelor degree or higher, which is double the average in Rockbridge County and Virginia as a whole. The presence of Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute contribute to high educational attainment rates in the City. These institutions are also key economic drivers and major employers for the City and region. Despite their powerful role in the City's economic makeup, Lexington struggles to retain the young, educated people who graduate from these institutions. Almost half of Lexington's population is comprised of college age people 18 to 24 years old. But young workers 25 to 39 years old only make up approximately 8% of Lexington's population. This disparity shows that most students do not

Over 7,000 people call Lexington home



Almost 44%
of earners making \$50k to \$75k spend MORE than 30% of income on housing



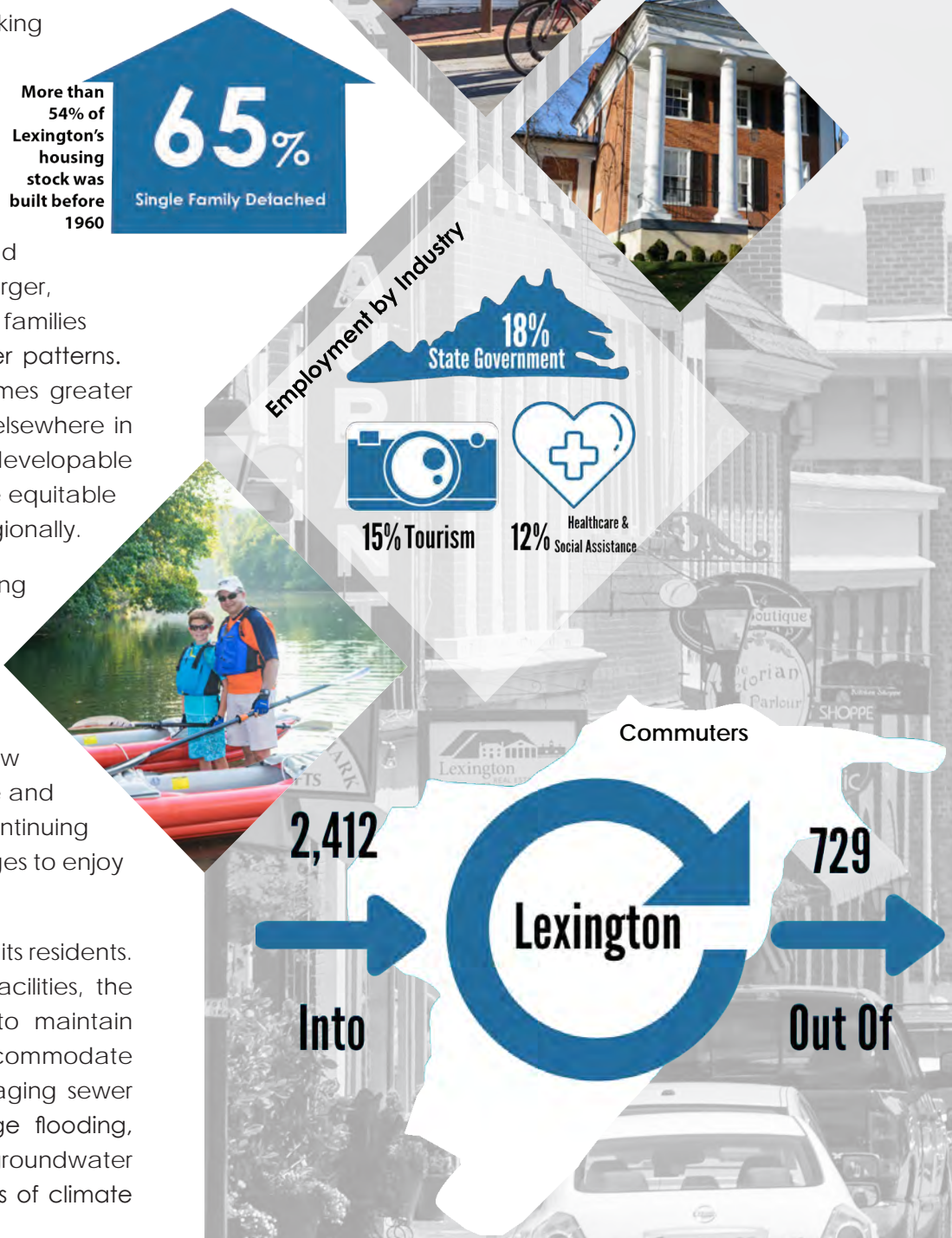
▶ Lexington Today

stay in Lexington after graduation and entry level workers are looking elsewhere for housing and employment.

Housing is one factor in Lexington’s challenge to retain a younger workforce. A large percentage of both low and high income households are cost-burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs. Furthermore, 65% percent of Lexington’s housing stock is single-family detached and greater than 54% was built before 1960. Housing in Lexington is larger, older, and more expensive to maintain than most young workers and families find appealing. This is further supported by Lexington’s commuter patterns. The number of people commuting into Lexington is nearly 3.5 times greater than the number commuting out. With more affordable housing elsewhere in the region, easy commutes along interstates, and little remaining developable land, Lexington must implement creative policies to support a more equitable housing market and ensure growth management is coordinated regionally.

While creating more affordable housing options to help retain young workers and families is important to the long-term vitality of the City, we can’t overlook the City’s second largest population group — people age 65 and older. Just over 14% of Lexington’s population is over 65. As such, Lexington should support expanded senior-living housing opportunities and also implement policies that allow residents to age in place – supporting the growth of the healthcare and wellness industries, providing safe alternative transportation, and continuing to support the development of amenities that allow people of all ages to enjoy a high quality of life.

Lexington provides a variety of community services and facilities for its residents. While the City strives to ensure the highest standard of public facilities, the City’s physical infrastructure is aging and requires investment to maintain and enhance services, protect environmental quality, and accommodate future development. Maintenance and upgrades to the City’s aging sewer and stormwater infrastructure are particularly critical to manage flooding, water quality degradation, and sewer capacity issues due to groundwater inflow and infiltration – issues made worse by the growing impacts of climate



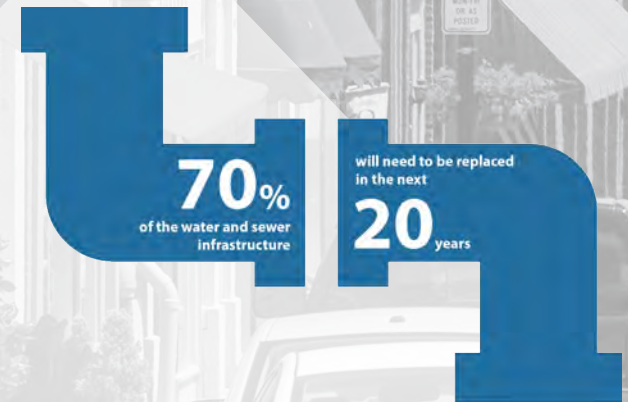
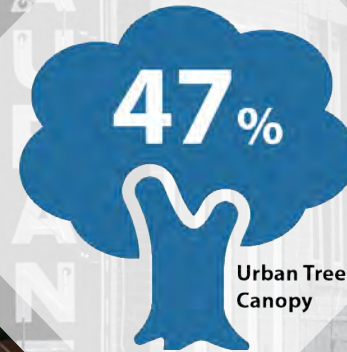
► Lexington Today

change. Looking to protect citizens, property, and the environment, Lexington must prioritize traditional infrastructure upgrades as well as look to innovative green infrastructure investments to offset the impact of development on our valuable natural resources. Lexington has a robust existing green infrastructure network that includes over 17 sites (such as public and private parks and open space), three trails, six waterways, and at least ten Low Impact Design stormwater sites. Increasing this network will enhance opportunities for alternative transportation and afford residents more opportunities for “green time”, while also lessening the burdens on traditional infrastructure networks.

The traditional development patterns of many of Lexington’s neighborhoods support the focus on alternative transportation. Connectivity between neighborhoods and shopping, dining, and entertainment amenities and choice in how residents get there creates a more affordable community by lessening the cost burden of transportation for households; allows people to safely age in place; lessens burdens on public infrastructure; and creates a more connected, healthy, and resilient community. Lexington’s narrow, human-scale streets naturally-support bicycle and pedestrian travel between neighborhoods and amenities. At the same time, the narrow right-of-way presents challenges for retrofitting bike lanes and expanding sidewalks to improve safety and accessibility, an increasingly important issue both for young families and for aging residents.

Lexington already offers many quality of life amenities – a vibrant and historic downtown; two higher education institutions; one hospital; 20+ local restaurants just within downtown; 25+ museums, arts, theatre, and music venues; ten public parks or open spaces; a 500+ acre environmental preserve; three walking trails; and the Maury River - all within walking distance of most neighborhoods. As we plan for the Lexington of 2040, we must use these assets as opportunities to bridge the gaps in infrastructure, transportation, housing, and economic diversity.

In weighing the challenges and opportunities facing Lexington, it is clear that the City has much in its favor. The key is making use of those assets to address the challenges.



► Lexington 2040

Our Vision

The City of Lexington will develop strategically and sustainably by diversifying economic opportunities, housing options, and transportation methods while protecting the City's rich historic and natural resources and enhancing the quality of life enjoyed by its residents and visitors.

The Lexington of today is a great place to live. The question, as we welcome future generations, is how can Lexington best expand and share these assets? How can we protect and amplify the special things we value about this place? How do we preserve our character and history as we grow and evolve with changing times? How do we increase housing and transportation choices for different types of individuals and families? How do we keep Lexington healthy, safe, beautiful, and affordable? How can we face our more difficult problems, improve the City, and meet our challenges head on?

The distinct benefit of a Comprehensive Plan is that it confronts these big issues in a big-picture way. The Comprehensive Plan fully considers how the whole community's values, people, places, and prosperity are interrelated and interdependent. In creating this plan, we identified the defining issues that are central to the future success of Lexington. The challenge before us now – in shaping the **Lexington of 2040** – is to leverage our strengths as we grow, while mitigating the negatives. The Lexington 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides the direction to do that.





About the Plan

▷ About Comprehensive Plans ▷ Planning Process

About the Plan

▷ What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that serves as a guide for the development of a locality. The City of Lexington is charged with making many decisions on behalf of its citizens, all meant to serve the interests of the community. The Comprehensive Plan establishes the long-term vision for the future of Lexington so that each of these many decisions can be aimed toward shared goals for the City's future. The Plan describes the community's vision for where it wants to be in the next 20 years, along with strategies to achieve the community's goals. The strategies are based on community values that foster sustainable growth and enhance community character in order to create a more vibrant future for Lexington.



Legal Basis for Comprehensive Plans

All cities, counties, and towns in Virginia are required to adopt a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of their community. Within statutory limitations afforded by state code, land development, community facilities, and other public improvements are managed according to the policies set in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Code of Virginia establishes the Plan's legal status as a general community development tool based on the following:

... it shall control the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, no ... (improvement), whether publicly or privately owned, shall be established, constructed, or authorized, unless and until... submitted to and approved by the local commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof ...

The Code of Virginia Sections 15.2-2223 and 15.2-2224, among others, outline the required and optional Plan elements and offer a general

framework for plan activities. Typical elements of the Comprehensive Plan, include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Future land use planning maps and recommendations for development
- ▶ A comprehensive system of transportation facilities, including maps and cost estimates for improvements
- ▶ A system of community service facilities
- ▶ Areas and implementation measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of affordable housing
- ▶ Strategies to provide broadband infrastructure
- ▶ Urban development areas appropriate for higher density development, redevelopment, and infill

State requirements for Comprehensive Plans also recognize that community development is on-going and ever changing. For this reason, the Code of Virginia sets a requirement that all Comprehensive Plans be reviewed every five years and amended as needed.

About the Plan

▷ Planning Jurisdiction & Coordination

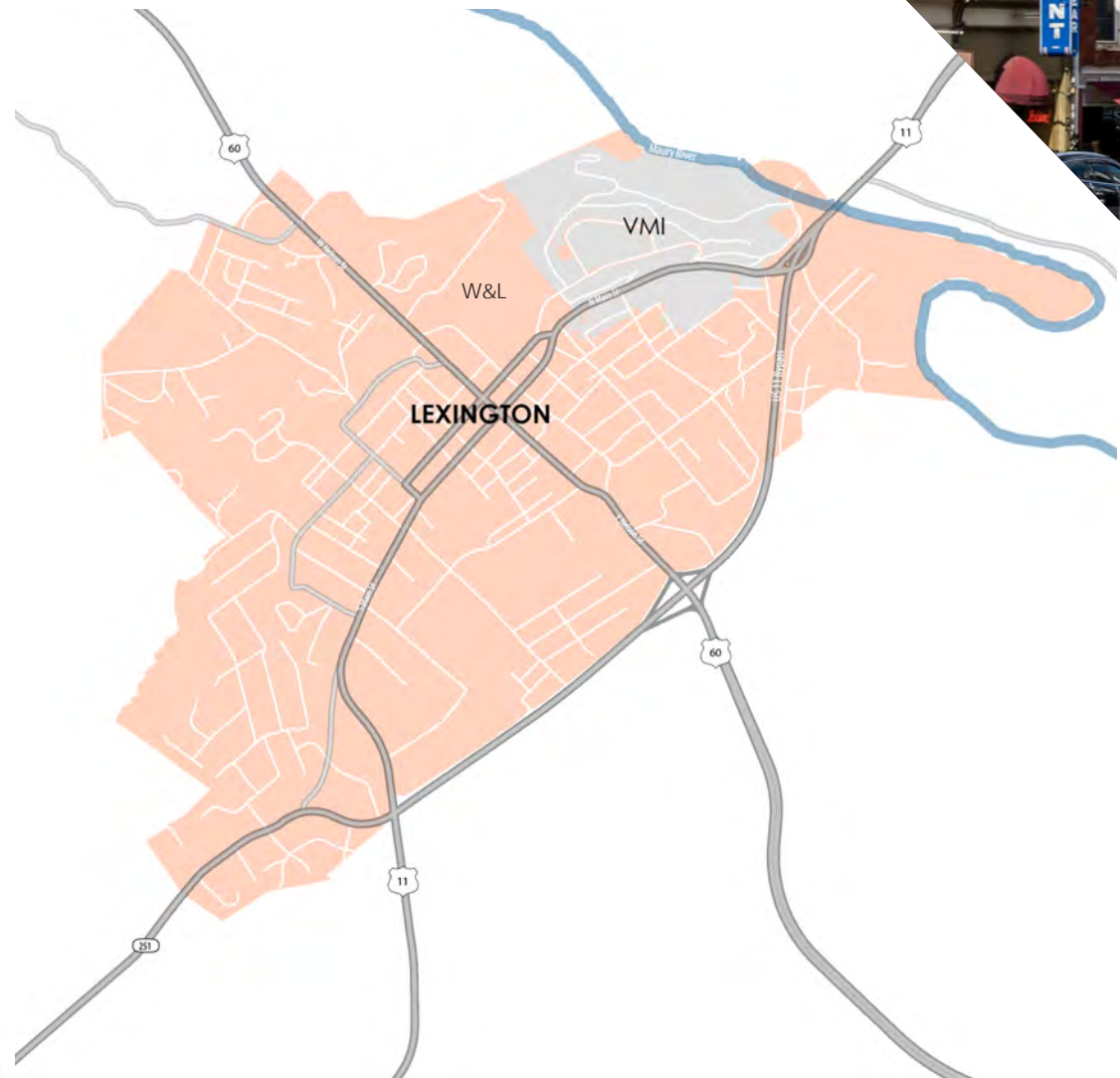
Lexington's official planning jurisdiction ends at City boundaries. At the same time, Lexington is an employment, shopping, and entertainment destination for residents of Rockbridge County and the region.

With few parcels available in the City itself, new development increasingly locates on county lands adjacent to Lexington. In its own Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2016, Rockbridge County prescribed that rural areas of the County should be preserved while new development should be encouraged adjacent to existing settlements and in areas well-served by existing transportation and utility infrastructure.

Lexington is also home to two major institutions – Washington and Lee University (W&L) and Virginia Military Institute (VMI). As a branch of State government, VMI is not subject to local zoning or other authority and conducts its own strategic and land use planning processes.

Lexington is a member of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC), a regional organization that provides planning services and technical assistance to its member jurisdictions. CSPDC staff participated in the development of this Plan and were integral in drafting the Transportation Chapter.

Lexington's connections to the region and major institutions shape the City's future. As such, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes and prioritizes collaboration with its institutional and regional partners as a critical component of long-range planning.



About the Plan

▷ Relationship to Other Plans, Policies, & Ordinances

This Comprehensive Plan is grounded in Lexington’s strong history of local planning and is integrally related to other plans, policies, and ordinances. This Plan includes valuable ideas from the last [Comprehensive Plan](#), the [Downtown Enhancement Plan](#), [City Council’s Five-Year Strategic Plan](#), and other community plans and planning processes. The Plan also sets the stage for future updates to community plans, ordinances, and strategic documents.

Previous Comprehensive Plans

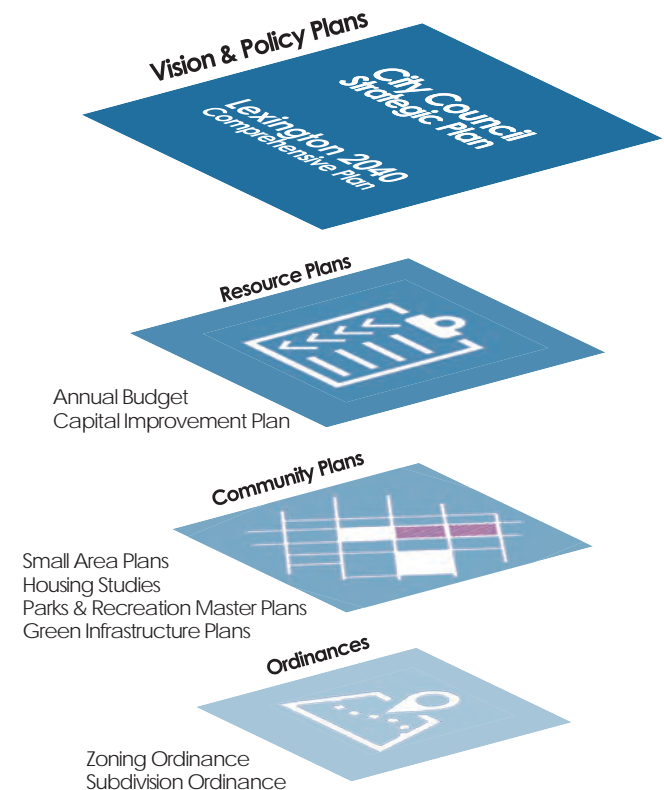
The first Comprehensive Plan for the City of Lexington was adopted in 1975 and was prepared by the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs. This Plan was updated in 1985 by the Lexington Planning Commission with the help of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. In 1990, the Lexington City Council requested that the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed and updated. Following a 5-year process led by the Planning Commission and the City’s Director of Planning and Development, an updated plan was adopted in June 1995. The Planning Commission and the City’s Department of Planning and Development again updated the Comprehensive Plan in 2007 in a process that included a public input forum, survey, and meetings with local institutions, including Washington and Lee University, Virginia Military Institute, and Rockbridge County.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

While the Comprehensive Plan sets planning policy for a community, land use and development are regulated through the City’s zoning and subdivision ordinances. The Comprehensive Plan guides amendments to these ordinances and should be used to make decisions on land use applications, such as conditional use permits and rezonings. Because it is a guide for other City actions, the Comprehensive Plan will only be implemented through its diligent application by Lexington’s staff and elected and appointed leaders.

In 2016, Lexington began a major review and update of the City’s zoning ordinance, following many years of minor changes and patches. The new zoning ordinance was adopted in 2017 and subsequent amendments have been adopted. Since then, Lexington has updated the zoning ordinance annually, as is best practice to ensure continued compliance with state code and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

How the Tools Work Together



About the Plan

▷ Relationship to Other Plans, Policies, & Ordinances

City Council Strategic Plan

Lexington's City Council adopted its Five-Year Strategic Plan in January 2019. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan provides a vision and prioritizes actions to address the needs of the community. The Strategic Plan is distinct from the Comprehensive Plan in its shorter-term planning horizon and broader focus beyond the physical environment. Where the Comprehensive Plan sets the planning context for private development, land use, and capital investments over a 20-year period, the Strategic Plan is focused on a five-year horizon and includes intangible or non-physical elements, such as operational and fiscal conditions. This distinction is evident in the City Council's strategic vision, which states that:

"Lexington is an inviting, open-minded and welcoming city. Our Community is known for its cultural, recreational, and education opportunities. Accomplishing this vision requires solution-focused and fiscally responsible city government, a vibrant and economically healthy downtown, and an engaged citizenry interested in friendly, livable and safe neighborhoods."

While the Strategic Plan is broader in scope than the Comprehensive Plan, both plans should be coordinated and work together toward the

same future. The five main principles set by the City Council to achieve its strategic vision can be applied to issues dealing with Comprehensive Planning:

- ▶ **Healthy and Physically Active** – Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, pedestrian, bicycle, and recreation facilities including Jordan's Point as a destination for outdoor activities.
- ▶ **Economically Healthy** – Appropriate scale and variety of commercial areas, enhance business activities and regional economic development initiatives, and diversify the tax base.
- ▶ **Learning** – Provisions for schools and affordable day care facilities, libraries, and access to the colleges.
- ▶ **Safe** – Safe transportation routes including pedestrian and bike accommodations as well as emergency services.
- ▶ **Engaged** – Community involvement in the Comprehensive Plan process itself.

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical expenditures such as land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. The CIP is a working document and should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP align with the City's Strategic and Comprehensive Plans.

Other Plans and Initiatives

Lexington's Comprehensive Plan relies on the body of knowledge and recommendations contained in many other plans, policies, and initiatives. Within each Planning Element, this Plan recognizes these existing documents and identifies new plans and studies that may be needed to support implementation.

About the Plan

▷ The Planning Process

A Phased Approach

To produce a plan that is clear, supported by the community, and suitably comprehensive, the process of creating the plan must be both open and organized. The planning process for Lexington's 2040 Comprehensive Plan was organized into four phases:

- Phase 1** – Analyze existing plans and regulations; gather demographic and other data.
- Phase 2** – Collect community input and establish a vision.
- Phase 3** – Develop individual plan topics, sections, maps, and goals.
- Phase 4** – Refine the plan through public review; adoption by elected leaders.



Community Input Process

Public input is essential for a Comprehensive Plan that is reflective of the community's vision for the future. This Plan is the result of a community-driven process that included broad outreach throughout the planning process.

The community involvement process, which began in Spring 2018, generated input from hundreds of residents. Through online surveys; public meetings and workshops; interviews with community stakeholders, including residents, business owners, leaders of City departments and other organizations, and county and regional leadership; and the guidance of thematic working groups, this Plan has been drafted and vetted with direct input from the community.

The information gathered in these community engagement activities guided the development of the Comprehensive Plan and are important aspects of all planning decisions regarding the future of the community.

- ▶ *Community Kick Off Forum*
- ▶ *Community Survey*
- ▶ *Interviews with Regional and City Stakeholders*
- ▶ *Joint Meetings with Rockbridge County Planning Commission*
- ▶ *Working Groups*
- ▶ *Drafting by Lexington Planning Commission*
- ▶ *Public Review, Refinement, and Adoption*

About the Plan

▷ Community Input Summary

Community Kickoff Forum

An opening public forum was held at Virginia Military Institute's Marshall Hall on March 8, 2018, to introduce the comprehensive planning process, explain the role of the plan, and begin to collect public input on the future of the City. After presentations by City staff and planning consultants, attendees were asked to work in groups of four to eight to answer questions identifying the top issues and projects they would like to see the plan address.

Top planning issues included:

- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Balancing growth and preservation (both historic and environmental)
- ▶ Pedestrian and bicycle networks
- ▶ Jobs and employment

The top projects identified included:

- ▶ Creation of additional greenspace
- ▶ Pedestrian improvements
- ▶ Beautification projects
- ▶ Affordable housing development and programs
- ▶ Attracting tourism

Community Survey

A community survey was available for residents of both the City and surrounding areas between June 15 and August 31, 2018. The survey was completed by 489 respondents who gave input on transportation, vision, priorities, and other topics. The survey was available online, with paper copies also available. Participation in the survey was promoted through the City's website, social media, in newspapers, and at local events. The results of this survey are summarized here and are vital to this plan:

- ▶ Top 3 concerns for Lexington's future: lack of job opportunities, affordability, and lack of shopping or services.
- ▶ Top 3 existing assets: small city character, natural beauty, and historic sites and buildings.
- ▶ Residents desire economic development while also preserving history and providing affordable living options.

- ▶ Priorities for the City's public facilities and services: basic needs of the public schools, public water and sewer systems, and emergency services.
- ▶ Type of residential growth needed: affordable housing, single family homes, and housing for seniors. Respondents also noted a need for condos, apartments, duplexes, and townhouses.
- ▶ Type of commercial development needed: general retail, healthcare, specialty retail, and restaurants.
- ▶ Top transportation challenges: parking, issues with sidewalks, and lack of bicycle lanes.
- ▶ Important characteristics of neighborhoods: friendliness, quiet, historic architecture, proximity to downtown and mature trees.

- ▶ Land use challenges: conservation of open space, limited developable land, and the presence of institutions of higher learning that impact the amount of land available.
- ▶ Top 5 changes needed to make Lexington more livable and enjoyable: more shopping and entertainment; community, family, kid friendly spaces; increased affordability, walkability, and economic development; and job opportunities for young people.
- ▶ What Lexington should look like in the next 10 years: thriving businesses and a downtown; historical and small-town character; increased opportunities for youth, young families and young professionals; no change; and a welcoming and diverse City.



About the Plan

▷ Community Input Summary

Interviews with City and Regional Stakeholders

As a follow-up to input from the public through the kickoff forum and community survey, specific insight was sought from stakeholders, including departments of City government, Lexington's two institutions of higher learning, non-profit organizations, and regional authorities. Each was asked about specific Comprehensive Plan issues affecting their work, and what City issues they see in their interactions with the community.

The issues and concerns covered by these interviews add expert input to the planning process and help identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the future. Stakeholder input mostly complemented the concerns of the public, with recurring themes including:

- ▶ The need to protect the City's irreplaceable historic character.
- ▶ The roles for many organizations in the active promotion of economic development.
- ▶ Desires for additional recreation and outdoor activities.
- ▶ The need to directly address issues of poverty in the City.
- ▶ The opportunity to collaborate with institutions of higher learning over shared interests.
- ▶ Lexington's need for affordable housing and a wider variety of housing options.
- ▶ The need for citizens to have a voice in local government and in all plans.



Interviewed stakeholders from:

- ▶ Police Department
- ▶ School Board
- ▶ Rockbridge Area Relief Association
- ▶ Washington and Lee University
- ▶ Virginia Military Institute
- ▶ Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
- ▶ Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
- ▶ Kendal at Lexington
- ▶ Fire Department
- ▶ Main Street Lexington
- ▶ Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Public Works
- ▶ Tourism Board
- ▶ Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization

About the Plan

► Community Input Summary

Joint Meetings with Rockbridge County Planning Commission

As the center of a larger region, Lexington must consider planning issues beyond its own borders. Land use and transportation plans of neighboring Rockbridge County, which completed its own Comprehensive Plan update in 2016, are particularly important.

To promote a cohesive and regional approach to planning and to learn from the experience of County planners, joint meetings of the Lexington and Rockbridge County Planning Commissions were held on June 13, 2018, at the County Office Building and again on July 12, 2018, at Waddell Elementary School. These meetings were an opportunity for Lexington commissioners to ask questions of their County counterparts, and to explore the regional coordination elements adopted into the 2016 Rockbridge County Comprehensive Plan. Key principles of this coordination effort include:

- **The County's future land use planning focuses development on areas directly surrounding Lexington.**
- **Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge must work together to leverage their resources for economic development.**
- **Developing shared community facilities benefits all residents.**
- **Promoting sustainable development is mutually beneficial.**
- **Affordable housing is an issue for everyone in the region.**
- **Preserving scenic beauty and environment is key to the region's success.**

Working Groups

Citizen working groups were established to supplement the community engagement efforts in early 2019. Two working groups were established: Green Infrastructure and Arts and Culture. These working groups were charged with examining existing conditions and making recommendations for improvements to be considered by the Planning Commission.

About the Plan

Drafting by Planning Commission

Under the Code of Virginia, the Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission drafted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan using the wealth of information collected through the community engagement process. The Planning Commission welcomed public comment throughout the drafting process during citizens' time at each meeting.

Public Review, Refinement, and Adoption

The public review and refinement period ensures that the drafted Comprehensive Plan presents a clear path forward that is understood by community members. In June 2020, Planning Commission made the draft plan available to the public and hosted a public review meeting to showcase progress and gather reactions.

With in-person meetings limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City employed new technology to collect citizen and stakeholder input on the draft Plan. The public review meeting was held as an interactive "Virtual Public Forum" and was made available on social media for real-time and asynchronous viewing. A follow-up survey was sent to participants, and the Plan was shared on the City's website and by email with stakeholder groups that had been involved throughout the process. The "Virtual Public Forum" was viewed by over 800 people and had more than 50 participants during the forum.

The public review process raised a new level of awareness and attention to considerations of diversity and equity in Lexington. Substantive changes were made to all chapters of the Plan, with particular emphasis on history and historic resources. In addition, the Planning Commission engaged numerous community organizations that represent the voice of the underrepresented, ensuring that the final draft plan recognizes Lexington's difficult past and charts a course to an inclusive future.

Following the public refinement period, the revised draft Comprehensive Plan was available for review by the public and considered by the Planning Commission through a formal public hearing process. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission's recommended draft, City Council completed its review of the draft Comprehensive Plan. The draft Plan was again made available for review by the public and considered through the formal public hearing process before adoption by City Council.





Planning Framework

▷ Vision ▷ Values ▷ Planning Elements ▷ Goals & Objectives

Planning Framework

▷ Plan Vision

A meaningful Comprehensive Plan looks 10 to 20 years into the future toward a vision of what a place can be. This vision is based on the collective input from the community and should be supported by residents, business owners, and other community members. The vision serves as the overarching principle for the Comprehensive Plan, guiding the development of goals and strategies for each Planning Element. The vision is a broad, aspirational statement headlining the entire Comprehensive Plan — the words are carefully chosen to reflect the most important issues on the minds of community members.

To develop the vision statement for this Comprehensive Plan, input was taken from a wide range of stakeholders including residents, organizations, government departments, and other groups. The vision statement was crafted collectively and adopted by Lexington's Planning Commission.

This vision statement points to an achievable future within the Comprehensive Plan's 10- to 20-year timeframe and is the guiding principle for this plan and the goals set forth in it.

How the City achieves this vision is a long-term project, and one that will take input and cooperation from a variety of people and entities. Through careful planning, this vision can be achieved through setting goals with specific objectives and strategies.

This vision statement paints a picture of a City that is thriving for all residents and businesses and is open to future growth and development. The City in this vision is one that welcomes new citizens and encourages small businesses, friendly neighborhoods, and a City government that works for and with the people to ensure long term sustainability and success for Lexington.

The City of Lexington will develop strategically and sustainably by diversifying economic opportunities, housing options, and transportation methods while protecting the City's rich historic and natural resources and enhancing the quality of life enjoyed by its residents and visitors.

Planning Framework

▷ Plan Values

The vision statement is supported by a series of planning values that provide direct guidance for the strategies, projects, and recommendations included in this Plan. Values are those things that Lexington, as a community, cares the most deeply about. As such, the Plan Values should serve as a guide for the many decisions community leaders will make over time for Lexington. With each decision, we must ask: Are we respecting our values and creating meaningful change for our community? By adhering to the following Plan Values, we ensure that our vision for the Lexington of 2040 becomes a reality.

▷ Defining Diversity

Diversity is paramount to understanding our community's history, enjoying its present, and ensuring future success. Diversity includes the many individuals and groups — demographic (race, age, income, family makeup, birthplace, neighborhood, etc.), self-identification (sex, gender, politics, religion, etc.), and any other differences deemed important — that live in, work in, or visit Lexington.



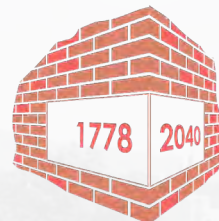
Accessibility & Diversity

We create a more equitable community by ensuring that all residents are connected to and have choice in amenities, services, and opportunities available across the City. We value our diverse community and promote inclusion, equal access, and justice for everyone. At the heart of our desire for inclusion is respect, empathy, mindfulness, and fairness.



Sustainable Economy

We create a more prosperous Lexington by elevating the quality of life for all people in the City. We create a robust and resilient regional economy by putting in place the foundations and programs that allow all Lexington residents to thrive and provide the innovation capable of weathering economic **fluctuations and challenges**.



Local Identity & Character

We create a more vibrant and livable Lexington by protecting and connecting neighborhoods and assets. We create distinct and authentic places by building on our unique history and culture. We provide the stewardship necessary to ensure Lexington's rich historic and natural resources are integral components of our City's future.



Citizen Engagement

We provide education and outreach materials, venues, and planning support so that all residents have the opportunity to engage, lead, and be heard. We recognize that the scope of this plan extends beyond the role of City government. We engage the community in helping the plan succeed.



Management & Collaboration

We act as leaders in our broader community. We leverage our **institutions, non-profit, and government organizations**, strengthening connections and forging partnerships. We work regionally and coordinate locally to ensure our community is interconnected, responsive, and resilient.

Planning Framework

▷ Planning Elements

Every community is comprised of physical elements, economic factors, and social structures that combine to create the distinct places people call home. When we plan for communities, we must consider each of these elements. While residents may require the same basic necessities, every community is unique and has different priorities. Through the development of this Comprehensive Plan, Lexington identified the following nine Planning Elements as important to the community:

- ▶ Historic Resources
- ▶ Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources
- ▶ Local Economy
- ▶ Arts & Culture
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Community Facilities & Infrastructure
- ▶ Governance

The following chapters describe these Planning Elements in detail. Each Planning Element chapter contains a detailed analysis of planning context, an assessment of needs, and an overarching goal, supporting objectives, and specific strategies to bridge any gaps. Lexington's Vision and Values are achieved through the work done to improve each of these Elements.

▷ Goals & Objectives

The Plan sets out nine overarching Goals, one for each of Planning Element addressed in the Plan. Each Goal is supported by targeted Objectives that align with the Plan Values. Taken together, they create a strategic framework to improve each of these Plan Elements and achieve our Vision for the Lexington of 2040.

Table 2.1 illustrates the Goals and Objectives for each Planning Element included in this plan.



Table 2.1
Goals &
Objectives

Historic Resources

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

Local Economy

Arts & Culture

Housing

Land Use

Transportation

Community Services & Infrastructure

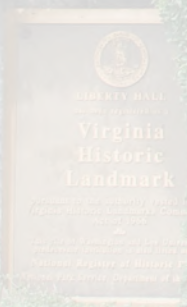
Governance

GOALS

	Continue to improve the quality of life in Lexington, by protecting its historic character, bolstering cultural and recreational opportunities, and promoting tourism to the region.	Protect, preserve, and promote Lexington's natural ecosystems and green infrastructure as a cornerstone of sustainable development and social, environmental, and economic well-being.	Market the City's assets, including its history and small-town character to attract business, increase employment opportunities, raise salaries, and expand local revenue.	Foster the expansion of the artistic and cultural assets in the Lexington region by effectively using existing resources and talent to attract and expand new opportunities.	Conserve and foster the improvement of the City's neighborhoods to ensure safe, affordable, and desirable places to live.	Plan for strategic, efficient, and quality development that increases the economic vitality of Lexington by building on local character and identity; protecting sensitive resources; and prioritizing connectivity between neighborhoods and services.	Build an interconnected and attractive transportation network that provides all residents with safe and efficient mobility choices - including automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.	Provide and maintain the highest quality, efficient, and effective community services and facilities while addressing the future needs of the City.	Provide an inclusive, accessible, and responsive government that works for and with the people of Lexington to achieve its vision and implement its long-range plans.
	Promote historic preservation as a means to enhance the quality of life for all of Lexington's residents.	Create a connected system of green infrastructure to support biodiversity and "green time" access for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in the community.	Offer a business-friendly environment with opportunity for all residents.	Foster access to arts and culture in Lexington.	Promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options for all of Lexington's residents.	Support development patterns that are interconnected and provide opportunities for all of Lexington's residents.	Provide safe transportation options for residents of all ages and abilities.	Improve access to community facilities and services for all residents.	Ensure Lexington's leadership is available to and representative of all City residents.
	Continue to promote history and historic preservation tourism as key elements for a strong, resilient local economy.	Promote energy sustainability and environmental resilience.	Attract new business and investments that increase the city's tax base, diversify the economy, and promote job growth.	Support a strong local arts and culture economy.	Pursue policies that bolster Lexington's housing market, promote new development, and reduce long-term financial burdens on property owners.	Implement land use and growth policies that minimize the burdens placed on the community and increase resiliency and adaptability.	Pursue fiscally responsible transportation improvements that promote accessible, resilient, and adaptable transportation networks.	Offer efficient and effective community services and facilities that meet the needs of residents and businesses of the city.	Advance fiscal responsibility and resiliency in all city decisions.
	Build on Lexington's history and distinctive identity to create a more vibrant 21st century community.	Leverage green infrastructure to build a more beautiful, healthy, and sustainable community.	Make strategic investments that enhance the quality of the community to attract visitors, businesses, and employees.	Use art and culture as a placemaking tool in the community.	Protect and enhance the quality and character of Lexington's residential neighborhoods.	Encourage innovative development that respects, compliments, and builds on Lexington's historic character.	Ensure Lexington's transportation networks are attractive, equitable, and improve the quality of life for all city residents.	Ensure public facilities and services complement the community's design while satisfying the highest level of service for the citizens.	Make decisions that reflect and enhance the values and character of the Lexington community.
	Empower citizens to protect and enhance Lexington's historic resources.	Engage citizens in efforts to create a greener, more sustainable city.	Leverage the business community to strengthen economic development and growth.	Encourage and support citizen-led arts and culture events and initiatives.	Engage Lexington residents and property owners to create a more robust local housing market.	Encourage participation in land use plans, policies, and decisions.	Use citizen input to guide decisions regarding community transportation network improvements and opportunities.	Commit to engaging community members in substantive policy- and decision-making to provide the highest possible level of service provision.	Use innovative techniques, tools, and platforms to engage citizens in decision making processes.
	Provide the appropriate planning information, regulation, and coordination for historic preservation and tourism.	Support partnerships that improve green infrastructure and protect natural resources.	Partner with adjacent communities, community organizations, and educational institutions to achieve the shared economic success of the region.	Provide resources and support for arts and culture in the greater Lexington region.	Leverage community resources to support diverse, safe, and affordable housing.	Work with local and regional organizations, institutions, and groups to further Lexington's land use and development goals.	Coordinate with local and regional agencies and organizations to implement improvements to Lexington's transportation network.	Maximize service delivery through effective management and partnerships.	Advance Lexington's community planning goals through internal coordination and external partnerships.

Historic Resources

Continue to improve the quality of life for all Lexington residents, by protecting historic character, bolstering cultural and recreational opportunities, and promoting tourism to the region.



Historic Resources

▷ Introduction

Lexington is an enduring city, rich in history and architectural character that serves as a backdrop to modern life. Lexington's well-preserved historic downtown is a point of pride for residents, an attraction for visitors, and an economic engine that helps propel the community forward.

Lexington's historic resources and cultural strength support the community's rich quality of life, and as such, the preservation of historic resources is vitally important to the community. Cultural and historic resources include many elements: buildings and structures, scenic roads and rural landscapes; institutions; urban streetscapes; neighborhoods; and other character defining landmarks. In addition to protecting Lexington's historic fabric and cultural identity, the preservation of these resources is integral to maintaining long-term community sustainability and is tied to success in reducing environmental impacts, promoting economic resiliency, providing affordable housing, and offering safer and more efficient transportation networks. Efforts to promote historic preservation support 21st century initiatives and the planning goals present in the rest of the Plan.

Lexington carefully attends to historic preservation while moving toward the future. In Lexington, the preservation of history is not an accident. It is an active pursuit that is planned for, executed daily, and balanced against change and growth. This chapter offers guidance to sustain and promote the identity of Lexington as a historic community. This is not without challenges. Lexington has a

complicated and difficult history in terms of racial injustice, and it is, therefore, incumbent upon us to promote the most accurate and inclusive history possible. This chapter includes recommendations to expand our preservation efforts (the places we protect, the stories we tell, the people we engage); enhance planning, regulatory, and incentive tools; improve coordination among all stakeholders who impact preservation in Lexington; and demonstrates how historic preservation contributes to the success of all of Lexington's planning efforts, including addressing the continuing effects of inequities in our past policy and planning decisions. The City's historic preservation efforts of today allow Lexington to use its past to learn and to grow so that we can create a more vibrant and sustainable tomorrow.



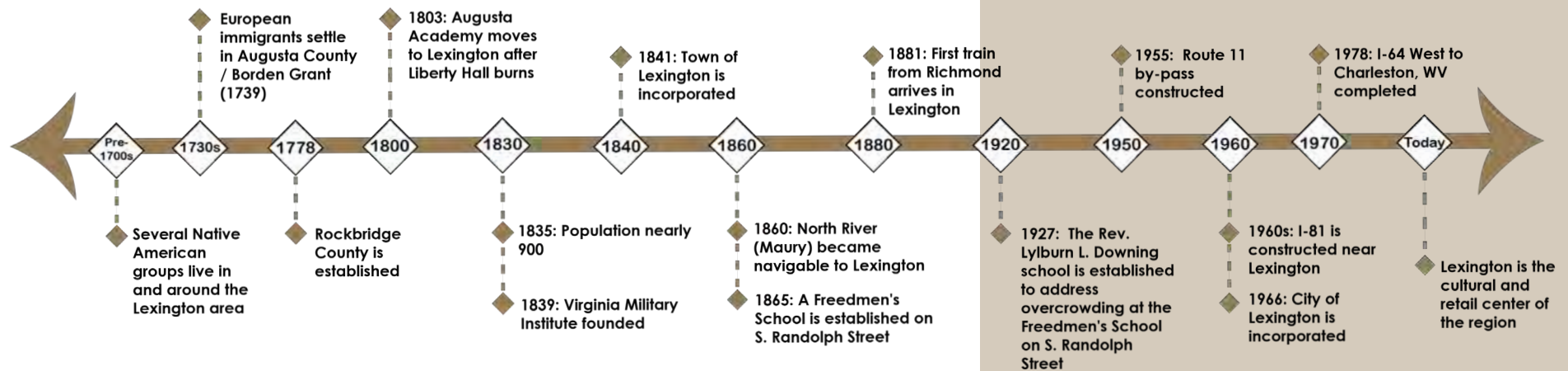
Historic Resources

▷ Planning Context

History

Lexington is located at the gateway to Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, which takes its name from its Native American past: Shenandoah — Clear-Eyed Daughter of the Stars. Archeological evidence suggests that Native Americans were present in the area 11,000 years ago. Migratory tribes, including the Monacan, Saponi, and Tutelo, traveled and hunted in the region through the ensuing centuries. When European immigrants began settling in the Valley in the mid-1700s, the dominant tribes were the Iroquois Confederacy and the Shawnee.

In the 1730's, Scots-Irish, English, and German immigrants moved south from Pennsylvania through the Valley and into what would become Rockbridge County. By the late 1700s, colonial land patents and sometimes deadly frontier conflict would drive most all native communities out of this part of the Valley. The expansion of the African and domestic trade of enslaved people through the 18th and 19th centuries would advance the area’s agricultural, industrial, commercial, and educational growth; the 1860 Lexington census shows that 1/3 of its 2,150 residents were of African descent (29% of them enslaved, with yet more hired from Rockbridge and nearby counties).



▷ Community Engagement

A recurring theme in this Plan’s community input activities was the importance of preserving Lexington’s historic building fabric. Lexington’s scenic and historic character was identified as a top asset that community members value. The community recognizes the need to protect the City’s distinctive historic character while balancing growth and the changing needs of a 21st century community. These themes guided the development of this chapter and informed efforts to identify strategies for Lexington’s historic resources.



Historic Resources

► Planning Context

After the Civil War and emancipation, many formerly enslaved people continued to live and work in the Lexington area. In the early 20th Century, Lexington had a vibrant and economically successful African American community. Businesses located along North Main not only served the nearby neighborhoods of Green Hill and Diamond Hill, but also provided goods and services to VMI. These communities began to diminish in the 1960s as young people moved away. This decline was exacerbated when African American public school teachers left Lexington in the wake of school desegregation for teaching jobs elsewhere. The physical reminders of this community are still present along the streets of the Green and Diamond Hill neighborhoods and in landmarks such as the Wilson-Walker House.

Lexington's history and growth is uniquely tied to its institutions of higher learning – Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute (VMI). From the early days of European immigrants settling in the area, the predecessors of Washington and Lee University, the Valley of Virginia boys' academies, served as a center of education for the region. VMI, established in 1839, boasts the title of the nation's first state-sponsored military college. Both institutions continue to thrive today and represent a defining element of the physical, economic, and social character of the community.

Lexington has also been shaped by infrastructure. Lexington was established in the center of Rockbridge county at the intersection of the Great Wagon Road and the North River at Gilbert Campbell's Ford. The Great Wagon Road functioned as the primary thoroughfare for trade and continues today as U.S. Route 11. By the 1860s, canals linking Lexington to Richmond created a thriving commercial center along the waterfront at East Lexington and Jordan's Point. The railroad arrived in the 1880s and was later abandoned in 1942. In the early 1960s, I-81 replaced Route 11 as the major north-south artery connecting urban areas in the Valley. Construction of I-64 in 1978 completed the major north-south and east-west highway networks that define Lexington today.

Lexington today serves as a retail and cultural center of Rockbridge County, as well as the home of local government and courts. In recent years, the addition of major shopping centers to the north and east of the city has changed the character of retail business in the Central Business District. But thanks to imaginative programs by Historic Lexington Foundation, Lexington Downtown Development Association (now Main Street Lexington) and others, Lexington's downtown has not only survived but continues to serve as a focal point for the tourist trade and the area's economy.

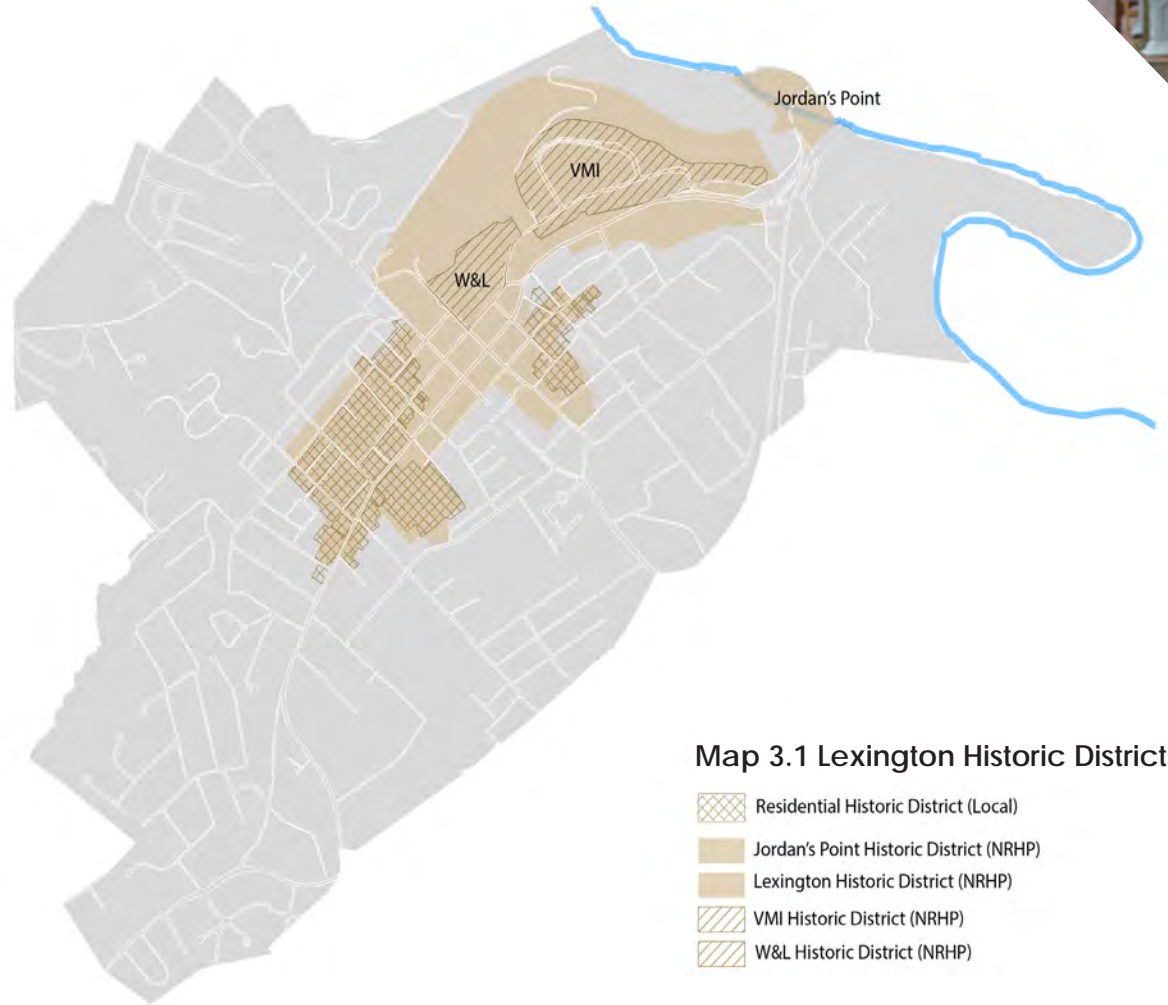


Historic Resources

Historic Preservation

The City of Lexington is well known for its architecture and record of historic preservation. The work of preserving Lexington's historic fabric has been ongoing for decades, including the physical rebuilding of damaged structures, the designation of historic places, and the promotion of the City's historic assets. In recent years, the City has updated its historic district nomination so that more properties will be eligible for historic preservation tax credits. In addition, the City achieved Certified Local Government status and developed design guidelines to ensure that new improvements in the historic district are compatible with the architectural character and contribute to the economic vitality of the City. Lexington's existing historic resources are shown in **Map 3.1**. Additional detail is provided in **Appendix A**.

