

TAZEWELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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I. Introduction

The natural beauty of Tazewell County attracted settlers to its rolling hills, gentle fields and the pleasant climate in the eighteenth century much like they do in the twenty-first century. In fact, today many descendants of those first pioneers are leaders in a vibrant twenty-first century Tazewell County. The location of Tazewell County is unique in the southwest corner of the Old Dominion, surrounded by West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. With a total of 520 square miles, Tazewell County is one of Virginia’s 20 largest counties. As a result, Tazewell County also has many assets and resources. In addition, the county has many natural, cultural, education and economic challenges which demand the attention of local, regional, state and national governmental bodies and agencies. For appropriate development to occur in Tazewell County these government entities must evaluate the needs and assets of Tazewell County and develop appropriate planning, implementation policies and tools to guide the growth and development of the county to the greatest benefit of all its citizens while protecting the core values and resources, and historic context of this community.

The area, now called Tazewell County, was first occupied by an indigenous people known as Woodland Indians. Little is known of these early inhabitants, but from the artifacts found in cornfields, caves, and burial grounds throughout the county, it is clear that they were an organized society of people. One unique artifact in the county is the pictograph display near Paint Lick Mountain. Historians and anthropologist note the simple images represent wildlife, nature and human figures. The Woodland Indians were gone long before pioneers and European settlers arrived. For the Cherokee and Shawnee Tribes Tazewell County was hunting ground. In fact, the groups fought each other at one time at the base of the mountain now known as “Bald Knob,” which is located near the center of the county.

The first permanent European settler was most likely Thomas Witten who built a cabin on the Big Crab Orchard Tract in 1770. This tract’s previous owners include Patrick Henry. Other settlers soon arrived by way of the Wilderness Trail and later Fincastle Turnpike. Tazewell was formed in 1799 and was named for U.S. Senator Henry Tazewell of Norfolk County. Senator Tazewell opposed the formation of the county and only consented to support this new county on the Virginia frontier when told the county would bear his name.

A. Legal Basis for the Plan

Comprehensive Plans have been mandatory in Virginia for all jurisdictions since 1980. The Code of Virginia contains a broad enabling legislation for counties, cities, and towns. Virginia legislation requires local planning commissions to “prepare and recommend a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a Comprehensive Plan for the territory under its jurisdictions” (Section 15.2-2223).

The basic purpose of the plan is established in the Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-2223, states: “The Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants.”

The State Code of Virginia mandates that the planning commission review the Comprehensive Plan every five years to determine if any amendments are needed (Section 15.2-2230). Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the governing body, it has the following legal status: “Whenever a local planning commission recommends a local Comprehensive Plan or part thereof for the locality and such plan has been approved by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan” (Section 15.2-2232).

The comprehensive plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
3. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
4. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable measures to provide for the continued availability, quality, and sustainability of groundwater and surface water;
5. A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestall district maps, where applicable;
6. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;
7. The location of military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas; and
8. The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more.

B. Relationship to Other Planning Efforts

A variety of documents relate directly to the planning goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The Tazewell County Comprehensive Plan incorporates several documents that currently guide the development of the county in areas such as transportation, water and sewer service, and economic development. The policies set forth in these documents are an integral component of the revised Comprehensive Plan and thereby reinforce the goals and objectives presented herein. The following list represents documents and planning efforts that have substantial impact on the development of this plan:

- Tazewell County’s Tourism Strategic Plan
- Tazewell County’s Strategic Economic Development Plan
- Tazewell County Watershed Management and Water and Sewer Plan
- Tazewell County Public Schools’ Report Card
- Tazewell County Directory of Community Resources
- VDOT Access Management Regulations
- VDOT Chapter 527; Coordinating State and Local Transportation Planning

C. Citizen Involvement

Specific procedural requirements are contained in the Code to ensure at least a minimum level of public notice, so that citizens have an opportunity to provide their ideas and comments on the plan (Section 15.2-2225). Citizens will be able to give input and suggestions during Planning Commission Meetings and public hearings.

A working committee with representatives from the Planning Commission and staff was established in 2021 to update and help guide the Comprehensive Plan planning process, based on changes and data updates from federal, state, and local agencies.



D. Adoption Process for the Plan

Following the completion of the Draft Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to allow citizens the opportunity to provide comment on the document. The Comprehensive Plan is recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission and must be officially adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Once the plan is adopted by the governing body, it becomes an official plan for the county.

§ 15.2-2225. Notice and hearing on plan; need recommendation by local planning commission to governing body; posting of plan on website.

Prior to the recommendation of a comprehensive plan or any part thereof, the local planning commission shall (i) post the comprehensive plan or part thereof that is to be considered for recommendation on a website that is maintained by the commission or on any other website on which the commission generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information regarding the plan or part thereof being considered for recommendation, (ii) give notice in accordance with § 15.2-2204, and (iii) hold a public hearing on the plan. After the public hearing, the commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon approval, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan, or part thereof, to the governing body and a copy shall be certified to the governing body. Any comprehensive plan or part thereof approved by the commission pursuant to this section shall be posted on a website that is maintained by the commission or on any other website on which the commission generally posts information, and that is available to the public or that clearly describes how the public may access information regarding the plan or part thereof approved by the commission and certified to the governing body. Inadvertent failure to post information on a website in accordance with this section shall not invalidate action taken by the local planning commission following notice and public hearing as required herein.

II. Location and Geography

A. Regional Perspective

Tazewell County is located in the north central portion of Southwestern Virginia. The county lies within the valley and ridge province of the Appalachian Mountains with the Cumberland to the northwest. The original boundaries of the county consisted of an area east of present-day Giles County to the Kentucky border. Tazewell County encompasses dramatically changing elevations from 1900 to 4700 feet above sea level. The county is also located astride the eastern continental divide and is thus home to many headwaters and streams. To the east, the streams flow into the New River, to the North into the Big Sandy; to the west into the Clinch River; and to the south into the Holston River. In fact, the Clinch River, a major tributary of the Tennessee River, has its headwaters in Tazewell County. Tazewell County is one of four counties that comprise the Cumberland Plateau Planning District. Tazewell County is 520 square miles.

This region of Virginia is also home to growing technologies and the challenges of competing development. As with many rural communities across the country, Tazewell County is feeling the development pressures driven by suburban housing sprawl and the infrastructure and services expected and desired by the populations living here. Agricultural uses, commercial desires, and industrial developments vie for the same areas of arable land found in the valleys and small acreages of low-slope sections of the county. Tazewell County is constantly changing and developing, just as it has throughout history, a fact that has contributed directly to its rich and diverse community. By planning for and guiding that change toward a community-developed vision of the future, Tazewell County can

maintain its most significant historic and natural treasures while still embracing the development that will provide jobs for its people and strengthen its economic base for the future. From past to present, Tazewell County has much to admire as well as a responsibility to protect while maintaining its valuable natural and cultural resources Tazewell County strives to promote growth and development as the basis of its promising future.

B. Topography and Geography

Topographic features of Tazewell County are shown on the geographic features map. Elevation in the valley areas of the county ranges from 1,900 feet in the western and southeastern areas to 2,763 in the east central areas. The county is dissected by streams, and the presence of sinkholes that are the trademark of karst topography which gives the landscape its uneven relief pattern. Surface features range from sloping to hilly and steep with comparatively small areas of smooth and gently rolling sections across the county.

The mountain ridges range in elevation from 2,500 to 4,500 feet, though there are irregular peaks that are considerably higher. The ridges are penetrated by narrow, deep waterways that are sourced near the mountain summits. The mountainous terrain in the county creates innumerable scenic vistas for both residents and visitors in Tazewell County. The highly rugged character of the land also makes infrastructure and structural development difficult and expensive in many areas of the county. Much of the county’s land remains as forested uplands with agricultural production the principal land use for the hill and valley areas.

Figure 1

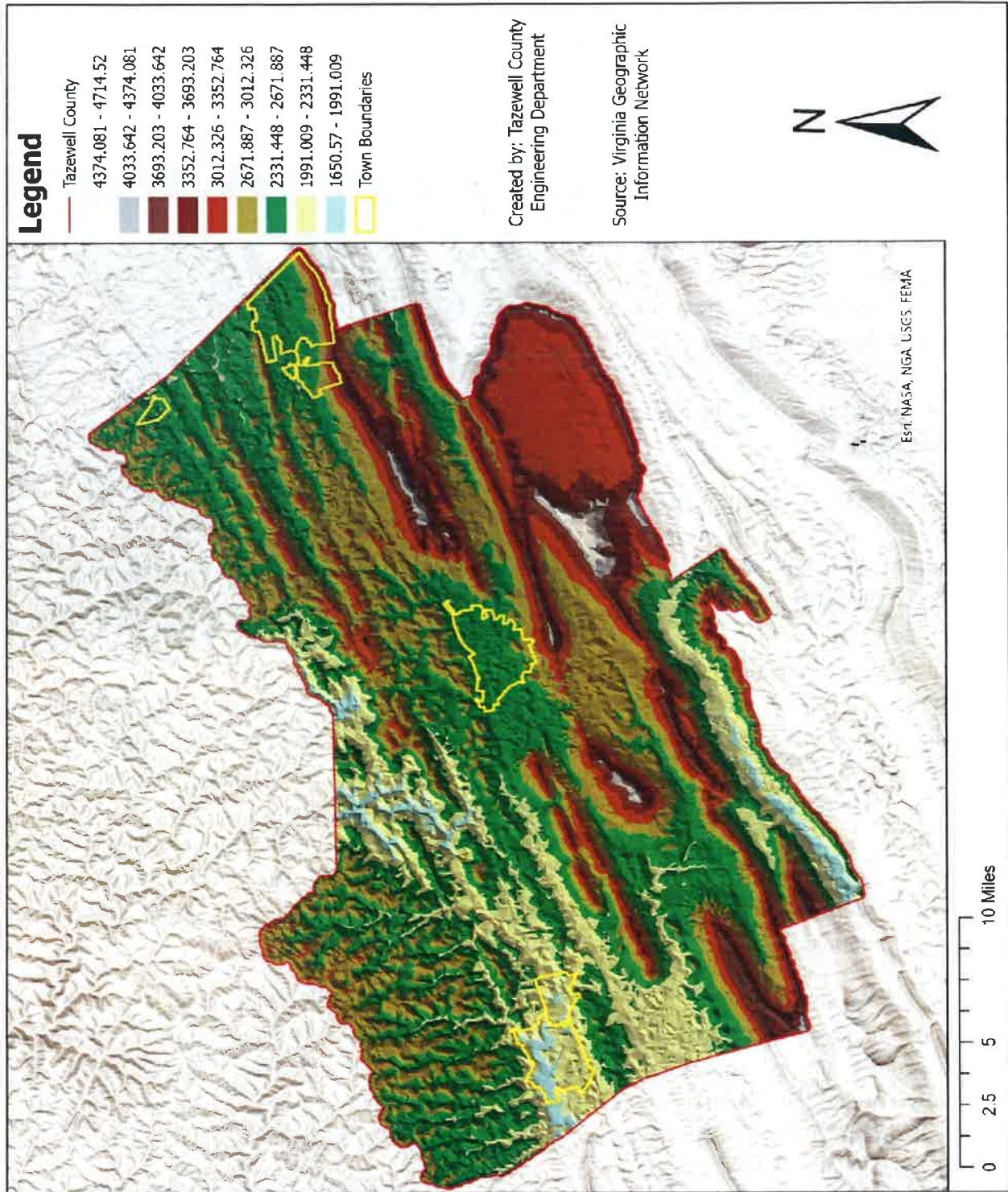
Tazewell County Woodland Uses

Year	Woodland (acres)	
	Pastured	Non-Pastured
1992	18,830	23,615
1997	15,483	32,445
2002	16,818	23,426
2007	15,797	23,140
2012	11,115	31,296
2017	16,473	26,856

U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2020.

Figure 2

Tazewell County Digital Elevation Model



Burkes Garden is a unique feature in Tazewell County and is Virginia’s largest rural historic district. The 32,000-acre oval-shaped basin is located in the eastern part of the county. The rock layers that formed this basin were once a great dome. The basin was created by geologic erosion to point that just a rim of hard rock was left surrounding the basin floor of water-soluble layers of limestone. Burkes Garden is home to the largest contiguous area of smooth uplands in the county.

The watersheds and fault lines of the county are shown in Figure 3. Geology is a significant factor in the development patterns of Tazewell County. The county has two distinct geological variations: the Appalachian Valley and Ridge Province to the south and east and the Cumberland Plateau Province to the west.