Buildings which can be seen while walking through the downtown area or driving through the residential neighborhoods bear evidence of the community's dedication to preserving its architectural history. However, like many Virginia communities, these historic preservation efforts were exclusionary and often prioritized the preservation of sites that honored a racially divisive version of our public story. While more modern preservation efforts aim to provide a more inclusive version of our shared past — the Historic Lexington Foundation is working to document and protect slave dwellings and historic African American schools and offers self-guided tours of the Green Hill and Diamond Hill neighborhoods — there is still much work to do. Recent community conversations are grappling with these issues, and this Plan acknowledges the need to address them by committing to telling a broader story of our community and reframing historic preservation as a means to improve the quality of life for all of Lexington's residents.



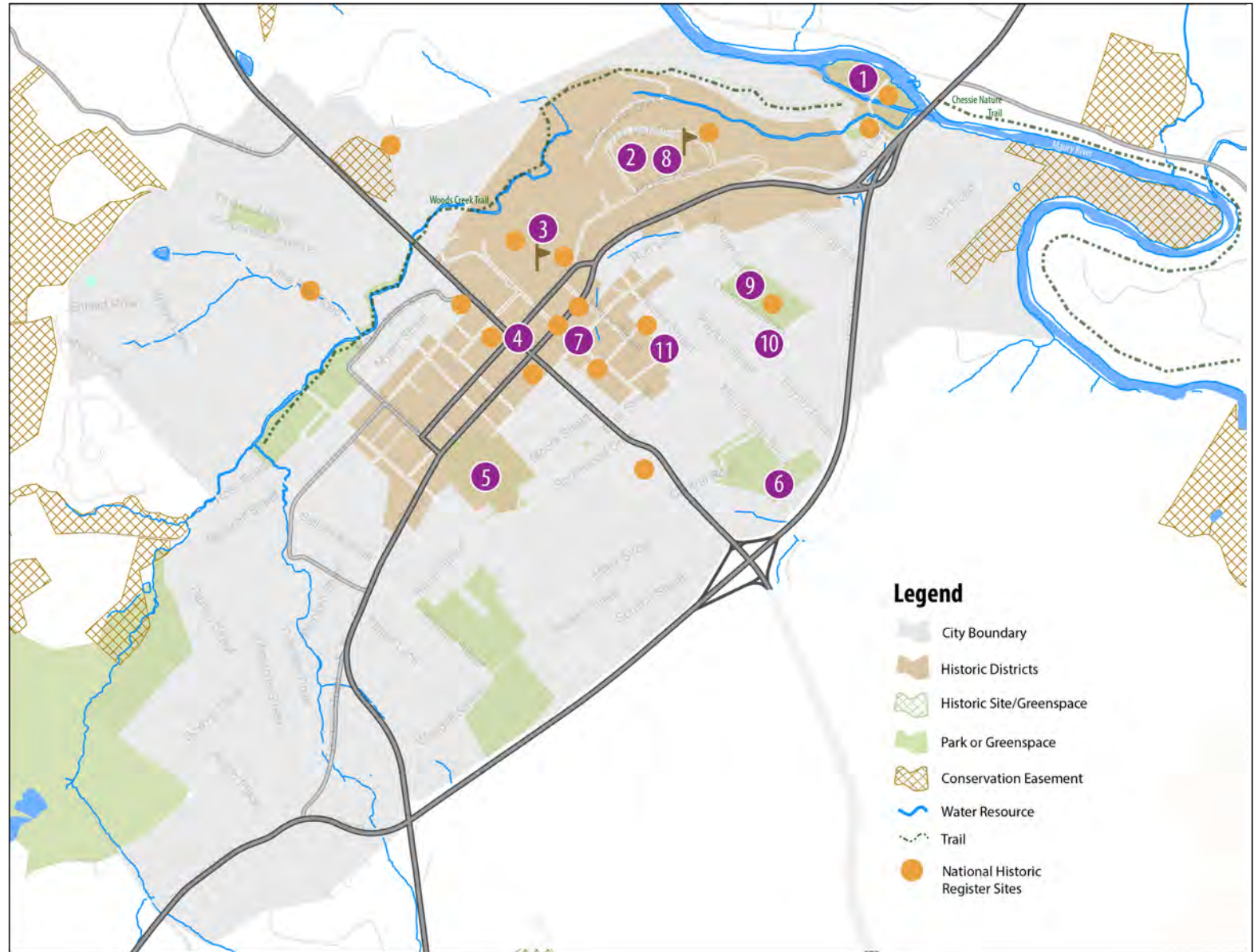
Map 3.1 Lexington Historic Districts

- Residential Historic District (Local)
- Jordan's Point Historic District (NRHP)
- Lexington Historic District (NRHP)
- VMI Historic District (NRHP)
- W&L Historic District (NRHP)

Historic Resources

Map 3.2
Existing Historic Resources

- 1 Jordan's Point/Miller's House Museum
- 2 Virginia Military Institute
- 3 Washington & Lee University
- 4 Historic Downtown Lexington
- 5 Oak Grove Cemetery
- 6 Evergreen Cemetery
- 7 Rockbridge Historical Society, Stonewall Jackson House, Visitor Center of Lexington
- 8 Marshall Foundation Museum and Library
- 9 Lylburn Downing Community Center
- 10 Diamond Hill Neighborhood
- 11 Green Hill Neighborhood



Historic Resources

▷ Planning Context

Historic Preservation and Sustainable Community Planning

When it comes to historic buildings and historic preservation, the case is clear — preservation promotes green development, bolsters economy through tourism, offers affordable housing options, reuses existing infrastructure and lessens the strain of providing community services, creates social connection, and improves quality of life.

In 2014, the National Trust for Historic Preservation completed an analysis, [“Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring how the character of buildings and blocks influences urban vitality.”](#) The study demonstrates the unique and valuable role that older buildings play in the development of sustainable cities. Based upon statistical analysis of the built fabric of three major American cities, this research finds that established neighborhoods with a mix of older buildings perform better than districts with larger, newer structures when tested against a range of economic, social, and environmental outcome measures.

Historic preservation is the necessary first step to capitalize on the City’s historic tourism potential – protecting assets that draw people to Lexington and fostering the creation of new amenities. Older, often smaller, buildings provide flexible, affordable space for entrepreneurs launching new businesses and serve as attractive settings for new restaurants and locally owned shops.

The rehabilitation of existing housing units and adaptive use of other building types for housing expands housing choices by providing residents with options that possess deeper cultural meaning and unique design qualities. The smaller size of many historic dwellings contributes to the City’s stock of market rate affordable housing and workforce housing. Furthermore, each dollar spent on rehabilitation creates more local jobs than new construction, and more of that dollar stays in the local economy, circulating multiple times. To ensure the rehabilitation of historic resources, the City encourages the Historic Lexington Foundation and local lending institutions to continue funding and sponsoring a rehabilitation loan pool for downtown buildings.

Historic development patterns integrated land use and circulation in a compact street grid serving multiple modes of transportation. Reinvestment in historic districts and communities also promotes reuse of existing infrastructure and supports areas that generally are walkable and have good transit access options. For instance, Lexington’s older residential neighborhoods and downtown receive Walk Scores of 78-81 whereas newer neighborhoods receive Walk Scores as low as 11. Preservation maintains these human-scale patterns of development, contributing to a more interconnected land use and transportation network where residents have choice in how they move throughout the city.

Encouraging walkability, bikeability, and transit use results in reduced energy consumption by individuals and more efficient provision of community services by municipalities.

Carl Elefante, AIA, LEED AP coined the phrase, “The greenest building is one that is already built.” In addition to using green building technology in new construction, sustainable development also embraces the preservation of existing buildings and structures. Reusing existing buildings saves landfill space and the energy expended in recycling materials from demolition. Furthermore, many of Lexington’s historic neighborhoods have mature tree canopies that help with carbon sequestration, creating cleaner, healthier air for Lexington Residents.

These benefits of historic resources surpass the traditional definition of historic preservation and set the stage for the weaving of historic preservation principles into Lexington’s broader planning activities. The preservation of Lexington’s historic fabric has far reaching and meaningful planning implications, creating a more vibrant and sustainable city.

Historic Resources

▷ Partnerships and Initiatives

The success of historic preservation initiatives in Lexington is largely the result of active community organizations, including the Rockbridge Historical Society, Preservation Virginia, the Historic Lexington Foundation, and Main Street Lexington. Additional information on these organizations and their efforts can be found in **Appendix A**.

State and National Historic Registers

The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, designates properties of historic significance. The Virginia Landmarks Register, administered by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, is a similar list of buildings, sites, structures, and historic districts that reflect Virginia's historical, architectural, and archaeological significance. Both designations are largely symbolic in that they do not regulate the use or change of listed buildings. These recognitions do however hold significance as a special honor and may provide tax incentives to eligible rehabilitations.

There are four nationally registered historic districts within the City: the Virginia Military Institute Historic District, the Washington and Lee University Historic District, Jordan's Point Historic District, and the Lexington Historic District. Additionally, the City has several properties that are individually listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places.

Architectural Review Board

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is an appointed body responsible for reviewing all proposals for exterior modifications to buildings and signs within the Historic Downtown Preservation District. The ARB's activities include applications for construction of new buildings or additions, demolition, signs, exterior renovations, and elements such as fences, walks, and retaining walls. Approved modifications are granted a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) allowing work to proceed. The ARB also reviews COA applications in the Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation District, but on a much more limited basis, where only demolition and new building construction are subject to ARB review.

In addition to efforts to create new design guidelines, the City has recently provided further training to the ARB, updated the board's by-laws, and updated historic property surveys to bring greater organization and clarity to future historic preservation efforts and projects.

Historic Downtown Preservation District

In 1971, the City established the Historic Downtown Preservation District. A feature of the City's zoning ordinance, the district places additional requirements on signs and buildings within the historic downtown. This district is administered by both City staff and the ARB. Recently, the City has enhanced its commitment to historic preservation by becoming a Certified Local Government and creating comprehensive historic district design guidelines to inform preservation decisions.

Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts

In 2006, Lexington established two Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts. One small district is located east of the downtown and centered near Randolph and Massie Streets, while a second district covers a much larger area west and south of the downtown. Creation of these districts was the result of coordinated efforts involving the City Planning Commission, Historic Lexington Foundation, the Rockbridge Historical Society, and other local citizens committed to local historic preservation.

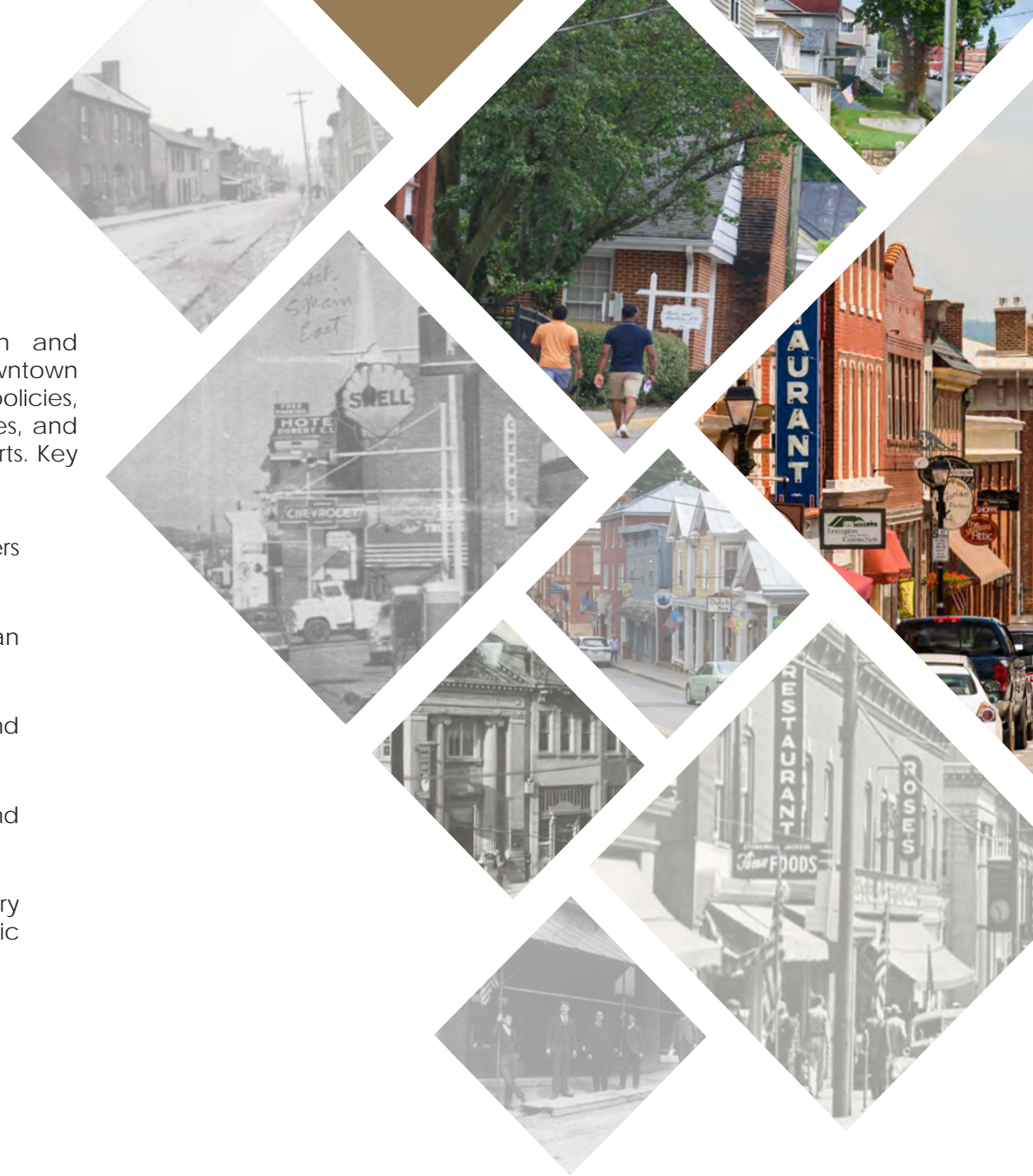


Historic Resources

▷ Needs Assessment






The City's long-standing attention to historic preservation and planning is apparent in the quality of Lexington's historic downtown and neighborhoods, as well as in the numerous programs, policies, and partnerships that are already in place. The goal, objectives, and strategies in this chapter continue and expand upon these efforts. Key needs include:

- ▶ Continued engagement of citizens and community partners in historic preservation efforts.
- ▶ Continued attention to researching and promoting an inclusive history of Lexington.
- ▶ Continued focus on context-sensitive development and preservation of historic structures.
- ▶ Continued use of resources to promote tourism and expand the local economy.
- ▶ Leveraging historic resources to promote complementary community goals, such as affordable housing, economic development, and sustainability.



Historic Resources

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Historic Resources		Historic Resources	
Goal: Continue to improve the quality of life for all Lexington residents by protecting its historic character, bolstering cultural and recreational opportunities, and promoting tourism to the region.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Promote historic preservation as a means to enhance the quality of life for all of Lexington's residents.	HR 1.1	Work with and support local organizations and institutions to promote the fullest understanding of the entirety of Lexington's history.
		HR 1.2	Coordinate with other City programs, such as affordable housing initiatives, to encourage preservation and support 'aging in place' by providing rehabilitation resources for owners of historic properties.
		HR 1.3	Create thematic walking trails and use green infrastructure linkages to connect historic resources.
	Continue to promote history, historic preservation, and tourism as key elements for a strong, resilient local economy.	HR 2.1	Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic downtown properties as a means of increasing downtown population and economic vibrancy.
	Build on Lexington's history and distinctive identity to create a more vibrant 21st century community.	HR 3.1	Ensure that new development within historic districts and conservation areas is sensitive to the historic character and context of those areas and preserves any archeological artifacts found during the construction process.
		HR 3.2	Encourage and support local preservation, rehabilitation, and beautification efforts and the use of green building design as complementary to the values of historic preservation.
		HR 3.3	Continue to invest in public infrastructure improvements to further enhance the historic character of the City.
	Empower citizens to protect and enhance Lexington's historic resources.	HR 4.1	Educate owners of historic properties on appropriate maintenance procedures and requirements and promote Lexington's historic district guidelines as an asset to property owners planning renovation, rehabilitation, new construction, or other substantive changes to historic properties.
		HR 4.2	Provide property owners with information on historic rehabilitations, financial incentives, and context sensitive design.
		HR 4.3	Continue to work with, support, and promote incentives for private-sector investment and use of historic properties.
		HR 4.4	Welcome citizen-initiated requests to rename streets linked to the confederacy and enslavement of people.
	Provide the appropriate planning information, regulation, and coordination for historic preservation and tourism.	HR 5.1	Continue to work with organizations, such as Main Street Lexington, Lexington & the Rockbridge Area Tourism Development, and Rockbridge Historical Society to promote history and tourism in the City.
		HR 5.2	Encourage the maintenance of the City's Certified Local Government status with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources by reviewing and managing the City's historic preservation programs.
		HR 5.3	Ensure the City's historic preservation activities are consistent with Virginia's Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.

The background image shows a scenic view of a river with a bridge in the distance. In the foreground, three people are on a grassy bank: a woman standing, a child standing, and another child sitting on the grass. The scene is bright and natural, with trees and foliage visible.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

Protect, preserve, and promote Lexington's natural ecosystems and green infrastructure as a cornerstone of sustainable development and social, environmental, and economic well-being.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

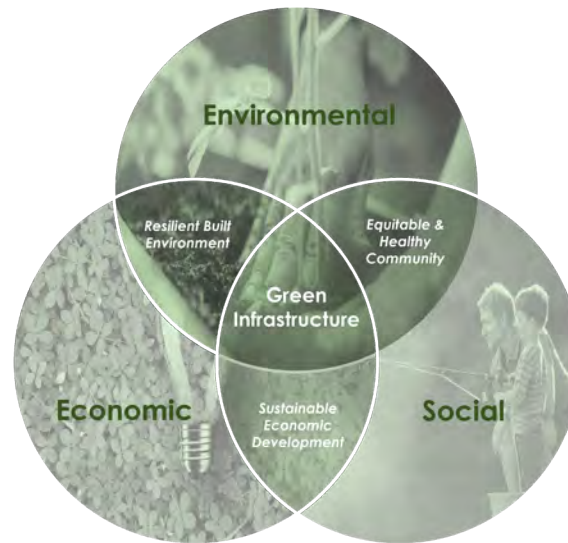
▷ Introduction

Nestled in the Valley of Virginia and bordered by the Maury River, life in Lexington is defined by the natural environment and natural resources. The rolling terrain and natural features, including waterways and soils, have shaped development patterns and contribute to the City's unique character and form.

Within the downtown, pleasant streets give way to views of the surrounding mountains, inviting residents to appreciate nature, explore the outdoors, and lead healthy, active lifestyles. Throughout the City, parks offer opportunities to relax, play, and picnic with neighbors, while ecological corridors connect residents with rivers and wildlife. Beyond its borders, Lexington serves as a gateway to the scenic beauty, outdoor adventure, and natural wonders of the Valley of Virginia, attracting visitors and further spurring the local economy.

This chapter recognizes and builds on Lexington's long-standing connection to the environment and natural resources. For the first time, the "natural resources" chapter is being revised to include "green infrastructure" in order to track and manage natural resources with the same scrutiny as more traditional infrastructure.

Green infrastructure includes natural and nature-based systems and corridors that sustain clean air, water, wildlife, and biodiversity while enriching the quality of life for communities and their residents. At the regional scale, green infrastructure includes planned and unplanned networks of natural areas and open spaces, including parks, nature reserves, river corridors, trails, forests, and wetlands. At the local



scale, green infrastructure can be parks and open space associated with schools, universities, major institutions, and cemeteries as well as rain gardens, bioswales, green walls and roofs, and tree canopy.

The goal and strategies in this chapter focus on plans, policies, and programs that support environmental stewardship, eco-friendly development, and equitable access to green infrastructure. Recognizing that environmental impacts extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries, extensive cooperation and coordination is encouraged to ensure that Lexington continues its longstanding connection to the environment.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

► Community Engagement

Community engagement efforts for this Comprehensive Plan highlighted the importance of the natural environment and green infrastructure to the people of Lexington. Natural beauty was identified as a top characteristic that community members value, second only to the City's small-town character. Conservation/open space was identified as Lexington's number one land use challenge, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure and parks ranked among the top priorities for the community. These themes guided the development of this chapter and informed the work group's efforts to identify strategies for green infrastructure.

"Green Time"

The working group adopted the phrase "green time" as a way of promoting physical activity and making Lexington a more attractive City to work, study, and live by connecting the population to the natural world and each other. Green time is contingent upon green infrastructure for destinations and corridors for play and exercise, reducing stress and improving mood, encouraging social interaction and community building, and fostering appreciation of nature.

Green Infrastructure Working Group

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, a green infrastructure working group was tasked with examining the existing conditions of green infrastructure in the Lexington community, as well as providing recommendations for improvement **to be considered by the Commission. The working group identified a key challenge for this chapter: how can we align City planning with ecological principles that promote human well-being and respect the value of ecosystems as a cornerstone of sustainable development in Lexington?**

- What local and state laws might need to be reviewed to realize certain objectives?
- How can green infrastructure assets be improved or created to serve people of all ages and cultural backgrounds?
- What actions can be taken by the City to improve green infrastructure in the immediate future as well as long term?
- How can the focus on green infrastructure serve the economic goal of attracting visitors to the area while ensuring that residents feel included and involved in the process?
- How can Lexington best cooperate with other local governments, educational institutes, and non-governmental organizations to achieve the desired goal of the chapter?



Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Planning Context

Natural Resources

The City's location, terrain, and natural features present both assets and constraints that contribute to the quality and character of Lexington's built environment.

Topography

Lexington covers 2.5 square miles in the rolling hills of the Valley of Virginia. While most of the City's terrain is moderately sloping, there are a few areas in Lexington with steep slopes. Steep slopes are especially susceptible to erosion, which creates natural constraints on development. Engineering and construction requirements for sound, safe structures on these slopes further inhibits their development.

Soils

Soil type influences such processes as drainage, erodibility, fertility, and building foundation strength. Valley carbonate soils dominate the Lexington area and are rated as moderate regarding significant building restrictions based on features such as low strength, high shrink-swell potential for heavy clay soils, severe slope and shallow depth to rock. Karst formations are also found throughout the region, making the Lexington/Rockbridge area vulnerable to sinkholes and ground water contamination. To address these issues, the City Building Official may require soil tests be conducted, and may require footers be designed by a licensed professional if there is any concern about the bearing capacity of the soils at a building site.

Air and Emissions

Air quality is a significant factor in determining quality of life. In the Valley of Virginia, which includes Rockbridge County and Lexington, two factors — weak winds and thermal inversions — can combine to create stagnant air conditions. These stagnant air periods generally last four or five days before being cleared out by a storm system. Stagnant air causes the build-up of air pollution and can cause major health problems. Reducing fossil fuel consumption and emissions can help improve air quality and also reduce environmental impacts associated with climate change.

Climate Change

As global temperatures continue to change, it becomes imperative for localities and individuals to prepare for potential impacts. Among the numerous health and environmental concerns associated with climate change, increased rainfall and flooding is of particular concern for Lexington's aging storm and sewer infrastructure. Correlation between carbon emissions and climate change is conclusive, and Lexington should take measures to reduce its carbon footprint by partnering with community groups on public education campaigns, increasing its reliance on clean and renewable energy, promoting public and alternate forms of transportation, planting trees, and supporting waste reduction, recycling, and composting, among other strategies. These efforts can also help create a

safer and more secure future, increasing community resilience and decreasing dependence on non-renewable resources. Development of a regional climate and energy plan is recommended.

Urban Tree Canopy

Lexington has made an extensive effort in the last 20 years to increase the number of trees throughout the community. First adopted in 2000, the City's tree ordinance mandated the creation of a City Tree Board and the hiring of a City Arborist. The City's 2009 urban tree canopy report measured between 44-47% coverage, an above-average level compared to other participating localities. Tree canopy coverage is generally highest in single-family residential areas, and lowest in commercial and multifamily areas.

Increasing Lexington's tree canopy offers many benefits, including improving air quality, absorbing stormwater runoff, preventing soil erosion, mitigating urban heat islands therefore reducing energy demand, providing wildlife habitat, and creating a more attractive community. Efforts to increase tree canopy in underserved areas should be paired with the policies that promote the use of native vegetation to ensure healthy growth, limit invasive species, and support pollinators.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Planning Context

Open Space and Conservation

The land use policy and development decisions in Lexington extend beyond the City's borders. As the geographic and economic heart of Rockbridge County, compact, urban development and infill in Lexington helps to conserve the natural beauty and bucolic farmland that define the greater region. According to the Valley Conservation Council (VCC), some 38% of Rockbridge County is under conservation, a much higher percentage than for the other ten counties that are members of the VCC. Rockbridge County also recognizes this with zoning that directs new growth to areas around Lexington. Along with initiatives to support compatible infill development, the City should ensure that development protects and restores environmentally sensitive areas, enhances access to natural open space, and encourages non-vehicular connectivity between neighborhoods.

Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is a major cause of localized flooding and water quality degradation in Lexington. As rain falls onto pavement and buildings, water cannot be absorbed as it would naturally by the ground. The engineered system of drains, gutters, and storm sewers collects and quickly transports water to Woods Creek and other local waterways, eroding stream banks and carrying sediment, fertilizer, and pet waste that degrade water quality. The steady annual increase in rainstorm intensity associated with

climate change creates additional stormwater runoff to manage and exacerbates existing inflow and infiltration into the City's aging sewer lines. This impacts the capacity of the sewer system and could possibly constrain future development if not addressed, as discussed further in the Community Facilities and Infrastructure chapter. **(See Community Facilities Strategy 2.3).**

Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) offer an array of technical solutions to address stormwater management and water quality issues. Examples include removing pavement and limiting impervious surfaces, streambank restoration, riparian buffer restoration, bioswales, rain gardens, rain barrels, and green roofs. Several BMPs have been implemented in Lexington **(See Map 4.1)**, many as part of the Woods Creek restoration efforts. Continued implementation of BMP design solutions should be paired with other regulatory mechanisms, such as robust landscaping requirements, to help improve local water quality and contribute to regional watershed goals.

Water Resources

The creeks and rivers in and around Lexington are wonderful natural assets that provide ecosystem, habitat, and recreation benefits. Lexington is located within the McCorkle watershed and the Woods Creek watershed. Both are a part of the larger Maury River watershed, which flows into the James River and ultimately to the Chesapeake Bay. The Maury River is also the source of Lexington's water supply.

Woods Creek has been the focus of restoration efforts since 2002, and several studies have been conducted to document sources of pollution and identify opportunities for improvement. Recent studies show that Woods Creek is impaired due to high levels of e. coli. The 2019 water quality improvement plan sets out a staged implementation plan to address sources of bacteria through a combination of agricultural and urban/residential best management practices. Lexington should support implementation of the water quality improvement plan and promote the use of rain gardens, riparian buffers, and pet waste reduction efforts identified in the plan.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Planning Context

Green Infrastructure Assets

The City's green infrastructure can be classified as sites, linkages between sites, and waterways. Sites include parks, nature reserves, forests, community gardens, cemeteries, rain gardens, and green walls and roofs. Linkages serve as the connection between sites and may include natural corridors that serve as wildlife habitat or green streets that incorporate vegetation or stormwater BMPs. Waterways include streams, rivers, and wetlands. When publicly accessible, these "green time" assets also provide safe and pleasant opportunities for residents to enjoy the natural environment.

Existing green infrastructure assets are shown in **Map 4.1**. Within the City, there are 17 green infrastructure sites, three trails, and five waterways. Residents also have access to many regional sites, including 500+ City-owned acres at the Brushy Hills preserve. While not within walking distance for most citizens, the trails and expansiveness of this tract offer unique "green time" for those who explore it. Within the timeline of this Comprehensive Plan, Brushy Hills can become a walking or perhaps biking destination for Lexington residents.



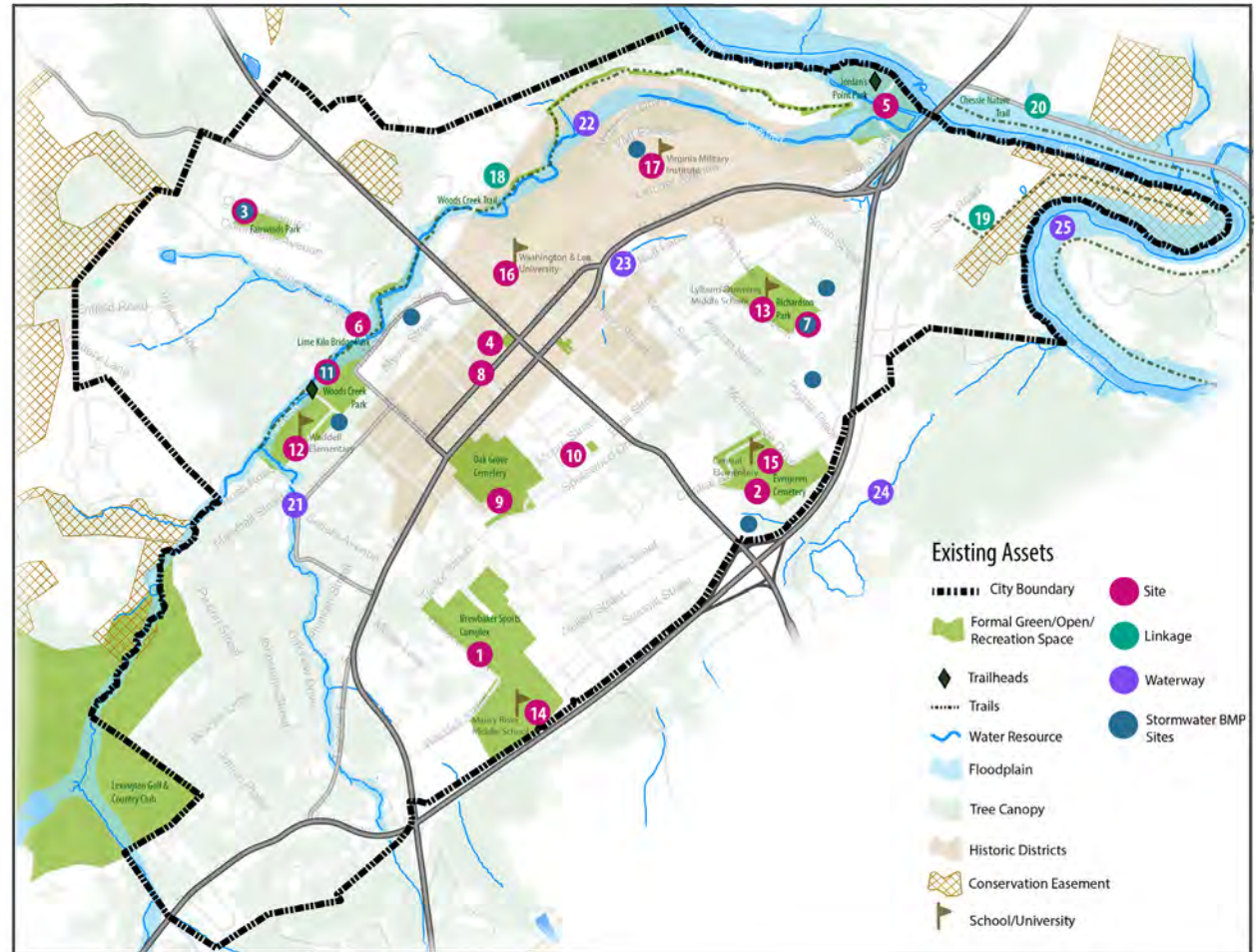
Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

Map 4.1 Existing Assets Map

The City's existing green infrastructure can be classified as Sites, Linkages, and Waterways. Sites include parks, nature reserves, forests, community gardens, cemeteries, rain gardens, and green walls and roofs. Linkages serve as the connection between sites and may include natural corridors that serve as wildlife habitat or green streets that incorporate vegetation or stormwater BMPs. Waterways include streams, rivers, and wetlands. When publicly accessible, these "green time" assets also provide safe and pleasant opportunities for residents to enjoy the natural environment.

Local Sites, Linkages & Waterways

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 Brewbaker Field Sports Complex | 14 Maury River Middle School |
| 2 Evergreen Cemetery | 15 Central Elementary School |
| 3 Fairwinds Park / Morgan Park | 16 W&L Campus & Woods* |
| 4 Hopkins Green | 17 VMI Post & Woods* |
| 5 Jordan's Point Park | 18 Woods Creek Trail |
| 6 Lime Kiln Bridge Park | 19 Uncas Trail |
| 7 M. Leroy Richardson Park | 20 Chessie Nature Trail |
| 8 Ravenhorst-Loyall Park* | 21 Sarah's Run |
| 9 Oak Grove Cemetery | 22 Wood's Creek |
| 10 Taylor Street Park | 23 Town Branch |
| 11 Woods Creek Park | 24 McCorkle Creek |
| 12 Waddell Elementary School Park | 25 Maury River |
| 13 Lylburn Downing Middle School Fields | |



Regional Sites & Linkages

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Brushy Hill Preserve** | Lexington Golf & Country Club* |
| Moore's Creek Dam*** | Vista Links Golf Course* |
| Boxerwood Nature Center & Woodland Garden | River Walk (Buena Vista) |
| Glen Maury Park (Buena Vista) | |

* Private Site

** Brushy Hill Preserve is a 560 acre watershed tract owned by the City of Lexington featuring a 14-mile trail system.

*** The Moore's Creek Dam site is difficult to reach and has limited access to the public for passive recreation and for fishing.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Protecting, preserving, and promoting green infrastructure requires collaborations among public and private landowners and the creation of partnerships for long-term success. These include City departments and boards, businesses such as hospitals and golf courses, non-governmental organizations and citizen groups, and private citizens as well as neighboring localities, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, and higher education institutions.

Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden

Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden is a 15-acre woodland garden operated by Boxerwood Education Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Open to the public, Boxerwood Nature Center features a collection of unique and unusual international trees and shrubs as well as beautiful native plant areas. Many programs are provided by Boxerwood, including summer camps, teacher development programs, and several programs for students in local schools. A full list of their programming can be found on the Boxerwood website.

Cemetery Advisory Board

The Cemetery Advisory Board advises and recommends to City Council the policies of cemetery operation, costs of interment, lots, equipment, and all other things necessary in maintaining a cemetery. The board also makes recommendations concerning expansion and landscaping.

Tree Board

The Lexington Tree Board was created in 2000 by the city's **Tree Ordinance**. The board advises City Council, the Planning Department, and the city arborist. The **Tree Board's duties include reviewing notifications for activities that affect trees within the Central Business District, conducting community outreach and education programs, assisting with the development, revision, and evaluation of the Comprehensive Tree Management Plan, seeking funding from state, federal, and other granting agencies, and evaluating yearly progress made toward the goals of the city's Tree Ordinance.**

Central Shenandoah Planning District

As part of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC), the City has access to Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan resources and tools. More information on this effort is available at CSPDC's website.

Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District

The Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is one of 47 soil and water conservation districts in Virginia. The Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District works to give citizens the structure and the capability to solve conservation problems at a local grassroots level through the Urban Virginia Conservation Assistance Program. Soil & Water Conservation Districts are governmental entities that manage conservation programs and are involved in the implementation of the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program and other environmental programs.

Rockbridge Bird Club

The Rockbridge Bird Club was founded to encourage the enjoyment, knowledge, and conservation of birds in the Rockbridge area.



Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Rockbridge Area Conservation Council

Headquartered in Lexington, Rockbridge Area Conservation Council's (RACC) mission is to promote the wise stewardship and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources through education, advocacy, and action in order to protect and enhance the quality of life for present and future inhabitants of Rockbridge. RACC promotes, facilitates, advocates, and encourages land use practices that conserve the local watersheds, air quality, wildlife habitats, and scenic forested and agricultural landscapes. The organization was integral in establishing the Chessie Nature Trail among other achievements.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Cooperative Extension is an educational outreach program of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University with a focus on natural resources, agriculture, and community and leadership.

Native Plant Society & Master Gardeners Chapters

Lexington is served by the Upper James River Chapter of the Native Plant Society. The Society is a nonprofit organization that seeks to further the appreciation and conservation of Virginia's native plants and habitats. The Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association is an adjunct to the local Cooperative Extension and provides educational outreach on horticultural topics.

Lexington also has a strong framework of existing initiatives in place to support green infrastructure strategies identified in this plan, including:

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan

As part of the CSPDC, the City has access to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan resources and tools. The plan calls for the installation of green infrastructure practices to improve local and regional water quality.

Downtown Enhancement Plan

The Downtown Enhancement Plan identifies opportunities to improve downtown Lexington, including pedestrian/bicycle connectivity, ADA accessibility, public art installations, streetscaping, undergrounding utilities, and other aesthetic upgrades. Since acceptance by City Council in 2013, approximately 30 changes contained within the plan have been approved by City Council. Approximately \$25,000 is budgeted annually to implement the plan.

Tree City, USA

Since 2000, the City has been recognized annually by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Tree City, USA offers grants and resources to assist localities and citizens in greening their communities.

Healthy Eating Active Live "HEAL" City

In 2019, the City passed a resolution to become a HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign member. The campaign supports elected officials to adopt Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) policies. As a HEAL member, the City will receive technical assistance to help people make healthy food choices and be physically active. The City resolved that the "personnel responsible for the design and construction of parks, neighborhoods, streets, and business areas should make every effort to promote bikeability and walkability...". This plan adopts these concepts along with providing natural buffers and spaces for green time.

Woods Creek Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Water Quality Improvement Plan

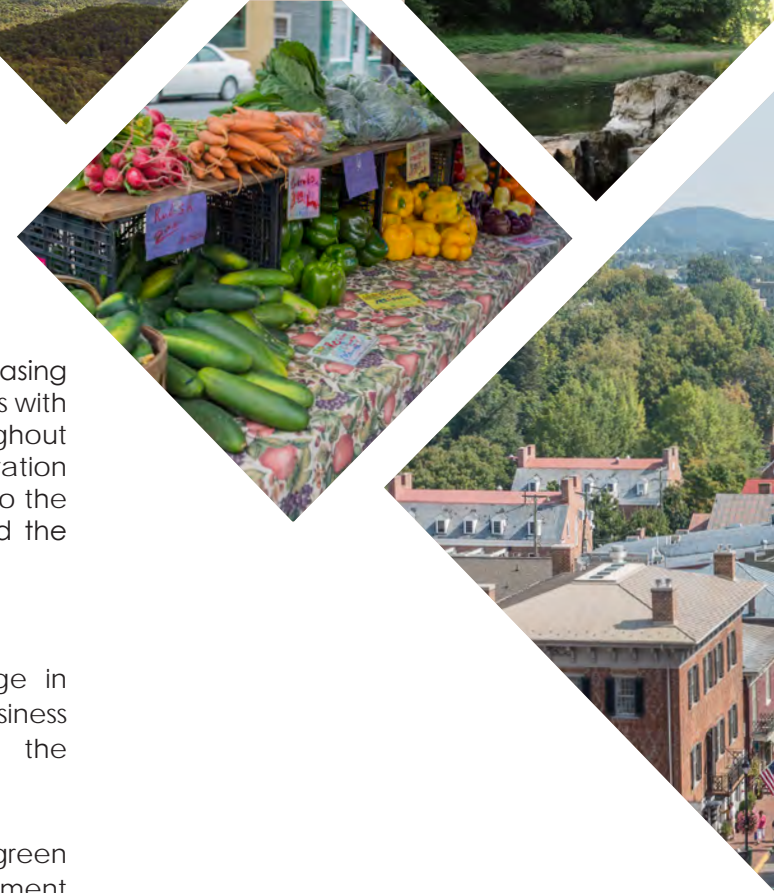
Updated in 2019, the plan's goal is to reduce bacteria levels in Woods Creek by implementing best management practices to reduce water pollution associated with agriculture, residential septic practices, residential and urban stormwater, and pet waste. The Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District partners with Lexington and Rockbridge County to achieve this plan.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Needs Assessment

Promoting green infrastructure and “green time” requires conserving existing resources and increasing the availability and accessibility to open, natural spaces and waterways. Connecting these areas with sidewalks, shared-use paths, and trails and providing buffers of native trees and vegetation throughout the City will create a green urban fabric while preserving Lexington’s historical charm. The integration and connection of green spaces and trails will make Lexington healthier and more attractive to the community of families, students, visitors, and wildlife. The existing conditions analysis identified the following opportunities and areas in need of improvement:

- ▶ Lack of an inventory of green infrastructure assets.
- ▶ Limited public access to major natural assets, such as the Maury River.
- ▶ Limited network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, bike lanes/trails, and bike racks.
- ▶ A need to increase accessibility for the disabled and continue efforts to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ▶ Opportunity for conservation easements in areas designated as open space on the future land use map (FLUM) as green infrastructure sites and linkages to provide public recreational access to significant natural features, including the Maury River.
- ▶ Lack of understanding or knowledge in the community (e.g., landowners, business owners, general public) regarding the benefits of green infrastructure.
- ▶ Few incentives to encourage the use of green infrastructure or alternative development and stormwater management methods.
- ▶ Lack of resources addressing the importance of issues such as non-invasive/native plants, soil pollution from fertilizers, and other soil amending processes.
- ▶ A need for a coordinated approach among the public and private sectors and major institutions to identify opportunities for energy sustainability and environmental resilience.



Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Needs Assessment

The strategies in this chapter are focused on improving green infrastructure and correcting the identified gaps. The accompanying green infrastructure concept map, **Map 4.2**, identifies key sites and projects that serve as catalysts for green infrastructure planning in Lexington.

In addition to these opportunities within Lexington, the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership is continuing work on the Brushy Blue Trail System that is envisioned to ultimately connect the Brushy Hills Preserve to the Woods Creek Trail, the Chessie Nature Trail, and the Buena Vista Riverwalk and eventually connecting to the Blue Ridge Parkway. A key priority will be providing the missing Woods Creek trail section from its western terminus along Ross Road and Rebel Ridge Road to the Kendal parcel. Development of this section and the missing link on the Kendal property will complete the Brushy Blue Trail System in Lexington.

The expansion of green infrastructure sites and linkages will need to be coordinated with landowners and in compliance with local boards and policies, such as the Cemetery Advisory Board and the cemetery regulations. In addition, plans should engage the people responsible for operations and maintenance, such as the Department of Public Works, cemetery caretakers, school groundskeepers, Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization, and the City Arborist.

Virginia has initiated new legislation that can support Lexington's efforts for energy sustainability, mitigating climate impacts, and implementing resiliency and adaptive strategies. The Virginia Clean Economy Act of 2020 establishes programs and funding to reduce carbon emissions, invest in clean energy technologies and related job training, reduce barriers to energy efficiency programs and the energy burden for low-income customers. Additional climate related legislation creates a Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund to help communities subject to recurrent flooding. Programs are also available to finance clean energy and resiliency renovations. These potential resources, available best practices, and examples of initiatives among Virginia cities such as Blacksburg and Charlottesville provide a solid basis for considering a comprehensive Energy and Climate Action Plan for Lexington in cooperation with other regional stakeholders.

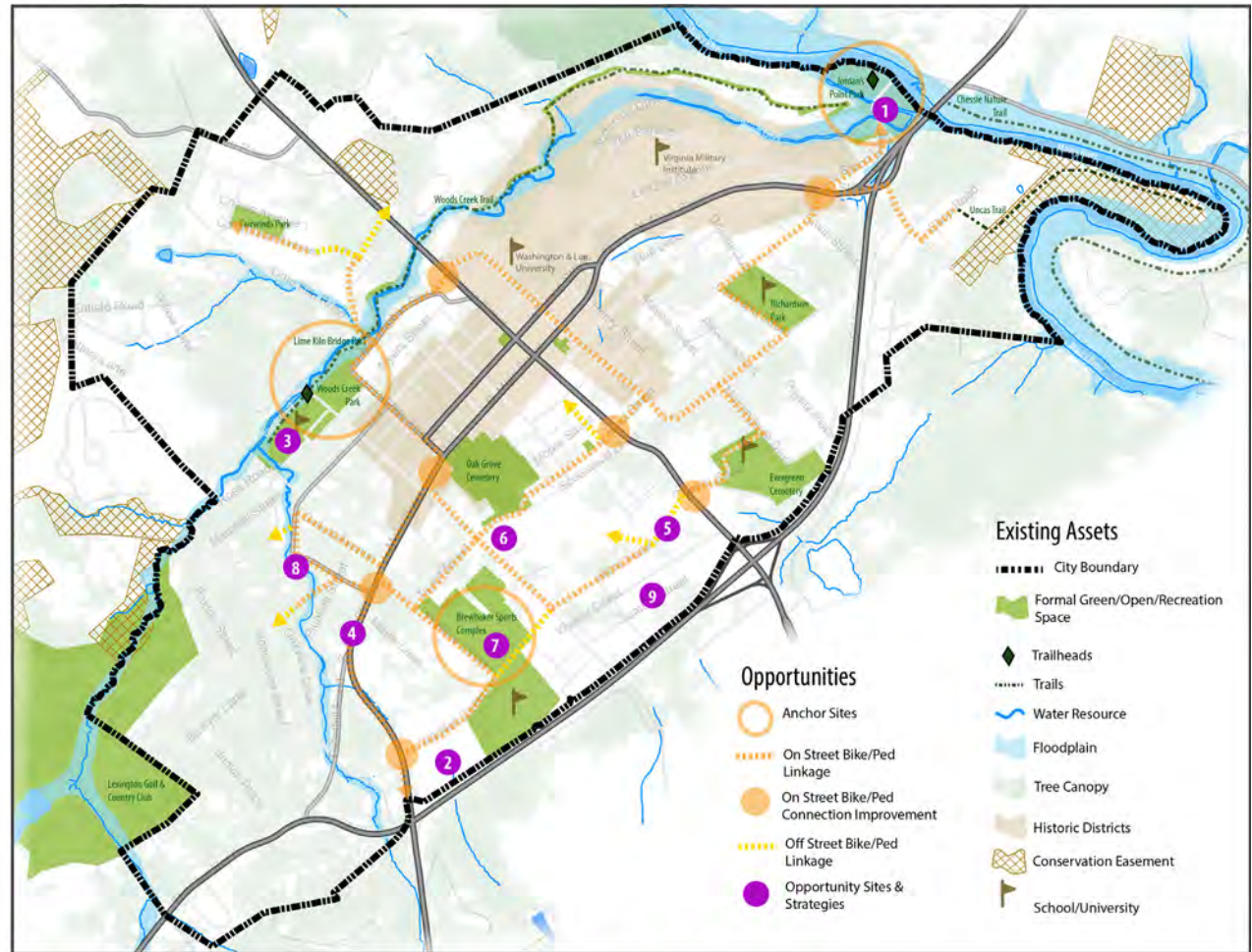


Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

Map 4.2 Concept Map

The Sites, Strategies, and Linkages included in the Green Infrastructure Concept Map build on the Green Infrastructure Strategies included in this chapter. The concept identifies Anchor Sites - important community resources that should be the focus of Green Infrastructure linkage connections. Anchor Sites are connected to surrounding residential neighborhoods and Downtown Lexington through a series of on-street and off-street networks, which include sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. The concept also identifies Opportunity Sites & Strategies - key sites, projects or strategies that serve as catalysts or example projects for green infrastructure planning in the City. Together these elements form the foundation for the development of a comprehensive green infrastructure plan that should include a complete inventory, mapping, condition assessment, and recommended improvements for all green infrastructure sites, linkages, and waterways within the City of Lexington.