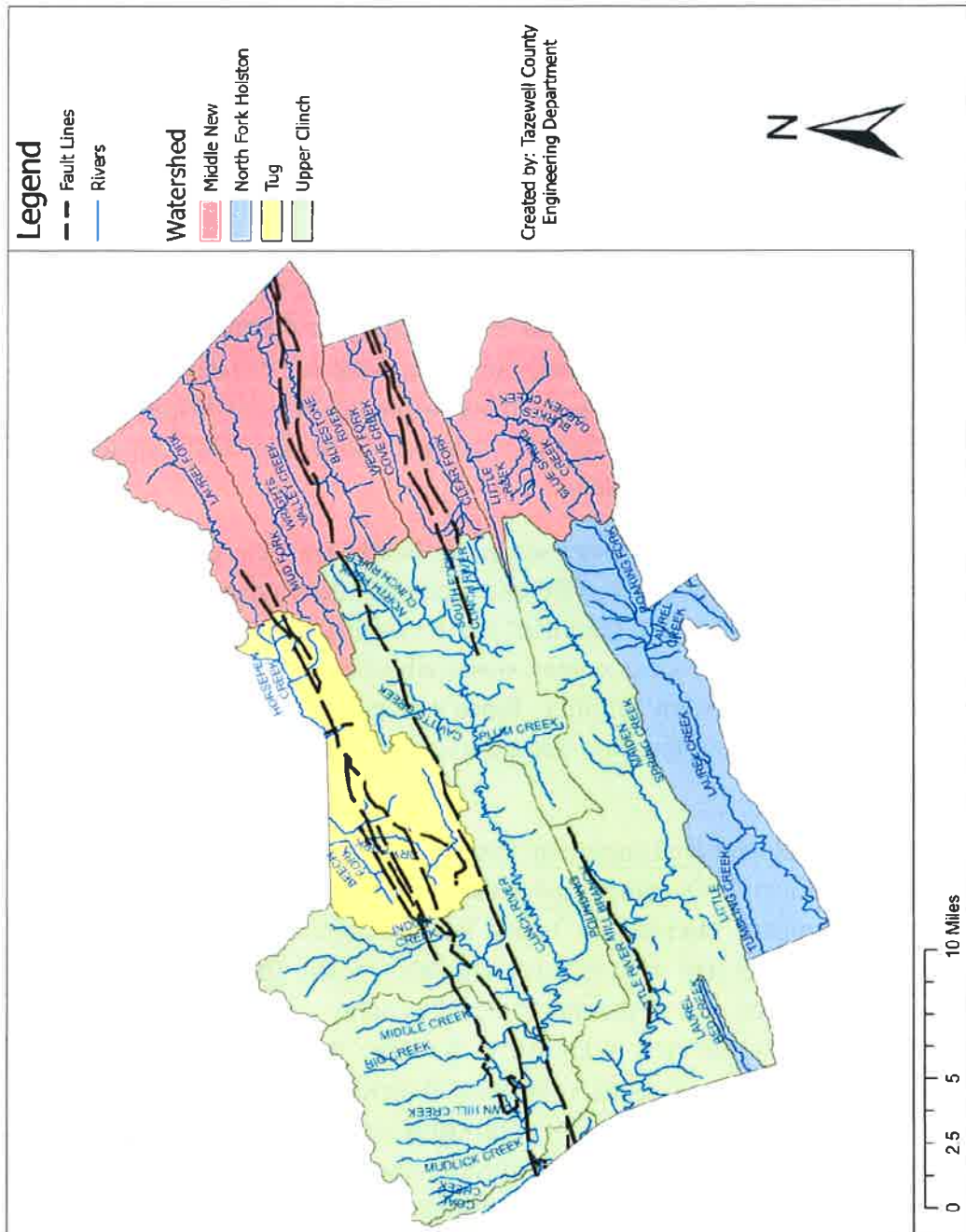
The Appalachian Valley and Ridge Province has various rock formations following the narrow bands of ridges and corresponding valleys. Limestone and dolomite with intermittent shale are the predominant

rock types in the valley floors and mountain flanks, while weather-resistant hard sandstone strata form the ridge crests. The arrangement of hard and soft rocks in alternate formation accounts for the various elongated ridges and the position of most streams in the county. The limestone beds have provided the richest agricultural soils and the most important groundwater aquifers. They also are driving creators of the county’s caverns and associated karsts topography. This combination of rock and soil suitability has targeted this area for development as well as rich agricultural uses in these areas of the county. However, these geological features are severe limiting factors for the building environment of commercial, industrial, and residential development in the county.

The western section of the county has a distinct and abrupt geological and physiological change in landscape due to its location in the Appalachian Plateau Province. This area is characterized by steep mountains with narrow, winding valley floors. The rock layers that define the plateau lie relatively flat and have been deeply dissected by historic stream drainage erosion. This portion of the county is divided into two distinct areas by the St. Clair, Boissevain and Richlands Fault System. This is coal-bearing land and has long been dominated by the coal extraction industry.

Figure 3

Watersheds and Fault Lines of Tazewell County



III. Background and Demographics

A. Historic Development Patterns

Formed from the counties of Russell and Wythe, Tazewell County was named in honor of U. S. Senator Henry Tazewell. Chartered on December 19, 1799, Tazewell County is governed by a Board of Supervisors composed of five representatives, one elected from each magisterial district, who then appoint a county administrator. There are five incorporated towns within its boundaries. Those municipalities include: Bluefield, Cedar Bluff, Pocahontas, Richlands, and Tazewell.

In order to look forward and plan for future development and community enhancement, it is critical to assess historic trends and cultural influences that affect how a community has grown and developed to date. Tazewell County has a rich history in westward expansion and its more recent growth patterns and statistics have greatly influenced the use of resources and delivery of services to citizens of the county. This section attempts to provide a brief history of the development of the county and provide general demographic change information that impacts the opportunities and challenges to land use and preservation.

Before the arrival of European settlers in North America, the region now known as Tazewell County was hunting grounds for the Cherokee and Shawnee Indians. As was stated earlier in the Plan, the Woodland Indians who were the initial settlers of this area had long departed the land. Less than 150 years after the first European colony was established in Jamestown, settlers began to explore the present region of southwestern Virginia. Since it was bountiful with large herds of deer, elk, buffalo, and other game, this area of the state was exploited by professional hunters who exported animal pelts from the area to Europe.

The first recorded land survey in Tazewell County was completed in 1749 when the area was part of Augusta County. Operating under the name of The Woods River Company (formed by James Patton), James Burke led a survey party into what is today, Burke's Garden. The survey recorded the area of that portion of the county as 4,400 acres, but today the area is known to be more than 32,000 acres. The same surveying expedition mapped the headwaters of the Clinch River and they probably reached the Bluestone and Abbs Valley. Their records show that they reached Maiden Spring and surveyed portions of what is now Russell County.



Early settlement of what became Tazewell County was slow due to the distance from the great migration road westward and also due to the hostile encounters with Indians in this area. Population figures of 1800, during the county's formation, show it as significantly less populated than some surrounding jurisdictions.

Tazewell County's pioneer past forms a tradition that is a continued source of pride for the current residents and is reflected in the large number of historic sites in and around the county. The link to pioneer, Native American and African-American ancestors is strong and reflected in historical exhibits and holdings.

B. Demographics and Background

Population growth and diversity trends are key elements to understanding and implementing planning principles and strategies. Understanding and predicting the future trends in the demographics of Tazewell County are central to determining how and why particular land use strategies will be successful in this community. In the same way the geography and climate affect land use decision, the diversity and growth trends of the population can dramatically influence how land is used and what will be sustainable and successful strategies of maximizing resources and protecting valued assets within the county.

Tazewell County saw steady and at times dramatic growth through the early 1900s. This growth stalled after a 1950 high of 47,512 that marked the turning point toward population decline through 1970, which logged in a population for the county of 39,816. The coal boom in the 1970s also was a time of dramatic growth of nearly 27 percent with an all-time high in population for the county in 1980 of 50,511. Since 1980, the population of Tazewell County has declined with each census.



This trend is true in the entire Cumberland Plateau Planning District (CPPD) which has lost population each decade since 1980. The state, however, has continued to grow at a steady pace indicating that Tazewell County and the surrounding area are not keeping pace with the Virginia population growth trends. Though there may not be a desire to keep pace with the growth of Virginia's urban centers in the northern portions of the state, the loss of population over time is a detriment to economic and community development for any community. Understanding these population losses and how to address them will be a critical factor in achieving a sustainable economic model for the county.

The density and diversity of population is also a relevant factor for any community development strategy and assessment. Tazewell County has a primarily white population, with minority groups totaling less than 7 percent of the overall population. Though this number is low compared to state (just under 31 percent) and national (nearly 24 percent) averages, Tazewell County has the highest minority population in the planning district.

Due to the geography and historic westward advancement travel routes, Tazewell County's population is not uniformly distributed. The average number of people per square mile is about 77.9 but this number does not reflect actual density across the county. Tazewell County residents live in and around the towns within the county and along major transportation routes.

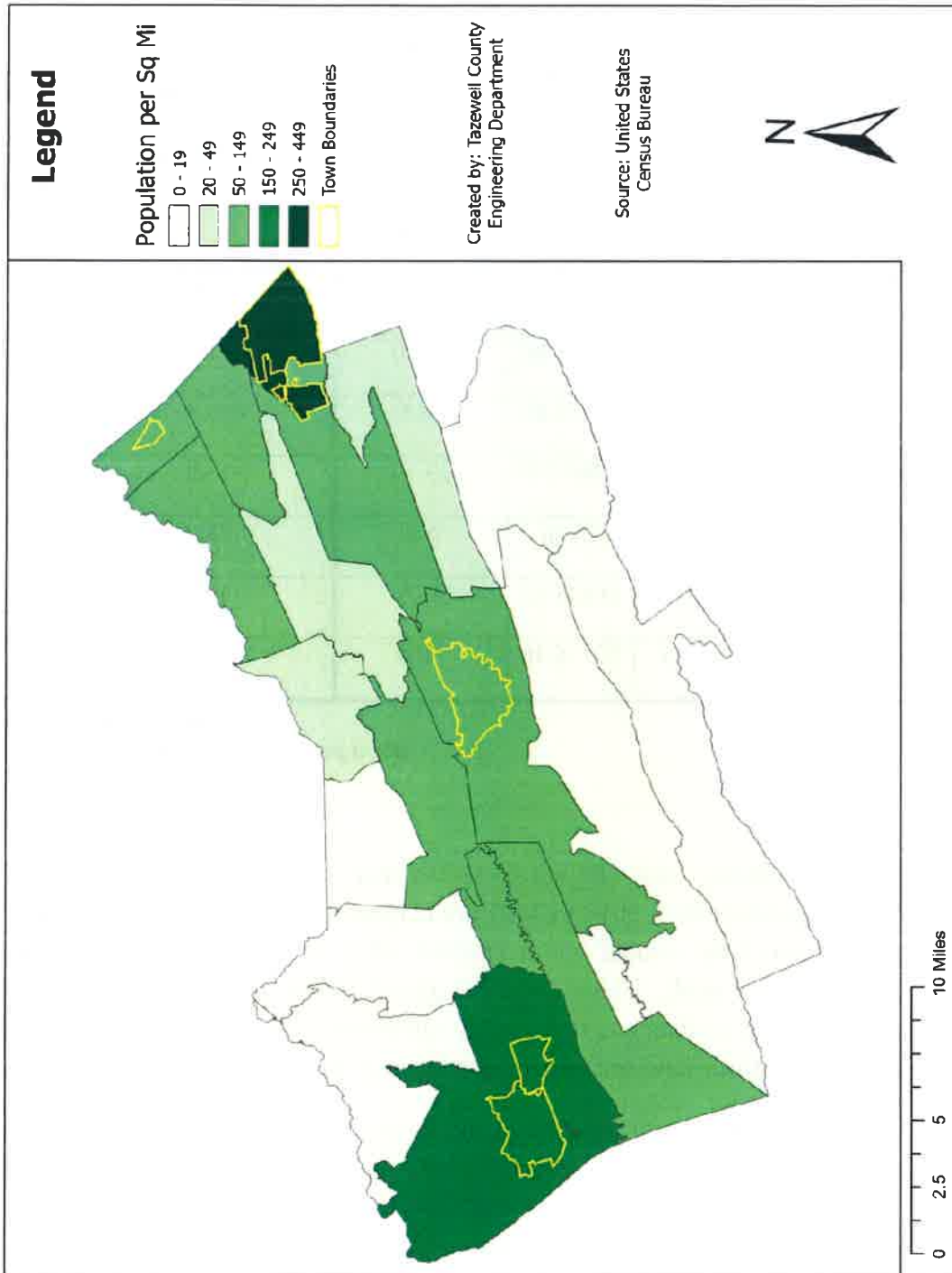
Figure 4
Population Change 2010-2020

PLACE	2010	2015	2020			
Tazewell County	44,706	43,870	39,925			
CPPD	113,973	111,064	99,078			
Virginia	7,841,754	8,256,630	8,642,274			
Buchanan County	15,966	15,463	19,816			
Dickenson County	24,459	23,486	13,787			
Russell County	28,842	28,245	25,550			

*2020 US Census Bureau
5 Year Estimates

Figure 5

Tazewell County Population Density by District in 2021



Tazewell County’s gender split is relatively equal with 49.6 percent male and 50.4 percent female. The age distribution of the population is not as even in Tazewell County. Tazewell County has a large working age population with approximately 47.1 percent of the people in the county are a part of the labor work force.

**Figure 6
Age Distribution in Tazewell County**

AGE	Tazewell County			Virginia	United States
	2010	2021	% of Total Population in 2021	% of Total Population in 2021	% of Total Population in 2021
<i>Under 5 years</i>	2325	1999.50	5.10	5.90	6.00
<i>5 - 17 years</i>	6850	7718.26	19.30	21.8	22.3
<i>18 - 64 years</i>	28146	20275.49	52.5	56.4	55.2
<i>65 yrs & over</i>	7757	9997.75	23.10	15.9	16.5
<i>Median Age (yrs)</i>	43.20	45.20	NA	38.2	38.10
<i>Males 18+ yrs</i>	17618	19835.53	49.6	49.2	49.20
<i>Females 18 + yrs</i>	18285	20155.46	50.4	50.8	50.8

*United States Census Bureau 2021
*not a percentage, this is actual median age for 2021
in Virginia and the United States*

The Age Distribution table (Figure 6) shows that Tazewell County’s population is aging in place. Losses in population from 2010 to 2021 are evident in the under 18 age groups. Of significant note is the comparison of the median age in Tazewell 45.2 years to that of Virginia and the US, both near the 38.2 year median mark. Unless there is a growth in the numbers of children and young adults over the next decade, this median age differential will continue to grow and the workforce population will begin to drift away from state and national averages as well.

Quality of life is always at the core of all community development and planning. Assessing quality is not always an easy process. Each locality has various goals and benchmarks to measure progress in targeted areas of development and service. How these goals translate into higher or sustained quality of life for citizens is not always a direct correlation and, in many cases, the impact is felt long after investments in programs and infrastructure are made.

Income and access to services are considered important measures of quality of life for individuals and families. The ability to rent or own a home and maintain it is also an important measure of how well citizens of a locality are thriving. Though these measures are not the only factors

in quality of life, they merit assessment and correlation for Tazewell County in relationship to the types and impact of investment in services and infrastructure by public and private sources.

Figure 7
Median Family Income:
County, State and National Comparison

Place	2010	2021	Percent Change from 2010 to 2021
Tazewell County	43,428	42,207	-3%
Cumberland Plateau Planning District	40,670	36,297	-10.75%
Virginia	73,514	76,398	3.924%
United States	62,982	64,994	3.194%

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2021.
U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey.*

Though it is clear that Tazewell is below the median family income average of both the US and Virginia, the percent increase shows the county keeping relative pace with the state (Figure 7.). The cost of living in Tazewell County is lower than many other areas of the state and with income levels still growing, the county residents are likely to be seeing that reflected as increases in spending power and investment opportunities. However, as in most rural areas, transportation costs are higher and almost exclusively born by individuals and families. With the significant increase in oil prices, health care costs and other economic increases these factors alone can be a dramatic impact on a family income balance. These are crucial factors of consideration for enhancing quality of life for individuals and families.



Tazewell County’s median household income is roughly 55.2 percent of the median household income of the state and 64.9 percent of that of the United States. The US Census defines a family as consisting of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit. A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship, whether it is a singular individual alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together. Family income has traditionally been considered the more reliable measure of median income when making such comparisons. However, with the rise of unmarried housing partners, this figure must be tracked and assessed now and into the future.

Health care coverage is another emerging category that local, state and national governments are taking a closer look at in this decade. The health and welfare of citizens is in no small measure

dependent on access to quality and affordable health care for the care of illness and injury as well as wellness care. Tazewell County is in below the state and national averages for uninsured rates for children and youth under 18 years old with just 4% percent of this population uninsured in the county. The adult population rate is above the state rate percent of adults uninsured in the county and 8.2% percent of adults uninsured in the state. The state rate is below the national average of 8.7% percent.

Figure 8
Health Insurance Coverage 2021

Place	Under Age 65			Under Age 18		
	# Insured	# Uninsured	% Uninsured	# Insured	# Uninsured	% Uninsured
Tazewell	36565	3314	13	8036	239	4
Virginia	7,601,635	1681362	8.2	1304800	74987	5.4
US	293,466,138	28058903	8.7	51046307	3014594	5.6

*Model-based Small Health Insurance Estimates for Counties and States
US Census Bureau.2021*

As the above demographic and historic data shows (Figure 8), Tazewell County is a dynamic area of Southwest Virginia with many challenges and opportunities as the county continues to shift economically and demographically. The need for careful planning and thoughtful evaluation of the historic trends and projections are very important for the county. This assessment of data is a critical first step in developing a strong and logical road map for the future of Tazewell County.

C. Housing Patterns and Structures

Housing is one of the most basic needs (shelter) in an individual’s life. Physically, socially, and economically, housing plays an important part in the well-being of individuals as well as families, and the community. Unsafe, unsanitary, and inadequate housing can affect local residents’ physical, social, economic, and emotional well-being. Planning for safe and attractive communities is an important role of local government and a diverse and aesthetically pleasing housing stock is at the heart of such vibrant and growing communities.

The coal boom years of the 1970s created growth in the number of houses built in Tazewell County at that time. Tazewell County’s housing growth during this period surpassed that of the state, and the population growth as well as incomes of the time supported this growth. From 2010 to 2021 population in Tazewell County decreased as did the average household size. Housing values did increase slightly during this time and the county maintained the highest average housing value \$102,600 in 2020 within the Cumberland Plateau Planning District. This was 36.28 percent of the state’s \$282,800 average house value in 2020.



Figure 9

Owner and Renter Occupation of Housing

2000-2020 Owner and Renter Occupation of Housing Tazewell County, Virginia, and U.S. Statistics										
STATISTIC	2000			2010			2020			
	TAZEWELL COUNTY	VA	US	TAZEWELL COUNTY	VA	US	TAZEWELL COUNTY	VA	US	
Owner Occupied Housing Units	14,229.00	1,837,939.00	69,815,753.00	13,105.00	2,046,845.00	75,896,759.00	12,227.00	2,123,771.00	122,354,219.00	
Median Value Owner Occupied	67,900.00	125,400.00	119,600.00	84,900.00	254,600.00	186,200.00	102,600.00	282,800.00	229,800.00	
Median Selected monthly owner costs	With a Mortgage	\$ 664.00	\$ 1,144.00	\$ 1,088.00	\$ 901.00	\$ 1,782.00	\$ 1,560.00	\$ 968.00	\$ 1,822.00	\$ 1,621.00
	Without a Mortgage	\$ 196.00	\$ 263.00	\$ 295.00	\$ 286.00	\$ 408.00	\$ 444.00	\$ 368.00	\$ 481.00	\$ 509.00
Rent Occupied housing units	4,148.00	861,234.00	35,664,348.00	4,131.00	887,768.00	36,689,881.00	3,540.00	986,357.00	41,390,514.00	
Median Gross Rent	\$ 376.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 602.00	\$ 535.00	\$ 1,024.00	\$ 871.00	\$ 668.00	\$ 1,257.00	\$ 1,096.00	

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2021
U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5 year Estimates*

The population centers in Tazewell County are in the towns of Tazewell, Cedar Bluff, Richlands, Pocahontas, Bluefield, and the communities of Claypool Hill and Raven. The housing stock found throughout the county includes both single family and multi-family housing options. Figure 9 shows the breakdown of owner and renter-occupied housing units as well as the median values from 2010 to 2021. The 2021 Census Bureau estimates show an increase in the median value of owner-occupied houses to \$102,600 in Tazewell County.

The county has continued to improve on this important housing measure to an estimated 143 housing units that lacked complete plumbing facilities in 2011. Given that nearly 33 percent of the housing structures in Tazewell County were built before 1960, the maintenance and rehabilitation of these older structures to provide adequate plumbing facilities is clearly evident in this area. Less than six percent of housing in the county has been built since 2000, as the rate of construction slowed dramatically from 2000 to 2011 (3.9% constructed in the years of 2000-2004, and 1.5% constructed in 2005 or later). Because housing growth is such an important indicator of economic stability and can even be used as a stimulus to economic development, this slowing of housing construction must be critically analyzed.

a. Affordable Housing

The coal boom of the 1970's spurred a time of dramatic growth in Tazewell County of nearly 27 percent, with an all-time high in population of 50,511. After 1980, the population declined through

the 2006 Census estimate of 44,608----not a statistically significant change from the 2000 figure of 44,598. Since then, Tazewell County’s population has bounced up and down. After 2006, the population rebounded somewhat through 2010, when the Census reported a total population of 45,078. It declined again with the 2012 population estimate of 44,268, and stands at 41,201 from the 2020 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate.

With the trend of population loss, there is an increase in the aging population – with a median age of 45.3 years and 22.2 percent being age 65 and older. The limited amount of affordable, appropriate and suitable housing that includes more assisted living options, housing with one floor and facilities for disable adults is a cause for concern. Tazewell County is growing older with inadequately constructed and unaffordable housing options.

One cause for this concern is the baby boomers. It is not uncommon for older adults to choose to downsize their homes, move into an apartment or retirement community, or consider assisted living options. Planning committees within Tazewell County must be aware of current housing availability and consider future housing needs and plan accordingly. Another area of concern is affordability of housing. Individuals living on fixed incomes, SSI or households with minimum wage earners will also be impacted by the need for affordable housing. With the majority of Tazewell County’s population being between the ages of 18-64 at 58.4 percent, with the median age increasing to 45.3 years, affordable housing is imperative for the aging population. For instance, Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens offers a Senior Living Community mobile home park that contains three duplex units, complete with bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living area. They also have ramps to provide easy access for older or disabled adults.

Access and availability of adequate, diverse and attractive housing is critical to the quality of life of all residents of Tazewell County. The county must continue to encourage the development of appropriate and desire housing stock within the county and ensure that resources are linked directly with the provision of necessary services and access to good transportation and job opportunities.

b. Subsidized and Assisted Housing Programs

Subsidized housing is available to residents of the county who meet income and/or age requirements. Elderly, as well as family housing developments, funded through the USDA’s Rural Development Program, are located in the towns of Richlands and Tazewell. Figure 10 shows the type and number of units in each bedroom category available through the housing subsidization program known as Section 8 housing. Additionally, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development has assisted the Cumberland Plateau Regional Housing Authority to develop and operate three complexes in the county (the bottom three listed in Figure 10).

FIGURE 10

Subsidized Housing Properties in Tazewell County

Rental Property	Location	Complex Type	Units	Bedrooms*	Renter out of pocket costs
Hunters Ridge Apartments	Richlands	Family	48	1-24 2-24	30% of adjusted monthly income
Oxford Square Apartments	Richlands	Family	87	1-31 2-56	30% of adjusted monthly income
Aspen Square Apartments	Tazewell	Family	60	1-60	30% of adjusted monthly income
Sierra Springs Apartments	Tazewell	Family	36	1-16 2-20	30% of adjusted monthly income
Tazewell Square Apartments	Tazewell	Family	56	1-24 2-32	30% of adjusted monthly income
Crescent View Apartments	Bluefield	Family	106	1-18 2-34 3-54	N/A
Indian Princess Pocahontas	Pocahontas	Family	34	N/A	N/A
Graham Manor	Bluefield	Elderly/Disabled	30	N/A	N/A
Fairfax Court	Richlands	Elderly/Disabled	34	N/A	N/A

*Numbers to left of the hyphen indicated number of bedrooms, to the right is number of units of this type Sources: MFH Rental (USDA RD) Property Website; Property management companies

Housing assistance is also available through the state and federal government for purchasing, refinancing, and repairing homes of residents of Tazewell County. The county is one of seven Southwestern Virginian counties designated as a Federal Target Area. This allows local residents the opportunity to apply for a lower-interest rate mortgage from the Virginia Housing and Development Authority (VHDA). This regulation also allows first-time home buyer regulations to be waived.

Weatherization, utility assistance, heating and cooling, and emergency home repair services are provided by two service organizations in the region. The Weatherization Program and the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement Program are operated by Clinch Valley Community Action. Both are designed to assist eligible low-income residents in Tazewell County to reduce energy loss in their homes through such installations as attic insulation, heating system inspection, window and wall sealing, and insulation. The Emergency Home Repair Program is funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and locally administered by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens. This program provides repairs or makes minor modifications to homes of low-income persons. These repairs focus on the areas of plumbing, electrical, roof repair and replacement, heating, and installation of such modifications as wheelchair ramps, hand railings, grab bars, and doorway widening. Cooling assistance is also available to eligible individuals through the Department of Social Services, Clinch Valley Community Action, and the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens. The Virginia Water Project provides assistance to eligible citizens in the county who need wells dug, septic systems installed, septic system maintenance and repair, water tanks, or tap fees. Clinch Valley

Community Action administers this program as well as the Indoor Plumbing Program that assists eligible residents who need indoor bathrooms.

c. Assisted Living and Nursing Homes

Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) are non-medical residential settings that provide or coordinate personal and health care services, 24-hour supervision, and assistance for the care of adults who are aged, infirmed or disabled. Nursing homes, on the other hand, have the primary function of the provision, on a continuing basis, of nursing services and health-related services for the treatment of inpatient care. Tazewell County residents have access to both types of facilities throughout the county and region.

The ALF’s provide residents an opportunity to remain as independent as possible. The services provided at these facilities vary, however, most provide graduated access to services that can be used by residents as they need them. Some provide nursing home care within the facility as well. Supervision, congregate meals, and recreational activities are available to all residents at all ALF’s located in Tazewell County.

Tazewell County residents who can no longer live safely in their own homes and need access to continuous care and medical attention have options for residential care in nursing homes in the county and the region. The facilities available locally are highlighted in the chart on the next page (Figure 11).

**Figure 11
Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes in Tazewell County**

Assisted Living Facilities	Location	Type of Facility	Number of Beds
Westwood Center	Bluefield	Non-Ambulatory Residential Assisted Living Care	25
Commonwealth Senior Living At Cedar Bluff	Cedar Bluff	Non-Ambulatory Residential Assisted Living Care	70
Dogwood Crossing Senior Living & Memory Care	Tazewell	Non-Ambulatory Residential Assisted Living Care Special Care	70
Nursing Homes	Location	Ownership/Hospital Based	Number of Certified Beds
Heritage Hall	Tazewell	For-profit Corporation/No	180
Genesis Elder Care Westwood	Bluefield	For-profit Corporation/No	65

*Source: Virginia Department of Social Services Web Assisted Living Facility Search
Virginia Department of Health Directory of Long Term Care Facilities, March 2022.*

IV. Transportation

A community transportation system affects development patterns that impact land development policies and the overall planning objectives of the community. The following is an examination of the major elements of Tazewell County's present transportation system.

A. VDOT/Functional Classifications

Tazewell County's Road network is classified by VDOT as principal or minor arterials, major or minor collectors and other freeways and expressways. Arterials are intended to emphasize mobility, the efficiency by which traffic can move. Collectors are intended to emphasize access, connecting different uses along the route. Functional classifications are used for the purpose of funding, design, determining statewide network for the State Highway Needs Assessment Study, and to help establish construction priorities.

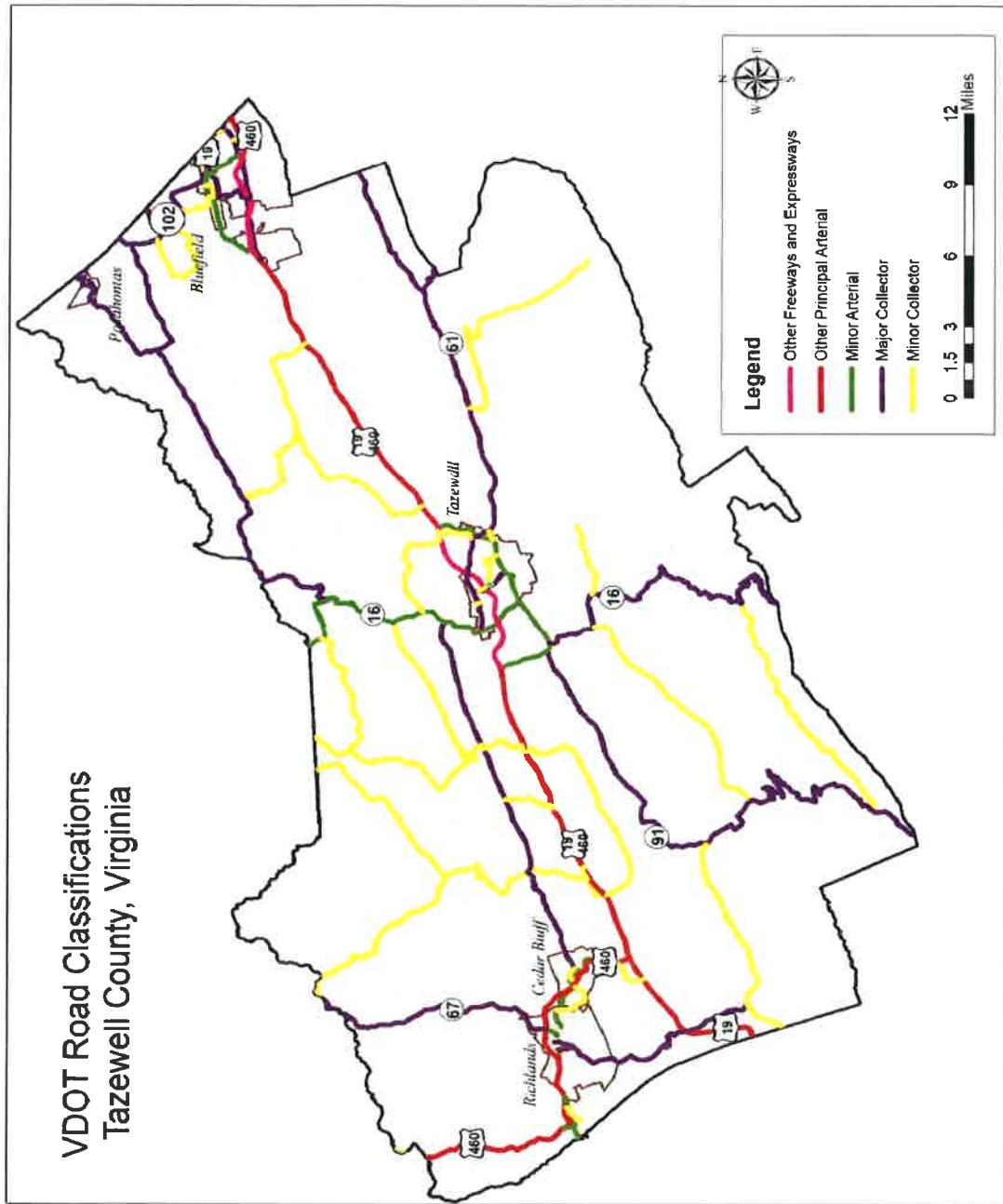
Tazewell County is bisected east to west by U.S. 19 & U.S.19/460. Route 460 also runs from the town of Richlands to the Buchanan County line in the northwest part of the county. U.S. 19 & U.S.19/460 is the most heavily traveled highway in the County, with an annual average daily volume estimate of 15,000 vehicles. U.S. 19 & U.S.19/460 is completely four-laned and has a functional classification of Other Principal Arterial. Bus. 460E runs through part of the Town of Richlands and the Town of Cedar Bluff. It has a functional classification of Minor Arterial and has an annual average daily volume estimate of 11,000 vehicles. U.S. 19N runs through the Town of Tazewell, has an annual average daily volume estimate of 8,200 and has a functional classification of Other Freeways and Expressways. Business 19E runs through the Town of Tazewell, has an annual average daily volume estimate of 4,700 and has a functional classification of Minor Arterial. U.S. 19N runs through the Town of Bluefield, has an annual average daily volume estimate of 14,000 and has a functional classification of Minor Arterial. U.S. 460E runs through the Town of Bluefield, has an annual average daily volume estimate of 9,500 and has a functional classification of Other Freeways and Expressways. It is important to note that U.S. 19 & U.S.19/460 is a Corridor of State Wide Significance.