- 1 Implement the Jordan's Point Park 2020 Master Plan and improve pedestrian connection across N. Main Street to better connect the park to residential areas of the City.
- 2 Incorporate green development, innovative stormwater management, and open space into redevelopment of the Waddell Street opportunity site.
- 3 Improve the energy efficiency of City buildings and consider installing solar panels at Waddell Elementary School.
- 4 In order to enhance connections to Downtown, improve bicycle and pedestrian connections along S. Main Street from White Street to the Rt. 11 Bypass.
- 5 Formalize and enhance the pedestrian connections between Miller Street, S. Main Street, and the hospital to better connect the Summit Street Neighborhood to surrounding amenities.
- 6 Incorporate green development, innovative stormwater management, and open space into redevelopment of the Spotswood Drive opportunity site.
- 7 Create formal pedestrian connections to the Brewbaker Sports Complex and Lexington Municipal Pool to better connect the facility to surrounding neighborhoods.



- 8 Enhance the protection of streams and natural wetlands by updating development standards and incentives to protect and restore buffer areas and discourage underground piping of streams.
- 9 Increase the Urban Tree Canopy throughout the City, particularly in underserved neighborhoods.



Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

► Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Green Infrastructure		
Goal: Protect, preserve, and promote Lexington’s natural ecosystems and green infrastructure as a cornerstone of sustainable development and social, environmental, and economic well-being.		
Values	Objectives	Strategies
	Create a connected system of green infrastructure to support biodiversity and "green time" access for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in the community.	GI 1.1 Explore opportunities to improve or add public access sites and linkages and increase public access to waterways.
		GI 1.2 Enhance access to and connectivity of natural open space in all development, redevelopment, and capital projects.
		GI 1.3 Undertake a city-wide green infrastructure assessment and develop a plan to create a continuous publicly-accessible green infrastructure network that connects neighborhoods, destinations within the City, waterways, and regional assets.
		GI 1.4 Plan for access to healthy, affordable, locally-grown foods for all neighborhoods by supporting sustainable food initiatives, such as urban agriculture, farmers markets, and composting.
		GI 1.5 Encourage access to energy-efficient transportation options by supporting the siting of e-vehicle charging stations and facilities for bicycles and other micromobility devices.
		GI 1.6 Support urban wildlife and biodiversity initiatives, such as "Monarch Butterfly City" or "Bee City" designations and citizen-led efforts to install bird houses and bat boxes.
	Promote energy sustainability and environmental resilience.	GI 2.1 Encourage green building and green infrastructure in development proposals to increase property values and reduce infrastructure costs.
		GI 2.2 Improve energy efficiency of City buildings and operations and assess the feasibility of installing solar panels at Waddell Elementary School.
	Leverage green infrastructure to build a more beautiful, healthy, and sustainable community.	GI 3.1 Develop Jordan’s Point Park in accordance with the 2020 Park Master Plan.
		GI 3.2 Grow and maintain the City’s tree canopy coverage through the existing tree planting program and other grants, as may be available.
		GI 3.3 Continue strengthening zoning and development regulations that address landscaping, tree preservation, and native plants. Consider incentives to promote tree planting and preservation beyond minimum requirements.
		GI 3.4 Promote the installation of stormwater best management practices, such as bioswales, pervious surfaces, and rain gardens, including on City property and parking lots.
		GI 3.5 Enhance the protection of streams and natural wetlands by updating development standards and incentives to protect and restore buffer areas and discourage underground piping of streams.
		GI 3.6 Limit the extent of impervious surfaces that degrade water quality by considering reductions to minimum parking requirements and encouraging the use of pervious surfaces in development projects.

Green Infrastructure & Natural Resources

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Green Infrastructure			
Goal: Protect, preserve, and promote Lexington’s natural ecosystems and green infrastructure as a cornerstone of sustainable development and social, environmental, and economic well-being.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Engage citizens in efforts to create a greener, more sustainable city.	GI 4.1	Educate and encourage landowners to install green infrastructure best management practices, plant native trees and vegetation, and reduce fertilizer and pesticide use.
		GI 4.2	Identify and collaborate with local organizations to educate landowners on installing solar panels.
		GI 4.3	Continue to engage the support of local students, volunteers, and non-profit organizations to help the City achieve its environmental and green infrastructure goals.
	Support partnerships that improve green infrastructure and protect natural resources.	GI 5.1	Identify and collaborate with local organizations to promote development and use of green infrastructure sites, linkages, and waterways within the City and the larger region, including sports organizations, the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership, Carilion Hospital, and retail businesses selling outdoor equipment.
		GI 5.2	Collaborate with regional organizations, such as the Central Shenandoah Planning District Committee and the Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District, to seek funding and resources to implement green infrastructure best management practices to improve local and regional water quality.
		GI 5.3	Work with regional stakeholders to develop a comprehensive regional Energy and Climate Action Plan that identifies common issues, agreed upon approaches and principles, joint actions, and individual contributions by each participating locality and the major institutions of higher learning.

Local Economy

Market the City's assets, including its history and small-town character to attract business, increase employment opportunities, raise salaries, and expand local revenue.



Local Economy

▷ Introduction

Lexington is home to a vibrant and diverse economy built around education, health services, tourism, and regional commerce. The City provides a welcoming environment for employers and entrepreneurs drawn to the walkable community, highly educated workforce, and exceptional access to mountains, rivers, and major highways.

Lexington's flourishing downtown is the economic heart of the region and integral to the health of the economy. The local arts, history, culture, and food scene is thriving and remains central to attracting visitors, residents, and the businesses that serve them. Local institutes of higher learning, Washington & Lee University (W&L) and Virginia Military Institute (VMI), drive employment and bring a constant influx of fresh energy and talent to the community.

Lexington's economic strength, its universities, also presents a challenge, including a disproportionate number of untaxed properties. Even in its relative economic success, poverty affects a portion of Lexington's population who struggle with housing affordability and food security.

Addressing these challenges requires Lexington's government to be an active and cooperative participant in the economic development of the City. Working with local businesses and partners, the strategies in this chapter offer a path for Lexington to continue marketing its spectacular tourism assets, increase private investment and development, and diversify the economy to create new jobs and retain its young residents.



Local Economy

▷ Planning Context

Human Capital

Human capital indicators reflect Lexington's central role in the region and deep connection to institutions of higher learning. Lexington residents over the age of 25 are highly educated, with 44.9% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 25.1% in Rockbridge County and 31.3% in Virginia overall.

Signifying a relatively stable economy, median family income has remained around \$62,000 and poverty rates have hovered between 14-15% since 2010. At 5.7%, the unemployment rate has recently fallen to levels reflective of rates before the Great Recession in 2009, although the rate still lags Virginia (3.8%) and Rockbridge County (4.1%). The labor force participation rate is indicative of a community with a significant student population not actively seeking employment – only 31% compared to Virginia's 51% and Rockbridge County's 47%.

Additional information and detailed statistics can be found in **Appendix B, Community Profile**.

▷ Community Engagement

Input from community members illuminated key strengths and challenges in Lexington's economy. Residents expressed a strong desire to maintain the current small-town charm and historic attractions that have made Lexington a popular tourism destination, while also balancing growth that brings new jobs and people. Lack of housing options, entertainment, and shopping was cited as a barrier to attracting permanent residents, particularly young people. While 61% say that Lexington should welcome residential and commercial growth, 20% wish for it to remain the same size it is now, highlighting the community's small-town appeal and the need to ensure that new growth is compatible with this character.



Local Economy



▷ Planning Context

Existing Businesses and Industries

Employment in Lexington is driven primarily by W&L, VMI, Carilion Community Hospital, and Lexington City government. Due to VMI, state government makes up 19.34% of employment in Lexington, followed by accommodation and food services (12.52%), and health care and healthcare and social assistance (11.15 %). (See **Table 5.1**)

The City's largest employers highlight the importance of education, health care, and government in providing job opportunity to residents in Lexington and the region. Lexington's institutions require employees of varying positions and skill levels and support a small but diverse supply chain in the surrounding community.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission 2019

Note: Asterisk (*) indicates non-disclosable data

Table 5.1 Employment by Industry Sector

Industry	Employment	% of Total
Government Total	1,217	27.02%
Federal	51	1.13%
State	871	19.34%
Local	295	6.55%
Accommodation & Food Services	564	12.52%
Health Care & Social Assistance	502	11.15%
Retail Trade	323	7.17%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	175	3.89%
Finance & Insurance	92	2.04%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Service	75	1.67%
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	47	1.04%
Construction	33	0.73%
Manufacturing	26	0.32%
Information (producing, processing, or distributing information and cultural products)	20	0.44%
Unclassified	8	0.17%
Administrative, Support, & Waste Management	4	0.06%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting*	*	*
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0
Utilities	0	0
Wholesale Trade*	*	*
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0
Educational Services*	*	*
Total	4,504	--

Local Economy

▷ Planning Context

The reliance on these institutions also highlights key challenges for Lexington's future – developing economic resiliency and expanding the tax base. Diversifying the local economy can help absorb the impact of recessions in the future. Furthermore, fostering a competitive business environment with lowered business taxes and operating costs can help economies rebound quicker and allow for faster business development. Continued expansion of broadband infrastructure and promotion of this technology is also important to attract knowledge-based jobs and retain young adults and families. With limited land available for new development and land-consumptive industries, infill and redevelopment of underutilized property for revenue-producing purposes is also key to ensuring a fiscally sustainable future. Lexington's future land use plan reinforces this goal.

While large institutions are critical to the local economy, small businesses and entrepreneurs also play an important role. More than a quarter of employment in the City is in businesses with fewer than 20 employees, indicating a strong environment for small businesses and startups. Supporting the growth of small businesses is a key component of Lexington's economic development plan. Promoting "economic gardening" with incentive and grant opportunities for local entrepreneurs, streamlining administrative processes, and working with local business owners to identify improvements to Lexington's business environment are all part of an effective strategy for local job creation and business growth.

Table 5.2 Lexington's Largest Employers

Rank	Business
1	W&L
2	VMI
3	Carilion Community Hospital
4	City of Lexington
5	Kroger
6	Heritage Hall
7	Lexington School Board
8	Parkhurst Dining
9	Rockbridge Farmer's Cooperative
10	Rockbridge Regional Library

Source: Virginia Employment Commission LMI 2019

Table 5.3 Employment by Size of Establishment*

Category	Lexington City	Rockbridge County	Virginia
0-4 employees	288	460	235,552
5-9 employees	377	579	259,787
10-19 employees	488	717	393,338
20-49 employees	580	1,129	657,331
50-99 employees	417	670	511,805
100-249 employees	***	889	588,047
250-499 employees	0	***	386,792
500-999 employees	809	***	260,623
1000+ employees	***	0	682,778
Total	4,504	6,382	3,976,053

Source: Virginia Employment Commission LMI 2019
Note: Asterisks indicate non-disclosable data

*Employment counts only filled jobs, whether full or part time, and temporary or permanent, by place of work



Local Economy

▷ Planning Context

Commuter Characteristics

As evidenced by commuter characteristics, Lexington is a regional employment center. Lexington is a net importer of labor, as many more workers commute into Lexington rather than commute from Lexington. Predictably, Rockbridge County is the largest source of workers, accounting for 66.9% of the all workers commuting into Lexington. While this is not uncommon for a small city, it does highlight the importance of regional cooperation in economic development. For most workers, living and working in the same municipality does not matter, so long as they can commute the preferred distance or live in a place they enjoy. Promoting economic development in Rockbridge County, Lexington, and Buena Vista together benefits all three localities due to the overlap of workers' preferred locations for homes, work, and entertainment.

The Sharing Economy

In today's rapidly changing economy, more individuals are earning income through the "sharing economy." In the sharing economy, individuals hire out services and goods, such as cars, homes, and personal time, to other individuals in a peer-to-peer fashion. This innovative way of doing business makes use of emerging technology, opens the market to entrepreneurs and micro-businesses, and provides flexibility to earned income. College-age people are often early adopters of tech and digital social interaction – as such the sharing economy has the potential to play a pivotal role in Lexington's economic growth and change over the next decade.

Tourism

Tourism is another important part of Lexington's economy. Natural beauty, history, and proximity to Interstate 81 make Lexington a destination for both vacations and pass-through visits. Lexington's institutions of higher learning also draw prospective students and their families for day trips and overnight visits throughout the year. In addition, countless events and venues attract visitors and contribute to the economic vitality of the community.

In 2018, a regional destination assessment was completed to analyze the impacts of tourism in Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. According to the study, hotel, motel, and B&B visitors spent an estimated \$66,566,399 in Lexington, Buena

Vista, and Rockbridge County in FY17. Average trip spending per party is further detailed in **Table 5.4**. While not entirely attributed to visitors, the study estimated that Lexington generated over \$31M in meals and tax receipts and over \$1.9M in associated taxes in FY19.

Table 5.4 Regional Spending per Party (2018)

Spending Category	Total	Leisure	University-Related	Virginia Horse Center
Average Spending per Day	\$254	\$238	\$307	\$354
<i>Lodging</i>	\$128	\$119	\$147	\$155
<i>Food/Meals</i>	\$61	\$56	\$83	\$77
<i>Attractions/Entertainment</i>	\$35	\$37	\$22	\$72
<i>Shopping</i>	\$30	\$26	\$55	\$50
Average Trip Nights	2.67	2.33	3.16	4.37
Total Spending per Trip	\$678	\$555	\$970	\$1,547

Source: Lexington, Buena Vista, & Rockbridge Area Tourism Destination Assessment, 2018

Local Economy

► Planning Context

Surveys conducted as part of the 2018 assessment highlighted Lexington’s key role in the region’s tourism industry. **Table 5.5** shows that historic downtown Lexington, Natural Bridge State Park, and Lexington’s institutions of higher learning are the largest drivers of tourism annually. Visitors to the region were asked which of the attractions in the table they visited or planned to visit during their trip. Over 50 percent of visitors selected historic downtown Lexington and Natural Bridge State Park while a quarter or more of all visitors selected either VMI or W&L. The importance of downtown Lexington as a regional draw highlights the value of continued investment and revitalization in downtown Lexington. Expanded events, entertainment options, and recreation opportunities should further bolster tourism and visitor spending. Marketing Lexington’s tourism assets around the state and increasing their scale may also help to boost the returns on City investment in tourism and revitalization.

Table 5.5 Regional Tourism Drivers (2018)

Attraction	Visitors
Historic downtown Lexington	56%
Natural Bridge State Park	54%
VMI	29%
W&L	25%
Oak Grove Cemetery	19%
Caverns at Natural Bridge	19%
Brewery	16%
Vineyard	15%
Virginia Safari Park	9%
Lexington Carriage Tour	9%
Wade Mill	6%
Natural Bridge Zoo	6%
Glen Maury Park	6%
Downtown Buena Vista	6%
Lexington Ghost Tour	3%
Dinosaur Kingdom II	2%
Southern Virginia University	2%
None of these	16%
Other	11%

Source: Lexington, Buena Vista, & Rockbridge Area Tourism Destination Assessment, 2018



Local Economy

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

There are several existing economic development partnerships and initiatives in Lexington and the surrounding area. Cities and counties benefit from marketing an entire region to businesses. Collaboration between governments, development groups, and non-profits has become increasingly important in promoting a city or regional brand.

City of Lexington

City government is a key partner in economic development. The City Manager's office is the primary conduit for economic development activities. The City is a partner in community events, including parades and festivals, and works with existing and prospective business owners to promote the City and available properties within it. The City should also continue efforts to explore the best use of currently underutilized City-owned properties, including properties on Enfield Road, Spotswood Drive, and the former VDOT property on Waddell Street.

Lexington and Rockbridge Area Tourism Office

The Lexington and Rockbridge Area Tourism Office oversees regional tourism programs including, marketing of the region, operation of visitor's centers, planning and guiding tours, and compiling visitor information. Lexington, Rockbridge County, and Buena Vista spent a combined \$798,721 in 2018 to expand tourism in the region

Main Street Lexington

Main Street Lexington (MSL) is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization established in 2013 to enhance the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of the downtown area. MSL is part of the Virginia Main Street Program, which uses a "Four Point Approach" created by the National Main Street Center to achieve economic revitalization in the context of historic preservation. MSL receives funding from sponsorships, private fundraising, and the City of Lexington. MSL is focused on achieving three primary goals that are best summarized as: increasing the number of people living downtown, expanding innovation, art, and technology within Lexington, and making Lexington a magnet for destination travelers. These goals are supported by three committees — Economic Vitality, Organization, and Design — that work together to improve downtown Lexington. MSL has taken the initiative to organize community and business events, such as parades and sidewalk sales, to promote unused downtown properties through "underground" tours. MSL supports local businesses through economic gardening efforts that include a business plan competition with

winners receiving startup funding, small business loans, publicizing available downtown properties, and supporting the "Destination Retail" retail enhancement program.

Chamber of Commerce

The local Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization comprised of local leaders that promote the Lexington, Buena Vista, and the Rockbridge County region. The Chamber sponsors business, political, and educational events throughout the year with the goal to promote the competitive enterprise system of businesses. They also provide business development services using information from partner agencies, such as educational institutions, governments, and economic development agencies. Additionally, they assist with marketing efforts.



▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Shenandoah Valley Partnership

The Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) works with public and private partners locally, regionally, and statewide to promote an economic climate for business success throughout the Shenandoah Valley. This process involves attracting new businesses by marketing potential sites, working with governments to promote the availability of incentives, and working to help existing businesses expand and guide workforce development. SVP also tracks various economic indicators and publishes an annual report that includes Shenandoah Valley economic performance overviews.

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC) is supported in part by the City of Lexington. DSLCC provides opportunities for the extension of knowledge, skills, and personal enrichment in an environment that maintains high academic standards and respect for each individual.

In addition to these partnerships, Lexington has a strong framework of economic incentives in place to support economic development strategies identified in this plan, including:

Commercial Tax Abatement

The City of Lexington offers tax exemption on rehabilitated commercial or industrial buildings to help encourage private reinvestment in the City.

HubZone

The City of Lexington is designated as a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) through 2021. Through this federal program, small businesses gain preferential access to federal procurement opportunities. To qualify for the HUBZone program, businesses must meet certain size, ownership, and employment thresholds.

Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit

Major Business Facility Job Tax Credit qualified companies locating or expanding in Virginia are eligible to receive a \$1,000 income tax credit for each new full-time job created over a threshold number of jobs. Companies locating in an economically distressed locality or an Enterprise Zone are required to meet a 25-job threshold; all other locations have a 50-job threshold. For this tax credit, a locality qualifies as economically distressed if its unemployment rate for the preceding year is at least 0.5 percent higher than the average statewide

unemployment rate. Based on 2019 data, Lexington currently qualifies for the lower job creation threshold.

Opportunity Zones

The City of Lexington is designated as an Opportunity Zone under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This designation provides an economic and community development tax benefit to investors with capital gains. It is designed to encourage long-term private investment in low-income census tracts. The designation is current through December 31, 2028.

Local Economy

▷ Needs Assessment






Lexington offers and supports numerous programs and initiatives to bolster the economic well-being of the City and its residents. While changes in a modern economy can never be fully predicted and planned for, Lexington can take actions to develop a more robust and resilient economy. The objectives and strategies for Local Economy are intended to address these needs. The following list identifies some of the most critical economic development needs as Lexington plans for 2040:

- ▶ A more diversified economy with expanded opportunity for residents, particularly young professionals.
 - ▶ An expanded real estate tax base through better use of underutilized property, including adaptive reuse, infill, and redevelopment.
 - ▶ A supportive business environment with easily accessible resources and incentives for local entrepreneurs and businesses.
 - ▶ Increased dialogue to proactively address needs or problems confronting the business community and identify ways the City can help businesses succeed.
- ▶ More opportunities for Lexington business owners to recommend improvements to the City's business environment.



Local Economy

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Local Economy			
Goal: Market the City's assets, including its history and small-town character to attract business, increase employment opportunities, raise salaries, and expand local revenue.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Offer a business-friendly environment with opportunity for all residents.	LE 1.1	Assess business licensing, permitting, and other regulatory requirements and streamline process, where needed, that might hamper new businesses and "side-gigs".
		LE 1.2	Encourage the development of safe, affordable, quality childcare.
		LE 1.3	Practice "economic gardening" by offering startup loans and low-cost financial advice to small and minority-owned businesses, connecting citizens to federal micro-enterprise loan programs until local programs can be established.
	Attract new business and investments that increase the city's tax base, diversify the economy, and promote job growth.	LE 2.1	Actively recruit new businesses and assist expansion of existing businesses poised for growth.
		LE 2.2	Aggressively promote local and regional tourism through a variety of means, focusing on history and outdoor recreation.
		LE 2.3	Promote economic development incentive programs, such as HUBZONE, Job Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zones, to encourage desirable investments – including start-up businesses, hiring, and affordable dwelling opportunities.
		LE 2.4	Sell, lease, or otherwise leverage under-utilized City-owned properties to strengthen Lexington's tax base and economic strength.
		LE 2.5	Continue to invest in broadband and other telecommunication developments that are often cited as important determinants of local and regional economic growth.
	Make strategic investments that enhance the quality of the community to attract visitors, businesses, and employees.	LE 3.1	Continue to pursue streetscape improvements associated with the Downtown Improvement Plan, including pedestrian upgrades that make the downtown district safer and more enjoyable for visitors.
	Leverage the business community to strengthen economic development and growth.	LE 4.1	Connect developers, real estate professionals, and lenders with resources and educational materials to help them promote Lexington to potential investors and businesses.
	Partner with adjacent communities, community organizations, and educational institutions to achieve the shared economic success of the region.	LE 5.1	Recognizing the scarcity of development sites in Lexington, coordinate with Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista to promote economic improvement that can improve the regional economy.
		LE 5.2	Provide reliable funding to, and partner with, Main Street Lexington to expand downtown improvement strategies that may include branding campaigns, façade grants, business visitation and exit surveys, and business incubation programs.

A vibrant outdoor market scene on a city street. The foreground is filled with people, including a woman in a large straw hat and a colorful striped tank top, and a young girl in a yellow shirt. The middle ground shows several white and blue pop-up tents under which vendors are selling goods. In the background, there are multi-story brick buildings with various signs, including 'PARKING IN REAR SOUTHERN INN RESTAURANT', 'The Original', 'GIFT SHOPPE', and 'The Southern Attic'. The overall atmosphere is bright and lively.

Arts & Culture

Foster the expansion of the artistic and cultural assets in the Lexington region by effectively using existing resources and talent to attract and expand new opportunities.

Arts & Culture

▷ Introduction

Lexington is a small but culturally vibrant, independent city situated in the Valley of Virginia between the larger, more urban centers of Staunton and Harrisonburg to the north and Roanoke to the south. With the presence of Washington and Lee University (W&L) and Virginia Military Institute (VMI) within City limits, Lexington has developed a unique character centered around small-town charm while emphasizing the importance of arts and culture in the community. As with most university communities, Lexington has a longstanding tradition of artistic, musical, and cultural endeavors that continues to influence and inform the local arts and culture scene today.

The goals and strategies included in this chapter aim to transform Lexington into an even more vibrant cultural hub than it is today. The strategies are founded in the understanding that successful arts and culture initiatives are coordinated regionally; rely on citizen involvement, not just public investment; sustain and enhance local identity and character; contribute to a strong local economy; and can build a more inclusive community. Many venues, organizations, and initiatives relating to arts and culture in the Lexington community exist within or operate across the neighboring localities of Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista. As such, extensive cooperation and coordination is encouraged across a broad range of governments, institutions, and organizations to achieve the desired goal of this chapter.

This chapter builds on the City's long-standing support of the arts in the community. As Lexington's first formal effort to incorporate arts and culture into its Comprehensive Plan, this chapter examines the status quo of such initiatives in the community and makes recommendations for how Lexington can further expand and support arts and culture initiatives. This assessment:

- ▶ *Identifies existing assets, initiatives, and gaps in the City's ability to facilitate the growth of arts and culture in the community;*
- ▶ *Suggests a series of strategies to structure improvement; and,*
- ▶ *Makes formal recommendations for action to be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council.*



Arts & Culture

► Community Engagement

Arts and culture is important to the Lexington community. Nearly 30 percent of Comprehensive Plan survey respondents indicated that culture and events was one of the most valued characteristics of their community. As an economic driver, growing Lexington's arts scene may also support two areas of concern for City residents identified through the Comprehensive Plan survey – lack of job opportunities and lack of shopping and services.

Arts and Culture Working Group

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, an arts and culture working group was tasked by the Planning Commission in early 2019 with examining the existing conditions of arts and culture in the Lexington community, as well as setting forth a series of recommendations for improvement to be considered by the Commission. In conducting their assessment, the work group asked the following questions:

- What local and state laws might need to be reviewed to realize certain objectives?
- How can diversity be promoted within the Lexington arts and culture community to include people of all ages and cultural backgrounds?
- What actions can be taken by the City to improve arts and culture infrastructure in the immediate future as well as long term?
- How can the development of an enhanced arts and culture infrastructure serve the economic goal of driving tourists to the area while ensuring that locals feel included and involved in the process?
- How can the City of Lexington best cooperate with other local governments, educational institutes, and non-governmental organizations to achieve the desired goal of the chapter?



Arts & Culture

▷ Planning Context

Existing Conditions

Lexington's arts and culture venues, organizations, and initiatives are fundamental to the high quality of life enjoyed by residents. Not only do these organizations improve the community as a place to live, work, and play, they support the local economy by attracting tourism, driving events-related spending, creating jobs, and generating revenue through meals and lodging taxes.

As defined by the City's arts and culture working group, arts and culture generally include festivals, live music events, public art exhibitions, dance performances, food, and a variety of recreational activities. The area's three institutions of higher learning are major contributors to and hosts of events and performances. Outdoor recreation is also a major component of the City's culture given Lexington's idyllic location situated between the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Mountains.

In addition to existing venues, organizations, and initiatives, Lexington is home to dozens of independent artists, musicians, builders, artisans, professors, people skilled in crafts and trades, and an overall abundance of human capital and talent who contribute immensely to the community's arts and culture scene.

Existing Assets

Lexington boasts a wide range of community arts and cultural assets. From museums and performance arts to its historic physical character and annual events, Lexington affords residents and visitors a unique blend of history and tradition along with the energy of a college campus and a vibrant downtown. Although not an exhaustive list, **Map 6.1** details arts and culture events, venues, organizations and other assets, which create a strong foundation for the goal and strategies presented in this chapter.

12+ Theater
Music
VENUES

21+ Sites
HISTORIC

5 EVENT
VENUES

Art 5 Galleries

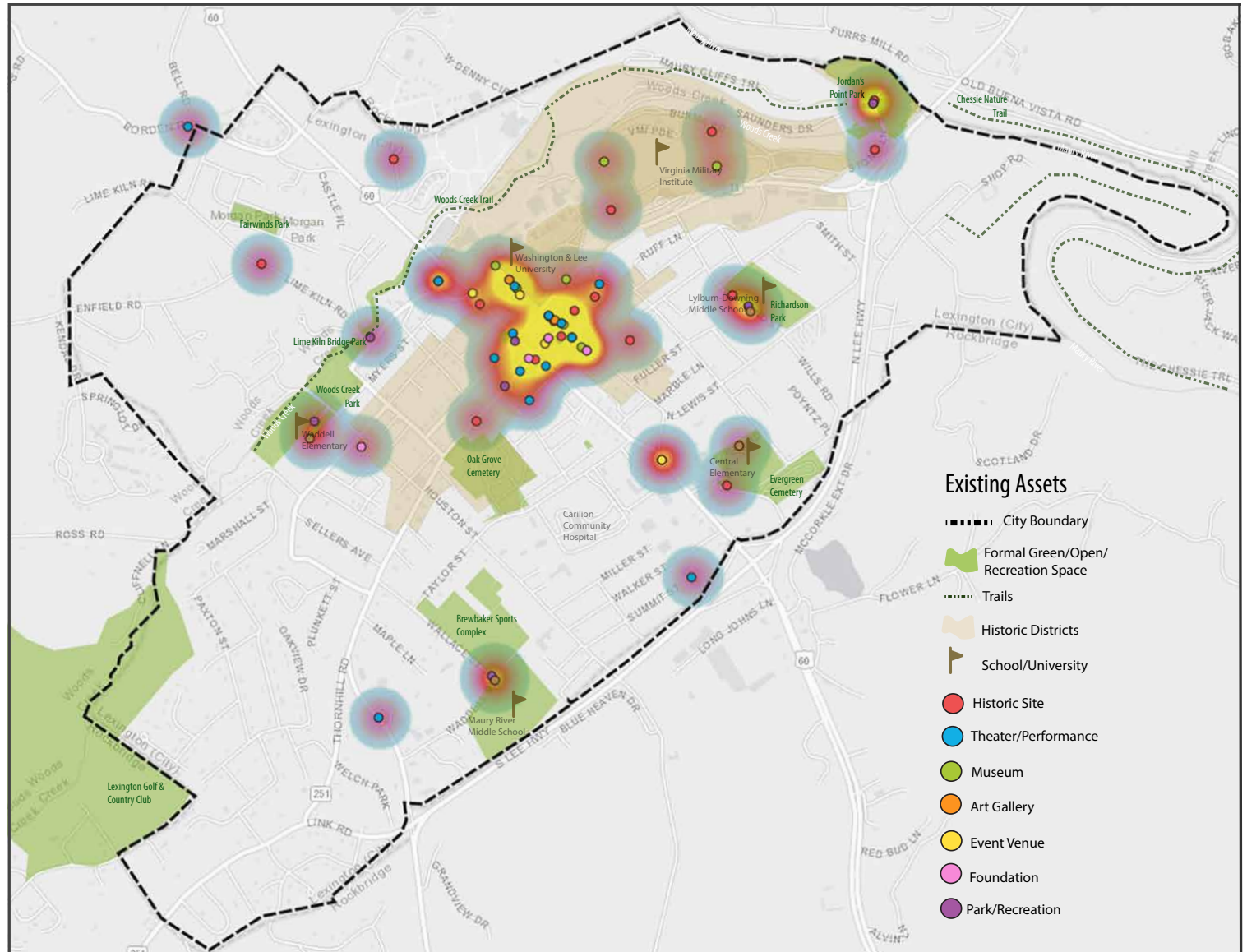
MUSEUMS 8

Arts & Culture

Map 6.1 Arts & Culture Assets

The City's existing arts and culture assets can be classified as museums, historic sites, venues & event spaces, green spaces & parks, and community-based organizations & initiatives. Although not an exhaustive list, this map shows the concentration of assets available to the Lexington community.

The greater Lexington Region is host to additional assets such as: Southern Virginia University, Virginia Horse Center, Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden, Rockbridge Artisan Produces, Rockbridge Symphony, and the Shenandoah Ballet just to name a few.



Arts & Culture

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

In addition to identified arts and culture assets, Lexington supports arts and culture through several partnerships and initiatives, including:



Boards and Commissions

Several of Lexington's boards and commissions deal directly or indirectly with arts and culture in the community: The Architectural Review Board, Cemetery Advisory Board, Regional Tourism Board, and the Rockbridge Regional Library.

Downtown Enhancement Plan

The Downtown Enhancement Plan was accepted by City Council in 2013 with the goal of creating an attractive, vibrant, walkable, and bikeable Downtown. The plan recommends a variety of public improvements that contribute to green infrastructure, including street trees, green space, and bicycle/pedestrian connectivity. To date, approximately 30 changes contained within the plan have been approved by City Council, and roughly \$25,000 per year is allocated for implementing the plan.

Media Organizations

There are several media organizations that help promote arts and culture opportunities in the City of Lexington. These sources include The News-Gazette, The Rockbridge Advocate, WLUR-FM 91.5 radio station, and others.

Main Street Lexington

Main Street Lexington is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization established in 2013. The organization works to enhance economic prosperity and cultural vitality of the downtown Lexington area. Several events sponsored by Main Street Lexington are intended to bring arts and culture into the City and into downtown specifically.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance includes regulations for the Downtown Historic Preservation District and the City's residential historic districts. The City received a grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to develop a set of design guidelines for its historic districts. The new guidelines were enacted in 2019.

Arts & Culture






▷ Needs Assessment

Lexington has long supported arts and culture throughout the City and, as demonstrated through existing programs, has a solid foundation for bolstering investment in community arts and culture. However, the existing conditions analysis performed by the arts and culture work group identified the following opportunities and areas in need of improvement. The goal, objectives, and strategies that follow are intended to address these existing gaps.

- ▶ Limited diversity of cultural and artistic expression in the community in terms of promoting a wide variety of content for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.
- ▶ Multiple underutilized spaces (such as alleys, abandoned buildings, bridges, vacant lots, entry corridors, etc.) throughout the City that could benefit from visually-engaging public art installations.
- ▶ Lack of clear, organized leadership, vision, communications infrastructure, and funding for stimulating arts and culture initiatives in both the private and public sectors.
- ▶ A need for safe and accessible sidewalks in the downtown area.
- ▶ Easing restrictions regarding the consumption of alcohol and dining in outdoor spaces in the downtown area to allow for food trucks and encourage the development of nightlife.
- ▶ Limited information and resources for promoting outdoor activity and recreation in the community.
- ▶ Limited space for workshops, classes, camps, and other small events.
- ▶ Examining Lexington's history in the context of its rich artistic and cultural contributions rather than focusing on political or military history.



▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Arts & Culture			
Goal: Foster the expansion of the artistic and cultural assets in the Lexington region by effectively using existing resources and talent to attract and expand new opportunities.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Foster access to arts and culture in Lexington.	AC 1.1	Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of civic, arts, and cultural facilities, venues, and activities with the goal that they will be more diverse and universally accessible.
		AC 1.2	Support affordable housing, flex live/work spaces, and resources for artists and artisans creating new businesses in Lexington.
	Support a strong local arts and culture economy.	AC 2.1	Encourage the development or designation of community space(s) as a general arts and culture center for the greater Lexington community, capable of hosting both national and local artists as well as other community events.
		AC 2.2	Adopt tax incentives for the renovation of underutilized spaces and buildings (e.g., Cultural Enterprise Zones — tax incentives and subsidies to attract cultural organizations and private investors).
		AC 2.3	Consider amending the zoning ordinance to create an arts/entertainment overlay district.
		AC 2.4	Work with community organizations to promote cultural tours that showcase the arts, culture, and area architecture through coordinated festivals, live music events, and other celebrations of local culture (e.g., host monthly mini-festivals that highlight one particular aspect of arts and culture).
	Use art and culture as a placemaking tool in the community.	AC 3.1	Use public art to revitalize, define, and enhance the character of Lexington and its neighborhoods.
		AC 3.2	Improve the aesthetic quality of the City's entrance corridors to be more inviting and appealing to visitors and locals alike.
		AC 3.3	Support the temporary re-use of vacant/underutilized building, facades, and sites for art exhibitions, events, and murals.
		AC 3.4	Include an arts and culture component in development requests for proposals for city-owned sites, when appropriate.
	Encourage and support citizen-led arts and culture events and initiatives.	AC 4.1	Streamline the public art/mural installation process to promote public art in the City.
		AC 4.2	Examine local regulations related to street festivals (food trucks, arts, music, food, drink, booths, etc.) to more easily accommodate special events.
		AC 4.3	Streamline the event registration/permitting application to be more easily accessible and user-friendly.
	Provide resources and support for arts and culture in the greater Lexington region.	AC 5.1	Promote partnerships between local and regional government, local businesses, organizations, schools, university art programs, and charitable foundations to enhance event, programming, and facility development.
		AC 5.2	Establish an independent Arts and Culture Community Council to better facilitate arts and culture programming, initiatives, funding, and promotion between organizations and institutions in Lexington and Rockbridge County.
		AC 5.3	Publish an arts and culture directory of programs, services, and funding available in the Lexington area.

Housing

Conserve and foster the improvement of the City's neighborhoods to ensure safe, affordable, and desirable places to live.



Housing

▷ Introduction

Access to housing is critical to the health, well-being, and economic vitality of Lexington and its citizens. Quality housing allows people to live comfortably, safely, and in a desired location. Housing construction, contracting, and other residential services create jobs, support the local economy, and contribute to local tax revenue.

With difficult topography and little undeveloped land, the City has seen little recent housing development. At the same time, with a strong economy and high quality of life Lexington is in demand as a place to live. These factors contribute to high average housing costs and make housing affordability a key issue for Lexington's future.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan reviews the city's existing housing stock and develops strategies for the future. This chapter combines the community's input and involvement in guiding the Plan with the data and observations gathered by city officials.



▷ Community Engagement

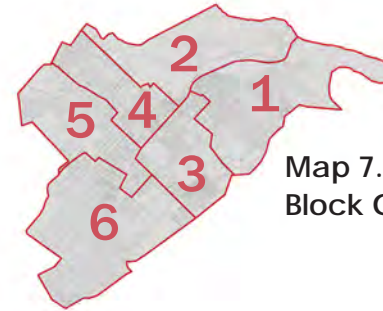
The online survey and community meetings for the Comprehensive Plan revealed a need for affordable housing in the city that is supported by housing data gathered during the planning process. Affordability was one of the most frequently cited concerns for Lexington's future and was highlighted as the most-needed type of residential development. Single family homes, housing for seniors and the elderly, workforce housing, and homes within walking distance to employment were also commonly shared needs.

Housing

▷ Planning Context

Existing Conditions

In order to formulate a future plan for housing in Lexington, it is important to understand the current trends. By using American Community Survey data (5-year estimates, 2014-2018) along with US Census Block Group boundaries, housing data is visualized specific to location to allow for a detailed analysis. The Census Block Group Maps included in this chapter offer a glimpse into the specific housing and habitation patterns within the City of Lexington. There are six block groups within the City; each encompasses relatively equal population numbers but contains varying housing characteristics. Block Group 2 primarily encompasses Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee Campuses; note that the housing data for this Block Group is anomalous but was not excluded since it is partitioned into one Block Group.

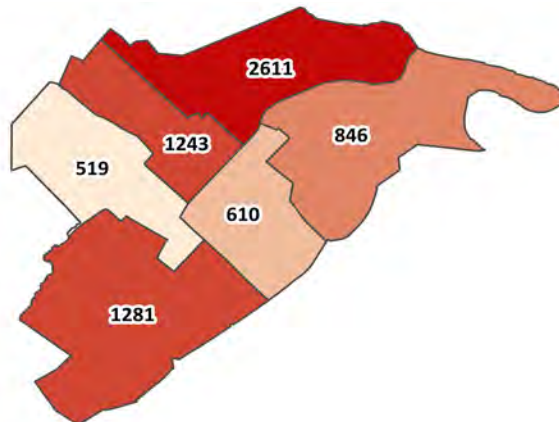


**Map 7.1
Block Groups**

Map 7.2 Population

Population count for number of people living in each Block Group

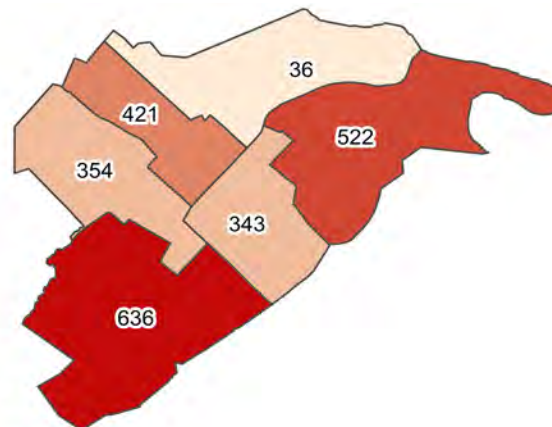
Total: 7110



Map 7.3 Housing Units

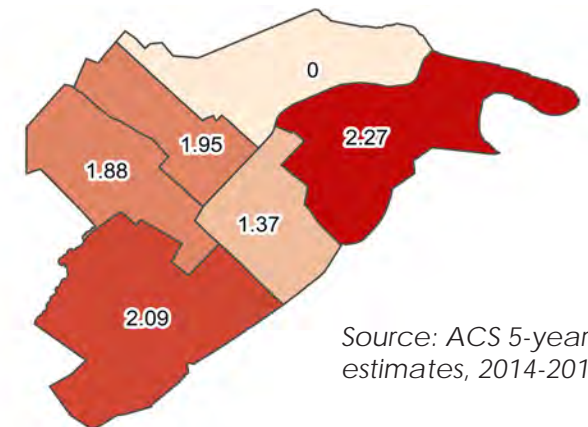
Number of available housing units in each Block Group.

Total: 2312



Map 7.4 Household Size

Average size of household living in each Block Group.



Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2014-2018

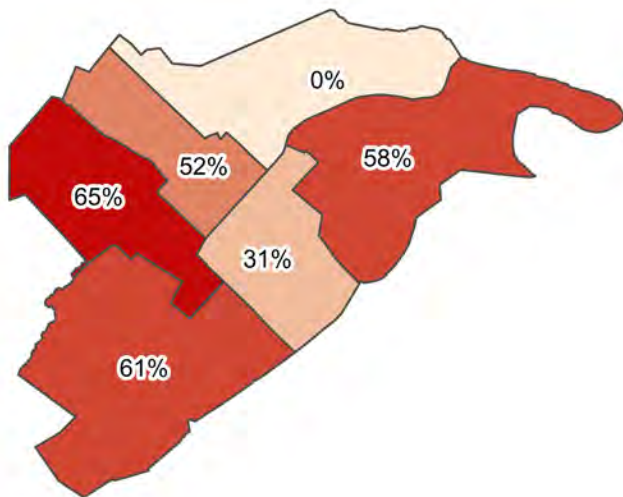
Housing

▷ Planning Context

Housing Type

Lexington's neighborhoods provide a variety of housing options for City residents. The housing stock is predominantly single-detached units, but there is also a relatively large share of apartments, attached, and accessory units throughout the City. Washington and Lee and Virginia Military Institute also provide on-campus dwellings for students, which are considered group living quarters and are not counted in the traditional housing statistics, which can be found in **Appendix B**.

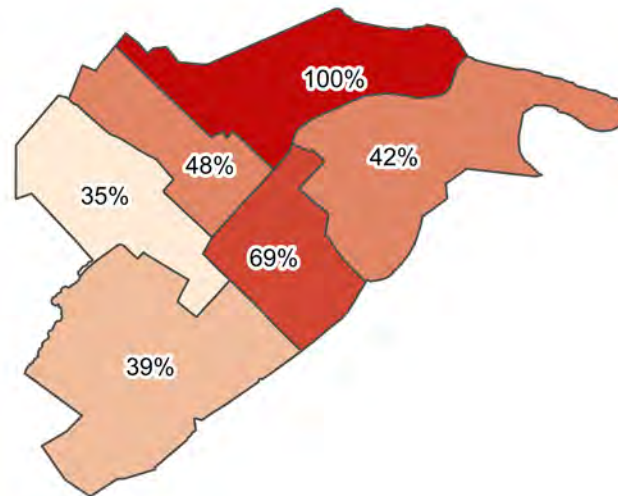
Map 7.5 Percent Owner Occupied Homes



Housing Tenure

A little more than half of Lexington households own their homes compared to more than 75% in Rockbridge County, indicative of the City's denser development pattern and student demand for rental units. Though rental units are well-distributed throughout the City, the concentration of rental units is slightly higher in eastern portions of the City near W&L and downtown.

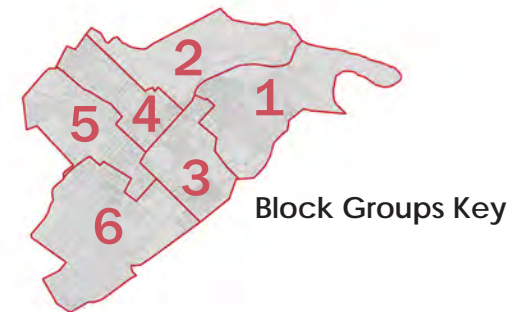
Map 7.6 Percent Renter Occupied Homes



Housing Age

Lexington is home to many historic neighborhoods, reflecting the long history of the community. More than a third of Lexington's homes were built before 1940, and more than 75% were built before 1980. Only eight new housing units were constructed between 2010 and 2015, highlighting the limited amount of recent development.

While older, historic homes contribute to the beauty and charm of Lexington, they may not meet the accessibility, energy efficiency, or other needs of modern consumers. These older units may also require complex and costly repairs as they age. Housing rehabilitation programs, such as those provided through Lexington's partnerships and initiatives, can help prevent the displacement of low-income households who otherwise may struggle to keep their home in livable condition.



Housing

▷ Planning Context

Housing Turnover

Housing turnover rates show a relatively strong inclination for owners to stay in Lexington, with nearly 25 percent of homes being occupied by the same owner for thirty years or more. Predictably, apartment turnover is much higher, reflecting student living and home ownership preferences.

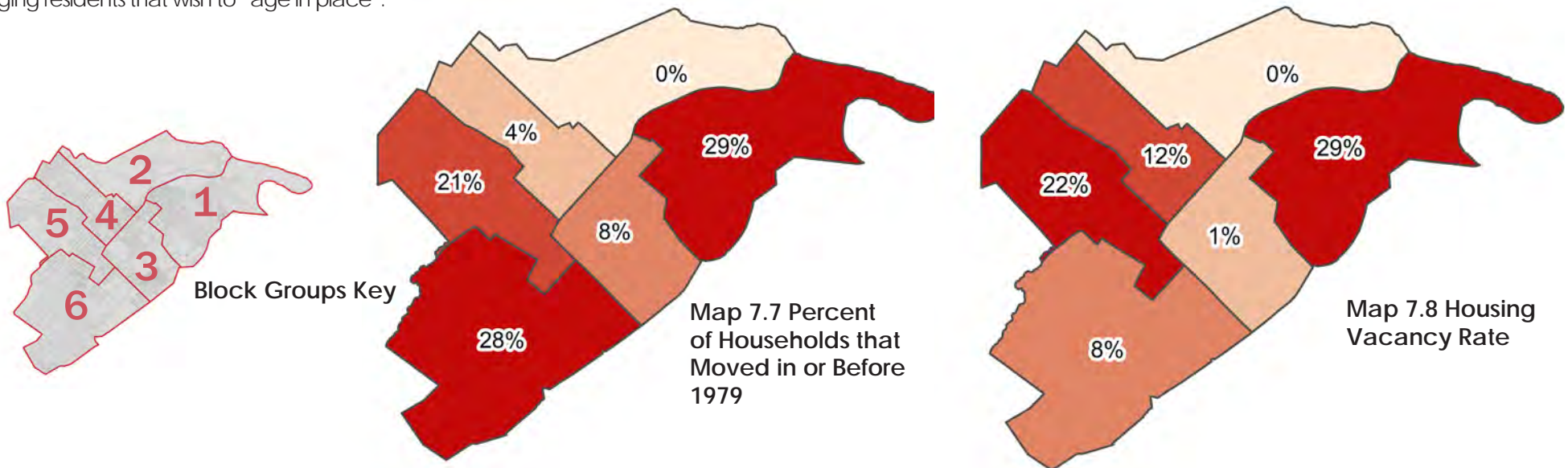
Block Group 1 and Block Group 6 have a large percentage of owners who have lived in their homes for more than 40 years. These areas could soon see a transition in ownership from older residents to younger families or rental properties as these homes are sold or inherited. Neighborhood improvements, such as sidewalks, signals, and benches, could also help making these areas more accessible and friendly for aging residents that wish to “age in place”.

Housing Vacancy

Slow growth in housing construction has resulted in very low housing vacancy.

The highest vacancy rates are found in Block Group 1 and Block Group 5. For Block Group 1, this may be a result of the low demand for the type or location of housing available in this area. The average year built is 1959, home values tend to be lower here, and it is relatively inaccessibility to downtown and the college campuses. However, the low rental/high vacancy ratio and median resident age of 40.5 may evidence opportunity for an increase of rental properties in this area for non-student residents.

The data tells a very different story about Block Group 5. Here, the rental rate is low, and the median age is high. The median resident age here is 60, while the median male age is 63.8 (the national median age is 38.2). This, along with the significant number of houses for sale in the \$500,000 price range, indicates that this area is likely in transition as older well-established residents are shifting their assets and lifestyle. The rate at which this neighborhood successfully transitions could be an indicator of the future housing demand.



Housing

▷ Planning Context

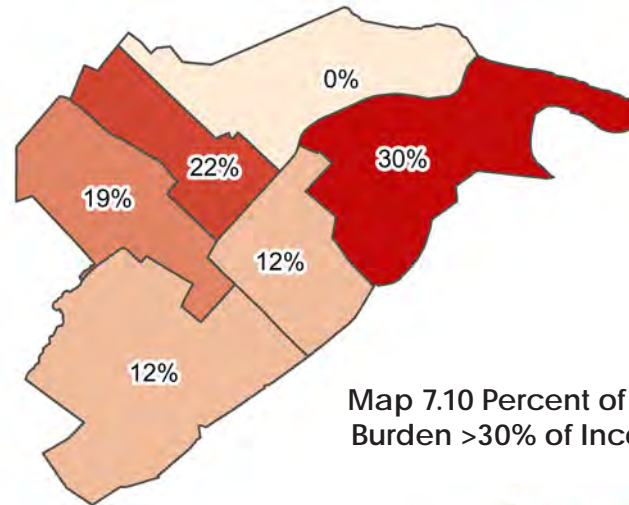
Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is a pressing issue for Lexington and the region. Households that spend over 30% of their income on housing costs are considered “cost burdened,” as they are likely paying more for housing than they can reasonably afford. These households may have trouble paying for other basic necessities such as food, transportation, and health care. In Lexington, 56% of mortgaged homeowners and 58% percent of renters exceed this threshold. By comparison, 36.5% of mortgaged homeowners and 52% of renters are cost burdened in Rockbridge County.

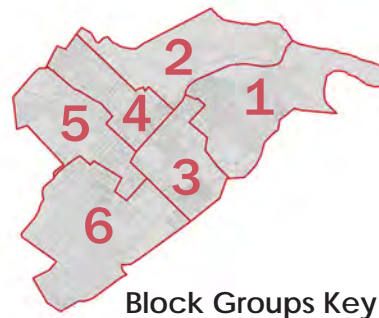
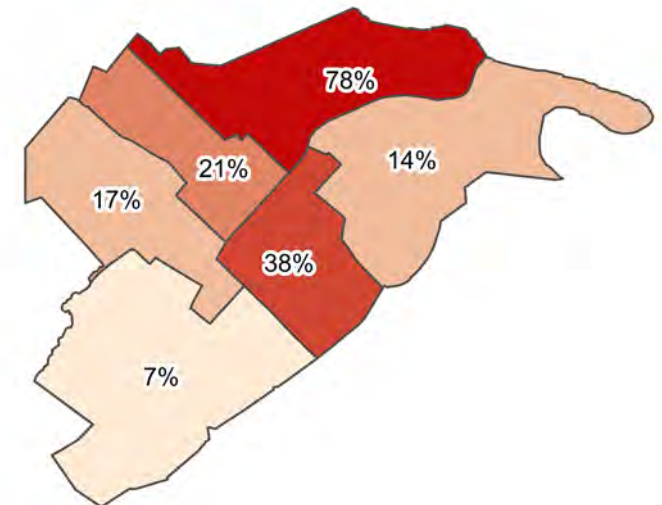
Cost burden is shown geographically in **Map 7.9** and **7.10**. The areas with the highest percentage of residential units being rented, other than on college campuses, are the neighborhoods along the Route 60 corridor, thus that is the area that experiences the greatest cost burden to renters. The highest housing cost burden for homeowners is found in the area with the lowest average home value (Block Group 1) and in Block Group 4, nearest the Washington and Lee campus. This data concludes that Block Group 4 exhibits the highest cost burden for both renters and owners.

Adding housing supply is one way to alleviate housing cost burden and affordability by making units available at different price points. In addition, renovating and retrofitting homes with more efficient building materials and systems can help to reduce the overall cost of owning a home, while also supporting the sustainability goals within the Green Infrastructure and Natural Resources chapter. Housing affordability must also be addressed through active participation with local and regional partners, which is one of the key goals of the Threshold Housing Commission discussed later in this chapter.

Map 7.9 Percent of Households with Mortgage Cost Burden >30% of Income by Census Block Group



Map 7.10 Percent of Households with Rental Cost Burden >30% of Income by Census Block Group



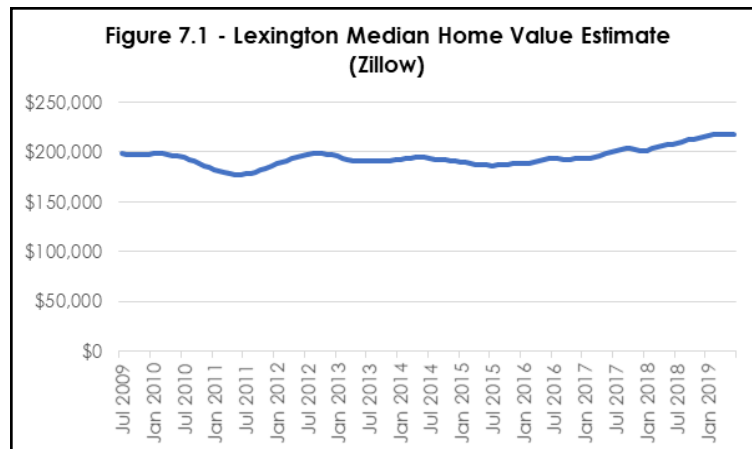
Housing

▷ Planning Context

Housing Value

Housing values in Lexington are higher than Rockbridge County, reflecting the desirability of the City's historic, walkable neighborhoods and proximity to employment, education, and services. In 2017, median value in Lexington was \$252,500, compared to \$197,200 in Rockbridge County.

Regionally, the Lexington area housing market has seen a slow but steady increase in value, particularly since the housing market crash in 2008. From July 2009 to July 2019, the median home value estimate of area homes climbed from \$198,700 to \$217,300. Between April and July 2019, the median sales price of a home was \$278,750, based on 44 home sales. For 2019, the average price per square foot was \$156, an 18 percent increase over 2018. For potential sellers who have large amounts of equity in their homes, increasing home value is a good sign, but the same trend can increase the tax burden on long-term residents and make Lexington unaffordable to buyers.



Subsidized Housing

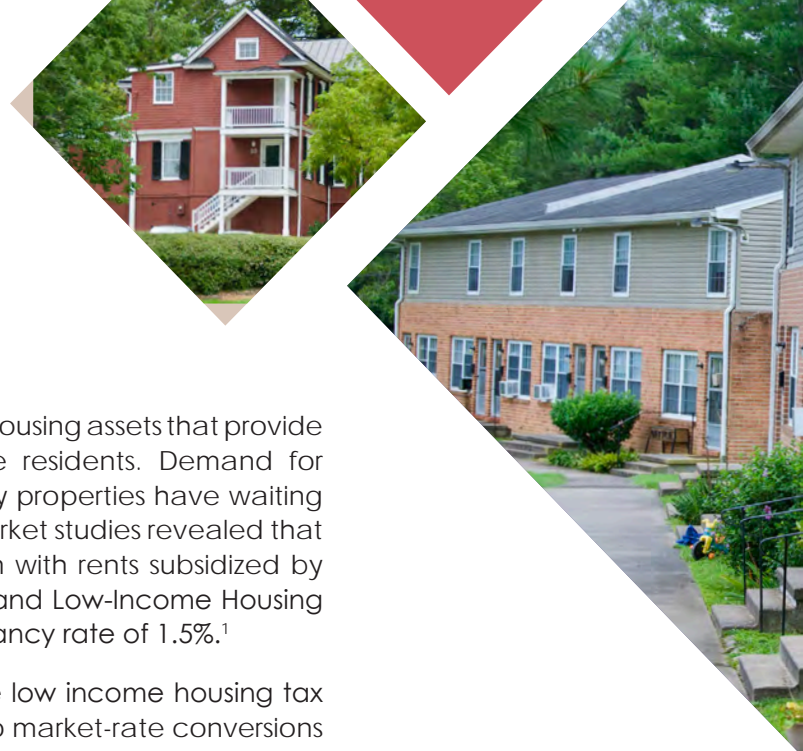
Lexington has several subsidized housing assets that provide housing options for low income residents. Demand for subsidized units is high, and many properties have waiting lists for available units. Recent market studies revealed that the ten apartments in the region with rents subsidized by Section 515 Rural Development and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit programs have a vacancy rate of 1.5%.¹

Properties subsidized through the low income housing tax credit program are susceptible to market-rate conversions once the original term agreements expire. The City and its local housing advocates should be cognizant of the terms on these properties and work with property owners to reduce the risk of losing affordable units to market-rate conversions. This may include identifying development partners, such as non-profits, with the ability to acquire the property, secure financing, and maintain affordability.

Recent Development

While limited land is available for large-scale suburban residential construction, new residential development continues to occur in Lexington. Forty-eight homes are projected for construction through 2020. New development is concentrated in the Weatherburn Subdivision in the southeast (Block Group 6) and in the Thompson's Knoll subdivision to the northeast (Block Group 1). There has also been recent expansion at "Kendal at Lexington", the continuing care retirement community on the western edge of the city.

¹Revised Market Analysis for Renovation Green Hills Apartments Lexington, VA; Prepared by S. Patz and Associates, Inc.; February 2019



Housing

▷ Planning Context

Market Forces

Supply and Demand

As with most assets and commodities, housing price is impacted by supply and demand. Generally, demand drives up the price of an asset, which, if not met by an increase in the supply of that asset, leads to shortages and ever higher prices. The price of housing and real estate is especially contingent on this delicate balance of supply and demand.

The rental market is in particularly high demand in Lexington. A 2019 market study showed that the current market-rate and tax credit apartment supply is 98.8% occupied. Given the limited number of traditional apartments available, students and other renters who cannot secure a conventional apartment must occupy single-family homes, duplexes, and other rentals or live outside City limits. Development of new market rate apartments will open new housing opportunities for renters and potentially support the re-conversion of existing rental homes back to single-family use. Construction of additional rental units may also stimulate housing churn, creating new opportunities for buyers and renters alike.

Ideally, the demand for housing would be met with an equal supply of housing. However, Lexington's housing market is limited by supply rather than demand, and the City is handicapped in its ability to build new housing by its small geographical size. While this small geographical

size certainly lends itself to the charm and character of the City, it does not readily foster new housing construction to meet the current and future demands of the citizens. Housing demand unable to be accommodated within the City of Lexington will naturally spread into Rockbridge County, highlighting the importance of regional cooperation and a coordinated approach to development and growth.

Revitalization and Infill

Lexington's quaint downtown and walkable, traditional neighborhoods make it a desirable urban center within the region. While Main Street Lexington has helped promote revitalization in the downtown, upper stories of some buildings remain unoccupied and underutilized. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of these buildings for multifamily housing should be actively promoted and supported, along with compatible infill development of surface parking and vacant lots. At the same time, revitalization in the downtown may place pressure for the conversion of residential property to commercial use. While encouraging a diverse and sustainable economy is a cornerstone of this Plan, the City is committed to balancing the economic development and housing needs of the community by protecting neighborhoods from commercial conversions that might further constrain the housing market or otherwise degrade the quality of neighborhoods.

Institutions of Higher Learning

W&L students have a significant impact on Lexington's housing market. While VMI students must live on-post, many W&L students have historically lived off-campus in rented houses spread throughout Lexington and the County. In 2016, the University opened new third year housing facilities and began requiring that juniors live on-campus. This decision was undertaken to improve the sense of student body community and connectivity but has affected the local housing rental market. The reduction in demand for off-campus student rentals has freed up units for non-student rentals, or in some cases caused former rental houses to be sold. At this time, W&L has not announced any similar effort to require seniors or law students to live in on-campus housing. In 2018, W&L enrolled 407 seniors, for whom minimal on-campus housing is available, and 394 law students, for whom no on-campus housing is available. At double occupancy, these students represent 401 student households that compete with long-term residents for rental housing in Lexington and surrounding community. While W&L has made efforts to concentrate students on campus, senior and law students continue to place high demand on Lexington's rental market. The market study estimated that student households represent 82% of the apartment base.

Housing

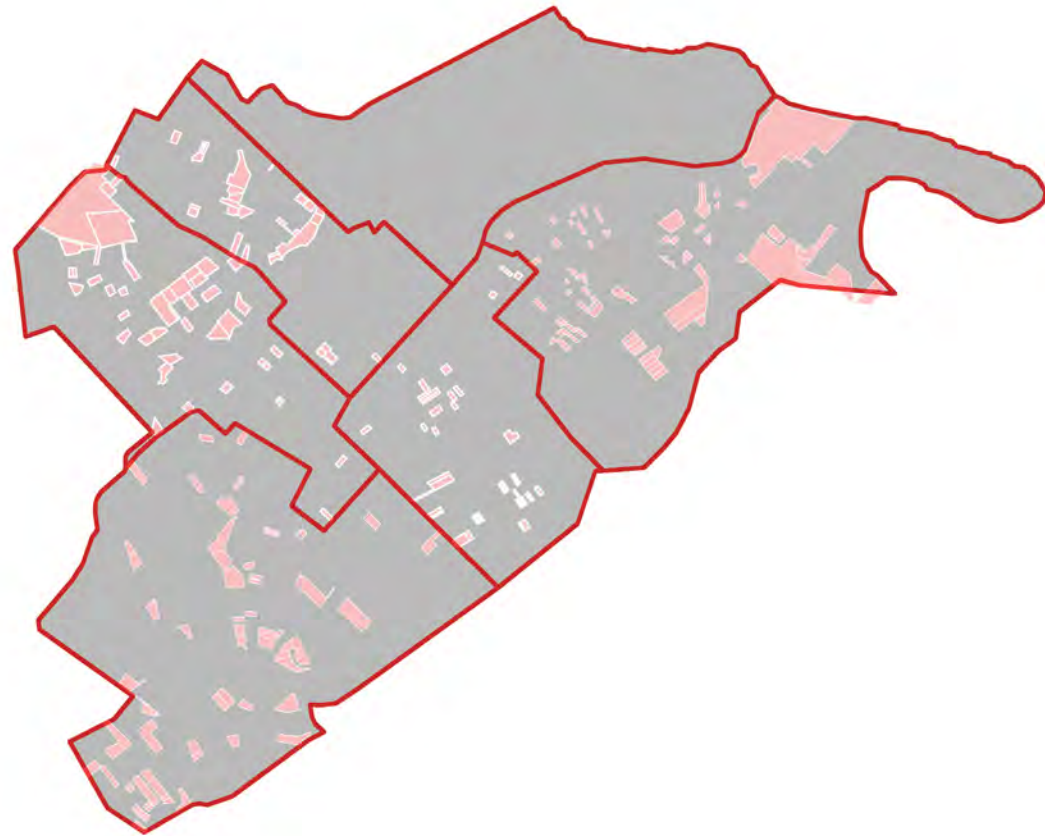
▷ Planning Context

Development Potential

Limited opportunities for development are scattered throughout the City, but most open land is limited in area and is burdened with development limitations. **Map 7.11** highlights existing vacant residential parcels that could potentially be developed in the future. Some of these lots are undersized while others are completely landlocked. While recent zoning updates have allowed more flexible development regulations, additional modifications, such as reducing frontage requirements to allow infill residential development in large rear yards, should be explored.

In addition, the land use chapter highlights key opportunity areas where additional residential density should be promoted. New residential construction is most likely to be realized through multi-family infill, rehabilitation and reuse of underutilized downtown buildings, and the addition of accessory dwelling units.

Map 7.11 Undeveloped Residential Zoned Land



Housing

▷ Planning Context

Age-Friendly Housing & Neighborhoods

Lexington's aging population and high rate of long-term owners indicates a need for senior housing options. A 2019 market study showed a strong need for active adult and senior housing with services in Lexington. Currently, there are no market-rate apartment properties designated for older adults (age 55 and over) in Lexington or the surrounding area. New opportunities for senior living have been developed at the Kendal at Lexington, a continuing care retirement community on the western edge of the city, which recently developed approximately 30 cottages to accommodate the older population. Additional development of age-restricted and senior housing will create new housing options for those wishing to stay in Lexington but downsize out of homeownership. If local seniors are making a move to Kendal at Lexington or other supportive environments such as Heritage Hall or The Mayflower, it could stimulate transfer of real estate in areas with older populations and open the housing market to a new generation of homeowners who wish to call Lexington home.

To support its aging population, Lexington should also take actions that support successful aging in place. Ensuring age-friendly neighborhoods requires solutions covering the range of planning elements discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Community design features, such as ADA-accessible sidewalks and benches, can make it easier for aging-residents

to stay active and healthy. Transportation options can help seniors travel to reach shopping and services outside their neighborhood. Housing rehabilitation programs, such as those noted under the Local Advocacy section below, can help seniors maintain and modify their homes to be more accessible. Accessory dwelling units, discussed in the following section, can help offset rising housing costs or create living space for live-in caregivers.

Accessory Dwellings

Accessory dwelling units are an increasingly common tool used to respond to housing demand in constrained markets. Where traditional zoning practices have limited single-family neighborhoods to one home per lot, accessory dwelling unit ordinances allow a second small dwelling to be constructed on the same grounds of a standard single-family home. In 2018, Lexington revised its zoning ordinance to allow the construction of accessory dwelling units in single family neighborhoods, provided they are attached to or located within the existing dwelling unit. The City should also explore the modification of zoning policies to allow detached accessory dwelling units to further expand rental opportunities. As an added benefit, accessory dwelling units can provide supplemental income to cost burdened homeowners, helping increase housing affordability for renters and owners alike.

Short-Term Rentals

Short-term rentals are a relatively new component of Lexington's housing market. Short-term rental registration requirements and standards were adopted into the zoning ordinance in October 2017. In 2019, the first full year of the program, 19 short-term rentals were registered.

Short-term rentals offer substantial positive economic impacts by providing a supplemental source of income to the owner and supporting increased tourism activity and spending in the community. However, they are not without their own planning considerations. When unregulated, short-term rentals may negatively impact neighborhood character and quality of life with issues such as parking, traffic, and noise. They may also reduce the amount of housing available for long-term occupancy, which can lead to increased housing and rental prices in constrained markets. As a city with limited space for new housing development, Lexington will need to continue monitoring and regulating short-term rentals to balance community housing needs and protect quality of life in neighborhoods.

Housing

▷ Partnerships and Initiatives

The City of Lexington works with local partners and has undertaken a variety of housing advocacy programs over time, including grant programs aimed at housing rehabilitation, the purchase and renovation of aging homes, and new construction of affordable housing.



Local Advocacy

Local organizations also play a role in advocacy and housing issues. Total Action for Progress (TAP) and Mission Next Door both provide home repair and rehabilitation for people in need. Habitat for Humanity is well known for its work to build affordable housing and is active in Lexington. The Rockbridge Area Relief Association also provides homelessness prevention programs and HelpLine financial assistance to low-income area residents.

Rental Assistance Office

The Rockbridge Area Rental Assistance Office provides safe, sanitary, and affordable rental housing for low income citizens in the Rockbridge County area through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Section 8 program is overseen by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered on a state level by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). The vouchers allow low-income residents to find a home of their choice and use the program voucher to pay for all or part of the rent.

Rental Housing Inspection Program

In 2006, the City of Lexington adopted a rental housing inspection program, which required the inspection of residential rental units in six designated districts as well as the multifamily complexes located in Lexington. The program also provided for the inspection of properties located outside an inspection district based on observations of City staff or complaints from landlords, tenants, or the public. In 2020, the program was dissolved with the direction to reevaluate the ordinance in fiscal year 2021.

Threshold Housing Commission

The City's Threshold Housing Commission supports the housing needs of low- and moderate-income families, the elderly, and the handicapped. Since 1988, Threshold has successfully implemented housing rehabilitation projects for eligible low- and moderate-income families using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, city funds, and financing from local banks. Despite Threshold's impact on the community, efforts to develop a new affordable housing community using CDBG funds were unsuccessful

due to eligibility requirements that were unattainable for Lexington's low to moderate-income residents. Threshold continues to provide housing assistance and coordinate the efforts of various local housing assistance providers.

Housing

▷ Needs Assessment






As discussed in this chapter, Lexington faces many challenges when it comes to meeting the housing needs of current and would-be residents. While a balanced housing market provides opportunities for most residents, very low housing vacancy rates, as found in Lexington, can drive up housing prices and limit opportunities for new buyers and renters alike. Research, market studies, and surveys specifically show a need for:

- ▶ Preservation and expansion of affordable housing opportunities.
- ▶ Additional appropriate and compatible multifamily, rental housing.
- ▶ New age-friendly housing opportunities, including age-restricted multi-family and senior living.
- ▶ Continued promotion of adaptive reuse, revitalization, and infill development.
- ▶ Continued exploration and expansion of innovative housing options, such as accessory dwelling units.
- ▶ Protection of neighborhood character by limiting encroachment from commercial uses, promoting homeownership, and supporting housing rehabilitation programs.



Housing

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Housing			
Goal: Conserve and foster the improvement of the City's neighborhoods to ensure safe, affordable, and desirable places to live.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options for all of Lexington's residents.	HO 1.1	Pursue funding strategies such as Community Development Block Grants or local revolving loan funds to finance the rehabilitation of housing on behalf of residents in need.
		HO 1.2	Review regulations allowing accessory dwelling units in separate structures in appropriate residential areas.
	Pursue policies that bolster Lexington's housing market, promote new development, and reduce long-term financial burdens on property owners.	HO 2.1	Encourage energy efficiency and other green principles in the planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of Lexington housing to reduce long-term ownership costs for residents.
		HO 2.2	Expand provisions of Lexington's Zoning Ordinance allowing density bonuses for the creation of low- and moderate-income affordable housing units.
	Protect and enhance the quality and character of Lexington's residential neighborhoods.	HO 3.1	Provide housing rehabilitation resources for elderly and low-income residents to support "aging in place" and preservation of neighborhood character.
		HO 3.2	Protect existing affordable neighborhoods from losing housing stock to commercial conversions or other non-residential uses.
		HO 3.3	Facilitate the redevelopment and expansion of East Nelson Street and South Main Street commercial areas into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods with higher densities, a mix of housing types and a range of complementary uses.
		HO 3.4	Explore revisions to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow lots without street frontage, where appropriate, making additional infill lots possible.
	Engage Lexington residents and property owners to create a more robust local housing market.	HO 4.1	Conduct outreach to owners of downtown buildings with underutilized upper floors, explaining upper story zoning and building codes.
	Leverage community resources to support diverse, safe, and affordable housing.	HO 5.1	Partner with local organizations to educate the public about heating systems, window-repair systems, storm windows, insulation, roof ventilation, and other energy-saving features suitable for existing buildings.
		HO 5.2	Continue partnership with the Threshold Housing Commission as an affordable housing agency to coordinate and support the work of local housing non-profits. Cooperate with Threshold Housing Commission to organize and facilitate seminars and workshops on housing issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan needs assessment.
		HO 5.3	Explore modifying the City's zoning regulations to facilitate the creation of a variety of safe, affordable, and innovative housing options, including the establishment of small lot, attached units, and other housing types that achieve higher densities and a diversity of housing options.
		HO 5.4	Reevaluate the Rental Housing Inspection Program.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a courtyard. In the foreground, there is a brick-paved area with several wooden picnic tables and metal chairs. The courtyard is surrounded by large, leafy green trees. In the background, there is a two-story red brick building with white window frames and a central entrance with a white door. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Land Use

Plan for strategic, efficient, and quality development that increases the economic vitality of Lexington by building on local character and identity; protecting sensitive resources; and prioritizing connectivity between neighborhoods and services.

Land Use

▷ Introduction

Lexington is a historic and charming city with quality neighborhood, commercial, and institutional areas centered around its traditional downtown center. While Lexington is a mature community with limited land for new development, growth is welcomed and is expected to occur mostly as compact infill that is compatible with the character of the existing community.

Land use constitutes the base upon which all other aspects of development are founded. Land use policies and development patterns establish the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan. The future planning framework articulated in this chapter was developed following an analysis of existing development patterns and extensive public input that together define the community's vision for the future. Recognizing that land use patterns in the City are largely set, the policies in this chapter focus largely on the form, connectivity, and character of development.

Through the recommended future land use framework and strategies, this Plan considers how future growth and development could make Lexington a more accessible and diverse community; bolster the local economy; enhance local identity and character; more closely involve citizens; and improve management and collaboration regionally and with local institutions.



▷ Community Engagement

Public Survey

Lexington residents value their community's strong sense of place and identity. In the Comprehensive Plan survey, Lexington's small city character was cited as the top characteristic that people value about their community. Nearly 50% of survey respondents noted the importance of preserving history and architectural character, and over 60% of survey respondents reported that Lexington should welcome new residential and commercial growth.

Regarding land use, the survey results showed a need for a variety of housing types and retail, restaurants, and healthcare uses. Respondents showed a strong desire that, in the next ten years, Lexington would see thriving businesses and downtown and preserved history/small town character. More shopping/entertainment options and more community/family/kid friendly spaces/events were commonly cited changes that would make Lexington a more livable and enjoyable city. The survey results also identified land use challenges common for mature communities, including conservation/open space and lack of developable land, along with the presence of institutions of higher learning.

These results highlight the need for a flexible land use framework that preserves and enhances the community's character while offering new opportunities for development and amenities for residents.

Land Use

▷ Planning Context

Lexington is organized along two major streets, Main and Nelson. The intersection of these streets marks the center of the historic downtown. North Main Street passes Lexington's two institutions of higher learning before joining Lee Highway as it passes over the Maury River. A bypass carries Lee Highway away from the downtown and along the City's southern border.

Lexington has three main commercial areas. The City's historic downtown core is home to a variety of small retail stores, offices, service uses, restaurants, hotels, and government uses. The downtown is largely made up of older, multi-story buildings in a dense configuration with pedestrian facilities and limited parking. South of the downtown, where East Nelson Street meets Lee Highway, a suburban commercial area includes shopping centers and national chain retailers on larger sites with ample parking. A second suburban commercial zone at South Main Street and Lee Highway includes a motel, farmer's co-op, and other automobile-oriented commercial uses.

Institutional uses also make up a major part of Lexington. The two institutions of higher learning that help define the City are found north and east of the downtown. Importantly, while Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is a branch of state government and therefore exempt from local zoning and other land use regulations, Washington and Lee (W&L) is a private institution whose land use is governed by a university master

plan approved by the City. Both institutions include relatively dense mixes of residential, classroom, administrative, and recreational spaces, and both feature abundant open and green spaces. Other institutional uses include the campus of Carilion Community Hospital south of the downtown, as well as a variety of church and organizational uses such as Lexington's three national fraternity headquarters.

Residential uses in Lexington are predominantly single-family detached homes, with older homes on smaller lots found nearest the downtown and larger lots with more modern homes found along the City's edge, particularly south and west of the downtown. Occasional duplexes or multi-family residential buildings are scattered throughout Lexington. Many are small multi-family buildings rather than large apartment complexes and are well-integrated into single-family residential neighborhoods.

Park and civic uses make up the remainder of Lexington, including two major cemeteries, government offices for both the City and County, parks, and both City and County elementary and middle schools. Civic spaces also include utilitarian spaces dedicated to transportation rights-of-way, water and sewer facilities, and maintenance yards.



Land Use

▷ Planning Context

Development Potential

Lexington is a relatively constrained land area of 2.5 square miles and is largely built-out, with few vacant parcels for new development. Growth and development are anticipated to occur primarily through individual infill projects that add residential density or commercial space or through redevelopment and adaptive reuse that converts one land use to another.

Numerous residential properties in the City are made up of more than one parcel of land, often with a house on one lot and another lot making up part of the yard. While in some cases these yard lots are too small to build on, it may be possible to add a new house on these lots, potentially infilling existing neighborhoods with occasional new houses. This is a positive addition to the City and should be encouraged where possible. In other cases, residential lots may contain enough land area to be subdivided but remain one parcel. A limited number of large rear yards could be used for infill housing except that Lexington's subdivision ordinance requires all lots to have street frontage. The City should study the opportunity to change this requirement, allowing driveway easements to access infill lots to the rear of existing residential parcels where enough land exists. **(See Housing Strategy 3.4).**

A small number of substantial development sites can be found, including two areas of East Lexington near Campbell Road, a commercially-zoned parcel east of the Nelson Street/Lee Highway interchange, acreage near Lexington's water storage facility along Enfield Road, and a City-owned site on Spotswood Drive, among others. With so few sites available, it is important that these sites be considered carefully and are developed to meet the City's goals, including higher-density housing and valuable additions to the tax base.



Land Use

▷ Planning Context

Regional Land Use Considerations

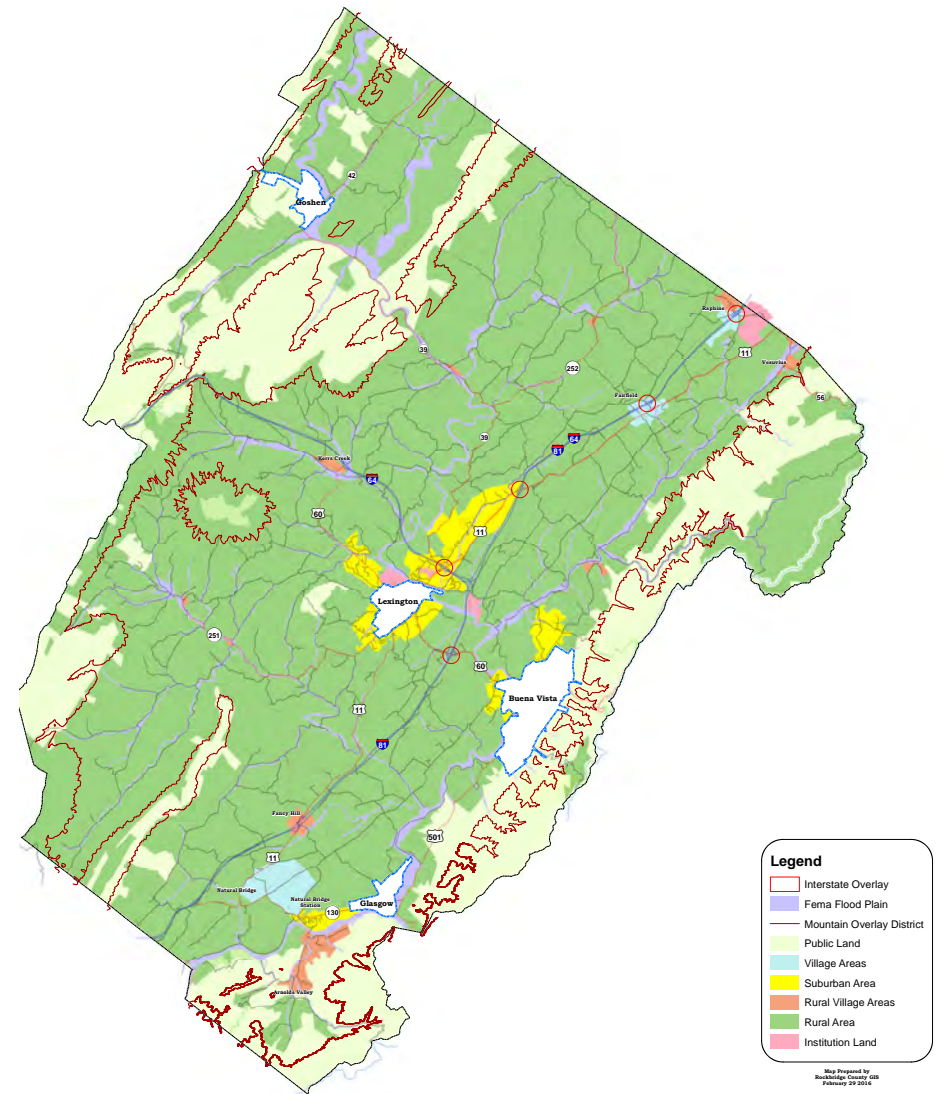
While this Plan is specific to the boundaries of the City of Lexington, land use in the real world is not so clearly defined. Lexington is an employment, shopping, and entertainment destination for residents of Rockbridge County and the region, and, with few parcels available in the City itself, new development increasingly locates on county lands adjacent to Lexington.

In its own Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2016, Rockbridge County prescribed that rural areas of the County should be preserved while new development should be encouraged adjacent to existing settlements and in areas well-served by existing transportation and utility infrastructure. These areas are labeled Suburban Areas and are found in areas adjacent to Lexington and Buena Vista. Suburban Areas are planned for mixed residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan also calls for development that serves and takes advantage of interstate highway interchanges. Lands around these exits are planned for regional shopping centers, major office or industrial employment centers, large-scale recreation or tourism uses, and traveler services such as fueling, restaurants, and accommodations.

The County has already made progress toward its goal of encouraging development near Lexington and preserving rural areas. Changes in 2008 introduced sliding scale zoning to further discourage rural area development and provide a new R-2 zoning district in key areas to promote compact single-family and multi-family residential uses. The County also extended water and sewer service in 2007 from the vicinity of Lexington along U.S. 11 to Raphine and is planning to extend sewer service along U.S. 60 to I-81 at Exit 188.

Lexington and Rockbridge County have previously undertaken joint planning initiatives in South Lexington and East Lexington and should continue such cooperation where adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas offer opportunities to enhance vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity as well as common urban design and land use objectives.

Map 8.1 Rockbridge County Future Land Use Map



Land Use

► Partnerships & Initiatives

Coordination with Institutions of Higher Learning

Lexington benefits enormously from the presence of W&L and VMI. These institutions raise the profile of the City, provide employment opportunities, host cultural events, attract visitors, and support local organizations through partnerships and student involvement. Both institutions are inseparable parts of the history and character of Lexington. Both institutions conduct their own strategic and land use planning processes, which shape the land use, transportation, and other elements of the City's future.

VMI Master Plan

As a branch of State government, VMI is not subject to local zoning or other authority. The institution does, however, have a positive working relationship with the City. VMI has an enrollment of approximately 1,700 cadets and in-City facilities covering approximately 134 acres. Facilities include housing, classrooms, offices, dining facilities, support services, and indoor and outdoor sports and training facilities. VMI maintains a Post Facilities Master Plan, updated annually, to guide changes and additions to the Institute's facilities. The school has also conducted a strategic planning process, whose guidance is found in a document titled [Vision 2039](#).

The overall strategic vision of VMI includes a variety of upgrades and renovations to the Post but does not include significant plans to expand VMI's land holdings within Lexington or to grow significantly beyond its current enrollment of approximately 1,700 cadets. Efforts to renovate and modernize a variety of facilities will be ongoing but will have little effect on the larger City. The most recent addition to VMI has been the Corps Physical Training Facility, opened in October 2016 and located on the south side of North Main Street, adjacent to existing VMI facilities. This is a 200,000

square foot LEED certified building housing an indoor running track and other athletic facilities with parking beneath and connected to the main Post by a pedestrian bridge over North Main Street. While very large, the building maintains the character of VMI and the North Main corridor, with complementary design and traditional construction materials.

An indoor aquatics facility is planned for a site adjacent to the new Corps Physical Training Facility along North Main Street, which may increase traffic during large events. The North Main Street corridor in this area will also be affected by the City's own plans to remove on-street parking and enhance pedestrian spaces through a new streetscape program.

W&L Master Plan

W&L is a private institution and is therefore subject to City land use authority. All parcels that make up the University are zoned, and most university properties are covered by the City's Institutional Overlay zone.

W&L enrolls approximately 1,800 undergraduate students and 400 law students on a 325-acre campus. In its own [strategic planning process](#), completed in 2018, W&L expressed little desire for significant growth in land area or enrollment, but does plan for significant construction, additions, and other improvements to the campus to create new programs, better serve students, and to increase environmental sustainability – a shared goal in Lexington's Comprehensive Plan.



Land Use

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

W&L is currently undertaking a significant campus master planning effort, the adoption of which is subject to City review and approval. In considering such proposals, the City will continue to encourage W&L to look within its present holdings for future growth rather than acquiring additional land. Not only would additional expansion further erode the City's tax base, removal of viable commercial activities from an already limited downtown is harmful to the health and vigor of this vital commercial district.

The University owns most, but not all, of the houses in a block bounded by Glasgow, Nelson, and McLaughlin Streets and adjacent to the University's Lenfest Center for the Arts and Gaines Hall. Any proposed redevelopment of this block should mimic the scale and architecture of adjacent historic homes.



Land Use

▷ Future Land Use Plan

As a historic city with a great deal of existing development, Lexington must carefully plan for those areas where change is possible. The following framework establishes the desired pattern and character for future development that affords the City an opportunity to create organized and attractive City entrances, add development that supports the City's economy and tax base, and create unique neighborhoods that attract investment and tourism.

The Future Land Use Map (See **Map 8.2**) provides a depiction for how the City should grow to achieve its vision of the future. The map identifies a framework of gateways, centers, corridors, opportunity areas, and pattern areas where Lexington should encourage change and redevelopment. Because Lexington is a compact, largely developed community, the Future Land Use Map acts as a tool to guide redevelopment and infill.

The Plan prioritizes the creation of a more connected and accessible community, the expansion of traditional neighborhood patterns, and the protection of sensitive cultural and natural resources. The Future Land Use Map is informed by environmental features, existing development patterns, and existing and planned transportation and utility networks. The map and associated planning objectives and design strategies are crafted to provide flexibility for future trends while holding to an overall defined pattern for shaping development in the City of Lexington. In weighing development applications, Lexington's staff, Planning Commission, and City Council should be mindful of the Future Planning Framework as well as the needs of a changing city, the desire of Lexington residents for top-quality development, and the economic necessity of improving the City's tax base.

The Future Land Use Plan establishes five overarching Land Use Areas — Gateways, Centers, Corridors, Opportunity Areas, and Pattern Areas — with supporting Planning Objectives and Design Principles for each. Corridors are further articulated into two types and Pattern Areas into seven types.

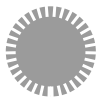


Land Use

▷ Future Land Use Plan

Future Planning Framework — Land Use Types

The Future Planning Framework establishes the following land use areas for the community, based on the significant planning objectives (See **Table 8.1**) for each area:



Gateways

Gateways are key places where the regional road network enters the City. These gateways serve as the community's front door, establishing first impressions and reinforcing perceptions of the City. Planning strategies should prioritize improving the image and attractiveness of these gateways.



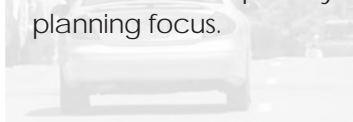
Centers

Centers are community focus areas – bridges between the transportation networks and surrounding neighborhoods. Centers are anchors of the community where services and amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods may be clustered. Focusing growth and investments in Centers encourages more compact and walkable development and encourages efficiency in new infrastructure investments.



Corridors

Corridors are important local and regional travel routes and commercial destinations. These areas strongly influence the City's accessibility, attractiveness, and economic vitality. Civic corridors are intended to be regional connectors, while neighborhood corridors are intended to connect residential areas to centers and commercial areas. Improving the conditions, character, and quality of these corridors is a primary planning focus.



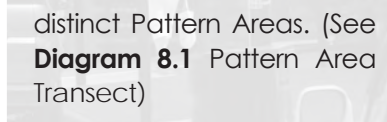
Opportunity Areas

Opportunity Areas represent key areas of focus for revitalization, infill, redevelopment, or development. Opportunity Areas are locations for change in which Lexington has the opportunity to create organized and attractive development, add density that supports the economy and tax base, and create unique neighborhoods that attract investment and tourism.



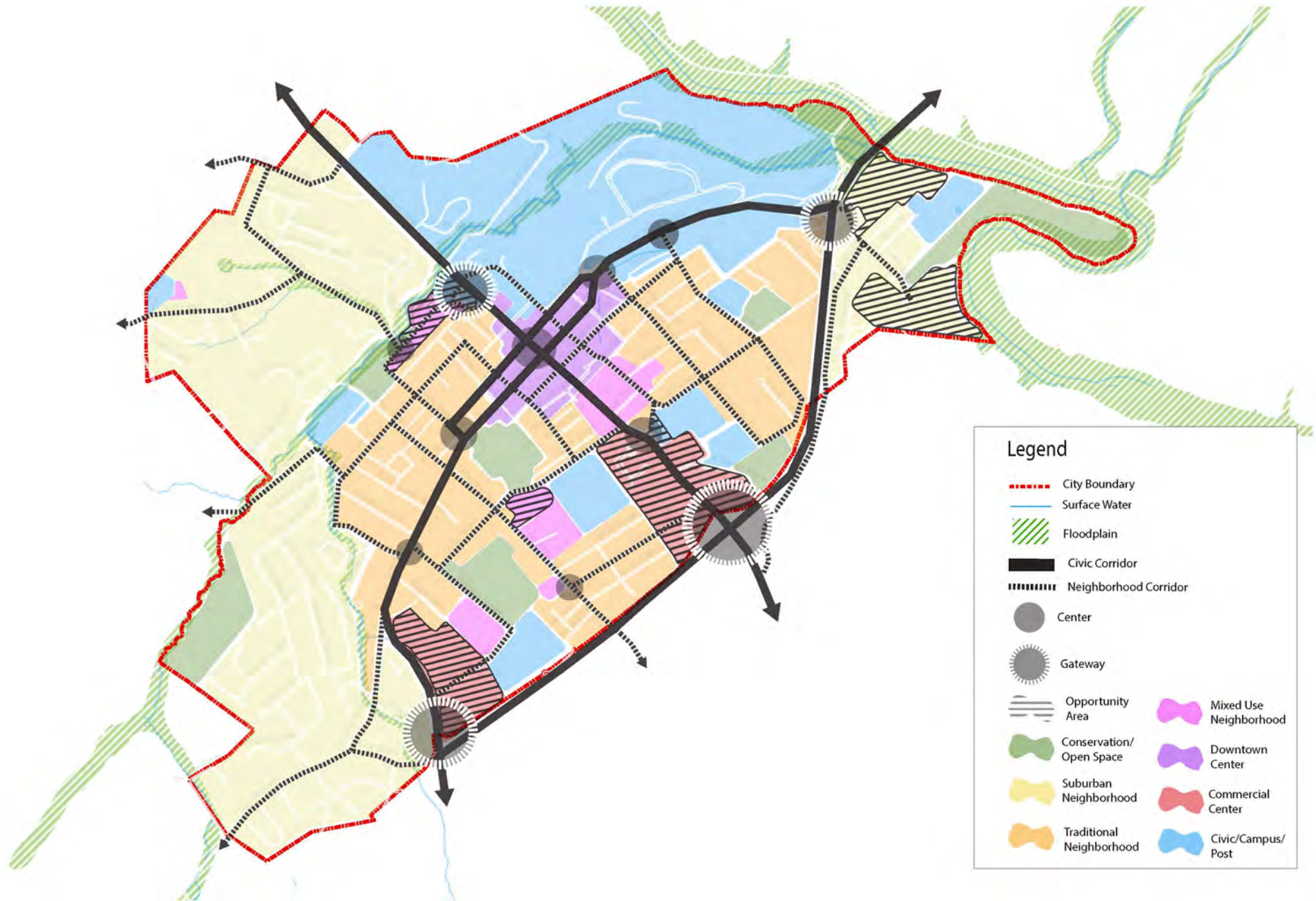
Pattern Areas

Pattern Areas are areas of the City that share distinct characteristics by virtue of geographic location, built form, and/or types of use. As a planning tool, these areas reflect the intended form, character, and planning objectives of future development and redevelopment. As development applications are evaluated, these pattern areas will serve as a guide for City leaders and staff in evaluating the appropriateness of future developments. This Plan identified seven distinct Pattern Areas. (See **Diagram 8.1** Pattern Area Transect)



Land Use






Map 8.2 Future Land Use Map



Land Use

Table 8.1 Future Planning Framework — Planning Objectives

▷ **Planning Objectives**

	Focus on infill or redevelopment	Implement traffic calming measures	Design for pedestrian & bicycle friendly community	Enhance and protect cultural resources	Connect neighborhoods through a network of green infrastructure	Encourage mixed use development	Improved streetscaping & landscaping	Enhanced design & development standards	Enhance & protect natural resources and open space	Improved wayfinding measures	Build on and promote local character and identity	Foster the development of a variety of housing types, including affordable housing	Incorporate sustainable development standards	Promote coordination of regional development and land use decisions
 Gateways		X	X				X	X		X	X			X
 Centers			X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	
 Civic Corridors	X	X	X				X	X		X				X
 Neighborhood Corridors	X	X	X		X		X	X		X				
 Opportunity Areas	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	








Land Use

Table 8.1 Future Planning Framework — Planning Objectives

▷ **Planning Objectives**

Focus on infill or redevelopment	Implement traffic calming measures	Design for pedestrian & bicycle friendly community	Enhance and protect cultural resources	Connect neighborhoods through a network of green infrastructure	Encourage mixed use development	Improved streetscaping & landscaping	Enhanced design & development standards	Enhance & protect natural resources and open space	Improved wayfinding measures	Build on and promote local character and identity	Foster the development of a variety of housing types, including affordable housing	Incorporate sustainable development standards	Promote coordination of regional development and land use decisions
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Pattern Areas

 Conservation / Open Space					X				X				
 Suburban Neighborhood	X	X	X		X				X			X	X
 Traditional Neighborhood	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X
 Mixed Use Neighborhood	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X
 Downtown Center	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
 Commercial Center	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X
 Civic/Campus/Post			X	X	X					X			X

Land Use

▷ Design Principles

The planning framework approach places greater emphasis on the quality of development and its form than on the separation of individual uses. The design principles that follow present the context, density, character, and land use appropriate within each pattern area.

Diagram 8.1 Pattern Area Transect



Land Use

▷ Design Principles

Gateways, Corridors, and Centers

Gateways, Corridors, and Centers serve as an orienting network that overlays the designated pattern areas. The appearance and functionality of Gateways, Corridors, and Centers help to integrate the distinct pattern areas and create a strong impression for the overall community.

Development along and within Gateways, Corridors, and Centers should incorporate appropriate features within the public and private realm that enhance the design character and quality of the community. Landscaping, sign controls, and underground utilities should be provided to elevate community appearance. Removal of existing mature trees should be minimized along the frontage of sites, and parking should be screened from off-site views using plants of different types and heights. Gateways should incorporate special signage, public art, and landscaping to create a sense of arrival into the City. Corridors should incorporate enhanced streetscaping and encourage multiple travel options, with Neighborhood Corridors providing sidewalks on at least one side of the street and Civic Corridors providing bike facilities and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Centers should provide community amenities, such as pocket parks, benches, and bike racks, for the surrounding neighborhoods. Gateways, Corridors, and Centers should also be prioritized for enhancement projects, such as undergrounding utilities, sidewalk infill, and wayfinding signage.



Land Use

▷ Design Principles

Opportunity Areas

New development, infill, and redevelopment are expected to be focused within Opportunity Areas. Each Opportunity Area is unique and must be considered in light of the underlying pattern area and surrounding uses. For example, the suburban-style commercial areas offer opportunities to increase density through redevelopment or infill outparcel development, while the McLaughlin Street area is poised to create a unique live-work arts district as an expansion of downtown. Development proposals should incorporate high quality architectural design and provide gradual transitions to surrounding land uses using design features, such as setbacks, height step downs, and landscaping. These areas also offer the opportunity to improve sidewalk and pedestrian access and add green infrastructure.

The unique planning, design, and investment prospects within Opportunity Areas may warrant additional study through the development of small area plans in the coming years. The planning process should begin with a community discussion to identify specific development goals for each area and assess the need for additional guidance on planning, design, and investment. The small area planning process will be most appropriate for those areas where significant revitalization or development may impact surrounding neighborhoods or vary from the underlying pattern area principles. The small area planning process will examine these areas holistically with full engagement of the public, elected and appointed officials, and planning professionals. The small area planning process may also qualify such areas for exemption from certain conditional rezoning proffer restrictions under Virginia Code Section 15.2-2303.4(F), allowing Lexington more flexibility to achieve its development goals.



- ① McLaughlin Street
- ② East Lexington
- ③ E. Nelson Street
- ④ Spotswood Drive
- ⑤ S. Main and Waddell Streets

Land Use

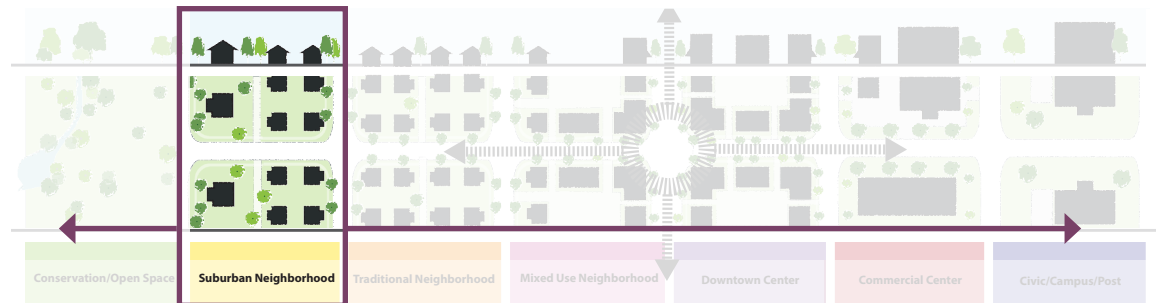
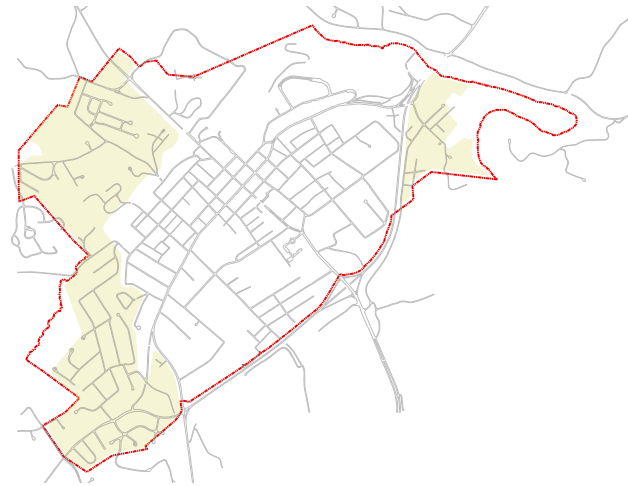
▷ Design Principles

Suburban Neighborhoods

Suburban Neighborhoods will continue to be an important part of Lexington's future. These larger homes on large lots are found mostly on the City's western and southern edges and take on a more suburban than urban character.