Because of the existence of only one U.S. highway and no interstate highways, State Primary Highways play a greater role in traffic flow in the County. State Route 102 at College Ave. in the Town of Bluefield is the most heavily traveled state primary highway with 10,000 vehicles per day and a functional classification of Minor Arterial. State Primary Highway 16 provides important two-lane access to counties north and south of Tazewell County. The north part of 16 has a functional classification of Minor Arterial and the southern part has a functional classification of Major Collector. Other State Primary roads with the functional classification of Major Collector are Route 67, Route 61, and Route 91 (portions are not paved)

Tazewell County has 477 miles of State Secondary Highways that serve many small rural communities throughout the County. Major secondary roads with traffic volumes of approximately 1,000 vehicle types per day.

The map below shows the state routes within Tazewell County and their classification:

Figure 12
VDOT Road Classifications



1. Transportation Programs and Funding Sources

1.1 VTRANS

VTrans 2040 is Virginia’s statewide transportation plan that lays out visions and goals for transportation in the Commonwealth. VTrans identifies transportation needs and investment priorities for SMART SCALE, VDOT Revenue Sharing, and advanced activities and project development per the Board policy.

The Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) works with partner agencies at the statewide, regional, and local level to develop Virginia’s Statewide Transportation Plan (VTRANS), the Commonwealth’s multi-modal long-range plan. The plan includes proposed improvements on Virginia’s federal functionally classified roadways and is part of a greater initiative to aid the statewide transportation funding process.

Projects identified in VTRANS 2040 that are eligible for the Smart Scale application process for the 2024 funding year for Tazewell County are:

Figure 13

VTRANS Needs-Tazewell County, Virginia

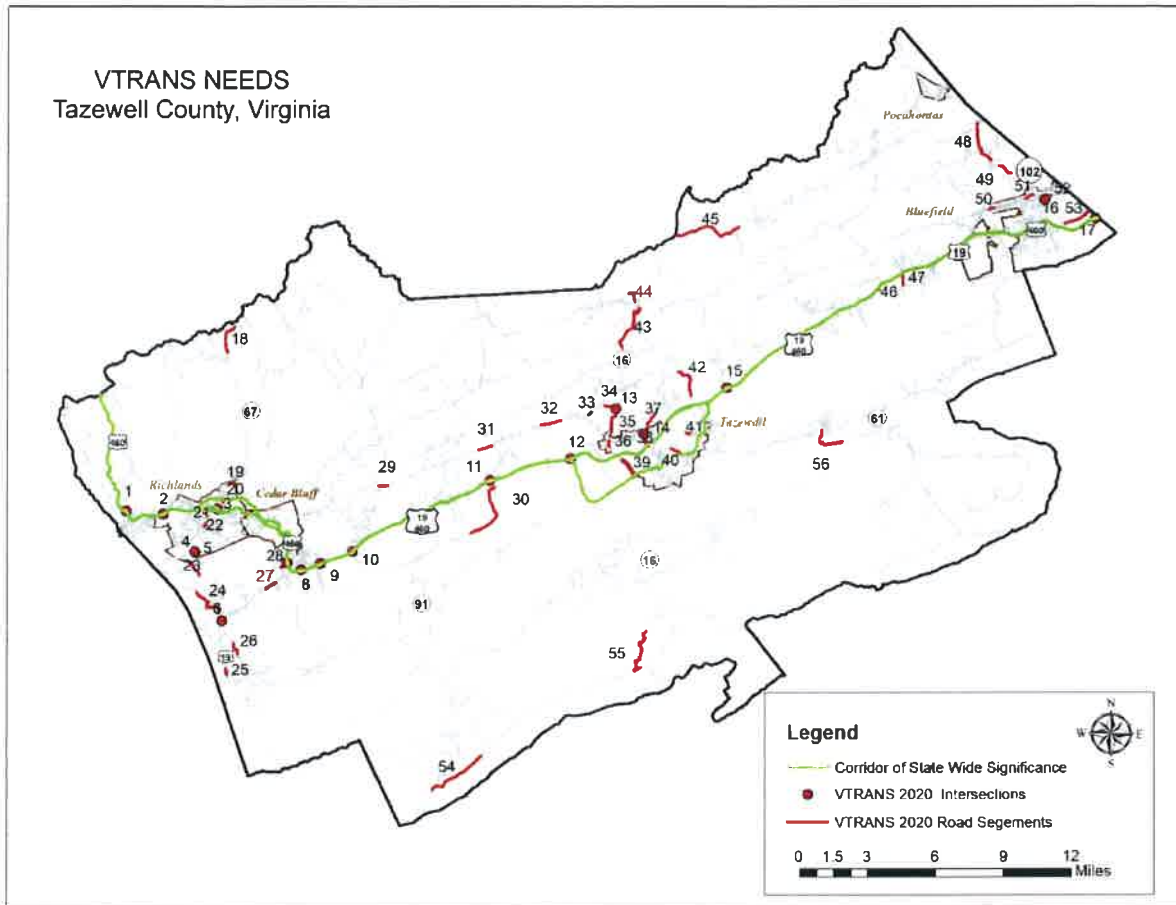
Number		
1	US 460, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 805, Southerland Branch Rd.	Intersection
2	US 460, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 783 Acme Rd.	Intersection
3	US 460 Bus., Second St. & Rt. 67 Railroad Ave.	Intersection
4	Rt. 4700, Kents Ridge Rd. & Rt. 19, Daw Rd.	Intersection
5	Rt. 4700, Kents Ridge Rd. & Rt. 21, Birmingham Rd.	Intersection
6	US19, Steelsburg Hwy & Rt. 609, Kents Ridge Rd & Rt. 609, Wardell Rd.	Intersection
7	US 460, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 719, Claypool Hill Mall Rd.	Intersection
8	US 460, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 610, Indian Paint Rd.	Intersection
9	US 19, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 1249, Granny's Rd.	Intersection
10	US 19, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 637, Limestone Rd & Rt. 637, Pounding Mill Branch Rd.	Intersection
11	US 19, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 637, Pounding Mill Branch Rd. & Rt. 637, Cochran Hollow Rd.	Intersection
12	US 19, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 632, Pisgah Rd & US 19, Crab Orchard Rd.	Intersection

13	Rt. 16, Adria Rd. & Rt. 631, Baptist Valley Rd.	Intersection
14	Rt. 16, W Riverside Dr. & Rt. 61, E Riverside Dr. & Rt. 16, Tazewell Ave.	Intersection
15	US 19, Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy & Rt. 651, Wittens Mill Rd.	Intersection
16	Rt. 102, South College Ave. & Rt. 3252, Tazewell Ave.	Intersection
17	US 460, C. Jefferson Stafford Hwy & Rt. 868, Leatherwood Ln	Intersection
18	Rt. 67 (Jewell Ridge Rd.) From Rt. 620 (Jewell Main Rd.) to Tiller Rd.)	Segments
19	Rt. 67 (Jewell Ridge Rd.) From Jabo Ln to Shadow Ln	Segments
20	Rt. 67 (Railroad Ave.) From US 460 Ramp to Fifth St.	Segments
21	Rt. 4700 (Kents Ridge Rd.) From Brick St. to Front St.	Segments
22	Rt. 4700 (Kents Ridge Rd.) From Mason St. to Kimberly Ln.	Segments
23	Rt. 609 (Kents Ridge Rd.) From Pepper Loop St to Richlands Town Boundary	Segments
24	Rt. 609 (Kents Ridge Rd.) From Land St. to Little River Rd	Segments
25	US 19 (Steelsburg Hwy) From Rt. 1219 (Wardell Industrial Park Rd.) to County Line	Segments
26	Rt. 609 (Wardell Rd.) From Terrier Ln to Kansas St	Segments
27	US 19 (Steelsburg Hwy) From Montcalm Ln to South Ln.	Segments
28	Rt. 719 (Claypool Hill Mall Rd.) From US 460 (Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy) to Clinic Rd.	Segments
29	Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) From Rt. 699 (Green Mountain Rd.) to Rt. 773 (Bailey Rd.)	Segments
30	Rt. 637 (Pounding Mill Branch) From Citation St to Rt. 698 (Maxwell Rd.)	Segments
31	Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) From Rt. 812 (Webb St.) to Rt. 801 (Sutherland Dr.)	Segments
32	Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) From Rt. 1510 (Dailey's Chapel Rd.) to Campbell Dr.	Segments
33	Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) From Rt. 635 (Hubble Hill Rd.) to Rt. 855 (Burkett Dr.)	Segments
34	Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) From Raywood Dr. to Rt. 16 (Adria Rd.)	Segments
35	Rt. 16 (Adria Rd.) From Rt. 631 (Baptist Valley Rd.) to Town of Tazewell Boundary	Segments
36	Rt. 16 (Fairground Rd.) From Pisgah Rd to Rt. 16 (Adria Rd.) & Rt. 16 (W Riverside Dr.)	Segments
37	Rt. 831 (Whitley Branch Rd.) From Rt. 732 (VanHoozer Rd.) to Blackhorse Rd.	Segments

38	Rt. 16 (Tazewell Ave.) From Rt. 16 (W Riverside Dr.) & Rt. 61 (E Riverside Dr.)	Segments
39	to US19 Ramp (Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy.)	Segments
40	Rt. 16 (Fairground Rd.) From US 19 Ramp (Gov. G. C. Peery Hwy.) to US 19 (West Main St.)	Segments
41	Rt. 23 (Cemetery Land) From Rt. 9707 to US 19 (E Fincastle Tpke.)	Segments
42	Rt. 61 (E Riverside Dr.) From Valley View St. to Maplewood Ln.	Segments
43	Rt. 645 (Lake Witten Rd.) From Mountain Springs Ln. to Recreation Dr	Segments
44	Rt. 16 (Stoney Ridge Rd.) From Rt. 643 (Healing Springs Rd.) to Rt. 644 (Horsepen Rd.)	Segments
45	Rt. 16 (Stoney Ridge Rd.) From Rt. 642 (Crocketts Cove Rd.) to Gertrude Ln.	Segments
46	Rt. 644 (Abbs Valley Rd.) From Rt. 655 (Goss Rd.) to Russell County Line	Segments
47	Mallard Way - From US19 to end of Mallard Way.	Segments
48	Rt. 665 (Camp Joy Rd.) From US19 to Century Ln.	Segments
49	Rt. 102 (Falls Mills Rd.) From Yards Rd to Rt. 717 (Adams Dr.)	Segments
50	Rt. 102 (Falls Mills Rd.) From Southern Dr. to Hampshire Rd.	Segments
51	US19 (Virginia Ave.) From Rt. 749 (Deaton St.) to Glenn St.	Segments
52	US19 (Virginia Ave.) From Olney Ave. to East St.	Segments
53	US19 (Virginia Ave.) From Depot St. to Walton St.	Segments
54	Rt. 102 (College Ave.) From Sanders Ln. to Leatherwood Ln.	Segments
55	Rt. 601 (Freestone Valley Rd.) From Rt. 91 (Veterans Rd. to Laurel Creek Ln.	Segments
56	Rt. 16 (B F Buchanan Hwy.) From Rt. 601 (B F Buchanan Hwy.) to Doe Ln.	Segments
57	Rt. 623 (Burkes Garden Rd.) From Rt. 61 (Clear Fork Rd.) & Rt. 61 (Gratton Rd.)	Segments
58	to 1.8 Miles South East going towards Wolf Creek Dr.	Segments

Figure 13.1

VTRANS Needs, Tazewell County, Va (Map)



1.2 Smartscale

SMART SCALE is the process of developing and implementing a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions for capacity enhancing projects within the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Funding for project prioritization comes from two main pathways — the construction District Grants Program (DGP) and the High-Priority Projects Program (HPPP). The District Grants Program (DGP) is open only to localities and projects applying for these funds compete with other projects from the same construction district, while High-Priority Projects Program (HPPP) funds compete with projects from across the commonwealth.

Applications are due in the fall every other year for funds to be awarded the following year through inclusion in the Six Year Improvement Plan as either a VDOT High Priority Project (category # 1 and #2 below) or through the Construction District Grant Program (all categories below). SMART SCALE funded projects fall into four (4) categories:

1. **Corridor of Statewide Significance** – key multimodal travel corridors that move people and goods within and through Virginia, serving primarily long-distance/interregional travel.

2. **Regional Networks** – multimodal networks that facilitate intraregional travel within highly urbanized areas.
3. **Urban Development Areas (UDA)** – areas where jurisdictions intend to concentrate future population growth and development consistent with the UDA definition in the Code of Virginia.
4. **Transportation Safety Needs** – statewide safety needs identified in VTrans2040.

1.2.1 Smart Scale Application Process

A project application for funds from the HPPP or the DGP must meet an identified need in VTRANS 2040, the commonwealth’s long-range transportation plan. The regional or local government must identify its top regional/local priorities. If a project meets an identified need, then the regional or local government must provide a resolution of support and supporting information for the SMARTSCALE application.

SMART SCALE funded projects are scored and awarded funds based on their impact on the following evaluation criteria/measures:

1. Safety
2. Congestion Mitigation
3. Accessibility
4. Environmental Quality
5. Economic Development
6. Land Use Coordination for Areas Over 200,000 in Population

Projects are then ranked and provided to the CTB for funding consideration.

The projects listed in the table below have been funded or currently waits funding:

YEAR	PROJECT	STATUS
FY 2020	Route 460 Corridor Improvements	Funded
FY 2022	US 460 and US 19 Intersection Improvements	Not funded
FY 2022	US 460 at SR610 Intersection Improvements	Funded
FY 2024	US 460 and US 19 Intersection Improvements	Screened in Awaiting Approval

1.3 Six-Year Improvement Program

The SYIP is an allocation plan that allots transportation funds from all sources for all projects for the next six years. Programming focuses on where to invest Virginia’s funding for transportation over the next six years. The SYIP contains projects selected for funding through the statewide prioritization process, as well as projects funded through other programs including bridge, paving, safety, and other special federal and state programs. The SYIP also includes projects that are funded

by others but administered by VDOT. In March, April and May, on even-numbered state fiscal years SMART SCALE applications are sought from regional and local governments, and public transit agencies, Virginia-wide, that seeks state transportation funding by the CTB. Individual projects are selected for funding and included in the SYIP, which is adopted by July 1 of each year. Projects included in the SYIP are fully funded through construction and delivered according to the established budget and schedule.

Projects approved in the FY 2022 Six Year Plan for Tazewell County are:

UPC	DESCRIPTION	ROUTE	DISTRICT	ROAD SYSTEM	JURISDICTION	ESTIMATE/\$1,000	PREVIOUS	FY22	FY22-27	BALANCE
116927	RTE.19/460 CROSS-OVERS (BETWEEN CLAYPOOL HILL AND RTE.820)	19	BRISTOL	PRIMARY	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$360	\$0	\$0	\$360	\$0
113848	#SGR19VB-RT 61 OVER COVE CRK TAZEWELL VA 1069 FED 18469 #SMART22-US460 AT SR610 INTERSECTION	61	BRISTOL	PRIMARY	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750	\$0
119441	IMPROVEMENTS #SDR21VB-BRIDGE REPLMNT. RT 717 FED	460	BRISTOL	PRIMARY	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$9,359	\$0	\$1,300	\$8,059	\$0
101374	ID 18657 VA STR 6113 #SGR19LBA-FINCASTLE FARM RD BLUEST	717	BRISTOL	SECONDARY	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$1,201	\$711	\$100	\$391	\$0
113875	RV TAZ VA 5001 FED 29679 #SGR22VB-BR REPL-RTE 806 OVER COAL CRK	0	BRISTOL	URBAN	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$620	\$100	\$520	\$0	\$0
117112	VA #6298-FED ID 18686	806	BRISTOL	URBAN	TAZEWELL COUNTY	\$7,394	\$0	\$0	\$7,394	\$0

1.3.1 Secondary Six-Year Plan

The Secondary Six-Year Plan is the development of separate programs for the secondary system state highways in each county. This plan is administered differently from the SYIP. Each county oversees their own secondary roads plan which is approved each year by the Board of Supervisors. Decisions on which projects are included in the plan are based on traffic counts, immediate safety need, and projects that are the most economically feasible.

Projects in the 2020-21 through 2024-25 Tazewell County Secondary Six-Year Plan are:

The routes in bold red text are either under construction or to be constructed in the future. Those in black are complete.

District Bristol		SECONDARY SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (in dollars)									
County Tazewell County		Board Approval Date 2020-21 through 2024-25									
Type of Funds	FROM		SSYP Funding		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Type of Project	TO		Other Funding								
Priority #	Length	Ad Date	Total								
Rt 9999	Scenic Road - Acme Rd	PE	\$0								
115386	9999092913	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Scenic Rd - Acme Rd	CON	\$210,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Route 450	Total	\$210,296	\$210,296	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Charity Road			(296 From 766)							
	0 3										
Rt 0766	Wesleys Chapel Church Rd	PE	\$0								
115387	0766092914	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 766	CON	\$160,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Rte 631E	Total	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Rte 601E										
	0 4										
Rt 0505	Heartland Ridge	PE	\$0								
115388	0505092915	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 605	CON	\$197,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Rte 602	Total	\$197,000	\$197,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Dead End										
	0 5										
Rt. 0630	Buck Hollow Rd.	PE	\$0		UNDER CONSTRUCTION						
115389	0630092916	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 630	CON	\$210,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Rte 627	Total	\$243,968	\$243,968	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	0 7 Mi South of Rte 627			(33,968 From 766)							
	0 7										
Rt. 0677	Woods St.	PE	\$0		UNDER CONSTRUCTION						
115390	0677092917	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 677	CON	\$137,187	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Bluefield NCL	Total	\$142,187	\$53,668	\$88,519	\$88,519	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Dead End										
	0 4										
Rt. 0706	Woods St.	PE	\$0		UNDER CONSTRUCTION						
115391	0706092918	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 706	CON	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Rte 627	Total	\$150,000	\$2,000	\$148,000	\$148,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Rte 626										
	0 4										
Rt. 0769	Alamo Road	PE	\$0								
115392	0769092919	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
STATE FORCES/HIRED EQUIPMENT	Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 769	CON	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
	Rte 660	Total	\$88,000	\$53,000	\$35,000	\$21,344	\$13,656	\$0	\$0	\$0	
State forces/Hired equip CN Only 9999 99	Dead End			(From 605)							
	0 21 Mile										
Rt. 0610	Indian Paint Road	PE	\$0								
105873	0662092918	RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
S	RECONSTRUCT & PAVE NON-HARD SURFACE ROAD RT 610	CON	\$490,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Migration	Forest Hills Dr to 1 15 Mi S Forest Hills	Total	\$491,446	\$0	\$491,446	\$0	\$289,446	\$202,000			

Rt 821	Belcher Roads Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 821 Rte 657 Dead End 0.1 Mile	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
		CON	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				\$0	\$27,742	\$0		\$27,742		
		Total	\$27,742							
Rt 822	Dunn Road Reconstruct and Pave Non-Hard Surface Road - Rte 822 Rte 657 Dead End 0.17 Mile	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$40,000							
				0	\$46,000	0	0	\$46,000	0	0
		Total	\$46,000	0	\$46,000	0	0	\$46,000	0	0
Rt 643 Healing Springs Rd	Harmon Farm Rd Rt 830 1	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$390,000	0	390,000	0	0	274,742	116,268	0
		Total	\$390,000							
Rt 826 Atwell Street	Rt 644 Dead End 0.34 Mile	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$145,000	0	145,000	0	0	0	145,000	0
		Total	\$145,000							
Rt 819 Sisters Lane	Route 636 Deand End 0.6 Miles 9999 99	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$135,000							
				0	135,000	0	0	0	0	136,000
		Total	\$135,000							
Rt 761 Hunter Lane	Rt 782 Dead End 0.25 Mile	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$115,000	0	115,000	0	0	0	0	116,000
		Total	\$115,000							
Rt 662 Cove Creek Road	Rt 61 Dead End	PE	\$0							
		RW	\$0							
		CON	\$420,000	0	420,000	0	0	0	43,813	64,071
		Total	\$420,000							

1.4 Revenue Sharing

The Revenue Sharing Program is exempt from the SMARTSCALE prioritization process and it provides funding for use by a county, city, or town to construct, reconstruct, or improve qualifying highway projects. The Revenue Sharing Program is intended to provide funding for immediately needed improvements or to supplement funding for existing projects. It may be used to finance eligible work on highway systems within a locality, and may include sidewalks, trails, and other facilities that accommodate pedestrian and/or bicycle access along the highway network. Locality funds are matched with State funds at a 50 to 50 percent match, with statutory limitations on the amount of State funds authorized per locality. The Commonwealth Transportation Board approves the statewide Revenue Sharing Program, including allocations of funds based on existing statute and policies to specific projects in consideration of each locality's request.

Revenue Sharing Projects applied for in Tazewell County are shown in the table below:

PROJECT APPLIED FOR	ROUTE	YEAR APPLIED FOR
Crossover improvement West of Route 820	Route 19/460	2019
Widening	Route 609	2019
Structural Rehabilitation	Route 631	2019
structural rehabilitation	route 645	2019
cross overs (between claypool hill and rt. 820	route 19/460	2021

1.5 Coal and Gas Road Improvement Program

This program is funded by a Local coal and gas road improvement and Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority tax. Funds in this program are in addition to those allocated to Tazewell County from state highway funds. State highway funds are not reduced as a result of any revenues received from the Coal Haul Program. Coal Haul Road Plan funding includes, but is not limited to, county road maintenance and construction, PSA, State Revenue Sharing, Disaster Relief, and more. This program provides much needed funds for any road project in the county. Construction and maintenance funding is approved on a fiscal year basis by the Coal Haul Road Committee and submitted to the Board of Supervisors for their review and acceptance. The fiscal year coal haul road plan must be submitted and accepted by the Board of Supervisors prior to July 1, which is the beginning of each fiscal year.

1.6 State of Good Repair

The State of Good Repair Program is exempt from the SMARTSCALE prioritization process. This program provides funds to meet the asset management needs of bridges and highways. The program provides funding for deteriorated pavements and structurally deficient bridges owned or maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation and or localities. The bridge must be on the National Bridge Inventory and deteriorated pavement must be on an Interstate or Primary Highway. Each district will receive between 5.5 percent and 17.5 percent of the total available funds in any given year based on needs.

Tazewell County has a total of 207 bridges that are on the National Bridge Inventory. The following 17 bridges are listed as being in poor condition:

An application for Structure Number 29679 was applied for in the year of 2019 and was approved to be replaced.

Structure Number 18657 has been approved to be replaced and is in the FY-2022 Six Year Plan.

Structure Number	Year Build	Average Daily Traffic	Structure Length (ft)	Facility Carried by Structure	Bridge Condition	Bridge Age (yr)	Deck Area (sq. ft.)
18469	1957	366	65.9	Route 61	Poor	64	1925.6
29679	1932	10	30.5	Fincastle Farm Rd	Poor	89	430.4
18461	1969	1364	212.9	US-19 NBL	Poor	52	8522.6
18657	1912	49	71.9	Route 717	Poor	109	848.6
22548	1923	4400	82.3	Route 61	Poor	98	2458.6
18530	1950	262	30.8	Freestone Valley Rd	Poor	71	799.3
18587	1955	970	24	Route 631	Poor	66	715
18555	1981	185	43	Middle Creek Road	Poor	40	1170.4
22461	1932	87	43	Allegheny St	Poor	89	831.9
22463	1984	1700	279.9	Veterans Dr./Rt 609	Poor	37	11936
18686	1952	2300	65.9	Route 806	Poor	69	3418.4

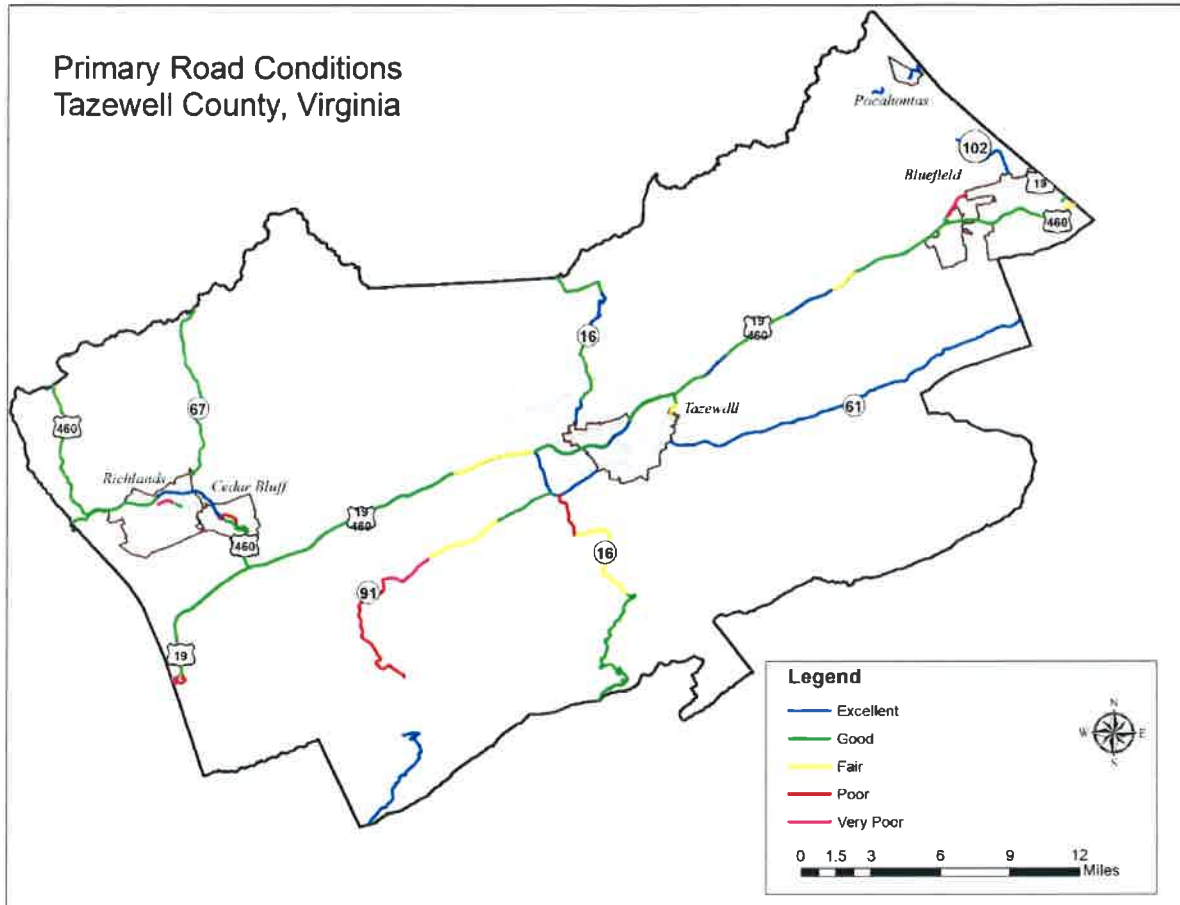
Tazewell County has a total of 28.85 miles of deteriorated pavement that is in poor to very poor condition that is on a primary highway.