Neighborhood preservation and enhancement is the key focus for Suburban Neighborhoods. While few large development sites are present in this area, individual infill lots exist. New and infill development should include homes with ample setbacks from streets and neighboring properties, as well as ample private open space and landscaping within individual lots. Siting of homes, driveways, and other residential features should be sensitive to existing trees, watercourses, and Lexington's complex topography.

Despite its somewhat suburban character, transportation access in these areas both by car and on foot remains important. While on quiet residential streets pedestrians and slow speed vehicle traffic may be compatible, major streets should be redesigned with sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities over the long term. Connections between neighborhoods and schools, parks, and civic places should be prioritized.



Land Use

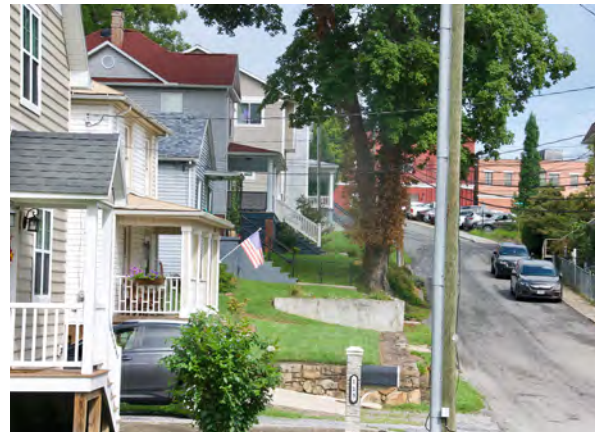
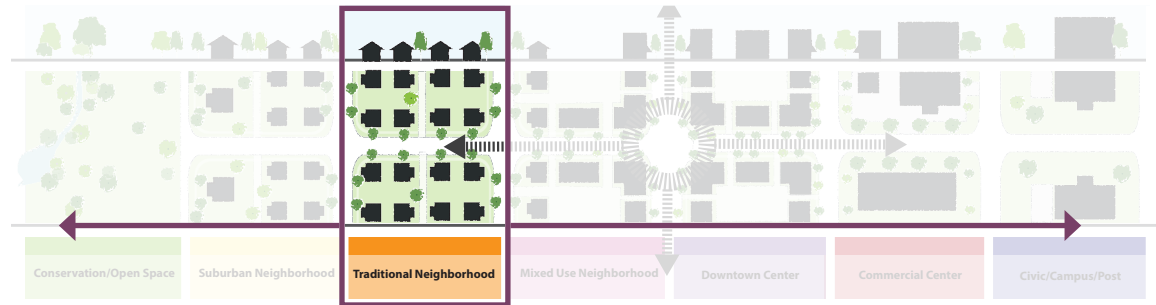
▷ Design Principles

Traditional Neighborhoods

Traditional neighborhoods represent areas of moderate density in closer proximity to Lexington's downtown core, with smaller lot sizes and greater urban character. These urban residential areas are found west, south, and east of the downtown and have primarily short blocks and a grid pattern of streets.

With very few available building sites, small infill projects are the most likely avenue for these areas to grow. Any new development should continue the street grid found throughout the downtown, include buildings that actively address the street, and provide full pedestrian connections. The proximity of these neighborhoods to the downtown is an essential part of their character, and so connections should be emphasized and promoted. Small urban lots also reduce the availability of personal open space, making parks, trails, and civic spaces increasingly important within these areas.

While Suburban Neighborhood areas are exclusive to single-family homes, the Traditional Neighborhood category also includes two-family homes, or duplexes. Duplexes create an opportunity to increase density and provide a more affordable residential option in near-downtown areas while maintaining the architectural appearance of existing neighborhoods. Duplexes should be of high-quality design, respecting the scale of the neighborhood through architectural forms, sizes, and styles compatible with the buildings in the neighborhood



Land Use

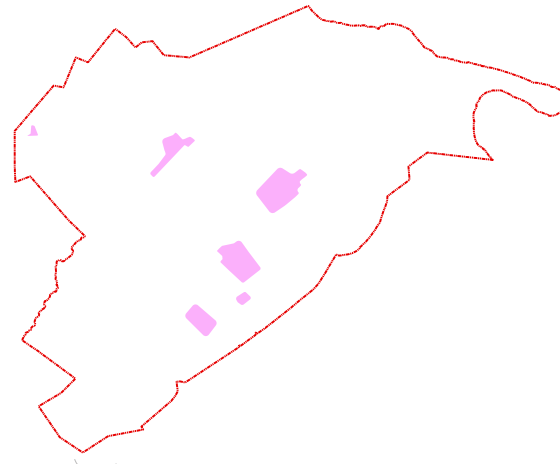
▷ Design Principles

Mixed Use Neighborhood

Mixed Use Neighborhoods are intended to be a transitional zone between downtown commercial areas and other areas. Because these sites are adjacent to other land uses and not isolated, the siting and architecture of infill development must meet the context of nearby buildings in design, density, and character.

Mixed Use Neighborhoods are appropriate for higher density residential uses, such as apartments and townhomes, and also for light commercial uses, such as offices, financial institutions, and boutique retail. Commercial uses should focus on service functions that can serve neighborhood residents while fitting in with the character of nearby neighborhoods. Motor vehicle-related uses and other high intensity or highly active businesses are not appropriate for these areas.

Good design should be varied using materials and geometry that divide large buildings into smaller visual pieces. Commercial and residential uses may be located in adjacent separate structures or in single structures that include both use types in a coordinated building plan. New buildings should be oriented toward the street to create comfortable pedestrian environment. Commercial uses should occupy ground floors, street corners, or other logical spaces with exclusive entrances. Surface parking and delivery areas should be located to the rear of the structures and appropriately sited and buffered so as not to disrupt pedestrian circulation and adjacent residences. Lighting and signage should be limited in quantity, scale, and intensity to reduce over-lighting and negative impacts on neighborhoods. While uses transition between residential and commercial, building design should likewise transition between typical residential design and the appearance of Lexington's historic downtown.



Example Mixed Use Neighborhood (Not located in Lexington).



Land Use

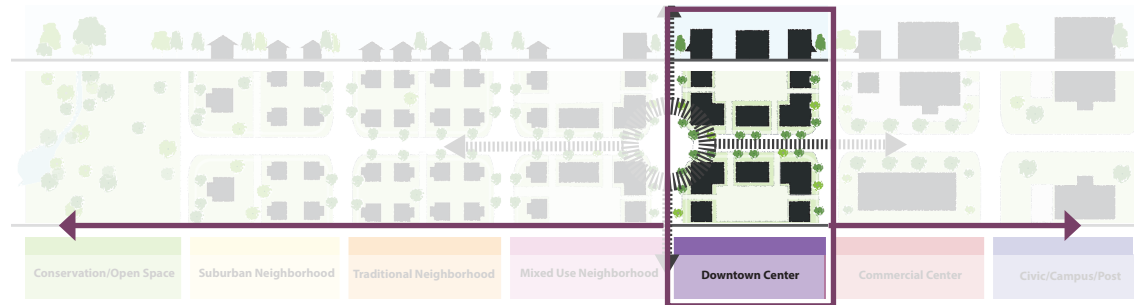
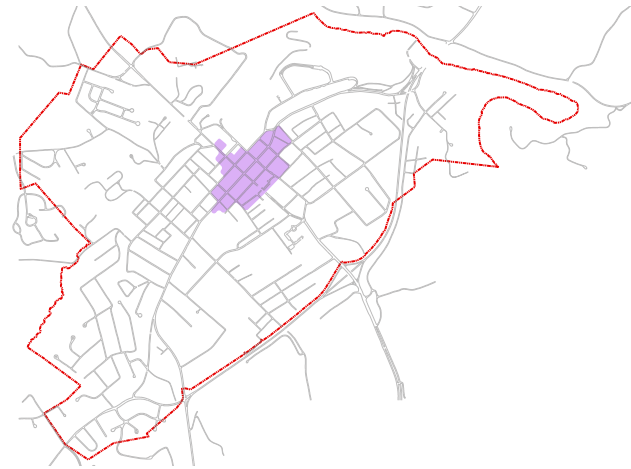
▷ Design Principles

Downtown Center

Lexington's historic downtown core is both an essential hub of commerce for city and county residents and a major attraction for visitation and tourism. The downtown is a dense mix of commercial uses, including shopping, restaurants, hotels, and upper floor residences. While the footprint of the commercial core should not expand in any way that endangers residential neighborhoods, the use and intensity of the downtown may expand in ways that are compatible with its historic and architectural character.

The Downtown Center is the appropriate area for commercial uses that are pedestrian-oriented, enhance a vibrant street life, and contribute to the economy of the larger downtown business zone. The downtown should maintain a balance of local and tourist-focused retail along with restaurants, accommodations, and other uses that contribute to an active street life and thriving economy. While there are very few opportunities to build new structures in the downtown, redevelopment proposals are likely given the downtown's appeal. The City should embrace downtown investment while also ensuring preservation of historic structures and carefully guarding the character and architectural quality of the downtown through careful site planning, architectural review, and construction planning.

Active commercial uses on the street front are important to downtown vitality and should continue to be encouraged. Additional investment and vitality downtown may come from more fully using second and third floor spaces above street front commercial as offices and residences. Residential uses should be welcomed in the downtown to increase the use of downtown businesses and extend business activity into weekdays and evenings. The overall focus of downtown



land use should not be on any one use, but on the maintenance of a cohesive district where a variety of businesses all contribute to the success of their neighbors.

Land Use

▷ Design Principles

Commercial Center

Commercial Centers are a lower-density element of Lexington's commercial economy found where East Nelson and South Main Streets meet the U.S. Route 11 Bypass. These areas lack the historic significance or tourism interest of the downtown but provide goods and services that are necessary to everyday living. Uses include grocery, pharmacy, general retail, fueling, automotive service, and other day-to-day uses, and may include national chain retailers. This zone also differs from the downtown in that it is primarily automobile oriented rather than pedestrian oriented, including shopping centers that focus on providing ample parking.

Despite the practical nature of Commercial Centers, Lexington should expect high-quality design and construction in these areas that line important entrance corridors to the City. Increased landscaping, pedestrian connectivity and safety, and access management should be encouraged, along with infill development within existing surface parking lots. Façade and sign improvements should be encouraged for existing uses, and trees and colorful landscaping should be incorporated to give visual interest between buildings, streets, and within and between parking lots. New buildings should be oriented toward the street and provide a visually rich and detailed architectural character with quality, enduring materials.



Land Use

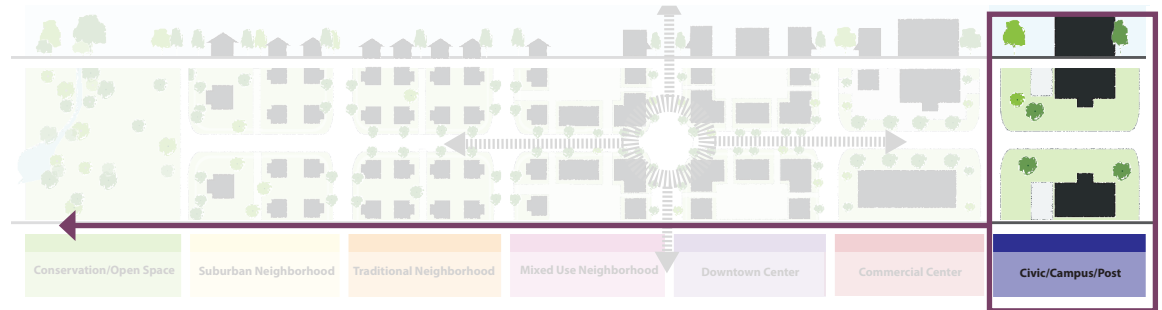
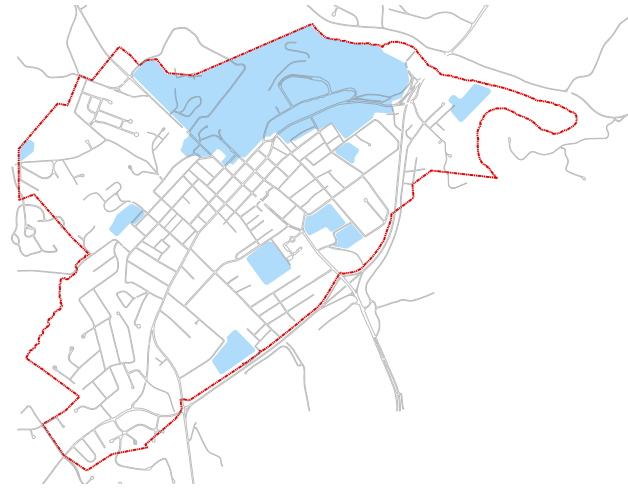
▷ Design Principles

Civic/Campus/Post

Civic/Campus/Post describes Lexington's two institutions of higher learning and civic uses, such as public school campuses and City facilities. These areas employ specialized structures to meet specific needs and may maintain master plans of their own to guide future growth and development. Institutional structures are often larger than typical Lexington residential or commercial uses.

Each of Lexington's major civic and institutional uses should encourage strengthened connections to existing neighborhoods and the downtown core through pedestrian connections, public spaces, and program policies. As some of the City's largest landowners, civic and institutional uses should continue to provide open and green space within urban areas of Lexington. While each institution of higher learning maintains its own unique character, other new or redeveloped civic and institutional buildings should match the history, style, and character of the City in their design and materials.

Because of W&L's proximity to Lexington's historic downtown, it is paramount that new or expanded buildings complement the scale and architectural quality of surrounding buildings. The City should also ensure that any campus master plan proposal evaluate and mitigate current and anticipated parking, transportation, and economic impacts.

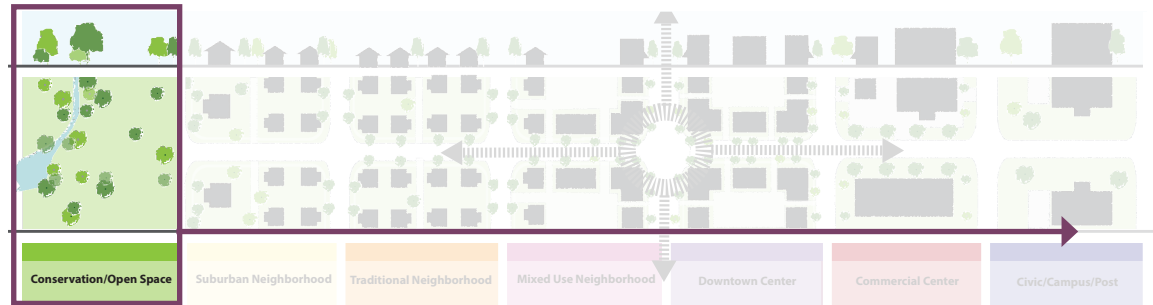


Land Use

▷ Design Principles

Conservation/Open Space

Conservation/Open Space areas are important elements of Lexington's land use, providing recreation space for urban residents, offering alternative ways to travel via paths and trails, contributing to the beauty of the City, and protecting environmental features. This category includes a range of unbuilt uses, from active recreation spaces like playing fields to passive woodlands that may provide no usable amenities. While most conservation areas are publicly owned and open to all residents, at least one large property in the East Lexington area has recently been recorded under conservation easement, an arrangement that maintains private ownership but prevents future development of a large in-City parcel. The City should take the position that while agriculture and open space preservation are laudable goals, they are best reserved for rural areas of the County. The City should not accept any future conservation easement within the City limits unless a significant public benefit is derived, such as public recreational access to significant natural features, including Maury River. Instead, Lexington should continue to plan for parks and open spaces that are most useful and most accessible for residents.



Land Use

▷ Future Land Use

Future Land Use and Zoning

While the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for future land use in Lexington, the City's primary tool for shaping and regulating land use is the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is a legal requirement that divides the City into eight zones and specifies allowed uses and dimensional requirements for each zone.

Future land use differs from zoning, although the two are related. Future land use can be thought of as a picture of what the City should strive to achieve within the next 20 or more years. This map does not change what is allowed on a piece of property right now, although it should be used to guide decisions on rezonings and conditional use permits. To determine the appropriate use and development form for a specific parcel, property owners should refer to the Future Land Use Map and the corresponding planning objectives and design principles. Ultimately, the specific use and zoning of an individual parcel will be reviewed by the City using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide.

Table 8.2 illustrates the relationship between the Future Land Use Map and Lexington's existing zoning categories.

Table 8.2 Future Land Use and Zoning

		Zoning Districts								
Future Land Use Pattern Area		General Residential District (R-1)	Suburban Residential District (R-2)	Multifamily Residential District (R-M)	Residential Light Commercial District (R-LC)	Central Business District (C-1)	General Commercial District (C-2)	Parks and Open Space District (P-OS)	Planned Unit Development	Institutional Overlay District (I-1)
	Suburban Neighborhood		X					X	X	
	Traditional Neighborhood	X						X	X	
	Mixed Use Neighborhood			X	X	X			X	
	Downtown Center					X				
	Commercial Center				X		X		X	
	Civic/Campus/Post							X		X
	Conservation							X		

Land Use

▷ Needs Assessment






This chapter provides a future land use plan to guide the character and location of development, infill, and redevelopment over the next 10-20 years. The goals, objectives, and strategies that follow complement the future land use plan and are intended to address key land use issues, such as:

- ▶ Maintaining Lexington's historic development forms while allowing for additional infill and redevelopment, where appropriate.
- ▶ Promoting connectivity and mobility through land use decisions and policies.
- ▶ Balancing the community's housing needs with economic development goals.
- ▶ Enhancing community character.
- ▶ Continuing to work with the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, homeowners' associations, and other citizen groups to promote maintenance, investment, and enhancement of existing neighborhoods.
- ▶ Encouraging participation in development decisions that affect residents.
- ▶ Coordinating regionally to accomplish shared goals with Rockbridge County, institutions of higher learning, and other non-profit and private partners.
- ▶ Ensuring that land use policies and regulations are updated and adapted to meet community goals.



Land Use

▷ Goal, Objectives, Strategies

Land Use		
Goal: Plan for strategic, efficient, and quality development that increases the economic vitality of Lexington by building on local character and identity; protecting sensitive resources; and prioritizing connectivity between neighborhoods and services.		
Values	Objectives	Strategies
	Support development patterns that are interconnected and provide opportunities for all of Lexington's residents.	LU 1.1 Improve ADA, pedestrian, and bicycle access, safety, and connectivity along Neighborhood and Civic Corridors.
		LU 1.2 Identify opportunities to connect neighborhoods through sidewalks, shared use paths, and trail improvements and require such connections in new development or redevelopment proposals.
	Implement land use and growth policies that minimize the burdens placed on the community and increase resiliency and adaptability.	LU 2.1 Collaborate with the private sector to attract investments in Opportunity Areas that increase the City's tax base and offer unique residential, shopping, dining, lodging, and entertainment opportunities.
		LU 2.2 Promote the economic vitality of Commercial Centers through the coordination of public and private sector investment to enhance their function and attractiveness.
		LU 2.3 Strongly encourage W&L to program new construction within the present University boundaries to preclude any further loss of local business and industry, as well as the loss of limited taxable land.
	Encourage innovative development that respects, complements, and builds on Lexington's historic character.	LU 3.1 Facilitate creative residential, commercial, and mixed-use development designs that enhance the community's sense of place and character.
		LU 3.2 Prioritize capital improvements such as wayfinding, streetscaping, and undergrounding utilities in designated Gateways, Corridors, and Centers.
		LU 3.3 Create an attractive Gateway along South Main Street near Lee Highway, including redevelopment of the former Virginia Department of Transportation parcel.
		LU 3.4 Encourage attractive redevelopment along the Civic Corridor at Lee Highway and East Nelson Street, adding pedestrian and bike facilities to this automobile-focused area.
		LU 3.5 Assess the implementation of the Downtown Enhancement Plan to create a more attractive, vibrant, walkable, and bikeable downtown.
	Encourage participation in land use plans, policies, and decisions.	LU 4.1 Enhance the City's online GIS tools to incorporate the Future Planning Framework map and additional zoning information, such as land use conditions and proffers.
		LU 4.2 Engage the community to identify development goals for Opportunity Areas and assess the need for small area plans for these areas.
	Work with local and regional organizations, institutions, and groups to further Lexington's land use and development goals.	LU 5.1 Evaluate land use applications and capital improvements against the applicable Future Planning Framework design principles and planning objectives.
		LU 5.2 Review the impact and implications of Future Planning Framework designations on existing zoning ordinances and procedures and recommend changes necessary to align the City's ordinances with the Plan's concepts.
		LU 5.3 Consider developing a Design and Construction Standards Manual to support implementation of the Future Planning Framework and ensure consistent and quality development throughout the City.
		LU 5.4 Explore the creation of a new Planned Unit Development zoning district focused on unique and flexible mixed residential development.
		LU 5.5 Continue communication and coordination between City and County planning staff and long-range plans to achieve regional land use goals.
		LU 5.6 Continue regular communication and coordination with W&L and VMI leadership to maintain Lexington's engagement in physical and programmatic additions to these institutions of higher learning.



Transportation

Build an interconnected and attractive transportation network that provides all residents with safe and efficient mobility choices — including automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.

Transportation

▷ Introduction

A community's transportation network is a vital element of economic development, a key factor in growth management, the backbone of the land use framework, and in the case of Lexington, a contributor to historic character. Lexington is one of several historic Virginia communities with streets initially designed for horse and buggy traffic. As such, the City's core developed along a close grid with narrow streets. The historic and human-scale of much of Lexington's transportation infrastructure creates a strong network for alternative modes of transportation. At the same time, constraints due to the network's age and narrow right-of-way presents modern-day maintenance, design, and retrofit challenges requiring sensitive and thoughtful planning.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for improving safety, accessibility, and connectivity while at the same time adapting to emerging transportation needs and trends. Transportation improvements recommended in this chapter are based on a detailed inventory and assessment of the existing transportation system and its relationship to the needs of the community. The Plan's strategies identify ways to leverage Lexington's existing system to increase mobility choices for residents, ensure safe and efficient connections for cars and people, and protect the City's vibrant historic character such that the transportation system will continue to positively shape Lexington's character into the future.

▷ Community Engagement

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan public survey highlighted the importance of transportation in Lexington. When asked about the top concerns for Lexington's future, traffic and road maintenance was the fourth most selected concern for survey respondents. Respondents were also asked to rank what Lexington's priorities should be on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being the highest priority and 1 being the lowest. Streets and roads scored an average 4.13, just below parks and recreation at 4.14, and higher than fire, rescue, and police at 3.39.

Disconnected or inadequate sidewalks were the most cited transportation problem, with insufficient downtown parking and lack of bicycle lanes as other commonly noted problems. When asked what street, road, or parking improvements residents would like to see in Lexington, respondents selected repaving and downtown parking as the two top answers. Residents also wanted to see more bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and safer crosswalks in the city. Speeding was cited as a transportation problem by only five out of 489 total respondents.



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

A safe, efficient, and effective transportation system is vital for local and regional economic growth and development. Recognizing the importance of transportation to community development, state code requires that comprehensive plans include elements from state plans and programming documents and that Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) review local comprehensive plans for conformance.

The inventory that follows, along with the supplemental data in **Appendix C**, was developed in conformance with these requirements and provides quantitative and qualitative analyses that inform the existing transportation needs for the City.

Roads

Lexington is located near the junction of Interstate 81 (I-81) and Interstate 64 (I-64). I-81 at exit 188 intersects US 60 east of the city limits, and I-64 at exit 55 intersects US 11 to the northeast of the City. While not located within City limits, the proximity of these interstates impacts Lexington's road network and traffic patterns. Within City limits, the City has approximately 214,000 linear feet of roadway, which is equivalent to about 40 linear miles. As an independent city, Lexington has local responsibility for its own streets with financial assistance from VDOT.

Much of Lexington's road network developed along a traditional grid network with several unique, forked intersections, many of which are due to topography and historic development patterns. Heading south through the City's northeast limits, US 11 forks into US 11 Business North Main Street and US 11 Lee Highway, which is also known as the US 11 bypass. Continuing

south on US 11 Business North Main Street past Virginia Military Institute (VMI), North Main Street forks again into two opposing direction one-way arterial streets, Jefferson Street and Main Street. These one-way streets, along with Randolph Street, form the north-south roadways of the central downtown grid. Washington Street, US 60 Nelson Street, and Preston Street intersect the central downtown grid. At the downtown center, US 11 Business intersects US 60 Nelson Street.



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

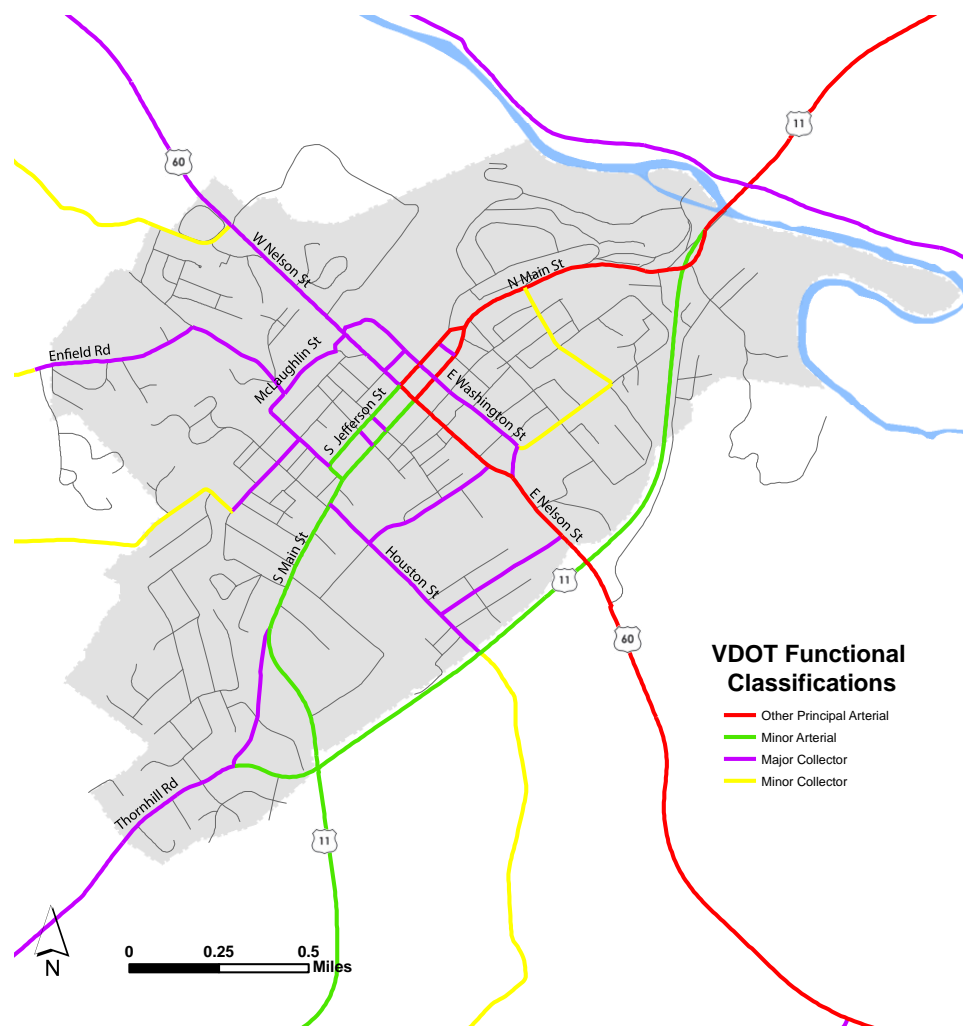
Functional Classification and Characteristics

Functional classification is the process of grouping streets and highways into systems based on the character of services they provide. Functional class is used to determine Federal-aid funding eligibility, design standards, and funding formulas for jurisdictions that maintain their own roads. VDOT's 2014 Functional Classification Comprehensive Guide describes the roadway functional classifications, and a definition of each road type are located in **Appendix C**.

Though Lexington is located near two major interstates, the traffic network within City limits is limited to arterials, collectors, and local streets. Lexington's Main Street and Nelson Street are examples of principal arterials, which connect to regional and interstate systems. Washington Street and Houston Street are local examples of collectors, which collect traffic from residential and commercial areas and distribute it to the arterial system. A map of the City's functional classification is provided in **Map 9.1**.

As an older, established community with little room to increase existing road widths, Lexington cannot meet many of VDOT's functional class design standards without significant impact to the environment and character of the City. Using a context-sensitive approach, VDOT grants the option of waiving requirements and allowing construction to lesser standards at a locality's request to allow flexibility in design. Context-sensitive design is important in a historic City such as Lexington to ensure that transportation improvements avoid destructive impact on neighborhoods.

Map 9.1 Functional Classification



Transportation

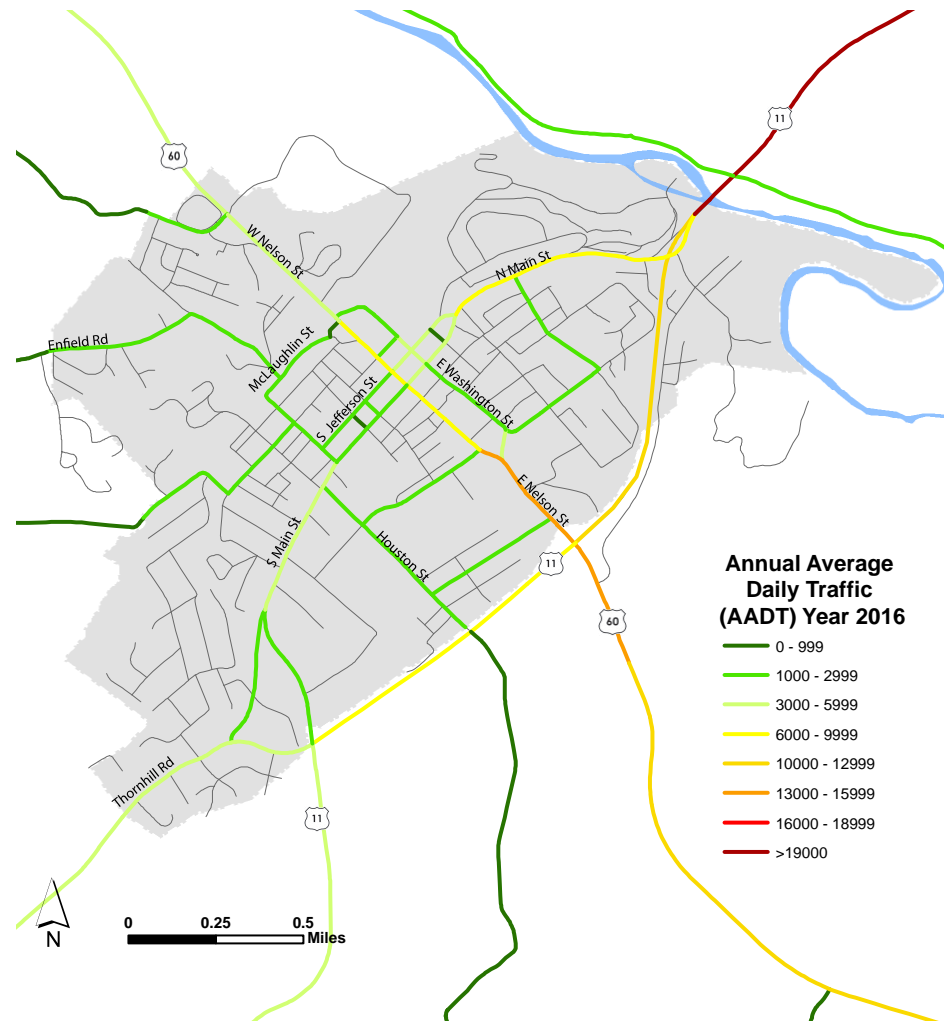
▷ Planning Context

Annual Average Daily Traffic

Lexington's estimated 2016 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes are shown in **Map 9.2**. The latest traffic counts were completed in 2016 for all arterials and collector roads and can be reviewed in **Appendix C**. Local roads are not included due to a lack of data.

The AADT map highlights the nature of travel in Lexington and is consistent with the functional classifications of Lexington's roads. Traffic is highest on the arterials of US 11 Main Street, US 11 Business, and US 60. In general, traffic levels are low to moderate throughout the City. US 60 Nelson Street carries between 3,800-15,000 vehicles per day, and US 11 Main street carries between 4,000-8,700 vehicles per day. There are no roads in Lexington where the traffic volumes exceed roadway design capacity limits.

Map 9.2 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Year 2016



Transportation

► Planning Context

Safety Needs

A detailed crash analysis is provided in **Appendix C**. Between 2013 and 2018, 387 total crashes were recorded, an average of 64 crashes per year. Of the total number of crashes, 47 were injury crashes, which equates to an average of 7.8 injury crashes per year.

The crash analysis shows injury crash clusters at four major Downtown intersections, and the Route 60 commercial corridor from Lewis Street to US 11 Lee Highway. There is also a crash cluster outside of the City at the signalized intersection of Old Buena Vista Road and US 11. The intersections within the City that had the most concerning numbers and types of crashes for the 2013-2018 analysis period were:

► **South Main Street and South Lee Highway/Link Road:** 14 crashes total. 2 severe crashes, 6 visible injury crashes, 1 non-visible injury crash, 5 property damage crashes. Some crashes were due to drivers failing to yield to left turning movements. There are many rear-end crashes at the **US 11 Lee Highway northbound right turn/ramp**. *Recommendation: Need to study the appropriate left turn signal phasing condition. Must determine protected-only phasing (green arrow) versus permissive-protected phasing (flashing yellow arrow) to address the failure to yield angle crashes.*

- **South Main Street and Nelson Street:** 12 crashes total. 1 severe pedestrian injury crash, 1 visible injury crash, and 10 property damage only crashes. Many crashes involved improper left turns or failure to yield red traffic signals. *Recommendation: Consider signal phasing that protects left turns.*
- **West Nelson Street and South Jefferson Street:** 11 property damage crashes and 1 visible injury crash. 10 crashes were angle crashes indicating a problem with sightlines and/or left turning movements. 2 crashes were sideswipe. Crash reports indicate that 8 out of 12 crashes were failure to yield red traffic signals. *Recommendation: Consider restricting right turns on red, and signal phasing that protects left turns.*
- **North Jefferson Street and West Washington Street:** 10 property damage only crashes that consist of 5 sideswipe crashes, 3 angle crashes, 1 off-road crash, and 1 backed-into crash. Crash reports suggest that 6 out of 10 of the crashes at this intersection involved parked vehicles or vehicles performing parking maneuvers.
- **Washington and Main Street:** 2 pedestrian crashes and several rear end crashes within the analysis period. *Recommendation: Consider adding pedestrian signals, traffic calming measures from the Downtown Enhancement Plan, and signal phasing that protects left turns.*



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

Parking

According to the Downtown Historic District Parking Management Plan performed in 2010, the City has an inventory of 876 publicly available parking spaces with 435 located on-street and 441 in off-street facilities. There are 279 private parking spaces downtown that are restricted to specific user group needs, for a total inventory of 1,155 public and private spaces. Parking surveys conducted at the peak 12:00 PM period showed 574 of the 876 publicly available spaces were occupied, resulting in a utilization rate of 66%.

Overall, the study found that Lexington has ample on and off-street parking to serve existing and future demand. However, there was also a significant block-by-block deficiency. This means that certain blocks of the downtown have higher demand for parking than others, which forces drivers to park further away from their destination. There is evidence to suggest that the vehicular movements associated with the search for parking cause a significant number of crashes, as explained previously in this chapter. The City should continually monitor downtown parking needs and consider additional wayfinding signage as a simple, cost-effective solution to alleviate perceived parking problems and better direct traffic downtown.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Lexington's interconnected street grid and compact scale make it ideal for walking and biking. While modern suburban areas must construct strategies to control volume and speed of traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, Lexington's low speeds and narrowed irregular streets naturally accomplish these aims. Walking is an integrated form of transportation in the City, as evidenced by 2017 American Community Survey data indicating that 32% of Lexington workers use walking as their primary means of transportation to work.

Lexington has an expansive, but aging sidewalk network that requires maintenance and investment. Many existing sidewalks are substandard and require upgrades to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for width, grade, and curb ramps. The City has no bicycle lanes or roadway-adjacent shared use paths. Sharrows and "share the road" signs can be seen on a portion of South Main Street.

Most of the sidewalk system is located within the former city boundary before Lexington annexed Rockbridge County land in the 1960s. Most streets included in the annexed portion do not have sidewalks, which is a significant disconnect for pedestrians living in the neighborhoods that were annexed. In some cases, pedestrians must walk in the road for a good portion of the way. An example is Thornhill Road between South Main Street and Link Road.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan survey indicated strong support for expansion in the City's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Disconnected and inadequate sidewalks were the primary transportation problems indicated in the survey. Citizens also expressed strong desire for more bike lanes, indicating a demand for bicycling and an opportunity for Lexington to shift motorized traffic to bicycling as transportation. Given the limited right-of-way and site constraints, opportunities to expand the bicycle and pedestrian network should be identified through a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan. The plan should be coordinated with green infrastructure efforts and identify opportunities to improve connectivity between neighborhoods; explore innovative design solutions to enhance walkability and biking in the downtown; and incorporate considerations of mobility equity.

Lexington should also continually work to ensure the safety and comfort of users of all ages and abilities. On-going maintenance of pavement markings and signage, removing or relocating obstructions such as overgrown trees and utility poles, and the addition of on-street bike facilities and crosswalks during repaving are low-cost improvements that enhance the user experience. Similarly, streetscaping upgrades such as trees, lighting, benches, and bike parking should be promoted to create a more appealing environment for pedestrians and

Transportation

▷ Planning Context

bicyclists. Map 4.2 in the green infrastructure chapter highlights a future vision of a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian transportation network.

Transit and Social Service Transportation

The Maury Express offers a deviated fixed-route transit service to the citizens of Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. The service operates six days a week, Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Local university students and children under age 6 ride for free, and all other passengers cost \$0.50 cents per ride. Individuals who are ADA certified may request the van to deviate up to ¾ miles off its route to make pick-ups and drop offs.

Founded by Lexington resident Joan Manley, Rockbridge Area Transit System (RATS) operates an on-demand, low-cost transportation company with service covering Rockbridge County, Lexington, Buena Vista, nearby airports from Roanoke to Richmond, and train stations in Charlottesville and Lynchburg. RATS has a fleet of 13 wheelchair accessible vans and three cars.

Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS) is a dedicated mobility service organization that provides transportation for the elderly, and includes Lexington, Rockbridge, and Buena Vista in its service area.

The Virginia Breeze bus service provides daily service between Blacksburg and the Washington

DC Metro area, including a stop in Lexington. Initiated in December 2017, it has exceeded its overall ridership predictions by over 200%, currently around 19,300 annual ridership. The Virginia Breeze is an important transportation alternative that improves regional connections between educational centers and enhances Lexington's knowledge economy.

Rideshare

CSPDC administers the Regional Rideshare Program, which serves the Lexington area, and offers free carpool matching, vanpool coordination, and a Guaranteed Ride Home program. The Kerr's Creek park-and-ride lot has 20 parking spaces and is located to the west of the City, near the I-64 Exit 50, at the intersection of US 60 West Midland Trail and VA 623 Fredericksburg Road. Lot occupancy was last checked by VDOT in 2016, and 4 out of 20 spaces were in use.



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

Air Travel

Lexington is served by multiple regional airports with commercial flights that connect to major national and international airport hubs. Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport is located about 50 miles to the south, Lynchburg Regional airport is about 50 miles to the southeast, and Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport is located in Weyers Cave, about 50 miles to the north. Some residents may also use Charlottesville-Albemarle regional Airport about 75 miles to the northeast. The nearest airports offering international commercial flights are in Richmond, Dulles, and Greensboro, North Carolina.

Rail

Lexington is not served directly by passenger rail, but two stations are located within 30 miles in Clifton Forge and Staunton. Both of these stations are served by Amtrak's Cardinal line, which runs from Chicago, Illinois to New York, New York passing through Charleston, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. Rail service is also available from Lynchburg and Charlottesville, which serves Amtrak's Crescent line running between New York City and New Orleans. There are no railroad crossings of public streets in Lexington.

Goods Movement

Goods movement in the Valley of Virginia is primarily by truck and rail services. Truck freight utilizes I-64, I-81, US 60, US 220, and US 250. I-81 is one of the primary truck freight corridors on the eastern seaboard. Freight generators and shippers were identified by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission in the 2011 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan as being centered primarily in the localities and areas along I-81, I-64, US 11, US 33, and US 250.

The Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) of 1982 allows large trucks to operate on the Interstate and on certain primary routes called The National Network. There is one STAA designated heavy truck freight route in the City that extends from the intersection of US 11 South Lee Highway and US 60 Nelson Street to a manufacturing facility southwest of the City on VA 251/ Thornhill Road. The truck route has about 3-4% heavy vehicles, which equates to about 150-250 heavy vehicles per day on average.

The Class I rail lines in the region are owned by Norfolk Southern as a part of its Crescent Corridor and CSX Transportation, Inc. CSX supplies local freight service to Glasgow and to Goshen. Norfolk Southern and CSX operate trailer-on-flatcar (TOFC) loading facilities in Roanoke and Lynchburg, respectively. The trains on the corridor along I-81 are intermodal, general merchandise, and auto trains. Resurgence in freight transfer



from truck to rail is occurring and will likely continue; however, I-81 and I-64 are still expected to be key freight corridors.

Transportation

▷ Planning Context

Planning Assumptions

Identifying development patterns, trends, and forecasting where future growth and development are likely to occur are essential to making good transportation planning decisions and infrastructure investments. The following land use and planning assumptions were used to identify where the existing transportation network will need to be improved to meet demand generated by future growth and land use changes:

- VTRANS 2045
- Economic Profile
- Population and Demographics
- Commuter Characteristics
- Land Use
- Urban Development Areas (UDA) Needs
- Projected Traffic Volumes in the Year 2040

VTRANS

State and federal transportation dollars are allocated through VDOT, in part based on how well projects support the goals and objectives of VTrans 2045, the statewide transportation plan. As such, this transportation plan and recommendations have been developed to ensure consistency with the plan. VTrans 2045 focuses on the needs of the Commonwealth's Corridors of Statewide Significance, the multimodal regional networks that support travel within metropolitan regions, and improvements to promote Urban Development Areas (UDA). The state has significantly shifted mobility priorities from being primarily single-occupancy vehicle-oriented to a multimodal model that addresses a variety of transportation options.

Population and Demographics

Population and demographic information that informed transportation needs can be found in **Appendix C**. Lexington's demographics indicate two trends: an aging population and continuing reductions in family size. These trends support the need for an enhanced sidewalk network that is safe and accessible for all users, including those with disabilities.

While it is unlikely that Lexington's population will grow dramatically in the future, the City remains an attractive community with a strong economy where some level of redevelopment growth is likely. Growth pressure not accommodated within the City itself is likely to spill into Rockbridge County and the nearby City of Buena Vista, which may further exacerbate peak traffic from in-commuters.



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

Economic Profile

VTrans 2045, the statewide multi-modal transportation plan, will, in part, identify transportation needs based on regional economic connectivity profiles. Profiles are based on transportation characteristics of local market, freight-dependent, and knowledge-based industries that serve as engines of regional economic growth. Lexington's primary economic activities stem from higher education, retail, and tourism.

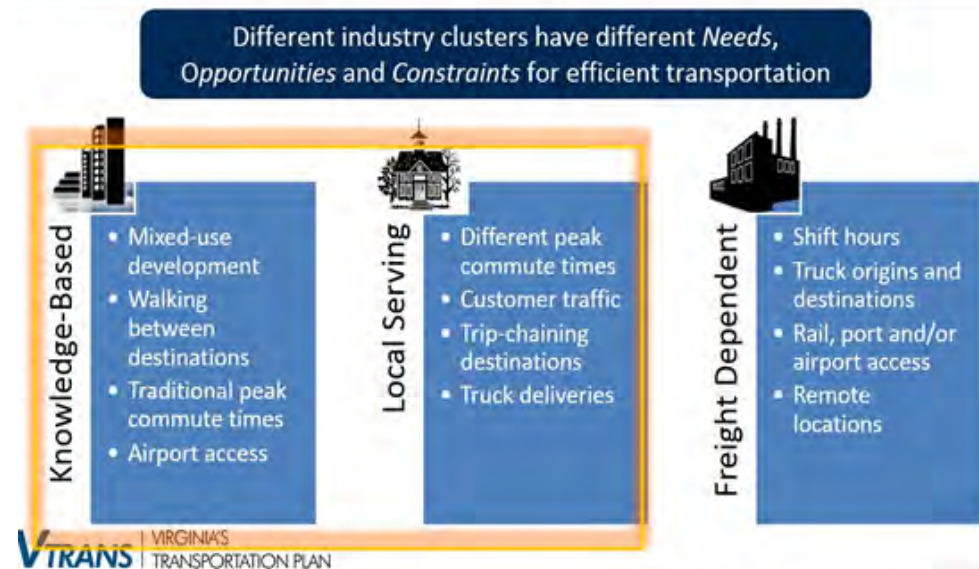
Diagram 9.1 describes the economic-transportation linkages and their relationship to Lexington's top economic industries. Lexington's top five job industries suggest that future transportation needs should serve the knowledge-based and local serving linkages.

Land Use

The City anticipates minimal future land use and development impacts, and these assumptions were used in the development of future traffic projections. The City does not anticipate any new large commercial, residential, or industrial developments between now and the planning horizon year of 2040. There are five opportunity areas for infill and redevelopment as shown in the Land Use chapter. In the long term, the City recognizes the need to coordinate policies with Rockbridge County and work together for the best overall growth pattern occurring along US 60.

Diagram 9.1 Economic-Transportation Linkages

ECONOMIC-TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES | TRANSPORTATION



Transportation

▷ Planning Context

Commuter Characteristics

Lexington's commuter trends show a large inflow of workers that live outside of the City, suggesting a need for continued transportation investments that support commuters in their journeys to work during the morning and evening peak periods. The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program is part of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau. Using LEHD data, the city can be analyzed as both a labor source and destination. Approximately 17% (527) of all workers that are employed in the City are residents, and 83% (2,542) of all workers in Lexington live outside of the City, according to U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2017.

Lexington residents stated that their primary means of transportation to work were: drive alone (53%), walk (32%), worked at home (5%), carpool (3%), and bicycle (2%), according to the 2017 American Community Survey estimates. The mean average travel time to work is 16 minutes.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan survey responses specified a need to expand its multimodal transportation network to improve non-motorized safety, mobility, and a high quality of life for all residents. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies like carpooling, rideshare, and park-and-ride lots help support this goal and may also help offset resident transportation costs from economic swings or rising fuel costs in the future.

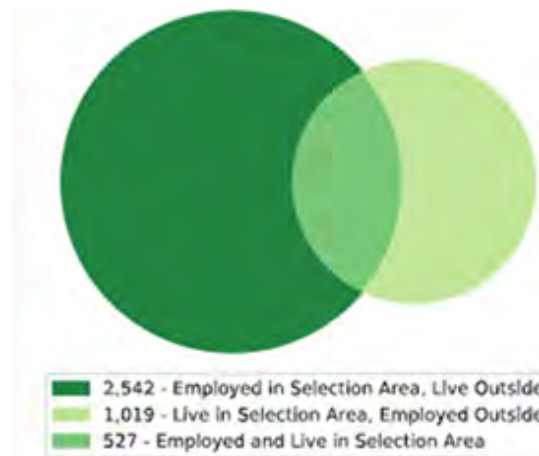
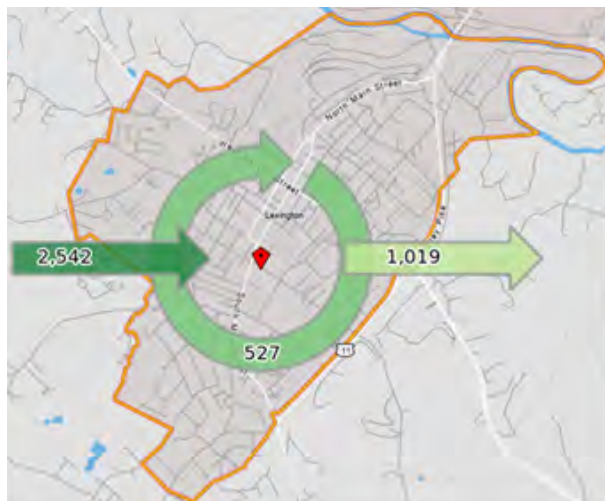


Diagram 9.2 Inflow/Outflow of Commuters

Transportation



▷ Planning Context

UDA Needs

The City has designated its full geographic area as its Urban Development Area (UDA) under Code of Virginia, §15.2-2223.1. UDAs coordinate land use and transportation planning efforts and are intended to embody the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design. Traditional Neighborhood Development embodies classic characteristics of traditional communities such as:

- Walkable neighborhood centers
- Interconnected streets and blocks
- Diversity of land uses
- Easy access to jobs, housing, and recreation by a variety of travel options

The General Assembly has directed that transportation improvements that support UDAs be consistent with the needs assessment contained in VTrans 2045, as well as to be considered in the SMART SCALE statewide prioritization process for project selection. In 2014, House Bill 2 was passed, now known as SMART SCALE, concerning prioritization of projects funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The legislation links transportation project eligibility for funding specifically to UDA needs.