The following list and map are an overview of current roadway conditions.

EFF YEAR	SYSTEM	ROUTE NAME	LANE MILE	CONDITION
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA SR00369NB1NS001	2.1	POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA SR00016NB	3.358	POOR
2020	PRIIIMARY	R-VA SR00091NB	5.256	POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US00019NB	1.92	POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA SR00091NB	5.136	POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US00460EBBUSUS009	1.33	POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA SR00091NB	3.818	VERY POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA SR00369NBINS002	.76	VERY POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US00091SB	1.574	VERY POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US00460EBBUS009	.072	VERY POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US000460EB	1.756	VERY POOR
2020	PRIMARY	R-VA US00460PABUS009	1.14	VERY POOR

FIGURE 14

Primary Road Conditions



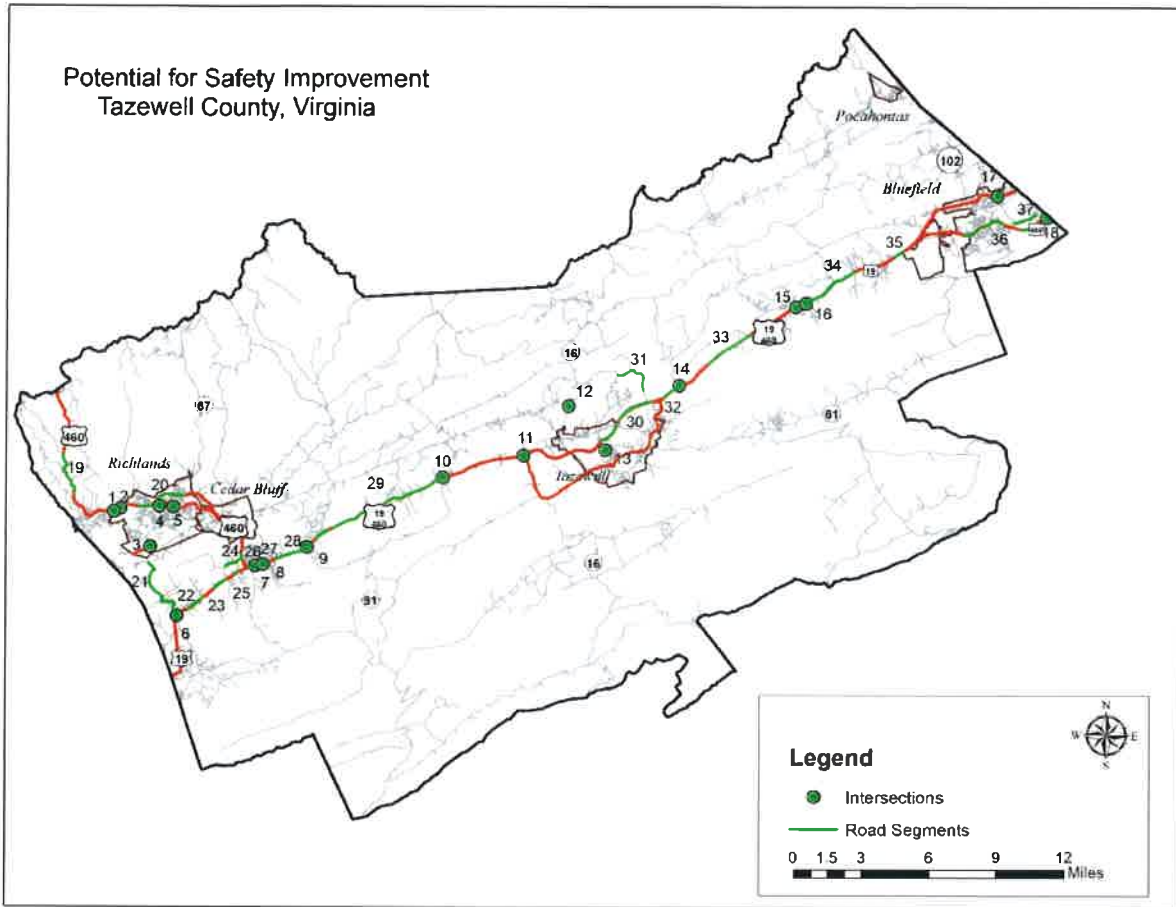
1.7 HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Highway Safety Improvement Program is exempt from the SMARTSCALE prioritization process. The primary objective of the Highway Safety Improvement Program is to identify and improve locations where there is a high concentration, or risk, of vehicle crashes that result in deaths or injuries and to implement strategies to attain Virginia’s Towards Zero Deaths vision.

The map and table below show potential safety improvements:

FIGURE 15

Potential For Safety Improvement



Potential for Safety Improvements

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT TYPE
1	US 460, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 67, Raven Rd	Intersection
2	US 460, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 752, Clearview RD	Intersection
3	Rt. 4700, Kents Ridge Rd & Rt 19, Daw Rd	Intersection
4	Rt 4700, Kents Ridge RD & US 460, Front St	Intersection
5	US 460, Front St & Rt 67, Norfolk St	Intersection
6	US 19, Steelsburg Hwy & Rt 609, Wardell Rd	Intersection
7	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 610, Indian Paint Rd	Intersection
8	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 1230 Thru Dr	Intersection
9	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 637 W, Pounding Mill Branch Rd	Intersection
10	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy, & Rt 637 E, Pounding Mill Branch Rd	Intersection
11	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt. 632, Pisgah Rd	Intersection
12	Rt 16, Adria Rd & Rt 631, Baptist Valley Rd	Intersection
13	Rt 16, Tazewell Ave & Rt 22, Old Tazewell Ave & Lyons Ave	Intersection
14	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 651, Wittens Mill Rd	Intersection
15	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Rt 680, Hurt Rd	Intersection

16	US 19, Governor G C Peery Hwy & Camden Dr	Intersection
17	US 19, Virginia Ave & Rt 3253, Graham Ave & Spruce St	Intersection
18	US 460, C Jefferson Stafford Hwy & Rt 868, Leatherwood Ln	Intersection
19	US 460, Governor G C Peery Hwy From Rt 804 Red Ash Camp Rd to Greystone Ln	Segment
20	US 460 Governor G C Peery Hwy from S-VA148PR Altizer St to US 460Ramp	Segment
21	Rt 609 Kents ridge Rd From US 19 Steelsburg Hwy) to Rt 811 Addison Rd	Segment
22	US 19 Steelsburg Hwy from Paige Dr tort 834 Town Hollow Rd	Segment
23	US 19 Steelsburg Hwy from Rt 705 Drews Ln to Rt 719 Claypool Hill Mall Rd	Segment
24	Rt 719 Claypool Hill Mall Rd From Rt 1020 Airport Rd to US 460 Governor GC Peery Hwy	Segment
25	US 19 Steelsburg Hwy from Taylor Rd to Honeyrock Rd	Segment
26	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from US 460 Governor G C Peery Hwy to Ravine St	Segment
27	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Rt 1230 Thru Dr to Rt 871 And St	Segment
28	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Maggie Ln to Rt 637 Limestone Rd	Segment
29	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Lake St to Rt 637 Cochran Hollow Rd	Segment
30	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Carline Ave to Rt 678 Market St	Segment
31	Rt 645 Lake Witten RD from Mountain Springs Ln to Rt 645 Cavitts Creek Rd & Rt 831 Whitley Branch Rd	Segment
32	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Fincastle Trnprk to Rt 651 Wittens Mill Rd	Segment
33	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Rt 781 Industry Rd to Rt 649 Lynn Hollow Rd	Segment
34	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Rt 745 School House Rd to Rt 665 Camp Joy Rd	Segment
35	US 19 Governor G C Peery Hwy from Rt 1520 Ebenezer Ave to Town of Bluefield Boundary	Segment
36	US 460 C Jefferson Stafford Hwy from US 460 Ramp to Commerce Dr	Segment
37	Rt 102 College Ave from Rt 102 S College Ave to Stinson –Williams Dr	Segment

1.8 Transportation Alternatives Program

The Highway Transportation Alternatives Program is exempt from the SMARTSCALE prioritization process. The program funds projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. It focuses on providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other community improvements. The program will reimburse up to a maximum 80% of the eligible project costs and requires a minimum 20% local match. The projects listed below are eligible:

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared use paths
- Infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers to access daily needs
- Conversion and use of abandoned railway corridors for rails-to-trails facilities
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas
- Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising (billboards)
- Preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities including train depots, lighthouses and canals
- Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way
- Archeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project
- Environmental mitigation activities to decrease the negative impacts of roads on the natural environment

- Wildlife mortality mitigation activities to decrease negative impacts of roads on wildlife and habitat connectivity

Tazewell County has not applied for this funding in the past. The county will apply for this funding as the future needs become available.

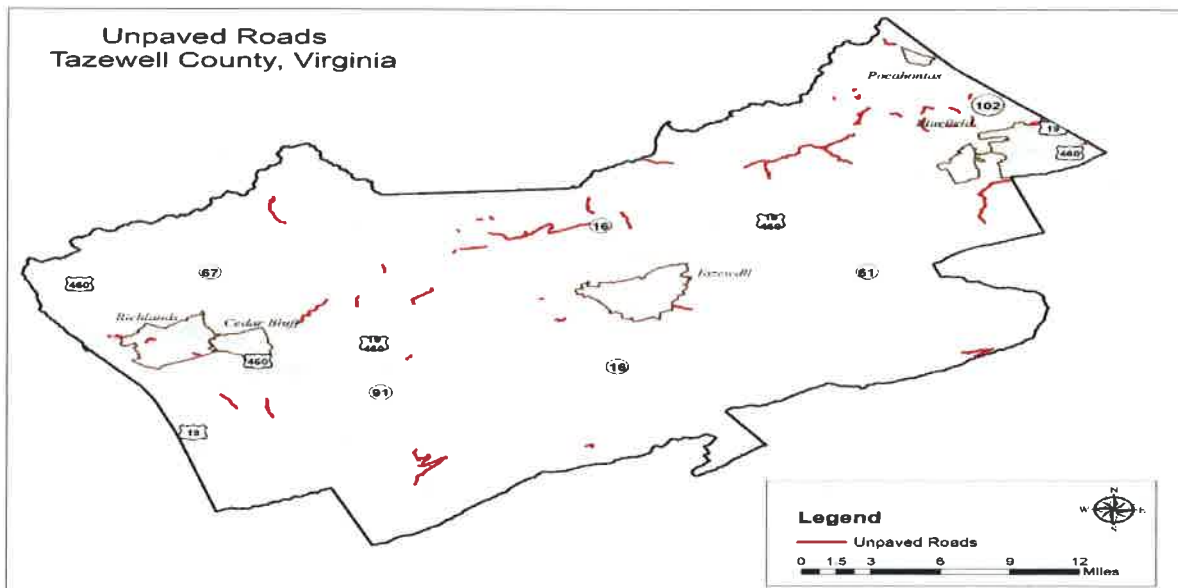
1.9 Rural Rustic Roads

The Rural Rustic Road concept is a practical approach to paving Virginia's low volume unpaved roads. The Virginia Department of Transportation's Local Assistance Division working with the Rural Rustic Road Policy Committee established the initial guidelines for this program. The maximum speed limit for a road designated as a Rural Rustic Road is 35 mph, must carry no more than 1,500 VPD, must be used predominately for local traffic, must have minimal anticipated traffic growth and must be an unpaved road already within the State Secondary System. The road also must be a priority (line item) in the locality's approved Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) if the funding source is from secondary system allocations. If secondary system allocations are not used, the project is not required to be in the SSYP.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors, by resolution, must designate the road as a Rural Rustic Road.

The map below shows all unpaved roads within Tazewell County.

FIGURE 16
Unpaved Roads



Unpaved Roads

Route Number	
R-VA092SC00739NB	R-VA092SC00819NB
R-VA092SC00713NB	R-VA092SC00656NB
R-VA092SC00768NB	R-VA092SC00653NB
R-VA SR00091NB	R-VA092SC00676EB
R-VA148UR00006NB	R-VA092SC00789EB
R-VA092SC00736NB	R-VA092SC00737EB
R-VA092SC00725EB	R-VA092SC00612NB
R-VA092SC00702NB	R-VA092SC00777EB
R-VA092SC00639NB	R-VA092SC00630NB
R-VA092SC00693EB	R-VA092SC00766EB
S-VA092PR BEAVERS RD	S-VA148PR PURCELL I
R-VA092SC00822NB	R-VA092SC00808EB
R-VA092SC00662NB	R-VA092SC00760NB
R-VA092SC00643EB	R-VA092SC00841EB
R-VA092SC00643EB	R-VA092SC00840NB
R-VA092SC00643EB	R-VA092SC00769EB
R-VA092SC00643EB	R-VA092SC00692EB
R-VA092SC00685EB	R-VA092SC00692EB
R-VA092SC00721NB	R-VA092SC00761EB
R-VA092SC00825NB	R-VA092SC00661NB
R-VA092SC00689NB	R-VA092SC00661NB
R-VA092SC00623NB	R-VA092SC00783EB
R-VA148UR00018EB	R-VA092SC00821NB
R-VA092SC00706NB	R-VA FRO0868EB
R-VA092SC00610NB	R-VA092SC00810EB
R-VA092SC00677NB	R-VA092SC00648EB
	R-VA092SC00634EB

1.10 Federal Funding

There are various grants available through Federal Grant Funds. In the past Tazewell County has not applied or used these resources due to lack of staffing. Seeing the potential Tazewell County has third party grant writers to help find and apply for these grants. The grant writers are not just helping with transportation grants they are helping find grant funds for other projects within the county as well.

1.11 Public Transportation

Four County Transit provided by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (AASC) is the primary transit service in Tazewell County. Fixed routes as well as demand responsive transit is available during the week. They also provide a Work Express Route that operates along US 19 and VA. 71. An additional transit service offered by Four County Transit is the Veterans Transport to Veteran’s Administration Hospitals. This transit is an important asset to the citizens of Tazewell County. Trips provide access to medical facilities, places of work, and higher education facilities in Tazewell County and surrounding counties.