The City's internal UDA needs are listed in **Table 9.1**

¹Complete Streets promotes designing and improving streets to safely accommodate users of all ages and abilities regardless of transportation modes. Complete Streets design directs decision makers to consistently plan, design, and construct streets to accommodate all users including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, motorists, emergency vehicles, and commercial vehicles.

Table 9.1 UDA Needs

Transportation Needs	UDA Needs	Improvement Type Icon
Sidewalks	Moderate	
Other pedestrian infrastructure	High	
Bicycle infrastructure	High	
Other complete streets ¹ improvements	Moderate	N/a
Traffic calming features	Low	N/a
Intersection design or other improvements	Moderate	
Street grid	Low	N/a
Signage/wayfinding	High	
Safety features	Moderate	
Transit capacity & access	Low	N/a
Transit facilities & amenities	Low	N/a
Transit operations	Low	
Transit frequency	Low	N/a
On-street parking capacity	Low	N/a
Off-street parking capacity	Low	N/a
Roadway capacity & infrastructure improvements	Low	N/a
Roadway operations	Moderate	
Improvements to the natural environment; stormwater management; site design; or landscaping	Moderate	N/a

Transportation

▷ Planning Context

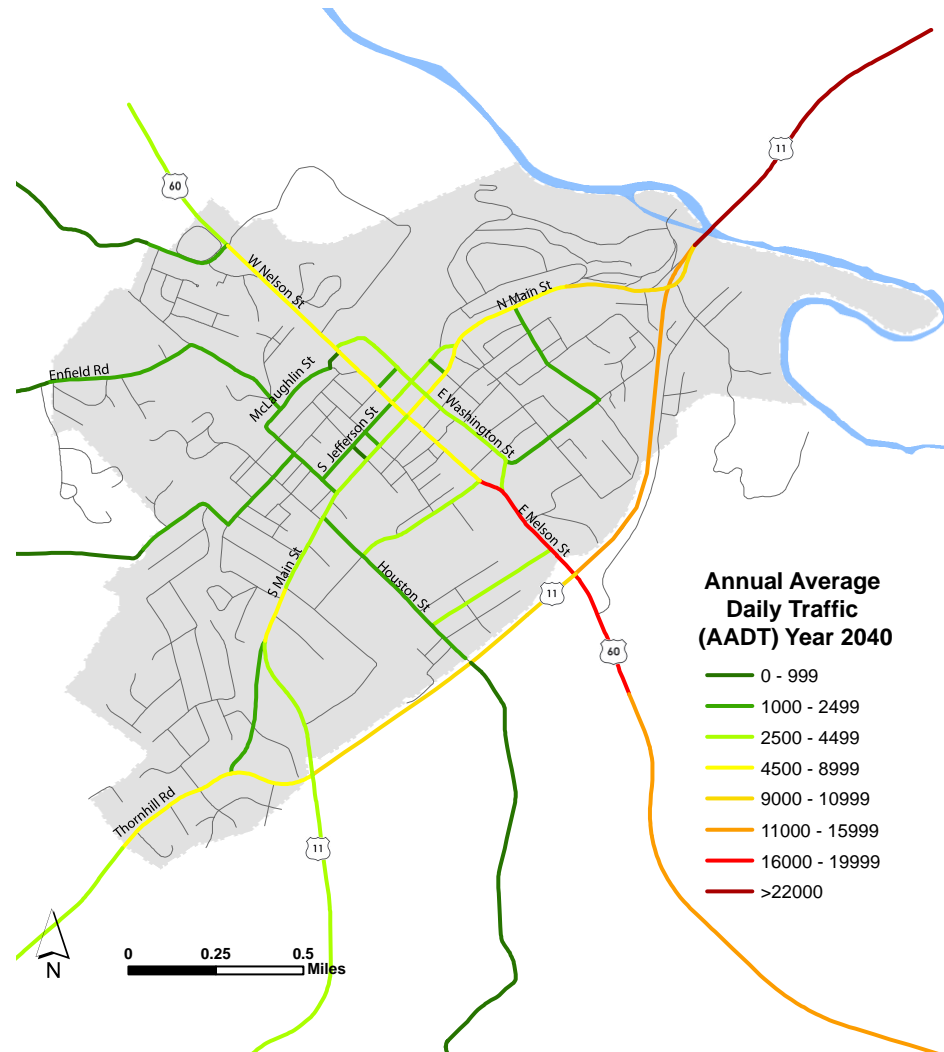
Projected Traffic Volume

VDOT's Statewide Planning System (SPS) is a data system designed to organize transportation planning related data and information such as roadway geometric inventories, traffic volumes, capacity analyses, and traffic projections. Traffic growth rates in SPS are based on the historic traffic trends within VDOT's Staunton Construction District. The City co-developed and approved revised traffic growth rates and 2040 traffic forecasts using data from SPS.

Updated traffic growth rates and forecasts for Lexington can be reviewed in **Appendix C** and **Map 9.3**. Based on the 2040 traffic forecast, there are no roads in Lexington where future traffic volumes exceed roadway design capacity limits. Lexington's Principal and Minor Arterial systems are projected to see the highest increases in forecasted traffic due to future land uses, projected development growth, or redevelopment, along the corridors. Specifically, US 11 Lee Highway, US 11 Main Street, and US 60 Nelson Street are projected to see the highest increases. These routes are still within capacity thresholds in the year 2040, although the projected traffic increases may potentially overburden the City's local streets.



Map 9.3 Projected Annual Average Daily Traffic Year 2040



Transportation

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) assists localities in meeting transportation challenges by providing a diverse and comprehensive spectrum of transportation planning services that can help move a project from the concept stage to implementation. Some of the services and programs the CSPDC offers include transportation studies, long range transportation plans and plan updates, technical assistance, grant writing and administration, on-call transportation consulting, and metropolitan and rural transportation planning.

Virginia Department of Transportation

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for building, maintaining, and operating the state's roads, bridges, and tunnels. The City of Lexington is part of the Staunton District which includes more than 7,000 miles of roads in 11 counties, 7 cities, and 28 towns.

Recent Plans and Studies

Many recent plans, studies, and initiatives have been conducted to inform transportation planning decisions. These include:

City of Lexington and Rockbridge County - Route 60 Corridor Study

This study, completed in 2016, provides transportation recommendations to establish Route 60 as a vibrant gateway corridor for the City of Lexington and Rockbridge County. The study focuses on enhancing mobility and safety for all users, while improving aesthetics to create a true gateway corridor. The study evaluated existing and future transportation conditions along the Route 60 corridor from Spotswood Drive within the city to Quarry Lane in the county. Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) methods were employed to identify the unique characteristics of the study corridor. These characteristics and the transportation needs of the public were used to develop future improvement alternatives that complement the characteristics of the corridor. See **Appendix C** for more details.

Downtown Enhancement Plan

The Downtown Enhancement Plan, accepted by the City in 2013, identifies numerous transportation improvements that support placemaking in the downtown. Recommendations include mid-block crossings, converting Main Street to a two-way street, signage/signal upgrades, curb extensions, streetscaping, alleyway upgrades, intersection bulb-outs, and many other items. The midblock crosswalk recommendations on Main Street are a low-cost, low-impact solution to pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, and should be evaluated thoroughly in the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.



Transportation

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Lylburn Downing Middle School Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Walkabout Study

In 2018, the City was awarded a grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of the Safe Routes to School program. The grant will fund improvements to the school's parking lot entrance, crosswalk, and sidewalk networks. The improvements are based on the recommendations of a 2017 Walkabout Study that was performed through partnership between city officials, VDOT, and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

Randolph Street was identified as a potential bicycle boulevard based on the origin-destination analysis of students. A bicycle boulevard is a low-stress shared roadway bicycle facility, designed to offer priority for bicyclists operating within a roadway shared with motor vehicle traffic. Randolph Street was selected due to its lower traffic volumes, and its central location that connects grade school student populations that live in the western part of the

City to Lylburn Downing Middle School. On-street parking and additional traffic calming measures require further study.

Green Infrastructure Plan

The Green Infrastructure chapter identifies the need for a Green Infrastructure Plan and highlights opportunities to improve green infrastructure connectivity. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan proposed in this chapter should be coordinated with future green infrastructure planning efforts.

Current Transportation Plans & Projects

Lexington accomplishes its transportation projects utilizing local, state, and federal funding. The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) lists projects that the City intends to construct in the near term. VDOT's Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) outlines planned spending for transportation projects proposed for construction or study within a six-year horizon. Six projects are currently programmed in the SYIP (FY 2020-2025) for the City of Lexington, as shown in **Table 9.2**.



Transportation

▷ Needs Assessment

Table 9.2 Virginia Transportation Six-Year Program (FY 2020-2025) Projects for Lexington, VA

UPC	Description	Estimate	Previous	FY20	FY21-25	Balance
(Values in Thousands of Dollars)						
113689	SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOLS- LYLURN DOWNING MIDDLE SCHOOL - construct two pedestrian crossings along Diamond Street, add a pathway from the school to Thompson's Knoll neighborhood, and improve the school driveway entrance.	\$94	\$8	\$87	\$0	\$0
111057	SMART SCALE 2018 - (ST) LEXINGTON N. MAIN ST COMPLETE STREETS ENTRY - add new bike facilities and improve sidewalks and crosswalks to a 0.62-mile section of North Main Street (US 11) at VMI, eliminate on-street parallel parking on both sides of the street.	\$2,846	\$167	\$210	\$2,469	\$0
112939	TAYLOR STREET RECONSTRUCTION	\$780	\$780	\$0	\$0	\$0
113113	RESURFACING N. LEE HIGHWAY (RT. 11) - PRIMARY EXTENSION	\$446	\$446	\$0	\$0	\$0
T22541	NORTH MAIN STREET - PRIMARY EXTENSION PAVING	\$52	\$0	\$52	\$0	\$0
112964	STATE OF GOOD REPAIR- LIME KILN ROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	\$1,663	\$0	\$0	\$1,663	\$0

Transportation

▷ Needs Assessment

Lexington has a small but complex transportation network that must accommodate a growing number of users. As the City looks toward the future, it must consider ways to equitably balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers, while also preserving the historic character of the community. Since Lexington's road network is projected to accommodate automobile traffic through 2040, transportation needs focus heavily on pedestrian, bicycle, and safety improvements. The transportation needs assessment identified the following key areas for improvement:

- ▶ Intersection improvements to improve safety for all users.
- ▶ Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, bike lanes/trails, and bike racks.
- ▶ Increased accessibility for the disabled and continue efforts to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ▶ Improved multimodal connectivity between neighborhoods and amenities.
- ▶ Transportation Demand Management solutions to reduce peak traffic from in-commuters.

By addressing these needs, Lexington will become a healthier, more sustainable community by decreasing reliance on the single-occupancy vehicle and creating safer conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and the disabled.



Transportation

▷ Needs Assessment

Priority Transportation Projects







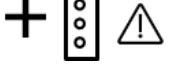
In addition to the strategies in this chapter, the projects and studies in **Table 9.3** were identified based on Lexington's existing and future transportation needs. The transportation system recommendations for Lexington are divided into two phases. Short-term recommendations are needs that can be met based on relatively low costs, impacts, and ease of implementation. Long-term improvements correct deficiencies based on projected costs and/or potential impacts that would require a greater number of years to plan and fund. Planning-level cost estimates were developed using VDOT's Transportation and Planning Mobility Division (TMPD) worksheet and are shown in 2020 dollars. Use the VTrans 2045 mid-term needs key in **Table 9.1** for the improvement type icons.

Map 9.4 Priority Transportation Projects








Transportation

Table 9.3 Recommended Priority Transportation Projects

Project	Description	Cost	Improvement Type
Short-Term Recommendations			
1) Waddell Street Pedestrian Improvements	Construct minimum 5-foot sidewalk from South Main Street to Wallace Street (0.26 miles)	\$1.1 M	
2) Myers Street and McLaughlin Street Intersection Crosswalk	Extend a short segment of sidewalk and construct a pedestrian crosswalk and improve signage at intersection of Myers Street and McLaughlin Street	\$55 K	
3) Thornhill Road Improvements	Add bike lanes and extend sidewalk on Rt 251, reconstruct/ widen bridges (Thornhill Road) from the VA 251 Link Road to S. Main Street (0.78 miles)	\$5.8 M	
Long-Term Recommendations			
4) South Main Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements	Construct bike and pedestrian infrastructure and improve signage along S. Main Street from Wallace Street to U.S. 11 Lee Highway (0.56 miles)	\$3 M	
5) Downtown Intersection Improvements	Install pedestrian crosswalk signals, high visibility signal backplates, adjust signal phasing, add turn on red restrictions, install traffic calming measures and other treatments from the Downtown Enhancement Plan at the following intersections: Main Street and Nelson Street; West Nelson Street and Jefferson Street; Jefferson Street and Washington Street; Washington and Main Street	TBD	
Route 60 Corridor Study Improvements*	6) Urban Gateway Improvements	\$2.2 M	
*These improvements are explained in detail in Appendix C and extend into Rockbridge County, and are consistent with Rockbridge County's Comprehensive Plan	7) Regional Service Area Improvements	\$3.1 M	
8) South Main Street and South Lee Highway/Link Road Intersection	Safety Improvements to address crashes at this intersection. Flashing Yellow Arrow signal conversion to address left turn crashes, add extra yield signage to Northbound US 11 channelized right turn lane. (See <i>Safety Needs</i>)	\$600 K	
Studies			
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Identify existing connections and routes, as well as map optimal future sidewalk, bike lane, and off-road trail routes throughout the City.	N/A	N/a
Road Safety Study	This study would directly inform Project 5 - Downtown Intersection Improvements; and develop the appropriate safety countermeasures for each intersection, as well as create a funding and implementation strategy.	N/A	N/a

Transportation

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Transportation		
Goal: Build an interconnected and attractive transportation network that provides all residents with safe and efficient mobility choices - including automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.		
Values	Objectives	Strategies
	Provide safe transportation options for residents of all ages and abilities.	TR 1.1 Implement safety and ADA accessibility improvements, including signage, traffic calming, and traffic control devices where appropriate.
		TR 1.2 Identify and make improvements to the City's busiest intersections to organize traffic and increase safety.
		TR 1.3 Develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan to retrofit streets to make them safer for bicycles and pedestrians.
		TR 1.4 Support the development of facilities and parking for bicycles and other micromobility devices.
	Pursue fiscally responsible transportation improvements that promote accessible, resilient, and adaptable transportation networks.	TR 2.1 Develop and implement design requirements for new construction and redevelopment projects to upgrade sidewalks and improve access management provisions, such as interparcel connections and limitations on curb cuts.
		TR 2.2 Require identification and mitigation of initial and long-term transportation and parking impacts associated with proposed developments.
		TR 2.3 Support the development and siting of e-vehicle charging stations and facilities to assist the transition to lower emission vehicle use.
	Ensure Lexington's transportation networks are attractive, equitable, and improve the quality of life for all city residents.	TR 3.1 Balance and appropriately mitigate impacts to historic, cultural, and natural resources throughout the transportation planning and construction process.
		TR 3.2 Develop streetscape standards for entrance corridors, such as E and W Nelson Street and N and S Main Street.
		TR 3.3 Implement wayfinding for key gateways, corridors, intersections, and parking areas.
		TR 3.4 Create an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to link neighborhoods to downtown, parks, and other historic and green infrastructure amenities. Target bicycle and pedestrian connection and corridor improvements along Neighborhood and Civic Corridors.
	Use citizen input to guide decisions regarding community transportation network improvements and opportunities.	TR 4.1 Ensure fairness, equity, and community engagement in the transportation planning process and its nexus with housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.
	Coordinate with local and regional agencies and organizations to implement improvements to Lexington's transportation network.	TR 5.1 Ensure that multimodal improvements, such as sidewalk and bike facilities, are included in the Capital Improvement Plan and street repaving plans, and identify additional funding sources, including public-private partnerships, to complete and maintain projects.
		TR 5.2 Share planning and costs with other jurisdictions when City road improvements have mutual benefits.
		TR 5.3 Support regional efforts to increase ridesharing, carpooling, transit, telecommuting, and public transportation.

An aerial photograph of a fire station. In the foreground, several red fire trucks are parked. One truck has 'LEXINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT' and 'TRUCK 9' written on it. Another truck has '6' on its side. A large American flag is flying on a tall pole to the left. The fire station building is a two-story brick structure with a grey metal roof. The background shows residential houses and trees.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Provide and maintain the highest quality, efficient, and effective community services and facilities while addressing the future needs of the City.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Introduction

One of the most important purposes of local government is to deliver quality services to its residents. A wide range of public services and facilities are available to the residents of Lexington. Quality public recreation facilities, fire and rescue services, schools, and libraries are but a few of the community assets that make Lexington a great place to live. These public facilities and services include both physical locations, such as parks, schools, and libraries, and direct services that reach beyond a brick and mortar building, such as utilities and fire and rescue.

While Lexington strives to ensure the highest standard of public facilities are met, the City's infrastructure is aging and requires investment to maintain and enhance services and respond to changing needs of residents. This chapter describes Lexington's existing community facilities and services along with required investments and capital improvements anticipated over the duration of this Comprehensive Plan. The goal, objectives, and strategies in this chapter provide an action plan to meet service demands, improve existing infrastructure, and capitalize on opportunities and partnerships to enhance these services.



▷ Community Engagement

Public Survey

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan survey revealed a number of service priorities for the citizens of Lexington. One of the areas that survey respondents valued the most about Lexington is the plentiful recreation opportunities. Parks and open space was one of the most cited focus areas for the City as it plans for the future. Concerns over traffic and road maintenance coupled with aging infrastructure highlights a community need for action. A majority of respondents felt that pedestrian and bike infrastructure should be the highest priority for improving public facilities, followed by social services, streets and roads, and parks and recreation.

Staff Input

Input from City staff was used to identify needed improvements to facilities and services. Generally, aging facilities and space constraints were common issues across City departments.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Existing Conditions

Map 10.1 shows the location of community facilities and services within the City of Lexington. Additional information on facilities and services is provided in the sections that follow.

Administration

City administrative offices are located in City Hall, at 300 East Washington Street. They include the City Manager's Office, the Department of Planning and Development, the Finance Department, the Commissioner of the Revenue, the Treasurer, the Electoral Board and Registrar and offices for Human Resources, and Information Technology. In addition, a mid-sized meeting room on the first floor is available for public use. The building was constructed in the early 1890s and was used for over sixty years as a public school. In 1960, it was renovated for use as the town hall, which became city hall after Lexington became an independent city in 1966. Since then, it has undergone minor upgrades and renovations; however, the space does not function well as a modern public administration building and needs complete renovation to extend its service life and improve utilization. As such, the City should consider exploring options to renovate the existing building or relocate and market the existing building for reuse and historic rehabilitation.

Public Works

The City's Public Works Department is located on 10 acres at the end of Shop Road. The complex houses equipment and supplies for street maintenance, refuse collection, water and sewer, equipment maintenance, and other services. An administrative office building was added to the complex in 2008.

The existing structures at the Public Works facility at Shop Road are antiquated and poorly designed for the current use. Heating and lighting are inadequate, and shop and storage space is extremely limited. Traffic circulation is poor, and site pavement is also in rapidly deteriorating condition. Improvements to the complex are expected to require a complete demolition and replacement of existing structures.

Refuse and Recycling Collection

Lexington offers garbage and brush collection to residents and businesses. Residential customers have no service fee while a bimonthly sanitation fee is collected from businesses. Residential garbage is collected by the Public Works Department once weekly, including holidays except Christmas Day, and businesses garbage is collected six days a week, Monday through Saturday. No-fee brush collection is offered one day per week to all residents and businesses. No-fee bagged leaf collection is also offered to residents between October and December. All garbage is hauled to the Rockbridge County landfill for disposal.

Until fiscal year 2021, recycling collection was offered to citizens and businesses. The reinstatement of the curbside recycling collection should be re-evaluated in the future.

Water and Sewer System

Lexington purchases water and wastewater services from Maury Service Authority (MSA), which provides water and sewer to all residential and commercial buildings in Lexington and to some adjoining sections of Rockbridge County. MSA water and wastewater usage rates are provided in **Table 10.1**.

Lexington's potable water is sourced from the Maury River and treated at the MSA Water Treatment Plant on Osage Lane. The plant, constructed in 1975 and upgraded in 2004, uses advanced filtration and chemical treatment techniques to provide high quality drinking water. Its existing 3.9 million gallons per day capacity ensures that the plant will be adequate to serve the growing needs of the area for many years to come. Annual average daily consumption by the MSA's 9,000 consumers typically ranges from 1.3-1.4 million gallons per day.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Map 10.1 Community Facilities



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Treated water is pumped to the MSA's three-million-gallon water tank located on Enfield Road, which also serves as an extended wet well for the MSA's Enfield pump station. From here, treated water is pumped to Lexington's one-million-gallon water tank on Houston Street, which is transmitted via City-owned distribution mains for domestic use and fire suppression. The City distributes between 0.50 to 0.60 million gallons per day to its approximately 2,700 customers.

The Lexington-Rockbridge Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, also owned by the MSA, is a 3-million gallon per day capacity facility that began operation in 1999 and was upgraded in 2011. The plant treats wastewater received from the City of Lexington and the Rockbridge County Public Service Authority as well as septage from septic tanks and commercial customers. Treated wastewater is released back into the Maury River. The City, on average, disposes of 0.58 to 0.89 million gallons per day of wastewater into the MSA. Some of the County's treated wastewater passes through the City owned infrastructure and is included in the City's average.

Although the existing water and wastewater treatment plants have the capacity to meet current and anticipated treatment needs, the distribution lines are aging and require maintenance and investment to ensure continued quality and reliable service. Based on a 2013 study, seventy percent of the existing lines will require replacement in the next 20-30

years, as the average water and sewer line is 70-80 years old. Deficiencies in the sewer lines allow stormwater and groundwater to enter the system. This inflow and infiltration (I&I) causes the lines to perform at or near capacity and degrades water by allowing sewage transfer to nearby streams. During periods of significant rain, instantaneous peak flows to the wastewater treatment plant exceed capacity by 200-300 percent. Repairs and upgrades are needed to correct these deficiencies, reclaim sewer line and wastewater treatment plant capacity, and provide looped water service to improve water flow and quality.

In addition to these improvements, Lexington will need to consider the future of the City-owned property at Moore's Creek Dam in western Rockbridge County. This area was intended to serve as an emergency water supply for Lexington after the original water treatment facility was decommissioned in the 1970s. However, the transmission connections from the dam was terminated or rerouted, and the lines are not connected to the water treatment plant operated by the MSA. Prior efforts to decommission the Moore's Creek Dam were thwarted by legal action instigated by Rockbridge County, which asserted its rights to a portion of the waters contained within the impoundment. Although the area currently provides limited recreation benefits to the community, upkeep of the Moore's Creek Dam to meet state safety standards is cost prohibitive.



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Stormwater

The City’s stormwater collection system is much less extensive than its water and wastewater infrastructure. Presently, the City’s stormwater infrastructure inventory includes 6.6 miles of stormwater pipe, 535 drainage structures, and four detention/bio-basin facilities. Given the City’s population, Lexington is not required to maintain a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) operator status under the Virginia Stormwater Management Act. Development plans are audited for state stormwater compliance by independent consultants, or DEQ directly.

Historically, the majority of stormwater infrastructure is designed for the 10-year rainfall event. However, as weather patterns shift and rainfall intensity increases, the need to replace, rehabilitate, and upgrade aging infrastructure will continue to grow. Since 2015, the City has worked to complete studies and implement stormwater improvement projects, primarily in reaction to problem areas. Three projects have been completed, and two additional projects have been deferred to unprogrammed status. The City intends to continue studying its stormwater infrastructure to determine adequacy for storm events of increasing intensity. Because Lexington’s topography and limited right of way, stormwater collection will be challenging and costly. As such, localized green infrastructure as described in Chapter 4 is a key solution to address stormwater issues in a cost-effective manner. In addition, the City will need to consider implementing a stormwater fee to fund improvements to the City’s stormwater management system.

Table 10.1 Water and Wastewater Usage

Fiscal Year	Water Produced		Wastewater Treated	
	Millions of Gallons	Average Daily Consumption	Millions of Gallons	Average Daily Influent
2018	466	1.28MG	Not Available	Not Available
2017	478	1.33MG	Not Available	Not Available
2016	517	1.42MG	Not Available	Not Available
2015	526	1.44MG	Not Available	Not Available
2014	516	1.41MG	312	0.85MG
2013	503	1.38MG	314	0.86MG
2012	493	1.35MG	338	0.93MG
2011	509	1.39MG	319	0.87MG
2010	488	1.34MG	359	0.98MG
2009	519	1.42MG	308	0.84MG
2008	542	1.48MG	296	0.81MG
2007	512	1.40MG	353	0.97MG
2006	510	1.40MG	315	0.86MG
2005	468	1.28MG	305	0.84MG

Source: Maury Service Authority

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Parks and Recreation

The City of Lexington owns and operates a swimming pool, two City school athletic fields, and seven park facilities: three large parks, three neighborhood parks, and an athletic field complex. The facilities are shown in **Map 10.1** and detailed in **Table 10.2**.

All facilities are open to the residents of the City and the Rockbridge County area. The Lexington outdoor municipal pool located at the intersection of Waddell and Wallace Streets is available to residents, while the Friends of Rockbridge Swimming operate the indoor municipal pool next door. Additionally, the Lylburn Downing Community Center, adjacent to the middle school, houses the Office on Youth, which provides after-school, summer, and recreational programs for students.

The City also owns two tracts of land in Rockbridge County that are available for hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, and the enjoyment of nature. Brushy Hills is a 600-acre preserve just west of the City that has hiking, mountain biking, and horseback trails. Moore's Creek is a 59-acre area located 12 miles south west of the City. It includes a 32-acre reservoir and is available for passive recreation and fishing with an access permit from the US Forest Service.

In addition to these City-owned facilities, Lexington partners with the Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization and the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership to enhance recreational opportunities for City residents. Many additional opportunities are available through private and non-profit organizations, such as YMCA and the Maury River Senior Center.

While Lexington residents have access to a wide range of park and recreation opportunities, additional facilities and investments are needed, particularly for adult recreation leagues and trails. Opportunities to renovate and expand Brewbaker Athletic Complex are being considered to meet these needs, and a master plan is underway to develop Jordan's Point Park as a more effective community asset. In addition, the [2017 Rockbridge Area Outdoor Recreation and Trail Plan](#) identifies two projects in Lexington to improve trail connectivity and river access – the Brushy Hill Connector Trail and the Chessie Nature Trail expansions. These investments will ensure that Lexington residents have ample access to parks, recreation, and trail assets that support the health and wellness of the community.



PARK 7 FACILITIES

**2 School Athletic
FIELDS**

**2 Swimming
Pools**

**3 LARGE
PARKS**

**ATHLETIC 1
Complex** **neighborhood
parks 3**

**2500+
ACRES OF
RECREATIONAL SPACE**

Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Table 10.2 Recreation Space and Facilities

Location	Size	Facilities
Brewbaker Athletic Complex	13.3 acres	Outdoor swimming pool, indoor swimming pool, athletic fields, playground (Kids Playce), skate park
Brushy Hills Preserve	560 acres	Hiking trails, passive recreation
Chessie Nature Trail	7 miles	Walking trail from Lexington to Buena Vista (Managed by VMI)
Courthouse Square	0.16 acres	Tables, benches, open space
Evergreen Cemetery	5.5 acres	Historic grave sites
Fairwinds Park	1.2 acres	Playground, picnic area, open space
Hopkins Green	0.32 acres	Picnic area, open space
Jordan's Point Park	9.5 acres	Walking trail, picnic area, pavilion, boat ramp, athletic fields
Lime Kiln Bridge Park	0.7 acres	Playground, picnic area
Lylburn Downing Community Center	0.75 acres	Multipurpose room, meeting rooms
Lylburn Downing Middle School	3 acres	Athletic fields, gymnasium, outdoor basketball court
M. Leroy Richardson Park	4.5 acres	Playground, pavilion
Moore's Creek Dam	59.6 acres	Passive recreation, fishing
Oak Grove Cemetery	11 acres	Historic grave sites
Taylor Street Park	0.5 acres	Playground, picnic area
Woods Creek Park and Trail	3 acres	Open space, 2.8 mile walking trail
Waddell Elementary	3 acres	Athletic fields, playground, multipurpose rooms, outdoor basketball court, outdoor pavilion

Source: City of Lexington

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Public Safety

Public safety services in Lexington are provided by the Lexington Police Department and the Lexington Fire and Rescue Department. Lexington is also home to the Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office, which works closely with the Lexington Police Department and offers numerous law enforcement services. The existing public safety community risk reduction program has proven extremely beneficial in improving the safety of Lexington residents.

Police

The Lexington Police Department is located adjacent to City Hall in a facility constructed in 2003. The Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency of the City and consists of 18 sworn officers and three civilian support personnel. The Police Department works closely with Washington & Lee's public safety department and has a successful community risk reduction program that has proven extremely beneficial in improving safety. The department's three divisions (Support Services, Operations, and Special Enforcement) work together to provide comprehensive law enforcement services to the City. The department has maintained accreditation by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission since 1998. The Police Department currently meets standards of the International Association of Chiefs of Polices that call for cities to have 1.4 to 2.4 officers per 1,000 residents. Using Weldon

Cooper's 2020 population projections for Lexington as a baseline population, 2.4 officers per 1,000 residents equates to 17.8 officers. Lexington, with 18 officers, is on target for current service needs, especially considering the higher daytime population given the number of in-commuters and visitors.

Fire and Rescue

The Lexington Fire and Rescue Department is located on South Main Street and includes both professional and volunteer personnel. The Fire and Rescue Department provides fire, rescue, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, and community risk reduction services along with emergency management responsibilities. The City also participates in a regional fire and rescue commission, and the fire department serves portions of Rockbridge County. Overall, the department's service area is 55.9 square miles. The fire department also works closely with Washington & Lee University and Virginia Military Institute and numerous other local and regional partners. As a result of the quality services provided by the department, Lexington's Insurance Services Office (ISO) Community Risk Rating has improved from a "6" to a "3" since 2009, resulting in reduced insurance costs for city residents.

Growth in Lexington will require additional investment in fire and rescue services. Currently,

the fire department does not always meet minimum national standards for staffing, and long-term operation will require more professionals amid the national trend of declining volunteer availability. The Department also anticipates the need to replace the 22-year-old ladder truck in the next two to three years. In addition, the existing fire station, constructed in 2002, is nearly 20 years old and has space constraints that limit the proper functioning of the Department. A comprehensive needs assessment and facility plan is recommended to identify solutions to address space needs and maximize fire and rescue response times.

Central Dispatch

The Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center serves as the Central Dispatch Center for Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. The center dispatches for local police, fire, rescue, and emergency services. The center is overseen by the Public Safety Communication Board and an executive director manages day-to-day activities.



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Schools

The City of Lexington is committed to providing progressive educational opportunities and challenging experiences that are responsive to the needs and talents of all students.

The City provides its own public elementary and middle school education facilities, while high school is provided under a joint services agreement with Rockbridge County. **Table 10.3** provides enrollment data by grade for Lexington public schools.

Some Rockbridge County students attend city schools as non-resident students who pay tuition, while students in the City attend Rockbridge High School. Division-wide, approximately 27% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged, as determined by qualifying for free and reduced meal services. The school system is led by the Lexington City School Board, a five-member board that is appointed by the Lexington City Council.

The City owns two school buildings, Harrington Waddell Elementary School on Pendleton Place and Lylburn Downing Middle School on Diamond Street. Waddell Elementary School was originally built in 1927 and was used as the City’s high school. In the 1960’s, it was converted to use as an elementary school. That school was demolished, and a new building was constructed on the same site in 2017. Lylburn Downing Middle School was originally built in 1949 as an addition to an existing African American school. It was converted to a middle school in the 1960s and has undergone two major renovations and additions since its construction. School board offices are housed at the Lylburn Downing Community Center, which also provides preschool services, meeting spaces, and a heritage center with historical items.

Table 10.3 Enrollment by Grade, Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8

Grade	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Pre-kindergarten	0	0	0
Kindergarten	51	50	51
Grade 1	51	63	53
Grade 2	48	62	61
Grade 3	49	53	60
Grade 4	54	55	55
Grade 5	60	50	59
Total Elementary	313	333	339
Grade 6	62	62	51
Grade 7	72	58	62
Grade 8	68	69	57
Total Middle	202	189	170
Total Students	515	522	509

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Lexington City Public School Quality Profile

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Planning Context

Public Libraries

The City of Lexington is a partner in the Rockbridge Regional Library System. The system is headquartered on South Main Street and also serves the Counties of Bath and Rockbridge and the City of Buena Vista. Maintenance and other operating expenses are shared by the jurisdictions in the regional library system. In addition to physical collections, classes, programs and story times for children, each location offers wi-fi and computers for public use.

Modern libraries have become community centers for individuals to interact and learn together. While the existing library space has functioned well over the years, a major renovation or replacement of the library in Lexington would be beneficial to the community as the existing space is cramped and not suited to its full potential as a center of community. Shared spaces with other community partners in one location could be one way to achieve a better library and better service to patrons.

Cemeteries

The City of Lexington owns and maintains two active cemeteries: Evergreen Cemetery and Oak Grove Cemetery. The smaller of the two cemeteries, Evergreen Cemetery, is a historically African American cemetery located on 5.5 acres on New Market Place. Oak Grove Cemetery is an 11-acre site on Main Street. The operation of both cemeteries is funded by a small service charge and public funds. A six-member Cemetery Advisory Board advises staff and City Council on issues pertaining to the operation and maintenance of the two cemeteries.

Both cemeteries are nearing capacity. Based on current rates of burial, Oak Grove Cemetery has approximately 10 to 15 years of ground interment spaces remaining, while Evergreen has approximately five years. An inventory expansion study was conducted in 2018, and the City is currently evaluating implementation of the plan.



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

The City of Lexington fosters and maintains many partnerships and initiatives with other organizations. These organizations all provide valuable community services and maintain an important physical presence in service provision to the Lexington community. Continuing to work with these groups is necessary to provide quality community services to the public.

Blue Ridge Resource Authority

The Blue Ridge Resource Authority, formerly the Rockbridge County Solid Waste Authority, was created in 2017 to own and operate the Rockbridge Regional Landfill. A seven-member committee governs the Authority with two members appointed by Lexington City Council. Each participating jurisdiction is responsible for its proportionate share of operating costs.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) is a political subdivision of the state chartered by the Regional Cooperation Act in 1969. The CSPDC serves the City of Lexington and 20 other local governments including Rockbridge County, other cities, and various towns throughout the region. The organization provides local and regional planning services including transportation, natural resource management, disaster mitigation and preparedness education, and many others. Lexington contributes a portion of funding to the commission along with all other member localities.

Institutes of Higher Education

Lexington's institutes of higher education, Washington & Lee University and Virginia Military Institute, are longstanding partners with the City of Lexington. Both institutes contribute to the advancement of the community through services, such as volunteer firefighting and emergency response, and publicly available facilities, such as libraries. Students from both institutions volunteer in the broader Lexington community and provide valuable services to some of Lexington's most in-need citizens.

Rockbridge Area Department of Social Services

The Rockbridge Area Department of Social Services provides services to all of Rockbridge County, the City of Lexington, and the City of Buena Vista. It is governed by a regional board with representatives appointed by each locality. The department is supervised by the state but locally administered. The department offers a wide variety of resources, including foster care and adoption, childcare assistance, food security assistance, and community

support programs such as 2-1-1 Virginia and the AmeriCorps State program.

Rockbridge Area Relief Association

The Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA), founded in 1972, is the largest nonprofit organization focused on alleviating hunger and poverty in Lexington. The RARA operates out of the Piavano Building (the former rescue squad building) on Spotswood Drive. The City provides some funding for RARA's mission.

Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization

The Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization (RARO) was established in 1988 by the Lexington City Council as the regional recreation provider for both the City and County. It is an independent recreation authority governed by a nine-member board and funded by three jurisdictions, including the Cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, and the County of Rockbridge. It operates a wide variety of sports programs,



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

primarily geared to the youth of the community. RARO offers 33 different programs serving over 1,500 Rockbridge County residents per year. A small building on White Street, which housed the School Board offices until 2010, now provides administrative and program space for the organization.

Transportation Providers

Lexington-area transportation providers support access to public facilities and services by providing safe and reliable transportation options. These providers include Maury Express, Rockbridge Area Transportation System (RATS), and Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS). A more detailed description of these providers can be found in the Transportation chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

Telecommunications

Technology-based economic growth is a key focus of the City's strategic plan and should be supported through the provision of high-speed, high-quality telecommunication infrastructure. The backbone for a high-speed fiber optic communication system has been put in place in the downtown and commercial areas through the regional Rockbridge Area Network Authority (RANA). The City should promote this service to businesses along the established routes to ensure the economic success of RANA. The City should also look toward a plan for expansion of the fiber system to other areas of the City where customers express a desire for this

service. The goal is to eventually make this service available to all areas of the City.

Energy Providers

Lexington is served by a variety of private utility providers. Electricity in Lexington is provided by Dominion Virginia Power and BARC Electric Cooperative. Natural gas is provided by Columbia Gas.

Rockbridge Regional Jail

Rockbridge Regional Jail serves Lexington, Rockbridge County, and Buena Vista under a contractual joint services agreement. The jail houses adult prisoners serving short sentences and suspects awaiting trial. The jail, which was built in 1988 to hold 56 inmates, was double bunked to hold 111 inmates. When capacity is reached, inmates are assigned to other facilities, resulting in increased operating costs. As of November 2019, the inmate population was 158.

The Rockbridge Regional Jail Commission oversees operations and is responsible for jail policy and financing. The Commission is comprised of the Sheriff, per State Code, and four other representatives, including one from Lexington.

The Virginia Compensation Board supports salaries for authorized personnel and provides some operational funds. These funds are not adequate

to support jail expenditures, which have increased significantly in recent years due to overcrowding, rising medical expenses, and maintenance costs. By agreement, the localities must fund the shortfall should the jail revenues be insufficient to pay operating expenditures. Per the agreement, any revenue shortfall must be assessed to the localities based on their number of prisoner days. Faced with these rising costs, Lexington should continue working with Rockbridge County, Buena Vista, and the Commission to implement cost reduction measures and reduce overcrowding at the jail.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Needs Assessment





Municipal services – such as parks, infrastructure, public safety, trash collection – directly affect the daily life of residents and impact overall quality of life. Population growth and development can impact demands on these services. Likewise, changing demographics and evolving needs of residents require an adaptive and responsive approach to facility and infrastructure planning and service delivery. Along with these challenges, aging infrastructure and facility issues associated with deferred maintenance present a costly yet critical needs that, in some cases, also have major environmental implications. Key community facility and infrastructure needs identified through the development of this Plan include:

- ▶ Integrating cost-saving and climate-friendly technologies.
- ▶ ADA improvements to facilities to support the City's aging and disabled populations.
- ▶ Continued investments in parks and recreation for a healthier population and a greener City.
- ▶ Improvements to the water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, particularly to address inflow and infiltration that leads to water quality and wastewater treatment capacity issues.
- ▶ Improved facility condition and utilization at City Hall, public works, and fire and rescue facilities.
- ▶ Ensuring that the quality and capacity of infrastructure does not become a constraint to revenue-generating development and redevelopment.
- ▶ Addressing capacity issues in the City's cemeteries and regional jail system in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.
- ▶ Continued partnerships between local and regional agencies for more efficient delivery of shared services, such as libraries, jails, hospital, and high school.

As Lexington looks to 2040, infrastructure and facilities will be a high priority as the City seeks to keep pace with maintenance, regulatory requirements, advancing technology, and evolving resident needs. In some cases, these needs can be fulfilled by working with citizens, businesses, and regional institutions to develop innovative and equitable solutions. The goal, objectives, and strategies that follow have been developed with these needs and priorities in mind.


Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Community Facilities & Services			
Goal: Provide and maintain the highest quality, efficient, and effective community services and facilities while addressing the future needs of the City.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Improve access to community facilities and services for all residents.	CF 1.1	Conduct an ADA accessibility study of City facilities, streets, and walkways and implement recommendations, as appropriate.
		CF 1.2	Integrate accessibility and safety into park facility design to ensure that parks and playgrounds are safe and inclusive for all users.
		CF 1.3	Ensure equity in service delivery for all of Lexington's neighborhoods and demographics.
		CF 1.4	Investigate the need for a community center to provide quality facilities that promote lifelong learning and achievement for all residents.
	Offer efficient and effective community services and facilities that meet the needs of residents and businesses of the City.	CF 2.1	Review the city's building systems and the use of renewable energy sources for upgrades to achieve energy efficiency and potential cost-savings.
		CF 2.2	Resolve the contingency water supply agreement with Rockbridge County due to the impracticability of piping water from the Moore's Creek Reservoir to the City's water treatment facility.
		CF 2.3	Evaluate the feasibility of implementing a stormwater fee to fund improvements to the City's stormwater management system.
		CF 2.4	Construct water, wastewater, and stormwater system improvements to reclaim capacity and ensure efficient and high-quality service.
		CF 2.5	Repair and upgrade the City's sewer lines to address inflow and infiltration (I&I) to protect water quality and ensure sewer capacity is maintained.
		CF 2.6	Implement cemetery improvements that support the financial sustainability and viability of the facilities by increasing burial capacity.
		CF 2.7	Ensure that new development assesses impacts on public facilities and infrastructure and adequately mitigates impacts specifically attributable to that development.
		CF 2.8	Regularly evaluate the refuse and recycling program to identify cost-effective improvements and opportunities for program expansion.
	Ensure public facilities and services complement the community's design while satisfying the highest level of service for the citizens.	CF 3.1	Evaluate administrative space needs at City Hall and explore options to renovate the existing building or relocate and market the existing building for reuse and historic rehabilitation.
		CF 3.2	Reconstruct the public works complex to provide safe, functional, and operationally-efficient facilities.
		CF 3.3	Continue efforts to provide high-quality parks and recreation resources by implementing the Jordan's Point Park master plan, expanding amenities at the Brewbaker Athletic Complex, and maintaining existing parks.
		CF 3.4	Support continued investment in the regional library system that improves the Lexington library as a center of community and learning.
		CF 3.5	Ensure that improvements of the public realm (sidewalks, curbs, street trees) are planned and executed in an integrated, coordinated manner when undertaking upgrades to sewer, water, or road infrastructure.
	Commit to engaging community members in substantive policy- and decision-making to provide the highest possible level of service provision.	CF 4.1	Continue to seek citizen input on service needs and priorities to ensure equitable investment in infrastructure and facilities.
		CF 4.2	Continue public safety engagement and programs, such as volunteer fire and rescue and community risk reduction programs, that encourage cooperation between public safety officials and citizens.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Community Facilities & Services		
Goal: Provide and maintain the highest quality, efficient, and effective community services and facilities while addressing the future needs of the City.		
Values	Objectives	Strategies
	Maximize service delivery through effective management and partnerships.	CF 5.1 Perform periodic studies/surveys of adequacy, quality, effectiveness, and equity of City service delivery, including service expansion.
		CF 5.2 Coordinate and support internal, local, and regional partnerships for shared services, infrastructure, and facilities that benefit City residents and ensure sustainable and cost-effective services.
		CF 5.3 Include public and private utility providers in the planning stage of all infrastructure and development projects to determine needs and upgrades as part of project development.
		CF 5.4 Continue partnerships with the Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization and the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership and support implementation of the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Recreation and Trail Plan.
		CF 5.5 Conduct a comprehensive fire and rescue needs assessment and facility plan to address space needs and maximize fire and rescue response times.
		CF 5.6 Continue partnering with Rockbridge County to provide state-of-the-art education and facilities for Lexington high school students.
		CF 5.7 Enhance the City's disaster preparedness through continued participation in regional Hazard Mitigation Planning through the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.
		CF 5.8 Work with Rockbridge County and Buena Vista to assess and address the long-term needs of the Rockbridge Regional Jail.
		CF 5.9 Work with the health system and other health providers to implement the Rockbridge Area Community Health Assessment, where possible.



Governance

Provide an inclusive, accessible, and responsive government that works for and with the people of Lexington to achieve its vision and implement its long-range plans.

Governance

▷ Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan sets Lexington on a path of proactive, long-term, and fiscally sound decision-making. The Plan better enables City leaders and community members to demand excellence and quality in everything the City and its partners do. The work does not end with adoption of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document that provides the direction to move Lexington toward its long-term vision. Implementation occurs through expertise, consistent application, utilization of tools, and review. To bring the shared vision to fruition, there must be familiarity with each goal, progress toward the strategies to achieve the goals, and consistency with the future land use map. This applies to all users, including businesses, applicants, citizenry, and City officials.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan builds on the City's commitment to transparency, accountability, and civility. The chapter examines the functional role of the City government as well as initiatives to increase citizen participation and ensure information is disseminated both timely and accurately. Finally, this chapter summarizes goals and action strategies. It is encouraged that these be reviewed on an annual basis to measure progress and adjust as priorities evolve.

▷ Community Engagement

Community engagement efforts for this Comprehensive Plan included a public survey and individual stakeholder interviews with representatives of various city departments and organizations. While a majority of comments, feedback, and results produced from these outreach methods focused on specific items, such as the character of Lexington and concerns for the future, some general thoughts and desires concerning good governance became evident through analysis.

A desire for more cooperation between the City and Rockbridge County in planning and development efforts was a common theme in stakeholder interviews. The public survey revealed a need for responsiveness to constituents, including transparency in government actions. Concerns over affordability in Lexington were cited along with a tax base impacted by several parcels of tax-exempt land in the city.



Governance

▷ Planning Context

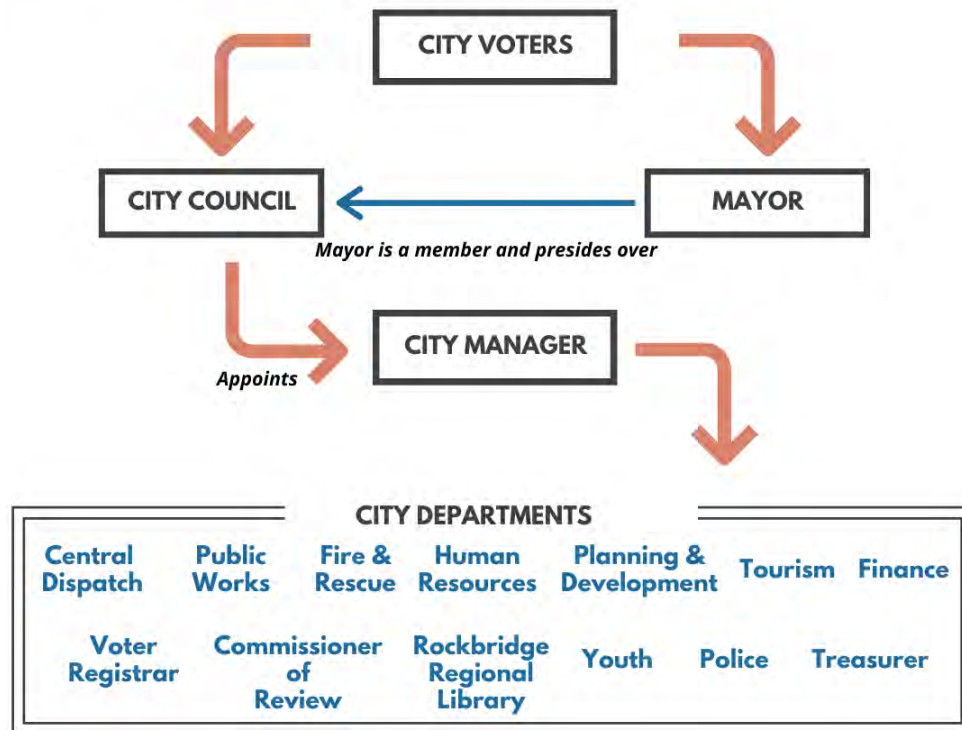
City Government Structure

The City of Lexington is small compared to most cities in the Commonwealth, but its responsibilities are not reduced. The city must meet the needs of its citizens by providing goods and services such as police, fire protection, water, and other utility services, parks, recreation programs, streets, and other public works improvements. These needs are met through the power of the City Council to levy taxes, pass ordinances, and adopt a budget with day-to-day operations occurring under the leadership of the city manager.