1.12 Airports

Tazewell County has one Airport that has small plane capabilities, including a 4,300-foot with instrument landing capabilities for single and twin-engine general aviation uses. The runway was resurfaced and the lighting replaced in 2023 as part of a \$750,000 renovation project.

Current site preparation for several new box hangers was completed at a cost of \$400,000 in 2023 with construction set to get underway in 2024. The airport's local authority is financing the hanger construction through a local bank and will use rental fees for the payments.

A \$500,000 obstruction removal project is already in the planning stages and scheduled to be completed in 2024. This work will remove trees from property surrounding the airport to give pilots clear site lines when landing or taking off.

A runway 25 turnaround project will get started in 2025 and is scheduled for completion in 2026. The perimeter of the airport is scheduled to be fenced in 2027-2028. All of the projects mentioned received 90% or more funding from the FAA and the Virginia Department of Aviation.

Angels of Mercy, a Charitable Group that offers free rides to and from medical appointments to patients in need of treatment, not available locally, picks up and drops off at the Tazewell County Airport. One of our local pilots is part of the program. Local businesses and government agencies use the airport for transportation of staff to and from meetings.

The facility offers 100 low lead and Jet A fuel for sale Monday thru Saturday from 8:30 until 4:30. Future plans call for self-service pumps for fuel.

Enterprise Car Rental is just a few minutes from the airport and offers drop off and pick up service. Airport staff will assist with car rental or information on nearby motels, restaurants, ATV rentals and other facilities during business hours. There is also a courtesy car that may be made available with advance request and a terminal with rest rooms, as well as, information on the area. The airport is camping friendly and offers easy access to Back of the Dragon, Burke's Garden, Breaks Interstate Park and other nearby attractions.

The airport employs a full-time manager and two part time assistants. It is governed by the rules and regulation of the FAA and the Virginia Department of Aviation. A 12-member local board comprised of five appointees by the Tazewell County board of Supervisors, 1-Appointee from each of the county's five towns and 1-from Buchanan County and 1-from Russell County oversees the operation of the airport. The airport may be reached at 276-963-4509. A view of the airport as well as pilot information may be accessed at fly.tazewellcountyva.org. Passenger service is available at Tri-cities Regional Airport in Blountville, TN which offers around the clock service and access to several major hubs including Charlotte, Atlanta and Chicago.

1.13 Rail Service

Passenger Rail Service is not currently available in Tazewell County. The nearest passenger service stations are located in Danville, VA and Lynchburg, VA. Grant funding to study the need and interest for passenger rail service toward Bristol from Roanoke has been awarded and is currently being evaluated.

Commercial Freight Rail Service is available in Tazewell County and is provided by Norfolk Southern Railway Corporation and CSX. The Norfolk Southern lines are a part of the company's Coal Corridor. The corridor carries most of the Virginia coal (90%) shipped to the port of Hampton Roads. The CSX lines are a part of the Coal Corridor of CSX which terminates in Newport News, Virginia.

1.14 Goods Movement

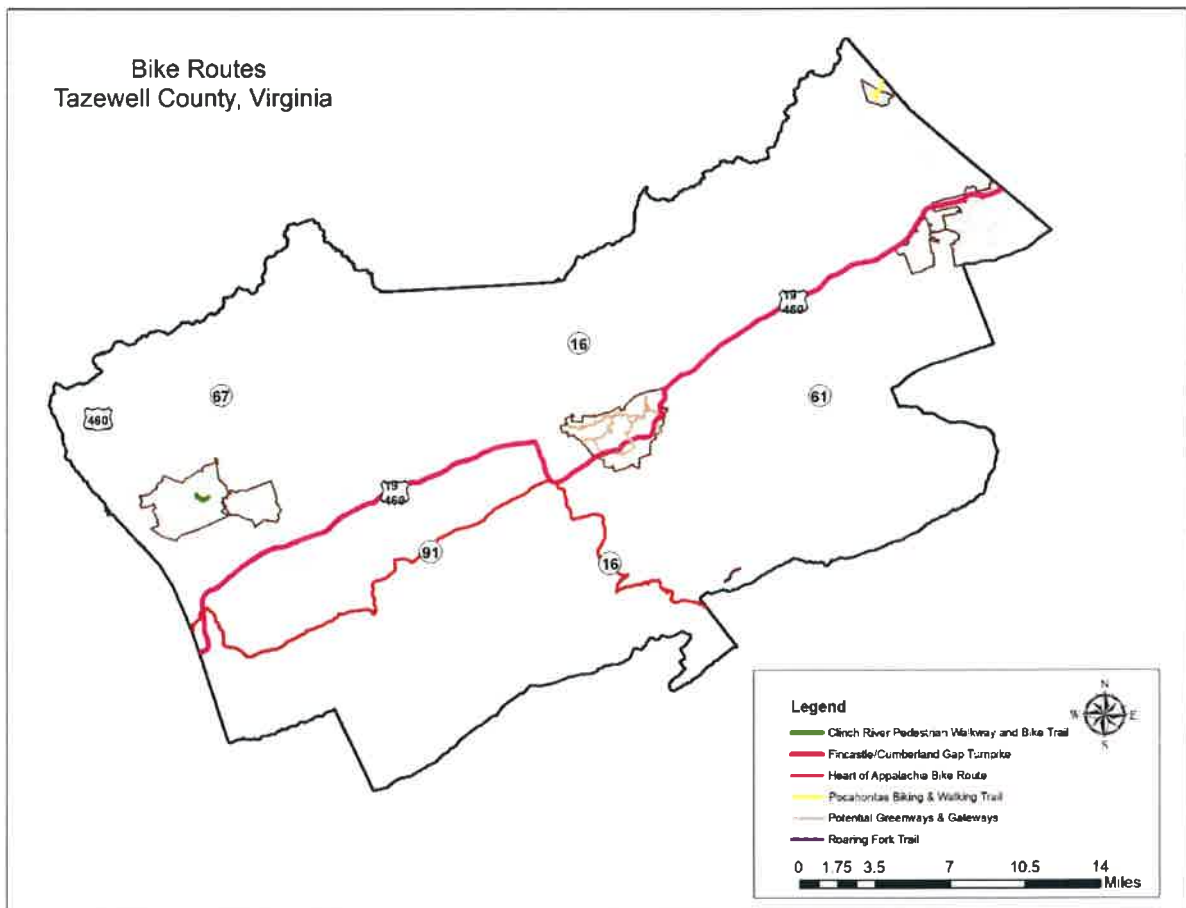
The majority of goods movement in the region, other than coal, is by truck and utilizes US 19, Alternate US 58, US 460, VA 80, and VA 83.

1.15 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

US Bike Route 76, known as Transamerica Trail, is a well-known bicycle route that stretches 4,300 miles from the coast of Virginia to the coast of Oregon. Bike Route 76, is a shared-use facility and is widely recognized as the greatest and most traveled bike trail in America. The Heart of Appalachia Bike Route runs from Burke’s Garden/Tazewell to Guest River Gorge/Wise County. Other trails in Tazewell County that are accessible to bikers is shown in the map below.

FIGURE 17

Bike Routes



1.16 Travel Demand

Travel Demand Management has been shown to greatly aid in reducing single occupant vehicle trips. Measures include carpooling, expanded peak hour public transit and park and ride lots. According to the 2019 U.S. Census, workers traveling outside their county of residence for employment was approximately 32.0% in Tazewell County. There are four park and ride lots located in Tazewell County.

FIGURE 18
Park & Ride Lots

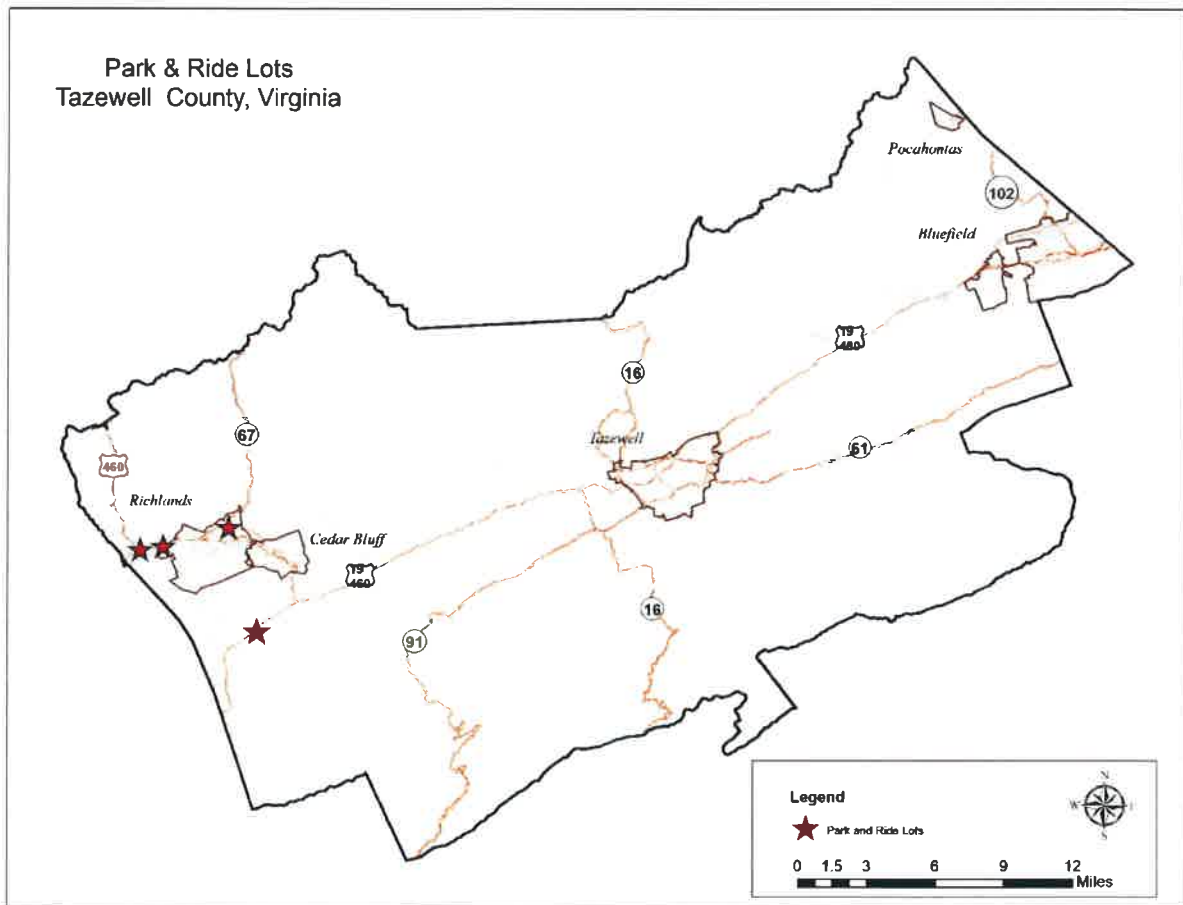


FIGURE 19

Primary and Secondary Road Map of Tazewell County

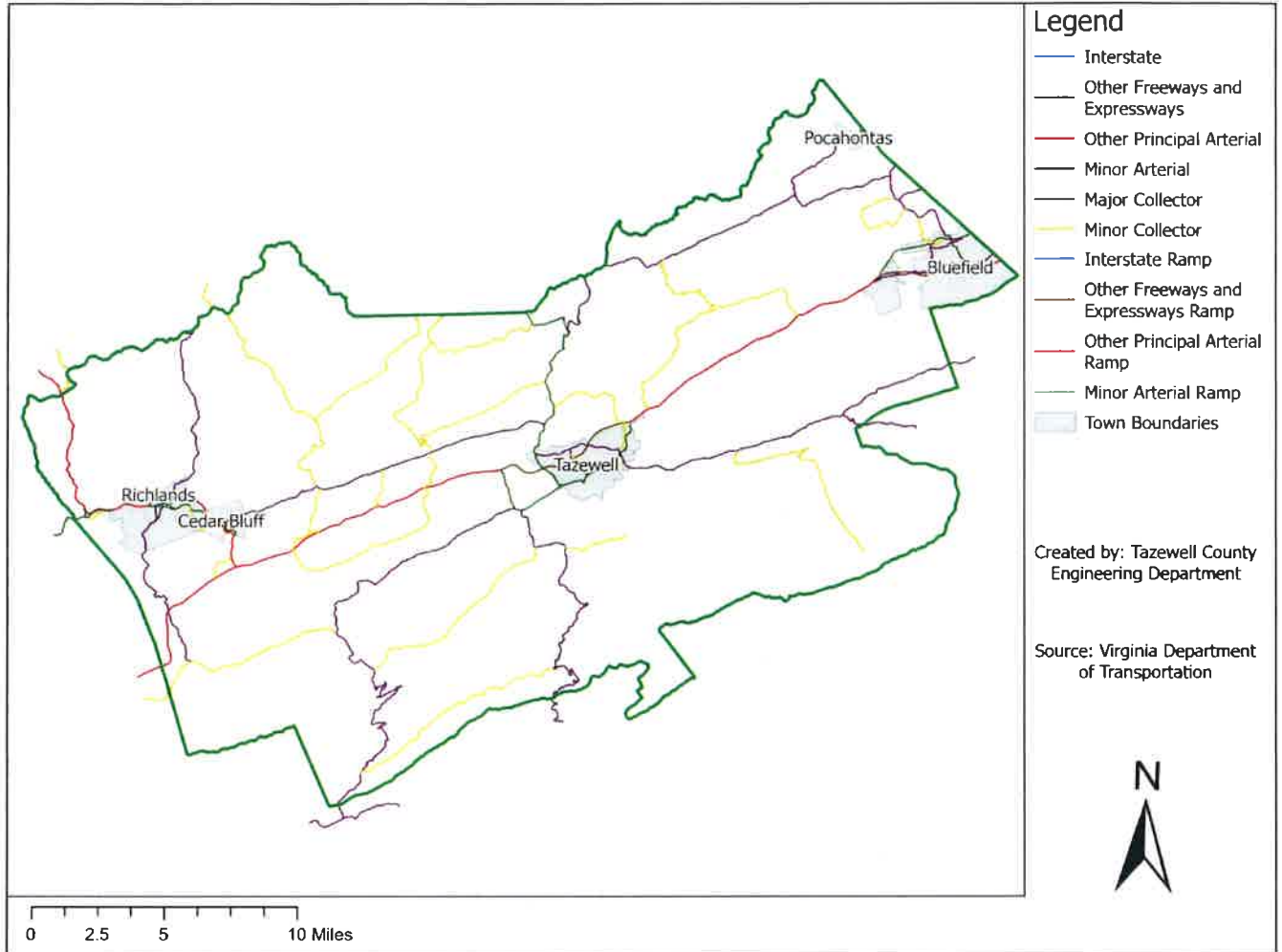


FIGURE 20

Methods of Transportation to Work

MODE	VIRGINIA			TAZEWELL
	2010	2015	2021	2021
DROVE ALONE	77.14%	77.51%	66.60%	94%
CARPOOL	9.98%	9.10%	7.05%	0%
WORKED AT HOME	4.34%	4.64%	22.29%	4%
PUBLIC TRANSPORTAION	4.38%	4.72%	1.48%	1%
TAXI, MOTORCYCLE, OTHER	1.11%	1.28%	1.31%	0%
WALKED	2.7%	2.35%	2.03%	1%
BICYCLE	.34%	.41%	.25%	0%

VA Bureau of Transportation Statistics

B. Improvements

2.1 Committees

Tazewell County has two committees and one commission that are responsible for looking at the roads to determine what roads need to be improved based on safety and other factors, such as congestion.