As provided in the City Charter, Lexington has a council-manager form of government. The council-manager structure combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the managerial experience of an appointed city manager. City Council serves as the legislative body elected by the community to enact ordinances, adopt the budget and capital improvement plans, and approve land use decisions, among other responsibilities. Lexington's Council consists of six council persons elected at large and a popularly elected mayor who presides over council. The city manager is appointed by Council to administer local government projects and programs on behalf of the Council. The manager prepares the budget, makes policy recommendations for Council consideration, oversees City departments and staff, and carries out adopted policies.

Diagram 11.1 City Structure

Council-Manager Form of Government



Governance

▷ Planning Context

City Budget

The City's budget establishes the plan of revenue and expense activities for the fiscal year and provides a coordinated financial program to attain the City's goals and objectives, including those identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The City of Lexington publicizes budget data on an annual basis. As shown in **Table 11.1**, annual expenses have increased modestly over the past four years with revenues increasing proportionately.

Tables 11.2 and 11.3 provide the City's general fund revenues and expenditures for 2019. The City's revenues are varied, including property taxes and other local taxes, permits and licenses, fines and forfeitures, service charges, state and federal grants, and other miscellaneous sources. Lexington's single largest general fund expenditure, outside of non-departmental spending, is through Public Safety followed by Public Works. The spending categorized as non-departmental includes insurance, debt services, and interfund transfer.

Lexington's ability to finance operations and capital improvements is intrinsically tied to the City's taxable land value. Like most cities, property taxes make up the largest percentage of the City's revenue. However, compared to other localities in the Commonwealth, Lexington is less able to generate additional revenues from its current tax base. This is largely due to the amount of tax exempted property associated with Lexington's institutions of higher learning, the presence of two

County schools and the County Administration building, and the number of churches enjoyed by residents. Approximately 65% of the total assessed value of all land parcels in Lexington is not taxed due to exemptions and government land ownership.* As such, it is highly desirable that Lexington optimize development of existing undeveloped parcels and encourage redevelopment and infill that results in additional revenue-producing uses and structures.

*Tax-exempt property includes various religious, institutional, and government uses. VMI does not pay a tax or fee. W&L contributes a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) to offset a portion of its impact on City revenue and services.

Table 11.1 Revenues and Expenses (2015-2019)

	Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Revenues	Amount	\$ 15,566,762	\$ 17,009,612	\$ 17,564,620	\$ 18,058,189	\$ 18,369,271
	% Change	--	9.27%	3.26%	2.81%	1.72%
Expenses	Amount	\$ 15,542,115	\$ 16,863,742	\$ 17,432,156	\$ 17,943,297	\$ 18,241,764
	% Change	--	8.50%	3.37%	2.93%	1.66%

Source: City of Lexington

Governance

▷ Planning Context

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical expenditures such as land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. The CIP includes a description of proposed capital improvement projects ranked by priority, a year-by-year schedule of expected project funding, and an estimate of project costs and financing sources. The CIP is a working document and is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities. CIPs are typically designed to consider both immediate and long-term capital assets and infrastructure needs. Public and private investors and relationships are needed for a robust CIP. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP and updates to ordinances align with the Comprehensive Plan.

City Code of Ordinances

The collection of laws passed by a local governing body is known as the City Code of Ordinances. The zoning and subdivision ordinance regulations, and the landscaping, parking, and signage standards contained therein are at the forefront in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Lexington's land use regulations are the primary Plan implementation tool and, therefore, should be kept up to date along with the Plan.

Table 11.2 General Fund Revenues (2019)

Type	Revenue (\$)
Property Taxes	\$6,872,000.00
Other Local Taxes	\$4,232,300.00
Permits & Licenses	\$343,150.00
Fines & Forfeitures	\$62,500.00
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$203,240.00
Charges for Services	\$704,510.00
Misc. Revenues	\$2,599,620.00
Recovered Costs	\$634,779.00
State- Noncategorical	\$1,265,462.00
State Categorical	\$1,230,150.00
Federal Categorical	\$101,560.00
Transfers	\$120,000.00

Source: City of Lexington

Table 11.3 General Fund Expenditures (2019)

Type	Revenue (\$)
General Government Administration	\$1,364,678
Judicial Administration	\$350,441
Public Safety	\$4,076,013
Public Works	\$3,323,405
Health, Education & Welfare	\$909,895
Leisure Services	\$532,088
Community Development	\$785,916
Nondepartmental	\$6,899,328

Source: City of Lexington

Governance

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

The partnerships described below are critical for transparent, effective, and efficient governance and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Citizens

Citizen engagement is a key component of good governance. Engagement provides transparency, predictability, and accountability. Engagement must occur with individuals but also with interest groups, committees, and agencies. Without this kind of public engagement, citizens can feel removed from the government entity that is working to serve them. The approval of ordinances and levying of taxes may feel forced and without forethought. City officials recognize this and identified engagement as one of the five main principles in the 2019 five-year strategic plan. The city has made great strides to engage citizens through initiatives such as public participation planning processes, easy to understand budget visualization tools and reports, weekly reports and "Meet the City Manager" forums, and events and partnerships with community institutions and organizations.

Public participation was a critical component of drafting this Plan, and engagement must continue through implementation. A comprehensive plan is only successful if the community and its leaders strive towards each goal, taking ownership of their role.

Commissions and Boards

The City Council establishes and appoints members to various boards and commissions and charges them with specific responsibilities. Members of boards and commissions are citizens who voluntarily serve the citizens of Lexington. Some boards are local, while others are regional in nature. In certain instances, members of City Council serve on these boards as a Council liaison. Boards provide policy and operational recommendations to the City Council to assist in its decision making and, in limited instances, make final decisions themselves. The City's local boards and commissions can be found in **Appendix B**.

While each appointed body should remain informed and engaged in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, and Board of Zoning Appeals are the three key bodies with responsibilities related to land use and physical development in the City. The Planning Commission is charged with the development, review, and implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Architectural Review Board reviews development and improvements within historic districts to ensure that the City's historical character is preserved. The Board of Zoning Appeals hears and acts on requests for variances from the terms of the city's Zoning Ordinance and on appeals of zoning decisions made by the Zoning Administrator. Decisions by each of these bodies ultimately impact the character, form, and quality of development in the City of Lexington.



Governance

▷ Partnerships & Initiatives

Regional Coordination and Partnerships

While Lexington has the autonomy to create its own plans and ordinances, land use and community planning issues do not stop at political boundaries. Shared, consistent regional planning and coordination is critical to the success of the goals and strategies included in this document. The city currently participates in a number of regional services and planning efforts – library system, a central emergency communications center, a community services board, a tourism office and board, regional water and wastewater plants, workforce investment board, and economic development, to name a few. These efforts are vitally important, and further coordination with Rockbridge County and local institutions and organizations on community and land use planning issues will ensure the long-range success of this Plan.



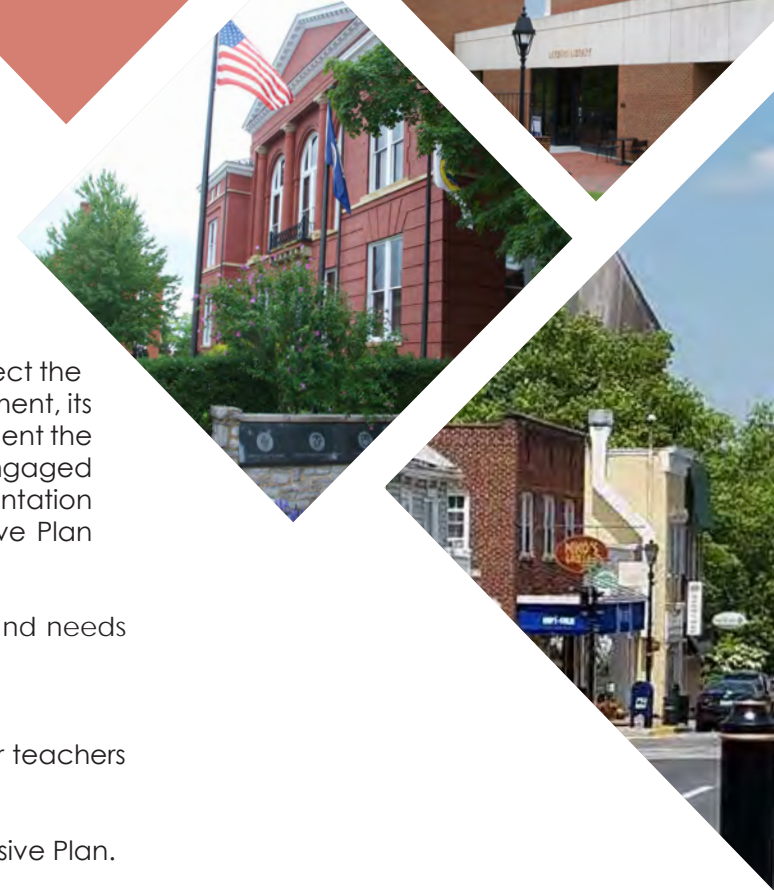
Governance

▷ Needs Assessment

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a dynamic document – evolving and changing to reflect the needs of the community. While the Comprehensive Plan is primarily a guide for physical development, its implementation touches upon all areas of government. The financial resources needed to implement the plan impact City budgeting and must be balanced with other funding priorities. An informed and engaged community is critical to ensure that citizens understand Lexington's governance and implementation challenges and voice their priorities. Key governance challenges related to the Comprehensive Plan include:






- ▶ Building an inclusive, engaged, and transparent government responsive to the priorities and needs of all citizens.
- ▶ Identifying ways to make Lexington a more attractive, welcoming, and desirable place for teachers and administrators of color.
- ▶ Improving coordination between the budget, capital improvement plan, and Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ Improving monitoring of progress on the Comprehensive Plan through annual reviews and updates.
- ▶ Engaging City department directors in an annual review of Comprehensive Plan-related activities in conjunction with the CIP process and identifying implementation challenges and the impact of Plan goals on service provision, expansion, or adjustment.
- ▶ Continued coordination of City and County planning policies through communication, knowledge sharing, and regular joint Planning Commission meetings.

The goal, objectives, and strategies that follow are designed to ensure that Lexington maintains an effective and transparent city government that works on behalf of the citizens of the city to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation chapter elaborates further, providing specific direction for making this Plan a reality.



Governance

▷ Goal, Objectives, & Strategies

Governance			
Goal: Provide an inclusive, accessible, and responsive government that works for and with the people of Lexington to achieve its vision and implement its long-range plans.			
Values	Objectives	Strategies	
	Ensure Lexington's leadership is available to and representative of all City residents.	GO 1.1	Actively foster diversity in recruiting and appointments to boards and commissions.
		GO 1.2	Create a diversity hiring initiative plan for the City and school system workforce.
	Advance fiscal responsibility and resiliency in all city decisions.	GO 2.1	Work with Main Street Lexington, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to engage businesses and promote the City's continued economic growth.
	Make decisions that reflect and enhance the values and character of the Lexington community.	GO 3.1	Ensure that the City's land use regulations are reviewed regularly and updated accordingly to reflect the community's vision.
		GO 3.2	Ensure that the City's land use regulations are applied and enforced in a professional and consistent manner.
	Use innovative techniques, tools, and platforms to engage citizens in decision making processes.	GO 4.1	Experiment with civic engagement techniques to create new opportunities for public participation.
		GO 4.2	Improve the transparency and exchange of information, incorporating comprehensive and contemporary communication strategies to engage residents and increase equity in public participation across generations and demographics.
	Advance Lexington's community planning goals through internal coordination and external partnerships.	GO 5.1	Maintain and strengthen partnerships, collaboration, and communication between the City and institutions of higher learning.
		GO 5.2	Improve coordination with Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista on policies including, but not limited to, long-range planning, strategic initiatives, and other regional interests.
		GO 5.3	Link the annual budget review and the update of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan involving all City departments.
		GO 5.4	Conduct an annual review of accomplishments to implement the Comprehensive Plan, including recommendations for budget and work plan priorities, as part of Planning Commission's annual report to City Council.
		GO 5.5	Support the School Board in identifying successful techniques for ensuring all students are successful as defined by measures of best practices.



Implementation

▷ Using the Plan ▷ Implementation Matrix

Implementation

▷ Using the Plan

The Planning Commission and City Council should refer to the Comprehensive Plan and consider its vision prior to making recommendations and decisions. Code of Virginia § 15.2-2232 states that the Comprehensive Plan “shall control the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown in the plan.” Consistently measuring each land use application and budgetary decision to the long-range vision of the Comprehensive Plan ensures proper implementation.

To assess the Plan's effectiveness, the City should review and monitor specific issues that impact the goals, objectives, and action strategies outlined within this document. Where prudent and necessary, the Plan should be amended periodically. It is incumbent upon City Council to carefully consider whether specific amendments are congruent with the Plan's overarching vision. Any modification or amendment should be considered with long-term policy implications.



▷ Tools for Implementation

A variety of tools should be utilized to enable Lexington's long-range vision to become a reality. The following tools are the most vital to ensuring the successful implementation of this Plan.

Annual Budget

The City Council and staff should keep the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in mind when preparing the City's annual budget. The budget works hand-in-hand with the Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan to move the City toward a thriving, resilient future.

Capital Improvement Plan

A [Capital Improvement Plan](#) (CIP) coordinates the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. Capital improvements refer to major, non-recurring physical expenditures such as land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. The community benefits and the long-range vision is achieved when the priorities of the CIP and updates to ordinances align with the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Regulations

The process for development approvals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, are a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning ordinance; subdivision regulations; landscaping, parking, and signage standards; and other land use and development standards and procedures are at the forefront in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Review and Update

Continuous review and progress monitoring holds everyone accountable to the City's long-range vision. The Code of Virginia § 15.2-2230 requires that Comprehensive Plans be reviewed every five years. In addition to the five-year review and update, annual reviews and revisions of ordinances and plans is considered a best practice. Reviewing the Plan regularly helps measure success in achieving Plan goals. It also provides an opportunity to propose and integrate strategic initiatives and policy changes that can be incorporated into the annual budget process, if necessary. This annual review helps set budgetary priorities that are consistent with the community's vision and ensures that monitoring is systematic and planned.



Implementation

▷ Planning Commission's Road Map

In addition to developing the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission is charged with specific responsibilities in using, coordinating, and updating the Plan. The following action items are specific to the Planning Commission's role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Catalyst Projects

The Planning Commission, after the formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, will recommend to City Manager strategies that can be completed in the short term (i.e., within the next year). The identification of Catalyst Projects is not intended to be an annual endeavor, but rather an immediate one-time effort to activate the plan once it is adopted and connect it to other departments in City hall, residents, businesses, and policy makers (primarily, City Council). The summary of catalyst projects will include an explanation of what category of implementation they are, and how the outcome will be measured.

Issue Identification

As is done with the Zoning Ordinance, an ongoing list will be compiled of issues and questions that arise over the course of the year concerning the Comprehensive Plan for annual review and action where needed.

Budget and CIP Coordination

In accordance with best practices in planning and governance, Lexington's Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed and considered when developing the annual budget and capital improvement plan. The Planning Commission will be integrated into this review process and provide recommendations to the City Council.

Annual Review

Each year, the Planning Commission will review progress toward completion of various projects / strategies, in preparation for its annual report to City Council. This activity will be scheduled into the Planning Commission's work calendar.



Implementation

► Implementation Matrix

The Plan Implementation Matrix provides the specific direction to make this Plan a reality. The matrix builds on the strategies included in each plan element by identifying tools, responsible parties, and anticipated timeframes for completion. The matrix also correlates strategies with specific policies, goals, and values set forth in the Plan. The implementation matrix should be reviewed annually as part of the City's budgeting process to set budgeting priorities as well as measure progress towards meeting the City's vision for the Lexington of 2040.

"A Road Map" to 2040

The Implementation Matrix provided in this chapter is our roadmap forward. Listed below are the step-by-step directions to achieve our vision for the Lexington of 2040. The key to its success will be a proactive approach by the Planning Commission in cooperation with City Council, City departments, residents, businesses, and community institutions and organizations.

The Implementation Matrix includes the following information:

► Implementation Strategy

The specific action to be taken.

► Type of Implementation

Categories include:

- Community Education
- Programs and Services
- Capital Projects
- Ordinance Updates
- Plans and Studies
- Partnerships

► Responsible Agency

The organization(s) responsible for partnering, administering, managing, and/or implementing the specific action item. These organizations include:






- City of Lexington
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Local Business Partners
- Regional and Institutional Partners
- Citizens

► Schedule




Timeframe in which action will be taken.

- Short-term (1-5 years)
Short-term actions can be completed within five years of the Plan's adoption.
- Long-term (5+ years)
Long-term actions may be initiated within five years but will be completed beyond the first five years of the Plan's adoption.
- Ongoing
Ongoing actions should continue for the life of the Plan.





Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	HR 1.1	Work with and support local organizations and institutions to promote the fullest understanding of the entirety of Lexington's history.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Citizens	On Going
	HR 1.2	Coordinate with other City programs, such as affordable housing initiatives, to encourage preservation and support 'aging in place' by providing rehabilitation resources for owners of historic properties.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners	On Going
	HR 1.3	Create thematic walking trails and use green infrastructure linkages to connect historic resources.	Partnerships	Nonprofit Organizations	Long Term
	HR 2.1	Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic downtown properties as a means of increasing downtown population and economic vibrancy.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	HR 3.1	Ensure that new development within historic districts and conservation areas is sensitive to the historic character and context of those areas and preserves any archeological artifacts found during the construction process.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	HR 3.2	Encourage and support local preservation, rehabilitation, and beautification efforts and the use of green building design as complementary to the values of historic preservation.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners, Citizens	On Going
	HR 3.3	Continue to invest in public infrastructure improvements to further enhance the historic character of the City.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On Going
	HR 4.1	Educate owners of historic properties on appropriate maintenance procedures and requirements and promote Lexington's historic district guidelines as an asset to property owners planning renovation, rehabilitation, new construction, or other substantive changes to historic properties.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	HR 4.2	Provide property owners with information on historic rehabilitations, financial incentives, and context sensitive design.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	HR 4.3	Continue to work with, support, and promote incentives for private-sector investment and use of historic properties.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	HR 4.4	Welcome citizen-initiated requests to rename streets linked to the confederacy and enslavement of people.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Citizens	
	HR 5.1	Continue to work with organizations, such as Main Street Lexington, Lexington & the Rockbridge Area Tourism Development, and Rockbridge Historical Society to promote history and tourism in the City.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	HR 5.2	Encourage the maintenance of the City's Certified Local Government status with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources by reviewing and managing the City's historic preservation programs.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	HR 5.3	Ensure the City's historic preservation activities are consistent with Virginia's Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	On Going







Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	GI 1.1	Explore opportunities to improve or add public access sites and linkages and increase public access to waterways.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	GI 1.2	Enhance access to and connectivity of natural open space in all development, redevelopment, and capital projects.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	GI 1.3	Undertake a city-wide green infrastructure assessment and develop a plan to create a continuous publicly-accessible green infrastructure network that connects neighborhoods, destinations within the City, waterways, and regional assets.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Short Term
	GI 1.4	Plan for access to healthy, affordable, locally-grown foods for all neighborhoods by supporting sustainable food initiatives, such as urban agriculture, farmers markets, and composting.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners	On Going
	GI 1.5	Encourage access to energy-efficient transportation options by supporting the siting of e-vehicle charging stations and facilities for bicycles and other micromobility devices.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	GI 1.6	Support urban wildlife and biodiversity initiatives, such as "Monarch Butterfly City" or "Bee City" designations and citizen-led efforts to install bird houses and bat boxes.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Citizens	Short Term
	GI 2.1	Encourage green building and green infrastructure in development proposals to increase property values and reduce infrastructure costs.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	GI 2.2	Improve energy efficiency of City buildings and operations and assess the feasibility of installing solar panels at Waddell Elementary School.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Short Term
	GI 3.1	Develop Jordan's Point Park in accordance with the 2020 Park Master Plan	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	Short Term
	GI 3.2	Grow and maintain the City's tree canopy coverage through the existing tree planting program and other grants, as may be available.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going
	GI 3.3	Continue strengthening zoning and development regulations that address landscaping, tree preservation, and native plants. Consider incentives to promote tree planting and preservation beyond minimum requirements.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	GI 3.4	Promote the installation of stormwater best management practices, such as bioswales, pervious surfaces, and rain gardens, including on City property and parking lots.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going
	GI 3.5	Enhance the protection of streams and natural wetlands by updating development standards and incentives to protect and restore buffer areas and discourage underground piping of streams.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	GI 3.6	Limit the extent of impervious surfaces that degrade water quality by considering reductions to minimum parking requirements and encouraging the use of pervious surfaces in development projects.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term







Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	GI 4.1	Educate and encourage landowners to install green infrastructure best management practices, plant native trees and vegetation, and reduce fertilizer and pesticide use.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	GI 4.2	Identify and collaborate with local organizations to educate landowners on installing solar panels.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	GI 4.3	Continue to engage the support of local students, volunteers, and non-profit organizations to help the City achieve its environmental and green infrastructure goals.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations	On Going
	GI 5.1	Identify and collaborate with local organizations to promote development and use of green infrastructure sites, linkages, and waterways within the City and the larger region, including sports organizations, the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership, Carilion Hospital, and retail businesses selling outdoor equipment.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	Short Term
	GI 5.2	Collaborate with regional organizations, such as the Central Shenandoah Planning District Committee and the Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District, to seek funding and resources to implement green infrastructure best management practices to improve local and regional water quality.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Short Term
	GI 5.3	Work with regional stakeholders to develop a comprehensive regional Energy and Climate Action Plan that identifies common issues, agreed upon approaches and principles, joint actions, and individual contributions by each participating locality and the major institutions of higher learning.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Long Term
	LE 1.1	Assess business licensing, permitting, and other regulatory requirements and streamline process, where needed, that might hamper new businesses and "side-gigs".	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LE 1.2	Encourage the development of safe, affordable, quality childcare.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	LE 1.3	Practice "economic gardening" by offering startup loans and low-cost financial advice to small and minority-owned businesses, connecting citizens to federal micro-enterprise loan programs until local programs can be established.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	LE 2.1	Actively recruit new businesses and assist expansion of existing businesses poised for growth.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	LE 2.2	Aggressively promote local and regional tourism through a variety of means, focusing on history and outdoor recreation.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	LE 2.3	Promote economic development incentive programs, such as HUBZONE, Job Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zones, to encourage desirable investments – including start-up businesses, hiring, and affordable dwelling opportunities.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LE 2.4	Sell, lease, or otherwise leverage under-utilized City-owned properties to strengthen Lexington's tax base and economic strength.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Long Term
	LE 2.5	Continue to invest in broadband and other telecommunication developments that are often cited as important determinants of local and regional economic growth.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On Going






Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	LE 3.1	Continue to pursue streetscape improvements associated with the Downtown Improvement Plan, including pedestrian upgrades that make the downtown district safer and more enjoyable for visitors.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On Going
	LE 4.1	Connect developers, real estate professionals, and lenders with resources and educational materials to help them promote Lexington to potential investors and businesses.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	LE 5.1	Recognizing the scarcity of development sites in Lexington, coordinate with Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista to promote economic improvement that can improve the regional economy.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	LE 5.2	Provide reliable funding to, and partner with, Main Street Lexington to expand downtown improvement strategies that may include branding campaigns, façade grants, business visitation and exit surveys, and business incubation programs.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations	Short Term
	AC 1.1	Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of civic, arts, and cultural facilities, venues, and activities with the goal that they will be more diverse and universally accessible.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	AC 1.2	Support affordable housing, flex live/work spaces, and resources for artists and artisans creating new businesses in Lexington.	Partnerships	Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	AC 2.1	Encourage the development or designation of community space(s) as a general arts and culture center for the greater Lexington community, capable of hosting both national and local artists as well as other community events.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	Short Term
	AC 2.2	Adopt tax incentives for the renovation of underutilized spaces and buildings (e.g., Cultural Enterprise Zones — tax incentives and subsidies to attract cultural organizations and private investors).	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	AC 2.3	Consider amending the zoning ordinance to create an arts/entertainment overlay district.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	AC 2.4	Work with community organizations to promote cultural tours that showcase the arts, culture, and area architecture through coordinated festivals, live music events, and other celebrations of local culture (e.g., host monthly mini-festivals that highlight one particular aspect of arts and culture).	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	AC 3.1	Use public art to revitalize, define, and enhance the character of Lexington and its neighborhoods.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	AC 3.2	Improve the aesthetic quality of the City's entrance corridors to be more inviting and appealing to visitors and locals alike.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going
	AC 3.3	Support the temporary re-use of vacant/underutilized building, facades, and sites for art exhibitions, events, and murals.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	AC 3.4	Include an arts and culture component in development requests for proposals for city-owned sites, when appropriate.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going





Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	AC 4.1	Streamline the public art/mural installation process to promote public art in the City.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Citizens	On Going
	AC 4.2	Examine local regulations related to street festivals (food trucks, arts, music, food, drink, booths, etc.) to more easily accommodate special events.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	AC 4.3	Streamline the event registration/permitting application to be more easily accessible and user-friendly.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	AC 5.1	Promote partnerships between local and regional government, local businesses, organizations, schools, university art programs, and charitable foundations to enhance event, programming, and facility development.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	AC 5.2	Establish an independent Arts and Culture Community Council to better facilitate arts and culture programming, initiatives, funding, and promotion between organizations and institutions in Lexington and Rockbridge County.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	Long Term
	AC 5.3	Publish an arts and culture directory of programs, services, and funding available in the Lexington area.	Community Education	City of Lexington	Short Term
	HO 1.1	Pursue funding strategies such as Community Development Block Grants or local revolving loan funds to finance the rehabilitation of housing on behalf of residents in need.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners, Citizens	On Going
	HO 1.2	Review regulations allowing accessory dwelling units in separate structures in appropriate residential areas.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	HO 2.1	Encourage energy efficiency and other green principles in the planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of Lexington housing to reduce long-term ownership costs for residents.	Programs and Services	Local Business Partners, Citizens	On Going
	HO 2.2	Expand provisions of Lexington's Zoning Ordinance allowing density bonuses for the creation of low- and moderate-income affordable housing units.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	HO 3.1	Provide housing rehabilitation resources for elderly and low-income residents to support "aging in place" and preservation of neighborhood character.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	HO 3.2	Protect existing affordable neighborhoods from losing housing stock to commercial conversions or other non-residential uses.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	HO 3.3	Facilitate the redevelopment and expansion of East Nelson Street and South Main Street commercial areas into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods with higher densities, a mix of housing types and a range of complementary uses.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Long Term
	HO 3.4	Explore revisions to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow lots without street frontage, where appropriate, making additional infill lots possible.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	HO 4.1	Conduct outreach to owners of downtown buildings with underutilized upper floors, explaining upper story zoning and building codes.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Nonprofit Organizations, Citizens	Short Term





Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	HO 5.1	Partner with local organizations to educate the public about heating systems, window-repair systems, storm windows, insulation, roof ventilation, and other energy-saving features suitable for existing buildings.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Nonprofit Organizations, Citizens	Short Term
	HO 5.2	Continue partnership with the Threshold Housing Commission as an affordable housing agency to coordinate and support the work of local housing non-profits. Cooperate with Threshold Housing Commission to organize and facilitate seminars and workshops on housing issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan needs assessment.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations	On Going
	HO 5.3	Explore modifying the City's zoning regulations to facilitate the creation of a variety of safe, affordable, and innovative housing options, including the establishment of small lot, attached units, and other housing types that achieve higher densities and a diversity of housing options.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	HO 5.4	Reevaluate the Rental Housing Inspection Program.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LU 1.1	Improve ADA, pedestrian, and bicycle access, safety, and connectivity along Neighborhood and Civic Corridors.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	LU 1.2	Identify opportunities to connect neighborhoods through sidewalks, shared use paths, and trail improvements and require such connections in new development or redevelopment proposals.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	On Going
	LU 2.1	Collaborate with the private sector to attract investments in Opportunity Areas that increase the City's tax base and offer unique residential, shopping, dining, lodging, and entertainment opportunities.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	LU 2.2	Promote the economic vitality of Commercial Centers through the coordination of public and private sector investment to enhance their function and attractiveness.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	LU 2.3	Strongly encourage W&L to program new construction within the present University boundaries to preclude any further loss of local business and industry, as well as the loss of limited taxable land.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Short Term
	LU 3.1	Facilitate creative residential, commercial, and mixed-use development designs that enhance the community's sense of place and character.	Programs and Service	City of Lexington	On Going
	LU 3.2	Prioritize capital improvements such as wayfinding, streetscaping, and undergrounding utilities in designated Gateways, Corridors, and Centers.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	LU 3.3	Create an attractive Gateway along South Main Street near Lee Highway, including redevelopment of the former Virginia Department of Transportation parcel.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	LU 3.4	Encourage attractive redevelopment along the Civic Corridor at Lee Highway and East Nelson Street, adding pedestrian and bike facilities to this automobile-focused area.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	LU 3.5	Assess the implementation of the Downtown Enhancement Plan to create a more attractive, vibrant, walkable, and bikeable downtown.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On Going
	LU 4.1	Enhance the City's online GIS tools to incorporate the Future Planning Framework map and additional zoning information, such as land use conditions and proffers.	Programs and Service	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LU 4.2	Engage the community to identify development goals for Opportunity Areas and assess the need for small area plans for these areas.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Citizens	Short Term




Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	LU 5.1	Evaluate land use applications and capital improvements against the applicable Future Planning Framework design principles and planning objectives.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	LU 5.2	Review the impact and implications of Future Planning Framework designations on existing zoning ordinances and procedures and recommend changes necessary to align the City's ordinances with the Plan's concepts.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LU 5.3	Consider developing a Design and Construction Standards Manual to support implementation of the Future Planning Framework and ensure consistent and quality development throughout the City.	Community Education	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LU 5.4	Explore the creation of a new Planned Unit Development zoning district focused on unique and flexible mixed residential development.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	LU 5.5	Continue communication and coordination between City and County planning staff and long-range plans to achieve regional land use goals.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	LU 5.6	Continue regular communication and coordination with W&L and VMI leadership to maintain Lexington's engagement in physical and programmatic additions to these institutions of higher learning.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	TR 1.1	Implement safety and ADA accessibility improvements, including signage, traffic calming, and traffic control devices where appropriate.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	Short Term
	TR 1.2	Identify and make improvements to the City's busiest intersections to organize traffic and increase safety.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	TR 1.3	Develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan to retrofit streets to make them safer for bicycles and pedestrians.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Long Term
	TR 1.4	Support the development of facilities and parking for bicycles and other micromobility devices.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Long Term
	TR 2.1	Develop and implement design requirements for new construction and redevelopment projects to upgrade sidewalks and improve access management provisions, such as interparcel connections and limitations on curb cuts.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	TR 2.2	Require identification and mitigation of initial and long-term transportation and parking impacts associated with proposed developments.	Partnerships	Regional & Institutional Partners, City of Lexington	Short Term
	TR 2.3	Support the development and siting of e-vehicle charging stations and facilities to assist the transition to lower emission vehicle use.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	Short Term
	TR 3.1	Balance and appropriately mitigate impacts to historic, cultural, and natural resources throughout the transportation planning and construction process.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington, Regional & Institutional Partners	On-Going
	TR 3.2	Develop streetscape standards for entrance corridors, such as E and W Nelson Street and N and S Main Street.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	Short Term
	TR 3.3	Implement wayfinding for key gateways, corridors, intersections, and parking areas.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Short Term
	TR 3.4	Create an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to link neighborhoods to downtown, parks, and other historic and green infrastructure amenities. Target bicycle and pedestrian connection and corridor improvements along Neighborhood and Civic Corridors.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Short Term






Implementation

Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	TR 4.1	Ensure fairness, equity, and community engagement in the transportation planning process and its nexus with housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On-Going
	TR 5.1	Ensure that multimodal improvements, such as sidewalk and bike facilities, are included in the Capital Improvement Plan and street repaving plans, and identify additional funding sources, including public-private partnerships, to complete and maintain projects.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On-Going
	TR 5.2	Share planning and costs with other jurisdictions when City road improvements have mutual benefits.	Partnerships	Regional & Institutional Partners, City of Lexington	On-Going
	TR 5.3	Support regional efforts to increase ridesharing, carpooling, transit, telecommuting, and public transportation.	Partnerships	Regional & Institutional Partners, City of Lexington	Short Term
	CF 1.1	Conduct an ADA accessibility study of City facilities, streets, and walkways and implement recommendations, as appropriate.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going
	CF 1.2	Integrate accessibility and safety into park facility design to ensure that parks and playgrounds are safe and inclusive for all users.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 1.3	Ensure equity in service delivery for all of Lexington's neighborhoods and demographics.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	CF 1.4	Investigate the need for a community center to provide quality facilities that promote lifelong learning and achievement for all residents.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Long Term
	CF 2.1	Review the city's building systems and the use of renewable energy sources for upgrades to achieve energy efficiency and potential cost-savings.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	Short Term
	CF 2.2	Resolve the contingency water supply agreement with Rockbridge County due to the impracticability of piping water from the Moore's Creek Reservoir to the City's water treatment facility.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Short Term
	CF 2.3	Evaluate the feasibility of implementing a stormwater fee to fund improvements to the City's stormwater management system.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Short Term
	CF 2.4	Construct water, wastewater, and stormwater system improvements to reclaim capacity and ensure efficient and high-quality service.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 2.5	Repair and upgrade the City's sewer lines to address inflow and infiltration (&I) to protect water quality and ensure sewer capacity is maintained.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 2.6	Implement cemetery improvements that support the financial sustainability and viability of the facilities by increasing burial capacity.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 2.7	Ensure that new development assesses impacts on public facilities and infrastructure and adequately mitigates impacts specifically attributable to that development.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners	On Going
	CF 2.8	Regularly evaluate the refuse and recycling program to identify cost-effective improvements and opportunities for program expansion.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going

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Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	CF 3.1	Evaluate administrative space needs at City Hall and explore options to renovate the existing building or relocate and market the existing building for reuse and historic rehabilitation.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Short Term
	CF 3.2	Reconstruct the public works complex to provide safe, functional, and operationally-efficient facilities.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 3.3	Continue efforts to provide high-quality parks and recreation resources by implementing the Jordan's Point Park master plan, expanding amenities at the Brewbaker Athletic Complex, and maintaining existing parks.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	Long Term
	CF 3.4	Support continued investment in the regional library system that improves the Lexington library as a center of community and learning.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 3.5	Ensure that improvements of the public realm (sidewalks, curbs, street trees) are planned and executed in an integrated, coordinated manner when undertaking upgrades to sewer, water, or road infrastructure.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	On Going
	CF 4.1	Continue to seek citizen input on service needs and priorities to ensure equitable investment in infrastructure and facilities.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	CF 4.2	Continue public safety engagement and programs, such as volunteer fire and rescue and community risk reduction programs, that encourage cooperation between public safety officials and citizens.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners, Citizens	On Going
	CF 5.1	Perform periodic studies/surveys of adequacy, quality, effectiveness, and equity of City service delivery, including service expansion.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	On Going
	CF 5.2	Coordinate and support internal, local, and regional partnerships for shared services, infrastructure, and facilities that benefit City residents and ensure sustainable and cost-effective services.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 5.3	Include public and private utility providers in the planning stage of all infrastructure and development projects to determine needs and upgrades as part of project development.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 5.4	Continue partnerships with the Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization and the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Partnership and support implementation of the Rockbridge Area Outdoor Recreation and Trail Plan.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 5.5	Conduct a comprehensive fire and rescue needs assessment and facility plan to address space needs and maximize fire and rescue response times.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	Short Term
	CF 5.6	Continue partnering with Rockbridge County to provide state-of-the-art education and facilities for Lexington high school students.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 5.7	Enhance the City's disaster preparedness through continued participation in regional Hazard Mitigation Planning through the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	CF 5.8	Work with Rockbridge County and Buena Vista to assess and address the long-term needs of the Rockbridge Regional Jail.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Long Term
	CF 5.9	Work with the health system and other health providers to implement the Rockbridge Area Community Health Assessment, where possible.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	Long Term

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Value	ID	Strategies	Type of Implementation	Responsible Agency	Schedule
	GO 1.1	Actively foster diversity in recruiting and appointments to boards and commissions.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	GO 1.2	Create a diversity hiring initiative plan for the City and school system workforce.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	Short Term
	GO 2.1	Work with Main Street Lexington, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to engage businesses and promote the City's continued economic growth.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Nonprofit Organizations, Local Business Partners, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	GO 3.1	Ensure that the City's land use regulations are reviewed regularly and updated accordingly to reflect the community's vision.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	GO 3.2	Ensure that the City's land use regulations are applied and enforced in a professional and consistent manner.	Ordinance Updates	City of Lexington	On Going
	GO 4.1	Experiment with civic engagement techniques to create new opportunities for public participation.	Community Education	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	GO 4.2	Improve the transparency and exchange of information, incorporating comprehensive and contemporary communication strategies to engage residents and increase equity in public participation across generations and demographics.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington, Citizens	On Going
	GO 5.1	Maintain and strengthen partnerships, collaboration, and communication between the City and institutions of higher learning.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	GO 5.2	Improve coordination with Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista on policies including, but not limited to, long-range planning, strategic initiatives, and other regional interests.	Partnerships	City of Lexington, Regional and Institutional Partners	On Going
	GO 5.3	Link the annual budget review and the update of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan involving all City departments.	Capital Improvements	City of Lexington	On Going
	GO 5.4	Conduct an annual review of accomplishments to implement the Comprehensive Plan, including recommendations for budget and work plan priorities, as part of Planning Commission's annual report to City Council.	Plans and Studies	City of Lexington	On Going
	GO 5.5	Support the School Board in identifying successful techniques for ensuring all students are successful as defined by measures of best practices.	Programs and Services	City of Lexington	On Going



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Appendix A: History of Lexington

▷ Early Settlement

Lexington is located at the gateway to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, which takes its name from its Native American past: Shenandoah — Clear-Eyed Daughter of the Stars. Archaeological evidence suggests that Native Americans were present in the area 11,000 years ago. Migratory tribes, including the Monacan, Saponi, and Tutelo, traveled and hunted in the region through the ensuing centuries. When European immigrants began settling in the Valley in the mid-1700s, the dominant tribes were the Iroquois Confederacy and the Shawnee.

Europeans first looked upon the Shenandoah Valley in 1716 when Virginia's Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood and his "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" band of explorers gazed into it from the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains. European immigrants began settling in the Valley in the 1730's when Scots-Irish and German immigrants moved south from Pennsylvania through the Valley and into what would become Rockbridge County. The earliest European settlers followed the path into the Shenandoah, and this route down the center of the Valley – called the Great Wagon Road – continued to function as the primary thoroughfare for trade and travel. This same course is followed today by U.S. Route 11, the Valley Pike.

By the late 1700s, colonial land patents and sometimes deadly frontier conflict would drive most all native communities out of this part of the Valley. The expansion of the African and domestic trade of enslaved people through the 18th and 19th centuries would advance the area's agricultural, industrial, commercial, and educational growth; the 1860 Lexington census shows that 1/3 of its 2,150 residents were of African descent (29% of them enslaved, with yet more hired from Rockbridge and nearby counties).

The Virginia legislature created Rockbridge County in 1778, drawn from parts of Augusta and Botetourt Counties, building out from the first royal land patents in the 1739 'Borden Grant,' and stretching south to the James River. Lexington was designated as its new county seat, named in honor of the revolutionary Battle of Lexington-Concord, which had occurred only three years before. To provide an accessible courthouse, the town was

located in the center of the county at the intersection of the Great Wagon Road and the North River at Gilbert Campbell's Ford.

The name Rockbridge was derived from a popular eighteenth-century name for Natural Bridge – Rock Bridge. In 1774, Thomas Jefferson, a member of the state legislature, bought the tract that included Natural Bridge and is reported to have played a part in choosing the name. The original town, which was 1,300 feet long and 900 feet wide, was laid out in a grid pattern and included what is today the greater part of Lexington's downtown. Three streets generally running north and south – Randolph, Main, and Jefferson Streets – were intersected by Henry, Washington, and Nelson Streets, forming four interior blocks. All but one of the streets were named for men prominent in the new nation's struggle for independence. A central block was designated for a courthouse and jail. Many of the first buildings, including a courthouse, were constructed of logs. In 1796, before the community was 20 years old, a massive fire destroyed almost all the town, which was quickly rebuilt. The new buildings were mostly brick in the nineteenth century style, which still dominates in the historic section of the city.

Martin's Virginia Gazetteer of 1835 reports that Lexington had Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, a printing office, five shoemakers, four taverns, four carpenters, three hatters, two tanneries, two tin-plate works, two cabinetmakers, two wheelwrights, two jewelers, two blacksmiths, and one bricklayer. Three libraries were open to the public. There were about 150 dwellings and nearly 900 inhabitants. Lexington was incorporated as a town in 1841.

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▷ Washington & Lee University

Along with its support from the County's agricultural system, Lexington's main industry has almost always been education. The various religious academies for boys in the Valley of Virginia, which were the predecessors of Washington and Lee University, go back to the early days of European settlement. In the early 1780's, Liberty Hall was built to house the academy headed by the Reverend William Graham, a Presbyterian minister. The building burned in 1803 and the massive stone walls of the structure can still be seen from West Nelson Street. Shortly thereafter, the college moved to its present location in Lexington.

After George Washington's sizeable gift to the college's endowment, Liberty Hall's name was changed to honor the country's first president. At the end of the Civil War, the trustees of Washington College offered former Confederate General Robert E. Lee the presidency of the institution. During the five years before his death in 1870, Lee modernized the college's curriculum, attracted much needed funding, and added several new buildings to the campus. Immediately after Lee's death, the trustees renamed the college Washington and Lee University (W&L).

▷ Lexington's Virginia Military Institute

In 1816, three arsenals were established in Virginia by the General Assembly for the purpose of housing arms. One of these was built in Lexington. This brought a real change to this rather remote Valley town, and the presence of state militiamen was, at times, a concern to native Lexingtonians. By the mid-1830's, a Lexington lawyer and Washington College graduate, John T. L. Preston, advocated the establishment of a state military school at the arsenal. After much debate, locally and in the legislature, Virginia Military Institute (VMI) was founded, and its first cadets were enrolled on November 11, 1839.

By 1849, VMI had proven itself a viable experiment and created the new barracks in the then-popular Gothic Revival form. VMI prospered during the pre-Civil War days. Among its faculty was Major Thomas J. Jackson, soon to become known as General "Stonewall" Jackson. Many other VMI faculty served in important military leadership roles in the Civil War.

▷ The Civil War Era

At the time of the Civil War and for many decades thereafter, Lexington's population was approximately 30% Black. In 1860, there were a total of 2,150 residents (including students at the two institutions of higher learning), 615 enslaved persons and about 90 free Blacks for a total of 705. The percentage of Blacks was 32.8%.

By 1860, a series of dams, canals, and locks made the North River (later re-named Maury River), a tributary of the James River, navigable up to Lexington. The fortunes of both Lexington and the county changed dramatically with the sudden ease of transport to Richmond. Lexington was an important port from 1860 to the 1880's, when the railroad arrived. In addition to farm produce and flour from local mills, canal boats shipped considerable quantities of iron from the then-thriving iron industry. The waterfront at East Lexington and Jordan's Point became an active commercial center. The first commercial operations sold for cash or traded household or farm products for produce, which could be shipped on the canal.

Like many of the areas west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the coming of the Civil War found these communities more divided around the question of secession, relative to those in the Piedmont or Tidewater. Indeed, the two electors from Lexington-Rockbridge both voted against secession in the Spring of 1861. Two weeks later, after President Lincoln called on Virginia and other southern states to supply troops following Fort Sumter, one of the local electors again voted to remain with the Union. One elector changed support to secession, as the Convention's majority voted to join the Confederacy on April 17, 1861. For the next four years, residents and soldiers from Lexington were now officially at war.

Even before the start of the war, VMI Cadets had been called on to stand guard at the hanging of John Brown at Harper's Ferry in 1859. In May 1864, the entire Cadet Corps would march from Lexington to fight at the Battle of New Market, still a central element in VMI tradition today.

In June 1864, the war would visit Lexington for the first time. General Hunter's Union troops burned the barracks at VMI when they raided Lexington in

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1864. Confederate soldiers under the command of General McCausland burned the covered bridge which crossed to Jordan's Point over the North River (later Maury River) at Jordan's Point in an effort to prevent Union troops from entering the city. The rebuilding of the bridge was not begun until 1870 and not completed until about 1879.

▷ After the Civil War

The county's primarily agricultural economic base continued to diversify in the 1880's with the arrival of the railroad. The first train from Richmond chugged into East Lexington in 1881; however, the station was ultimately built near the future site of the Castle Hill Hotel rather than at Jordan's Point. This decision, and the ever-present threat of flooding on the island, led to the eventual decline of the Point as an industrial and commercial center for the City.

The Lexington Land Company was formed late in a speculative real estate boom, which hit the county and the country at large in the early 1890's before the collapse of the nationwide "1893 Panic." During the same time, seven miles from Lexington in eastern Rockbridge, the town of Buena Vista was established in 1897 where the Maury River bent south towards the James River. The Buena Vista Land Company also looked to provide the county with a new commercial center, offering a host of new land parcels for sale, a promising industrial platform, and accessible river and rail networks.

The Lexington Land Company, aiming to grow the County seat, purchased 1,275 acres immediately west of town, along the railroad and the river to the east. This land included Honeysuckle Hill, Castle Hill, Sunnyside, the old golf course (now Fairwinds) and Mulberry Hill and extended north to the Maury River. It extended east and included land beyond the railroad line.

The Company constructed the Hotel DeHart, a sprawling structure of stone, brick, and wood. Reachable by a bridge over Woods Creek and overlooking Lexington from the west, it would be later know as Castle Hill. Lots were actively marketed in the spring and summer of 1891. There were

few buyers. According to The Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume 5, "Within less than a year from its inception, Lexington's great boom was in a state of collapse, with nothing to show for it but a vast, empty hotel, a ready-made site for tennis courts, a wide expanse of unsold lots, and a financial tangle of the first order." The Hotel DeHart was never opened as a hotel but remained boarded up for nearly two decades. In 1908 until the early 1920's, it was used as a student dormitory and as a summer hotel. It was about to be converted to a boys' boarding school when it was consumed in a spectacular early morning fire in September of 1922.

▷ Early- to Mid-Twentieth Century

African Americans in Lexington During the Time Period

The block of North Main Street situated between the First Baptist Church (established in 1867) and the expanded Court House (rededicated in 1896) was home to Black entrepreneurs for much of the twentieth century. One notable business was the butcher shop operated by Harry Lee Walker in the building later known as the Willson-Walker House, located at 30 North Main Street. Walker's grocery store was quite successful, with major clients including VMI and W&L.

The town's historically Black neighborhoods, clustered east of Main Street, were called Green Hill (Tucker, Massie, Henry, Fuller and part of Randolph Street and Marble Lane); Diamond Hill (Diamond, Maury, Lewis, High, and North Randolph Streets); and, Centreville or Mudtown (its muddy drainage basin east of Nelson Street stretching between Varner Lane and Taylor, East Preston, Moore, and Davidson Streets).

In 1880, town council acquired six acres of land a half-mile east of town as burial grounds for its African American citizens. The "old colored cemetery" or "Old Burying Ground" at the corner of Washington and Lewis Streets had become overcrowded, as its interments extend back into

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the age of enslavement. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several headstones and remains were removed and transferred during later land development at that site, but others likely remain buried there. The newer site was named Evergreen Cemetery and was managed by a group of African American trustees until 1971. The cemetery is still operated by the City of Lexington today.

During the 1960's, several businesses located downtown were owned and operated by Black entrepreneurs. Woven into the fabric of a vibrant downtown retail center were physicians, barbers, butchers, innkeepers, and restaurateurs who comprised a Black middle class. The aging of Lexington's African American entrepreneurs, with many of their children moving away in search of jobs, led to the gradual decline of these family and community businesses. The decline was exacerbated when many Black public schoolteachers lacking opportunities left Lexington in the wake of school desegregation (in 1965) for teaching jobs elsewhere.

Education in Lexington

Along with its noted leadership in higher education, Lexington's private and public schools would expand to serve its evolving community needs during the 19th and 20th centuries. The pioneering Ann Smith Academy, a classical school for girls, opened in 1807, and counted Thomas Jefferson as one of its early supporters. In time, it would expand to a prominent site downtown on Nelson and Lee. In 1927, the building would become home to Lexington High School, which moved to a larger site south of town in 1933. Named for Lexington School's Principal/ Superintendent Harrington Waddell, and substantially renovated in 2015, the building now serves as the City's sole elementary school.

Immediately after the Civil War in 1865, a Freedmen's School was opened on South Randolph Street. Its opportunities soon led to overcrowding and would eventually lead to the 1927 construction of a larger brick building atop Diamond Hill for the area's African American students. The school was named for Rev. Lylburn L. Downing, born enslaved in Lexington and a prominent preacher and educational leader in Roanoke. After the slow



Main Street 1900



Main Street 1939

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arrival of federal and state school desegregation, Lylburn Downing School would close in 1965. Now housing a Community Center and the Lexington Schools' administrative offices, the National Register of Historic Places building flanks the City's middle school, also named for Llyburn Downing.

Infrastructure in Lexington

In 1935, a new bridge was built over the Maury River at East Lexington. It was meant to take the traffic from the old covered bridge, a historic landmark that survived until 1947. The present Route 11 going up the hill from the bridge was constructed after the bridge was completed. The Route 11 by-pass was constructed in 1955 and 1956, giving drivers the option of going around rather than through the town.

The B&O's rail line from Staunton to Lexington was abandoned in 1942. The rails were melted down to provide steel for the war effort. The final vestige of railroad service was washed away by hurricane Camille in 1969, which ruined the C&O rail line along the Maury River and destroyed the wooden trestle at East Lexington. A recreational trail, the Chessie Trail, was constructed along the old railroad bed between Lexington and Buena Vista in 1981.

In 1949, the deed of the Lexington's historic cemetery on South Main Street was transferred from the Lexington Presbyterian Church. The town's first church had managed the growing burial grounds there since first meeting in a brick building in the wooded grove there in 1789 (the church would move to its larger, present location on Main and Nelson in 1845). Former church deacon Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson had been buried there in 1863 and would be reburied under a new monument bearing his name in 1891. Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the church and city shared costs for cemetery maintenance and expansion until the town council took full control in 1949 and renamed it Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery. In the summer of 2020, Lexington's City Council voted to rename the cemetery.

▷ Arrival of the Interstate

Interstate I-81 was constructed through the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in the early 1960's and Lexington was provided with two exits. The arrival of the Interstate meant that I-81, rather than Route 11, became the major north-south artery connecting urban areas in the Valley. It also meant that the Valley became a major conduit for through truck and automobile traffic. I-64 West to Charleston, West Virginia was completed in 1978. Its interconnection with I-81 is just north of Lexington. Thus, Lexington is located adjacent to the junction of major north-south and east-west highway networks.

▷ Lexington Today

Today, Lexington serves as a retail and cultural center of Rockbridge County, as well as the home of local government and courts. In recent years, the addition of major shopping centers to the north and east of the city has changed the character of retail business in the Central Business District. But thanks to imaginative programs by Historic Lexington Foundation, Lexington Downtown Development Association (now Main Street Lexington) and others, Lexington's downtown has not only survived but continues to serve as a focal point for the tourist trade and the area's economy.

More history of Lexington has been chronicled in [The Architecture of Historic Lexington](#), written by Royster Lyle and Pam Simpson and published by Historic Lexington Foundation (1977), and [Remarkable Rockbridge](#) by Charles Bodie, published by the Rockbridge Historical Society.

Appendices

▷ Historic Preservation Efforts

The work of preserving Lexington's historic fabric has been ongoing for many years, including the physical rebuilding of damaged structures, the designation of historic places (Table A.1), and the promotion of the city's historic assets.

VMI

After the disaster of the 1796 fire that destroyed the fledgling town, the first substantial historic preservation project in Lexington was the rebuilding of VMI after the Civil War. When Union General David Hunter occupied Lexington in June 1864, the barracks and other Institute buildings were burned, along with looting at neighboring Washington College. After the war, VMI's first order of business was repairing and rebuilding.

VMI undertook a second major preservation project in 1914, when it adopted a plan by Bertram G. Goodhue to redesign the Post and create the Parade Ground. Three of the original residences designed by A. J. Davis in the 1850's were disassembled and rebuilt adjacent to the new Parade Ground.

Rockbridge Historical Society

In 1939, the Rockbridge Historical Society was formed, in part, as an effort to save the Nannie Jordan House on Main Street. Thought to be one of the oldest frame structures in the community, local leaders, including Ruth Anderson McCulloch, organized to try to save it, but during the Great Depression, funding was limited. The building was lost, but the historical society was born. Local preservationists were also unable to save the Old Blue Hotel, which was demolished by Washington & Lee in 1947.

Table A.1 Sites on the National Register of Historic Places

Site Name	Address
Alexander-Withrow House	2 N. Main St.
Barracks, VMI	VMI
Blandome	101 Tucker St.
Col Alto	401 E. Nelson St.
First Baptist Church	103 N. Main St.
Jacob Ruff House	21 N. Main St.
Jordan's Point Historic District	Moses Mill Rd
Lexington and Covington Turnpike Toll House	452 Lime Kiln Rd.
Lexington Historic District	Downtown Lexington — Includes VMI and W&L
Lexington Presbyterian Church	120 S. Main St.
Lylburn Downing Community Center	300 Diamond St.
Mulberry Hill	115 Liberty Hall Rd.
Reid-White-Philbin House	208 W. Nelson St.
Stono	Junction of US 11 and US 11A — Jordan's Point
Virginia Military Institute Historic District	VMI
Washington and Lee University Historic District	W&L
Lee Chapel and Museum	100 N. Jefferson St.
Stonewall Jackson House	8 E. Washington St.



Appendices

In 1945, the Society gained a home through Hale Houston's bequest of The Castle, the unique fieldstone building on S. Randolph Street. It was one of Lexington's oldest buildings, built ca.1790 for the law offices of Andrew Reid, the first clerk of the new Rockbridge County Court. Along with the Alexander-Withrow House on Main Street, The Castle was one of only two structures in Lexington to survive the devastating fire that swept the fledgling town in 1796. For many years, The Castle served as the Rockbridge Historical Society headquarters, before its sale in 2019, with covenants that continue its stewardship for historic preservation. Today, the Society owns and maintains two historic properties on East Washington Street, both built in 1845: the Sloan House, and the Campbell House, which houses the RHS Museum of community history.

Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) – Preservation Virginia

The APVA (today known as Preservation Virginia) founded the Ruth Anderson McCulloch chapter in 1896 with efforts to preserve Old Monmouth Church. The local chapter was reactivated in 1935 in an effort to save the old covered bridge in East Lexington. The most recent revival of the APVA in Lexington took place in 1964, when several important historic houses, including the Barclay House and the Alexander-Withrow House, were threatened with demolition. The houses were saved.

As a local chapter of a state-wide organization, the APVA was not allowed to own property resulting in the forming of the Historic Lexington Foundation that could own property, receive legacies, and raise funds for preservation.

Historic Lexington Foundation

It was the threat that the Barclay House might be torn down by a national fraternity that spurred the creation of the Historic Lexington Foundation in 1966. The Alexander-Withrow House was its first effort with a Revolving Fund.

Using the area of lower Main Street between Washington and Henry Streets as the "Pilot Block," HLF bought and restored seven properties in the 1970's including the Central Hotel, the Jacob Ruff House and the Dold Building. The buildings were purchased, stabilized and the exteriors conserved, then they were sold with protective easements to sympathetic buyers who undertook the interior restorations.

In the mid-1970's, HLF undertook the project of restoring the Stonewall Jackson House to its 1850's appearance and then owned and operated it until 1995, when the Stonewall Jackson Foundation was formed.

HLF then returned to its primary mission of preservation. Recent projects have included the Miller's House at Jordan's Point and the Roberson-Phalen House on Jefferson Street. HLF's goals have always been to preserve historic properties, enhance the beauty of Lexington, and encourage others in similar efforts. The appearance of downtown Lexington gives ample evidence of HLF's success.

In 1974, the city undertook a five-year capital project that included the redesign of traffic lights, burying utility wires and the installation of new brick sidewalks in the downtown.

Main Street Lexington

More recently, Main Street Lexington was founded in 2013 as a volunteer-based, non-profit organization established to enhance the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of the downtown area. MSL is part of the Virginia Main Street Program, which uses approaches created by the National Main Street Center to achieve economic revitalization in the context of historic preservation.

Appendices

Appendix B: Community Profile

Analyzing existing trends and conditions is critical for understanding conditions that shape and impact the community. This appendix provides a baseline of common knowledge that informs the Lexington Comprehensive Plan. The report draws from existing data, primarily from the US Census, to provide a strategic “snapshot” of information about the City.

▷ Demographics

Historical Population

The population of Lexington has risen and fallen over time, sometimes dramatically. However, overall population has been relatively steady over the past 50 years, with only small fluctuations. It is very important to note that census counts of the City’s population include students at Lexington’s two institutions of higher learning, adding large numbers of residents within a narrow age range, and who may or may not remain in Lexington when their education is complete.

Population Projections

Each year, the Weldon Cooper Center develops and releases the official population estimates for Virginia and its counties and independent cities. These estimates provide the best approximation of the population count on July 1st of the prior year. Population estimates are an important tool used by a variety of state agencies in their planning processes — from developing budgets to determining salaries for public officials.

With very little undeveloped land, it is unlikely that Lexington will grow dramatically in the future, but the City remains an attractive community with a strong economy where some level of growth is likely. Growth pressure not accommodated within the city itself is likely to spill into close-in areas of Rockbridge County.

Year	Population	% Change
1900	3,203	-
1910	2,931	-8.5
1920	2,870	-2.1
1930	3,752	30.7
1940	3,914	4.3
1950	5,976	52.7
1960	7,537	26.1
1970	7,597	0.8
1980	7,292	-4.0
1990	6,959	-4.6
2000	6,867	-1.3
2010	7,042	2.5
2016 (*est.)	7,036	--
2017 (*est.)	7,113	--
2018 (*est.)	7,110	--

Source: United States Census 1900-2010

*U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

Year	Lexington		Rockbridge County	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
2020	7,447	-	22,636	-
2030	7,622	2.34	23,290	2.89
2040	7,698	1.01	23,643	1.52

Source: University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2020). Virginia Population Estimates

Appendices

Age

With a median age of 21.5 years old and 58.4% of the population between 15-24 years old, higher education institutions have a strong impact on Lexington's demographics. By comparison, the median age in Rockbridge County is 48.5, with the population almost evenly split among age groups. The age groups after college age show that most students do not stay in the Lexington after graduation and entry level workers are looking elsewhere for employment.

Educational Attainment

Lexington's residents have an extremely high average level of educational attainment among residents over the age of 25. This is very likely due to the influence of higher education institutions, whose employees, both professors and administrators, have high levels of education. While quality education and high levels of educational achievement can be very positive signs for Lexington's economic wellbeing, it must still be acknowledged that the city relies on service, hospitality, and other employment that do not require high levels of education. High educational attainment is one factor in the challenge of affordability that affects Lexington.

Gender

Lexington has slightly more male residents than female residents.

Table B.3 Age				
	Lexington (%)		Rockbridge County (%)	
	2010	2016	2010	2016
Median Age	22.4	21.5	45.3	48.5
Under 5 years	5.4	2.5	4.9	4.8
5 to 9 years	2.4	1.7	6.6	5.3
10 to 14 years	2.3	1.5	4.4	4.6
15 to 19 years	22.8	25.9	5.9	5.1
20 to 24 years	24.5	32.5	5.6	5.3
25 to 34 years	7.6	5.4	9.6	9.9
35 to 44 years	6.5	3.3	12.6	10.3
45 to 54 years	6	5	15.7	14.2
55 to 59 years	2.7	4.6	8.5	8
60 to 64 years	4.4	3.6	6.5	8.4
65 to 74 years	8.4	7.3	11	13.1
75 to 84 years	3.1	4.9	6.3	7.8
85 years and over	3.9	2	2.3	3.1

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2010 & 2016)

Table B.4 Educational Attainment				
	Lexington 2010	Lexington 2016	Rockbridge 2010	Rockbridge 2016
% High School Graduate or Higher	81.3%	85.0%	79.6%	86.2%
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	44.4%	44.9%	21.8%	25.1%

Table B.5 Gender				
	Lexington 2010	Lexington 2016	Rockbridge 2010	Rockbridge 2016
Male	3,785 (54.1%)	3,979 (56.6%)	10,969 (49.4%)	11,150 (49.7%)
Female	3,205 (45.9%)	3,057 (43.4%)	11,248 (50.6%)	11,300 (50.3%)

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Race and Ethnicity

The racial mix in Lexington is similar to surrounding Rockbridge County. Both areas are primarily made up of Caucasian citizens with relatively few minority residents, although Lexington does include a greater share of Black or African American, Hispanic, and Asian residents. This greater diversity may be due to the city's urban setting or to the influence of diversity in the city's higher education institutions.

Table B.6 Race and Ethnicity								
	Lexington				Rockbridge County			
	2010		2016		2010		2016	
Total Population	6,990	--	7,036	--	22,217	--	22,450	--
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	465	6.7%	294	4.2%	34	0.2%	351	1.6%
Not Hispanic or Latino	6,525	93.3%	6,742	95.8%	22,183	99.8%	22,099	98.4%
White alone	5,549	79.4%	5,667	80.5%	21,475	96.7%	20,917	93.2%
Black or African American alone	463	6.6%	633	9.0%	470	2.1%	572	2.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	29	0.1%	22	0.1%
Asian alone	210	3.0%	278	4.0%	17	0.1%	138	0.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	10	0.1%	-	0.0%	85	0.4%	28	0.1%
Some other race alone	88	1.3%	-	0.0%	3	0.0%	-	0.0%
Two or more races	205	2.9%	164	2.3%	104	0.5%	422	1.9%

Appendices

Household Size

Almost one half of the households in Lexington consist of one person, while just 6.5% include 4 or more persons. In addition, just 13.4% of households in Lexington include children. These statistics, when compared to the surrounding county, show that a relatively low number of families call Lexington home, likely due to student and retiree demographics.

Table B.7 Household Size				
	Lexington 2010	Lexington 2016	Rockbridge 2010	Rockbridge 2016
Total Households	2,108	1,856	9,372	9,277
1 Person Household	867 (41.1%)	913 (49.2%)	2,427 (25.9%)	2,507 (27.0%)
2 Person Household	663 (31.5%)	486 (26.2%)	3,777 (40.3%)	3,954 (42.6%)
3 Person Household	185 (8.8%)	336 (18.1%)	1,603 (17.1%)	1,153 (12.4%)
4+ Person Household	393 (16.6%)	121 (6.5%)	1,575 (16.8%)	1,663 (17.9%)
Average Household Size	2.13	1.91	2.4	2.4
Households with Children	436 20.7%	249 (13.4%)	2,708 (28.9%)	2,236 (24.1%)

Appendices

▷ Economy

Income & Insurance

While economic prosperity is a key goal for the city, and educational attainment is high, reported income is relatively low. This may be due to the relatively low presence of working age population in the city, the effect of college students who have not yet begun to earn, and retirees who are no longer earning. In a positive sign for economic and community wellbeing, Lexington sees a high percentage of residents with health insurance.

Examining median family income rather than median household income shows only family earnings and eliminates the many college students who make other income measures appear artificially low. In family earnings, Lexington has long led surrounding Rockbridge County, but has recently been eclipsed. Both localities trailed the Virginia average, but also enjoy a lower cost of living than Northern Virginia and other high-population areas of the state.

	Lexington 2010	Lexington 2016	Rockbridge 2010	Rockbridge 2016
Median Household Income	\$31,571	\$34,464	\$44,417	\$52,478
Residents with Health Insurance	*Not Available	5,182* (92.6%)	*Not Available	19,690 (88.4%)

*Based on Civilian Population of 5,595

Year	Lexington	Rockbridge County	Virginia
2010	\$62,109	\$53,889	\$73,514
2011	\$60,033	\$53,793	\$75,962
2012	\$62,521	\$55,088	\$76,566
2013	\$57,868	\$59,165	\$76,754
2014	\$59,219	\$60,233	\$77,939
2015	\$56,250	\$58,614	\$78,390
2016	\$67,457	\$61,820	\$80,068
2017	\$62,600	\$64,865	\$83,164

Source: American Community Survey Estimates, 2010-2017

Household Income	Households	% of Households
Less than \$10,000	278	14.4 %
\$10,000 – \$15,000	212	11.0 %
\$15,000 – \$25,000	170	8.8 %
\$25,000 – \$35,000	253	13.1 %
\$35,000 – \$50,000	252	13.0 %
\$50,000 – \$75,000	363	18.8 %
\$75,000 – \$100,000	152	7.9 %
\$100,000 – \$150,000	140	7.2 %
\$150,000 – \$200,000	17	0.9 %
More than \$200,000	98	5.1 %

Source: 2017 American Community Survey Estimates

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Poverty

Poverty is an issue facing both Lexington and Rockbridge County. Poverty rates are higher in Rockbridge and Lexington than Virginia overall, perhaps due in part to college-aged students with little income. Still, input from social service organizations indicates that poverty is a struggle for many in the region, including affordability of housing, food, and medical care.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates descended following a peak in 2009, but poverty rates remained relatively steady. This could be explained by a variety of factors related to the financial crisis in 2009, such as losses in home asset wealth, high unemployment that extended into 2012-2013, or underemployment resulting from structural shifts in the economy.

Table B.11 Residents Below Poverty Line by Age

	Lexington 2010	Lexington 2016	Rockbridge 2010	Rockbridge 2016
Under 18 year	267	52	756	967
18-64 years	445	521	1,567	807
65 years and over	169	80	485	464

Table B.12 Poverty Rate

Year	Lexington	Rockbridge County	Virginia
2010	13.8%	n/a	10.3%
2011	14.3%	n/a	10.7%
2012	14.9%	12.0%	11.1%
2013	15.4%	12.6%	11.3%
2014	15.6%	13.2%	11.5%
2015	15.5%	13.9%	11.4%
2016	15.1%	14.7%	11.2%
2017	14.6%	15.6%	14.6%

Table B.13 Unemployment Rate

Locality	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Lexington	4.6%	6.4%	9.7%	9.3%	9.2%	8.8%	8.5%	7.8%	6.8%	6.2%	5.7%
Virginia	3.0%	3.9%	6.7%	7.1%	6.6%	6.1%	5.7%	5.2%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%
Rockbridge County	2.9%	4.1%	6.5%	7.5%	6.8%	6.1%	5.8%	5.3%	4.7%	4.4%	4.1%

Source: Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

Source: U,S, Census, American FactFinder

Source: U,S, Census, American FactFinder

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Commuting

Many more workers commute into Lexington rather than commute from Lexington. Predictably, Rockbridge County is the largest source of workers, accounting for 66.9% of the all workers commuting into Lexington. While this is not uncommon for a small city, it does highlight the need for close, affordable housing in Lexington. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of regional cooperation in economic development. For most workers, living and working in the same municipality doesn't matter, so long as they can commute the preferred distance or live in a place they enjoy. Promoting Rockbridge County, Lexington, and Buena Vista together benefits all three places due to the overlap of workers' preferred locations for homes, work, and entertainment.

Table B.14 Commuting Patterns			
Top 10 Places Residents are Commuting To		Top 10 Places Residents are Commuting From	
Rockbridge County, VA	273	Rockbridge County, VA	1,614
Buena Vista City, VA	96	Buena Vista City, VA	306
Roanoke City, VA	81	Augusta County, VA	115
Henrico County, VA	48	Botetourt County, VA	70
Augusta County, VA	45	Roanoke County, VA	70
Fairfax County, VA	39	Bedford County, VA	60
Roanoke County, VA	39	Lynchburg city, VA	47
Harrisonburg City, VA	37	Campbell County, VA	44
Albemarle County, VA	36	Alleghany County, VA	43
Chesterfield County, VA	35	Roanoke City, VA	43

Source: Virginia Employment Commission LMI, 2019

Appendices

▷ Housing

Housing Type

Lexington has an estimated total of 2,248 housing units. Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute also provide on-campus dwellings for students, which are considered group living quarters and are not counted in the traditional housing statistics found in this table.

Age of Housing Stock

Overall, Lexington has a larger proportion of older housing stock than Rockbridge County, with 31.8% of all housing units in Lexington having been built in 1939 or earlier. Rockbridge County, for comparison, has 16.3% of its housing units built in 1939 or earlier.

Table B.15 Housing Types (2017)

Housing Type	Units	%
Lexington Total Units	2248	-
1, detached	1471	65.4%
1, attached - 4 units	370	16.5%
5-19 units	164	7.3%
20 units or more	230	10.2%
Mobile home	13	0.58%
Rockbridge County Total Units	11,352	-
1, detached	9,180	80.9%
1, attached- 4 units	417	3.67%
5-19 units	283	2.49%
20 units or more	106	0.9%
Mobile home	1225	11.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

Table B.16 Age of Housing Stock (2017)

Age	Units	%
Lexington Total	2248	- -
Built 2010 to 2017	8	0.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	176	7.8%
Built 1990 to 1999	193	8.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	164	7.3%
Built 1970 to 1979	315	14.0%
Built 1960 to 1969	160	7.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	419	18.6%
Built 1940 to 1949	99	4.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	714	31.8%
Rockbridge County Total	11,352	--
Built 2010 to 2017	429	3.78%
Built 2000 to 2009	2043	18.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	1823	16.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	1258	11.1%
Built 1970 to 1979	1448	12.8%
Built 1960 to 1969	1141	7.5%
Built 1950 to 1959	853	4.5%
Built 1940 to 1949	510	4.5%
Built 1939 or earlier	1847	16.3%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

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Number of Bedrooms

While 60% of Lexington's residential units contain three or more bedrooms, the average household size in the City is just 1.91 people, a number that has trended down in recent years. These numbers may reflect the age of the local housing stock, where many homes were built in an era of larger families or may represent an aging population whose children have left the family home. Such trends may point to the need for smaller homes that fit a larger variety of lifestyles.

Housing Tenure

A little more than half of Lexington residents own their own home, as seen in **Table B.18**.

Housing Turnover

Housing turnover rates show a relatively strong inclination for owners to stay in Lexington, with nearly 25 percent of homes being occupied by the same owner for thirty years or more. Predictably, apartment turnover is much higher, reflecting student living and home ownership preferences.

Table B.17 Number of Bedrooms (2017)		
Number of Bedrooms	Units	%
Lexington Total	2248	-
No bedroom	133	5.9%
1 bedroom	306	13.6%
2 bedrooms	465	20.7%
3 bedrooms	800	35.6%
4 bedrooms	467	20.8%
5+ bedrooms	77	3.4%
Rockbridge Total	11,352	-
No bedroom	89	0.8%
1 bedroom	787	6.9%
2 bedrooms	2,663	23.5%
3 bedrooms	5,811	51.2%
4 bedrooms	1,538	13.5%
5+ bedrooms	434	4.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

Table B.18 Owned vs. Rented Housing (2017)		
Housing Type	Units	%
Lexington	-	-
Owner occupied	2063	57.7%
Renter occupied	1510	42.3%
Rockbridge County	-	-
Owner occupied	7040	76.9%
Renter occupied	2120	23.1%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

Appendices

Vacancy

Slow growth in housing construction has resulted in very low housing vacancy. In 2017, there were zero unoccupied homes and only 78 apartments for rent in Lexington. All municipalities have some vacancy, with the desired rate depending on population and housing prices. Large amounts of vacancy are typically a sign of outmigration or city decline, but simultaneously creates a buyer's market that encourages prospective movers to purchase homes there. With too little vacancy, prospective buyers will either have few homes to choose from or may locate outside the city as opposed to purchasing the few homes on the market. Lack of available homes for purchase may also limit housing churn, causing a barrier to entry for new home buyers.

Table B.19 Housing Turnover (2017)		
Turnover	Units	%
Total population in occupied housing units	3573	-
Owner occupied:	2063	57.7%
Moved in 2015 or later	91	2.5%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	329	9.2%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	763	21.4%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	373	10.4%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	113	3.2%
Moved in 1979 or earlier	394	11.0%
Renter occupied:	1510	42.3%
Moved in 2015 or later	306	8.6%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	1036	29.0%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	131	3.7%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	12	0.3%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	11	0.3%
Moved in 1979 or earlier	14	0.4%

Table B.20 Vacancy (2017)	
Status	Units
Total	313
For rent	78
Rented, not occupied	80
For sale only	0
Sold, not occupied	0
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	31
For migrant workers	0
Other vacant	124

Appendices

Cost Burden

Predictably, high-income earners spend relatively less on housing than low-income earners, likely because they have a greater selection of affordable housing relative to their income. Still, almost 44 percent of earners within the \$50,000-\$74,000 bracket pay greater than 30 percent of income on their mortgage as well. This data points to a significant affordable housing problem in Lexington, both for low-income and higher-income families.

Additionally, Lexington's housing has become expensive relative to its citizens' incomes. A rule of thumb is that prospective home buyers should not spend greater than three times their annual income on a home purchase. With 60.6 percent of homes valued at \$150,000 or more and a median household income of \$47,749, the majority of Lexington households cannot afford 60.6 percent of existing homes.

Home Owners Spending Greater Than 30% of Income on Housing	Households	Percentage
Total owner-occupied housing units	1147	-
Less than \$20,000	145	88.4%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	136	67.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15	12.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	121	43.8%
\$75,000 or more	29	7.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

Turnover	Units	Percentage
Lexington	1147	
Less than \$50,000	96	84%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	185	16.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	170	14.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	64	5.6%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	280	24.4%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	290	25.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	62	5.4%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%
Rockbridge County	7040	
Less than \$50,000	532	7.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	939	13.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,045	14.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,054	15.0%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,430	20.3%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	1,274	18.1%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	723	10.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	43	0.6%

Source: American Community Survey, 2017

Appendices

Potential Housing Demand

The potential future housing demand shown in **Table B.23** was calculated using population projection baseline data and the following assumptions:

- Projected population for 2020, 2030, and 2040 is based on Weldon Cooper projected population data, 2020
- On-campus student population (estimated at 1,690 W&L students and 1,700 VMI students) will remain constant and are excluded from population-based household projections
- Lexington's average household size of 1.93 (American Community Survey, 2018) will remain constant and used to determine projected households based on population
- Lexington's estimated housing vacancy rate of 14.2% (American Community Survey, 2018) will remain constant and used to determine projected housing demand based on projected households

Year	Projected Population	Projected Households	Projected Housing Demand
2020	7,447	2,102	2,400
2030	7,622	2,193	2,504
2040	7,698	2,232	2,548

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Appendix C: Transportation Data

▷ Functional Classifications

Definitions of roadway Functional Classifications found in Lexington are as follows:

- Interstates are designated as part of the Eisenhower Interstate System. Roadways classified as interstates are limited access, divided highways with the highest level of mobility.
- Other Principal Arterials carry a significant amount of urban intra-area travel and serve demand between the central business district and outlying residential areas of a metropolitan area. In rural areas, Other Principal Arterials serve corridor movements of substantial statewide or interstate travel.
- Minor Arterials offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system, link cities and large towns, along with other major traffic generators. In urban areas, Minor Arterials interconnect with principal arterials, augment the urban principal arterial system, and provide service to trips of moderate length at a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials.
- Major Collectors link rural places to nearby larger towns and cities, or with arterial routes. They provide land access and traffic circulation within urban areas, residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas.
- Minor Collectors serve the remaining smaller communities and link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

▷ Current and Future Year Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

Table C.1 shows current and future year annual average daily traffic (AADT). Traffic growth rates and traffic forecasts for the City's arterial system were reviewed and co-developed by VDOT and the City for the year 2040. All major roadways in the City were anticipated to incur traffic growth between 0.25 percent, 0.5 percent, and 1 percent per year. The 2016 traffic volumes for each road segment were then multiplied by the respective growth factor to obtain the 2040 traffic projection for that segment of the roadway using simple linear growth. Growth rates were analyzed and checked against future land use, population growth, and planning assumptions.

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Table C.1 Current & Future Year Annual Average Daily Traffic

Route Name	Route Number	Segment From	Segment To	YEAR 2016 AADT	YEAR 2040 FORECAST AADT
US-11N	S LEE HWY	RTE BUS 11	RTE 60	8,440	9,453
US-11N	S LEE HWY	RTE 764	RTE 11 BUS	3,333	3,533
BUS US 11 N	MAIN ST	SOUTH CITY LIMITS	THORNHILL ROAD	2,616	2,773
BUS US-11N	MAIN ST	THORNHILL ROAD	WALLACE STREET	4,448	4,715
BUS US-11N	MAIN STREET	WALLACE STREET	WHITE STREET	4,111	4,358
BUS US-11N	MAIN STREET	WHITE STREET	NELSON STREET	2,730	2,894
BUS US-11N	MAIN STREET	NELSON STREET	JEFFERSON STREET	4,718	5,001
BUS US-11N	MAIN STREET	JEFFERSON STREET	LETCHER AVENUE	6,805	7,622
BUS US-11N	MAIN STREET	LETCHER AVENUE	RTE 11	8,662	9,182
US-11N	N LEE HWY	US-60	BUS 11	10,857	13,463
US-11N	N LEE HWY	BUS 11	RTE 752	19,194	21,497
BUS(2) US 11P2	JEFFERSON STREET	MAIN STREET	NELSON STREET	1,759	1,865
BUS(2) US-11P2	JEFFERSON STREET	NELSON STREET	MAIN STREET	3,062	3,246
US-60E	MIDLAND TRAIL	BELL ROAD	WEST CITY LIMITS	3,736	3,960
US-60E	NELSON STREET	WEST CITY LIMITS	WOODS CREEK ROAD	3,837	4,067
US-60E	NELSON STREET	WOODS CREEK ROAD	GLASGOW STREET	5,660	6,339
US-60E	NELSON STREET	GLASGOW STREET	JEFFERSON STREET	6,005	6,726
US-60E	NELSON STREET	JEFFERSON STREET	RANDOLPH STREET	7,401	8,289
US-60E	NELSON STREET	RANDOLPH STREET	LEWIS STREET	6,968	7,804
US-60E	NELSON STREET	LEWIS STREET	EAST CITY LIMITS	13,332	16,532
US-60E	MIDLAND TRAIL	EAST CITY LIMITS	0.11 MI EAST OF RTE 702	12,319	13,790

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▷ Crash Analysis 2013-2018

Vehicle crashes in the City were analyzed using six years of crash data. Crash reports from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2018 were obtained from an online database maintained by VDOT's Traffic Engineering Division. There were 387 total crashes recorded in six years, which is an average of 64.5 crashes per year. Of the total number of crashes, 47 were injury crashes, which equates to an average of 7.8 injury crashes per year.

Eight pedestrian crashes and one bicycle crash occurred; however, 1 pedestrian crash is believed to be a data entry error, and another was the result of a vehicle owner not placing their vehicle in park, causing it to roll over the owner. An accurate understanding of crash types is important in determining what kind of engineering solution is needed. The revised pedestrian crash total for the six-year period is six, and three of those occurred in 2018 alone. Of the 3 pedestrian crashes in 2018, two resulted in serious injuries requiring an ambulance. Main Street has a history of vehicle-pedestrian conflict.

The chart on the right shows crashes over a period of six years between 2013-2018, and by quarter year increments. There is a significant crash increase for the year 2018 when compared to the previous years, and a general uptrend as indicated by the orange trendline.

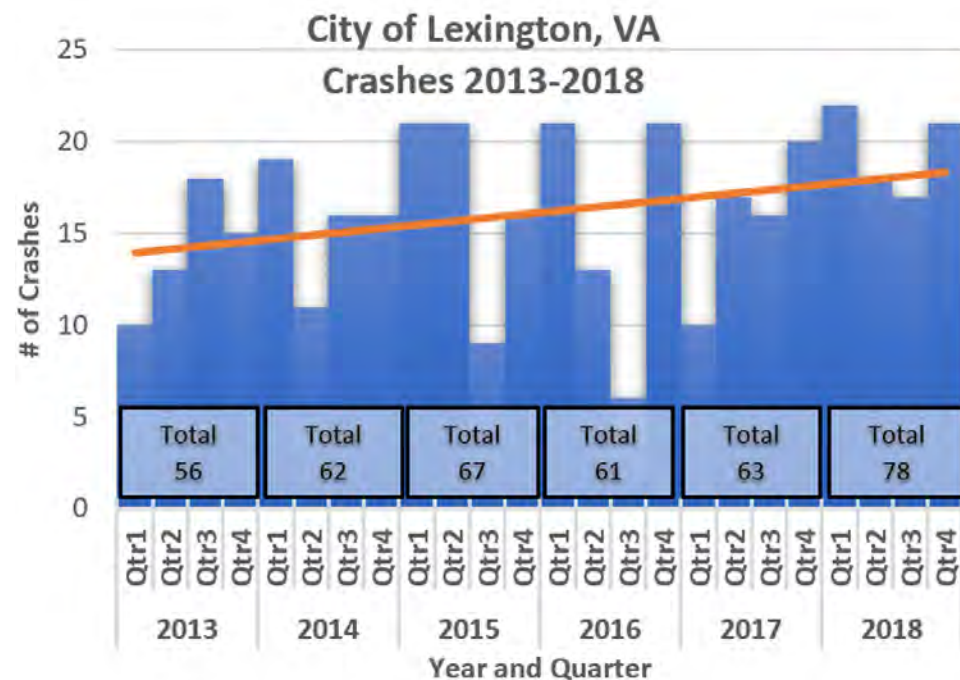
The chart also reveals a higher crash occurrence in the fourth quarter (October-December), indicating a visibility problem during daylight savings time or other weather-related conditions.

The increasing crash trend is consistent with state and national trends, and is partly related to an increase in vehicle-miles-traveled. The Federal Highway Administration reported that Americans drove 3.225 trillion miles in 2018, which is an increase of 0.4% from 2017, and a 1.6% increase from 2016. The crash trends will need close monitoring in future planning efforts for factors that may have an engineering, legal, or behavioral solution.

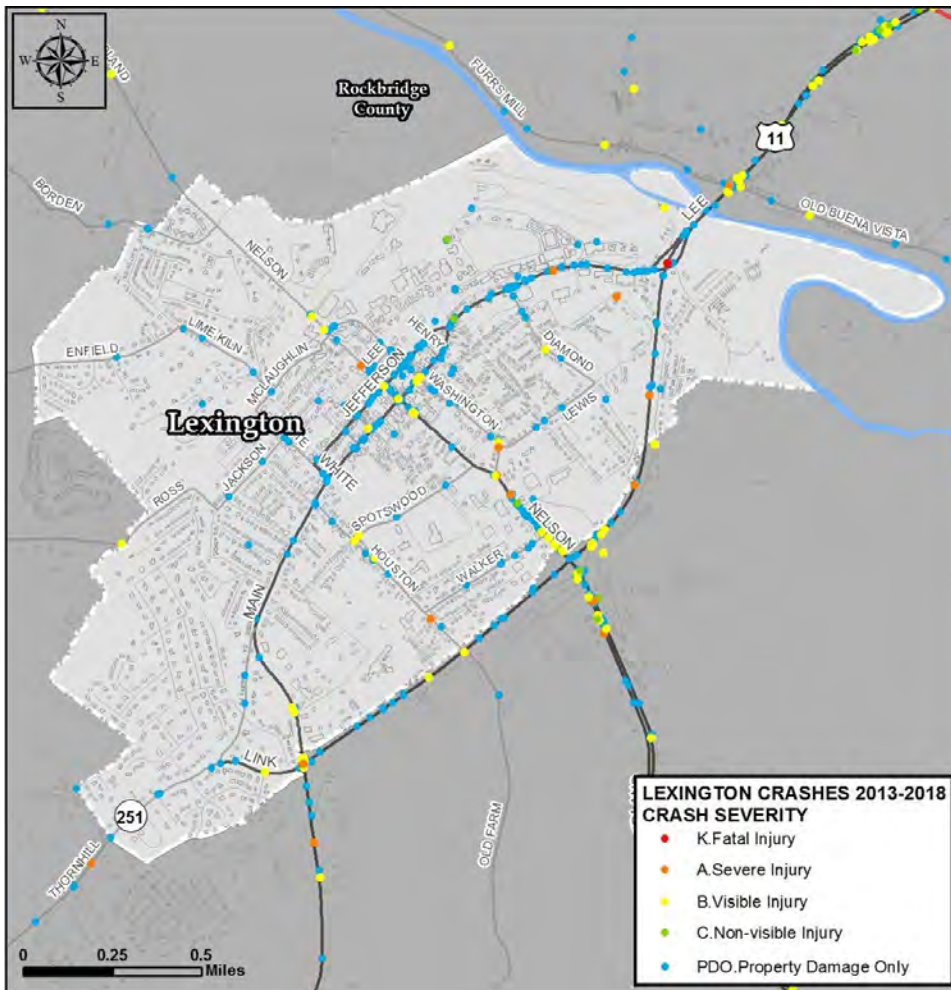
There were 47 crashes out of 387 in the six-year period that resulted in an

injury, the remaining crashes were Property Damage Only (PDO). There was one fatal crash resulting in the death of two people in 2013. A minivan ran off the road on North Lee highway near the grade separated forked interchange with North Main Street.

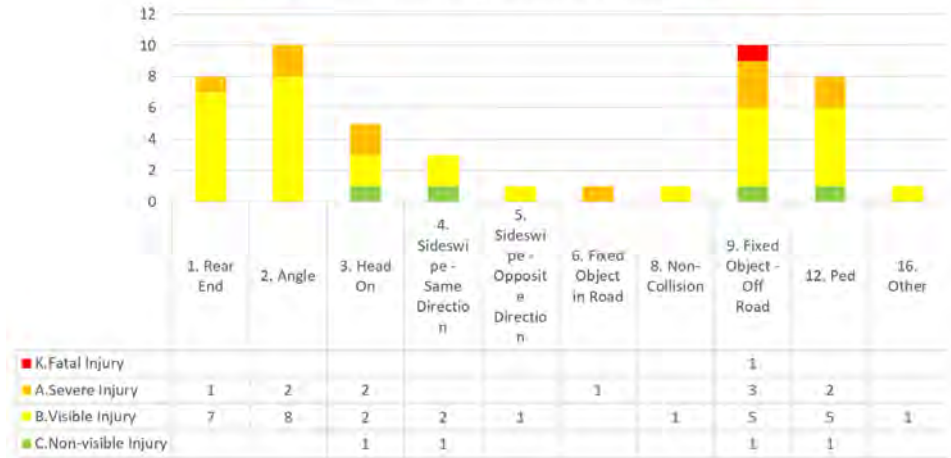
In the color-coded chart below, vehicle crashes were broken into two main categories: 1) Crashes by Severity and 2) Crashes by Type. The most common types of injury crashes were off-road and angle crashes, followed by rear-end crashes, and pedestrian crashes. The crash types help engineers and planners determine the kinds of solutions that may be needed.



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City of Lexington, VA
 Injury Crashes by Severity and Crash Type 2013-2018



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Appendix D: Boards and Commissions

Architectural Review Board (ARB): A five-member board that reviews and approves new construction, demolition, and proposed design features on all buildings in the historic downtown area as well as demolition and new construction in the city's two residential historic districts.

Board of Equalization: A four-member board that sits following every general real estate re-assessment to hear appeals from property owners.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA): A five-member board that hears and acts on requests for variances from the terms of the city's Zoning Ordinance and on appeals of zoning decisions made by the Zoning Administrator.

Cemetery Review Board: A six-member board that advises staff and City Council on issues pertaining to the operation and maintenance of the city's two cemeteries.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC): A 21-member regional commission comprised of the counties of Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham; the cities of Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and Waynesboro. Lexington has one appointed representative. The Commission works with its members to provide high quality planning technical assistance that address local, state, or regional needs.

Community Services Board (CSB): The Rockbridge Area Community Services Board provides mental health, intellectual disability,

substance abuse services, and prevention measures to the residents of the Rockbridge Region and Bath County. It is a fifteen-member board, the City has three representatives.

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College Board: serves as an advisory board to the college, meeting with members of the school's administration to discuss and approve policies in the best interests of the college community. The eleven-member board has one representative from the City.

Disabilities Services Board: The Board is a regional advisory board charged with making recommendations to local governments for improving services provided to disabled persons.

Electoral Board: The Electoral Board appoints the Voter Registrar for a four-year term. The Electoral Board also appoints officers of election to work at the polls on elections days and conducts all general and special elections. After each election, the Electoral Board meets to canvass the vote for the City and certifies the results to the State Board of Elections. The Board is comprised of three members, two from the political party receiving the most votes in the prior gubernatorial election, and one from the political party receiving the second most votes in the prior gubernatorial election. The appropriate party submits a list of names to the Circuit Court, who appoints one member each for a three-year term.

Industrial Development Authority (IDA): A seven-member authority that issues tax-exempt industrial development bonds to enhance economic development opportunities. The Authority meets as needed.

Maury Service Authority: the Authority produces the bulk of water for the City and its surrounding area through ownership and operation of a water treatment plant. Wastewater is also treated. The Authority is comprised of five members; two members represent the City.

Planning Commission: A seven-member commission that advises the City Council on all land-use and zoning issues facing the city. This body approves all site plans and makes design decisions in certain zones. The Commission develops and recommends the city's Comprehensive Plan to City Council.

Public Safety Communications Board: The Public Safety Communications Board provides emergency services dispatching for Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. The Central Dispatch Center, located in Buena Vista, dispatches for local police, fire, rescue, and emergency services. The Board oversees the operations of the center and hires an executive director to manage the day-to-day activities. The Board meets as needed and is comprised of seven members; the City Manager represents the City and serves as ex-officio.

Regional Tourism Board: The Regional Tourism Board oversees the activities of the regional



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tourism program that includes Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. The goal of the Lexington & Rockbridge Area Tourism Development is to use a variety of marketing strategies to attract visitors to the area. The Board is comprised of seven members; one represents the City.

Rockbridge Regional Library Board: The Rockbridge Regional Library Board oversees the Rockbridge Regional Library system which serves Lexington, Buena Vista, Rockbridge County, and Bath County. The Board helps guide the library towards their mission of “bolster[ing] the power of education, cultivat[ing] opportunities for learning, foster[ing] the fun in reading, and serv[ing] communities as information professionals. The Board is comprised of thirteen members; three represent the City.

School Board: A five-member board, established by the state constitution, to oversee the management and operation of the city’s school system. The School Board hires the Superintendent and all other school system employees.

Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP): The Shenandoah Valley Partnership collaborates economic development in the region to improve prosperity and quality of life. The SVP serves as an advocate for existing business expansion and assists with regional workforce development efforts while encouraging businesses to establish operation in the Shenandoah Valley through capital investments and job creation. The City Manager sits on the

Board of Directors and represents the City.

Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board: The Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board serves as the fiscal agent and administrative entity for employment and training programs funded under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act for the Shenandoah Valley. They work with a wide range of regional and state partners to offer a variety of services such as employment information, career development training opportunities, easy access to support programs, and self-directed job search/job posting options, on the job training, work experiences, worker training and other business services.

Social Services Board: The Regional Social Services Department, comprised of Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County, provides social services for Lexington residents. The Social Services Board sets policy for the Social Services Department and hires an executive Director to oversee day-to-day operations. The City is represented by two members.

Threshold: A seven-member board that provides advice to City Council and staff concerning the need for and ways to address workforce housing as well as overseeing the operation of the city’s low-income housing program.

Total Action for Progress (TAP): The Total Action for Progress Board oversees the regional Total Action for Progress program. TAP provides a variety of services to help lift families and individuals from poverty including adult education programs

and the Head Start preschool programs.

Tree Board: A five-member board that provides advice to the City Council and City Arborist on the management of the city’s trees.

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Appendix E: Glossary of Terms

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU): A separate, complete housekeeping unit with a separate entrance, kitchen, sleeping area, and full bathroom facilities, which is an attached or detached extension to an existing single-family structure.

Access Management: Systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway.

Affordable Housing: Housing where the occupant is paying no more than thirty (30) percent of gross income for gross housing costs, including utility costs.

American Community Survey: An ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability.

Area Median Income (AMI): The average income of persons and families living in a defined geographical area. The AMI is determined and published annually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The local AMI is used to determine individuals' and families' qualifications for various Federal and state assistance programs, including affordable housing programs.

Assisted Living Facility: Facilities designed to accommodate frail, elderly, and people with disabilities, who can live independently but need assistance with activities of daily living.

Average Daily Traffic Volume (ADT): The average number of vehicles passing a specific point during a 24-hour period.

Buffer: An area of land established to separate land uses, or a natural area design to intercept pollutants and manage other environmental concerns or provide for open space.

Best Management Practices (BMP): A practice, or combination of practices, that have been determined to be the most effective and practical means in achieving an objective.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): A community planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period.

Centers: Anchors of the community where services and amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods may be clustered.

City Budget: Establishes the plan of revenue and expense activities for the fiscal year and provides a coordinated financial program to attain the City's goals and objectives, including those identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

City Code of Ordinances: The collection of laws passed by a local governing body.

Comprehensive Plan: A long-range planning document that serves as a guide for the development of a locality.

Conservation Easement: A property interest or right granted by the landowner to a land trust to maintain in a natural state or limit the use of that land.

Corridors: Important local and regional travel routes and commercial destinations.

Density: The average number of dwelling units per gross acre of land on a development site, including all land within the boundaries of the site for which the density is calculated.

Floodplain: A relatively flat or low land area adjoining a river, stream, or watercourse which is subject to partial or complete inundation; or, an area subject to the unusual and rapid accumulation of run-off or surface waters from any source.

Gateways: Key places where the regional road network enters the City.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): A means of producing, analyzing, and storing computerized maps.

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Green Infrastructure: Natural and nature-based assets including sites (parks, sports fields, playgrounds, nature reserves, forests, community gardens, cemeteries), linkages between sites (sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails), and waterways (streams, rivers, and wetlands). Constructed green infrastructure features blend in with natural assets in a synergistic manner to survive and rebound from the impacts of natural and human-induced hazards.

Green Time: Connecting the population to the natural world and each other in order to promote physical activity and make Lexington a more attractive city to work, study, and live.

Impervious Surface: Any hard-surfaced, man-made area that does not readily absorb or retain water, including but not limited to building roofs, parking and driveway areas, graveled areas, sidewalks, and paved recreation areas.

Infill: The development of housing or other uses on vacant parcels or sites within already built-up areas.

Land Use Plan: A basic element of a comprehensive plan that designates the present and future location, form, class, and extent (size) within a planning jurisdiction for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional use or reuse. The land use plan includes a map and a written description of the different land use areas or districts.

Mixed Use: A building, development, or area that incorporates two or more uses such as, but not limited to, residential, retail, public, or entertainment. Vertical mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of uses within the same building, typically with uses on different floors. Horizontal mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of uses within adjacent buildings.

Open Space: An area or portion of land, either landscaped or essentially unimproved and which is used to meet human recreational or spatial needs, or to protect water, air, or plant areas.

Opportunity Areas: Represent key areas of focus for revitalization, infill, or redevelopment, or development.

Passive Recreation: Refers to non-consumptive recreation uses such as wildlife observation, walking, biking, and canoing.

Pattern Areas: Areas of the City that share distinct characteristics by virtue of geographic location, built form, and/or types of use.

Pedestrian-Friendly Development: Pedestrian-friendly developments are designed with an emphasis primarily on the sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the site and building, rather than auto access and parking areas. A walkable environment should have all or some of these characteristics: well-maintained and continuous wide sidewalks, well-lit streets, high

street connectivity, a safety barrier between pedestrians and motorized vehicles (such as trees, shrubs, street parking, green space between pedestrians and cars), minimal building setbacks, cleanliness, and land use patterns characterized as mixed-use.

Redevelopment: The placement of reconstruction of buildings that are not making efficient and effective use of the land on which they are located or are in substandard physical condition.

SMART SCALE: The method used by the Virginia Department of Transportation to score planned projects included in VTrans that are funded by House Bill 1887. Transportation projects are scored based on an objective, outcome-based process that is transparent to the public and allows decision-makers to be held accountable to taxpayers.

Statewide Planning System (SPS): A Virginia Department of Transportation data system design to organize transportation planning related data and information such as roadway geometric inventories, traffic volumes, capacity analyses, and traffic projections.

Streetscaping: Elements to improve the appearance and experience within a particular corridor or street, including traffic management, sidewalk conditions and materials, landscaping, street furniture (utility poles, benches, garbage cans, etc.), and signage.



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Subdivision: The division of a parcel of land into three or more lots or parcels of less than five acres each for the purpose of transfer of ownership or building development, or, if a new street is involved in such a division, any division of a parcel of land.

Traditional Neighborhood Development: Also known as ‘new urbanism,’ ‘neo-traditional,’ or ‘village-style’ development, this type of development typically includes principles such as pedestrian-friendly road design, interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, preservation of natural areas, satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management, mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and/or reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

Thermal Inversions: A reversal of the normal behavior of temperature in the troposphere (the region of the atmosphere nearest the Earth’s surface), in which a layer of cool air at the surface is overlain by a layer of warmer air. Under normal conditions air temperature usually decreases with height.

Traffic Calming: Design and management strategies that aim to balance vehicular traffic on streets with other uses and users by incorporating design features to slow motor vehicles and improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Urban Development Area (UDA): An area designated by a locality that is appropriate for higher density development due to its proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or a developed area and, to the extent feasible, to be used for redevelopment or infill development.

Wayfinding: A system of gateway signs, vehicular and/or pedestrian sign systems, or area-specific identification signs that help orient residents and visitors while promoting civic pride and enhancing community character.

Zoning Ordinance/Zoning Map: A zoning ordinance, along with a zoning map, controls land use by providing regulations and standards relating to the nature and extent of uses of land and structures. The zoning ordinances should be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The City’s zoning ordinance divides Lexington into eight zones and specifies allowed uses and dimensional requirements for each zone.