The Transportation Safety Committee is responsible for looking at the roads in Tazewell County and creating a priority list of roads based on safety. Once the list is completed the list will be recommended to the Tazewell County Board Supervisors for consideration. The committee is made up of various members of the public, VDOT, School Board, Sheriff's Office and State Police representatives.

The Road Viewer Committee is made up of members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The committee members for each district are responsible for traveling their district and assessing the roads. It is recommended that the Road Viewer Committee give recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at least once a year.

By having the committees and commissions in place the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors can make informed decisions about Tazewell County Roads.

C. Star Study

3.1 Background

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Bristol District, VDOT Transportation mobility and Planning Division (TMPD) and Tazewell County, Virginia identified the need to evaluate existing and future conditions for the US/US 19 corridor. The STARS corridor study focuses on evaluating US 460 from US 460 BUS to US 19 and US 460/US 19 from US 460 to Route 637, assessing measures to reduce congestion, access management and safety issues.

US 460 is considered a north-south route while US 19 an east-west in the study. Both corridors are four-lane divided highways and are major arteries in the State of Virginia. These corridors function as important routes connecting interstate 77, Tazewell County and numerous towns and localities. A high number of crashes and several access management issues are noted on the US/US 19 corridors. Both corridors experience moderate congestion during peak hours. Access Management and crash reduction/safety improvements are noted as key concerns along the corridors. With new development being planned and proposed along these corridors, it is important to establish guidance to address the long-term goal for the corridor.

3.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary goal of the study was to determine and access measures to reduce congestion, recommend possible adjustments to signal phasing and/or spot improvements to alleviate congestion and address safety, as well as, access management issues.

The operational issues intended to be addressed by the study included existing and future projected congestion within the corridor. This congestion is centered at the major intersections within the corridor which are currently heavily utilized by passenger cars and truck traffic. Reduction in intersection delays would mitigate congestion improve mobility and reduce travel time.

This study also intends to address existing and future safety concerns within the study corridor.

US 460/US 19 serves as a mix of commercial, retail and residential uses. This study also intends to address numerous potential access improvements within the limits of the study corridor by identifying and documenting driveway locations and their spacing, with the objective of recommending access management improvements in the context of VDOT Management Standards for Entrances and Intersections.

3.3 Study Work Group

The Study Work Group (SWG) was formed to include local stakeholders, who provide local and institutional knowledge of the corridor, review study goals and methodologies, provide input on key assumptions and review and approve proposed improvements concepts developed through the study process. The key members included in the SWG represent the following Agencies:

- VDOT Bristol District Office
- Tazewell County
- Town of Richlands
- WSP Team

3.4 Studied Areas/Intersections

The corridors that were studied are approximately 4.4 miles in total length that include fifteen (15) study intersections:

- US 460 and Cedar Valley Drive
- US 460 and Claypool Hill Mall Road
- US 460 and Greenhills Memorial Garden Entrance
- US 460 and Gas Station Entrance
- US 460 and AutoZone Entrance
- US 460 and US 460/US 19
- US 460/US 19 and route 610
- US 460/US 19 and VDOT AHQ
- US 460/US 19 and Holiday Inn Entrance (VFW Road)
- US 460/US 19 and Pond Street
- US 460/US 19 and Cedar Creek Road

- US 460/US 19 and Tractor Supply Entrance
- US 460/US 19 and Route 1249
- US 460/US 19 and Walmart Parking Lot
- US 460/US 19 and Pounding Mill Branch Road

V. Community Facilities and Governance

The citizens of Tazewell County have access to a myriad of services for health, welfare, and recreation throughout the county. These facilities include buildings and services that provide for the quality of life as well as the health and safety of a community. The county provides many of these services and amenities to residents, some of which are paid in part or wholly through taxes and state and federal programs. Because much of the population is centered in the towns, the services and infrastructure are also centralized in these areas. It is not fiscally responsible or feasible to provide equal services across the vast geography of the county, but the provision of services and the burden of the cost for these services must be equitably borne. All citizens benefit from a healthy economy, and vibrant communities, even when not everyone lives in the center of these communities. Likewise, town residents benefit from the protection of natural beauty and resources available in the agricultural areas. The provision and management of services and infrastructure is an important role of government and one worthy of assessment, planning, and protection for Tazewell County.

A. Community and Human Services

Tazewell County is home to a myriad of community and human service organizations and governmental programs. These services provide resources to residents and visitors ranging from emergency needs to entertainment opportunities. Although a large number of these services are available, the majority of resources provided come from three sources: Clinch Valley Community Action (CVCA), the Tazewell County Department of Social Services (TCOSS), and the Cumberland Mountain Community Services Board (CMCSB). Both Clinch Valley Community Action and the Cumberland Mountain Community Services Board provide services to the region, in addition to Tazewell County.

Some of the services provided by these groups can be broken down into categories that include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Advocacy Services | • Head Start Program |
| • After School Programs | • Housing |
| • Alcohol and Drug Support Services | • Indoor Plumbing and Weatherization |
| • Case Management Services | • Intellectual Disability Services |
| • Civic Organizations | • Legal Services |
| • Community Outreach | • Medical Services |
| • Counseling | • Mental Health Services |
| • Crisis Services | • Psychosocial Rehabilitation |
| • Support Services for the Deaf | • Recreation |
| • Domestic Violence Support | • Reproductive Health |
| • Education | • Senior Citizen Services |

- Emergency Food and Shelter
- Employment Services
- Group Homes
- State Agencies
- Tourism
- Transportation Services

The Tazewell County Department of Social Services and Clinch Valley Community Action compile a Directory of Community Resources that list the services available within the county along with valuable contact information and general descriptions of the type of service and eligibility requirements. The primary service area for both the CVCA and CMCSB is Tazewell County with additional services provided in Russell and Buchanan counties.

CVCA is locally managed and governed by a 15-member Board of Directors for the purpose of reducing poverty and promoting self-sufficiency of the poor. One-third of the board includes locally elected officials or their designees, one-third, representatives of local business or civic organizations and one-third, low-income representatives. CVCA operates twelve programs with a total of 36 different projects. Over 8,000 individuals and more than 5,000 families are impacted by CVCA's services in the three-county area. The agency employs over ninety (90) full and part-time individuals throughout the three-county area. CVCA brings a cross-section of the community together to address the needs of low-income citizens.



CMCSB is one of forty (40) Community Service Boards in Virginia. Their services include mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual disability programs in the three-county area. Many of their programs have received recognition at the local, regional, state, and national levels for innovation in their service fields. Programs impact a wide cross section of the population, from services with infants, the elderly, the mentally ill, substance abusers, and the intellectually disabled. The Service Board employs approximately 480 full time, part time, and client-employees throughout the three-county area of Tazewell, Russell and Buchanan Counties.

a. Employment

According to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment conducted by Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. (CVC, thirty-five percent (35) of respondents stated that living wage jobs was an extremely important need for their household. Twenty-one (21%) percent of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. Reasons for unemployment include:

- Lack of Transportation—26
- Lack of child care –28
- Personal or family illness/physical or Mental Disability –36

- Criminal record –14
- Lack of funds for gas/car insurance –27
- Distance to available employment – 18
- Don't have the right job skills – 16

The total civilian labor force in Tazewell County for February 2022 was 15,509 of which 14,828 were employed and 681 were unemployed. Also, the February 2022 employment rate was 4.4% compared to 3.2% for Virginia and 4.1% for the United States (Source: Virginia Employment Commission). However, Tazewell County's numbers are deceptive. Many have exhausted benefits and do not continue to report their status to the Virginia Employment Commission. The Virginia Employment Commission only compiles information on those actively seeking employment or who would like to work.

The average weekly wage for Tazewell County in the third quarter of 2021 (July-September), which is the most recent data available, was \$733, compared to the Virginia average weekly wage of \$1,264.00 The median household income for Tazewell County is \$42,207. The county significantly lags behind Virginia and the United States, which have median household incomes of \$76,398 and \$64,994 respectively, according to the U.S. Census and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The coal industry, along with agriculture, which used to provide economic stability for the county, has been declining over the past thirty-eight (38) years. In addition, the remaining coal-related jobs increasingly require higher education levels than the traditional employees in the field. The low education level of the available job pool is a barrier to new industry as well. Together, employment and education serve as economic indicators to explain the increase in poverty statistics in Tazewell County.

The 2022 Community Needs Assessment survey indicates that 15% of participants identified job training/education as key need for Tazewell County. Job losses in core economic sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, textiles, etc.) are being replaced by lower paying service sector jobs. The ability to assist individuals in obtaining these job skills would significantly decrease our unemployment rate.

TABLE 21

General Demographic Characteristics 2020

LOCALITY	Population 25 years and older	% of population 25 years and older with less than a high school diploma	% of population 25 years and older with a bachelor's degree or higher	Median Household Income
Tazewell County	30,120	16.7%	15.2%	\$42,207
Virginia	5,831,919	9.7%	39.5%	\$76,398

United States	222,836,834	11.5%	36.6%	\$64,994
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Locality	Population Totals (All ages)	% living below poverty level	Population Totals (ages 0-18)	% of children (0-18) living in poverty
Tazewell County	39,572	17.0%	7,881	25.8%
Virginia	8,255,575	10.0%	1,838,531	13.1%
United States	331,449,281	12.8%	72,065,774	17.5%

Table 1 & 2: Poverty, Unemployment & Education Attainment Statistics
 *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2020 American Community Survey

The 2020 American Community Survey shows that Tazewell County has a population of 30,120 age 25 and over. Of this population, 16.6% have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalency. Over thirty percent (31.2) of our population over age 25 has gone on to take college classes and pursue additional education. Fifteen percent (15.2) have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) produces estimates for adult literacy based on educational attainment, poverty, and other factors in each county. Tazewell County has 13% of its population functioning as illiterate. The inability to read, write and comprehend affects an individual’s ability to have gainful employment, assist family members with tasks, or to participate fully in their own opportunities for personal growth.

Transportation is another barrier to employment in Tazewell County. Eleven (11%) of respondents in our 2022 Community Needs Assessment stated that they do not have reliable transportation. For an individual to travel from Pocahontas to the county seat in Tazewell, he/she will face a total of 90 miles round trip. There are few taxi services available for those able to pay for the service. Local transit is available within well-traveled routes inside of the five (5) towns in Tazewell County and along the spine of Route 460, but citizens living in the mainly rural areas of Tazewell County are without these services. Transportation concerns for respondents in our 2022 Community Needs Assessment are as follows:

- No access to car -- 38
- No car insurance -- 23
- No driver’s license or license suspended--19
- Unable to afford gas-- 56
- Unable to afford car repairs --72

The lack of public transportation after regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.) poses another challenge to families. According to the 2020 American Community Survey for Tazewell County, 7.3% of households do not have a motor vehicle. This presents an additional barrier to obtaining employment, housing, childcare, safety, etc.

b. Adequate and Affordable Housing/Homelessness

Over the past sixteen (16) years, Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc (CVCA) has experienced a significant increase in the number of individuals requesting services because they are homeless. From July 1, 2020 –June 30, 2021, 143 requested services. A majority of those seeking services is due to the lack of affordable housing. In Bluefield, there are two (2) public housing facilities. One is for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The other is Crescent View Apartments with 106 units. Two (2) low-income housing facilities are located in Tazewell, one of which is also designated for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. These two (2) housings facilities provide units for 92 families. Two (2) low-income housing facilities in Richlands provide 135 units for residents.

In the 2022 Point in Time Homeless Survey, conducted by CVCA through the Cumberland Plateau Local Planning Group (Balance of State Continuum of Care, staff members identified six (6) individuals who were homeless during the twenty-four-hour survey period. The survey was conducted on January 26, 2022, and proves a snapshot of homelessness in our community. It does not indicate the true and accurate number of people who are homeless, either with a roof (places they can stay, but are not their home) or without a roof. According to Family Crisis Services (CVCA’s sexual violence an intimate partner violence program), 83 women, men and children received shelter services for over 2,500 nights during the last fiscal year. At the time of the 2022 Community Needs Assessment survey, 8% of respondents indicated that they were homeless.

The list below details housing concerns for respondents:

- Homeless in the past 12 months – 10
- Shared housing to prevent being homeless – 40
- Had to choose between paying rent or basic needs – 44
- Had to move multiple times – 10
- Stayed in shelter in past 12 months – 11

The American Community Survey 2020 reports that median rental costs are \$668 a month, while 604 pay no cash rent. Median mortgage costs are \$968 a month. The median value of homes in the county is \$102,600. For 54% of those paying monthly costs for home ownership, the costs are less than 20% of their income. Rent as a portion of income is much higher, ranging from 25.7% at less than 15% of their monthly income and 27.8% as 35% or more of their monthly income.

Low-income housing exists in Tazewell County and in Russell County through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, formerly known as Section 8 Housing), but there are waiting lists for each voucher that comes available. Currently, 386 vouchers are available for individuals/families to receive housing through this program, which is operated by CVCA. CVCA also coordinates the Homeless prevention Program, which can provide rental assistance to participants to help divert them from homelessness, but even this program has inadequate resources for the number of clients in need of emergency rent and homeless prevention services. The pandemic placed additional challenges for individuals and families seeking housing this year. The eviction moratorium helped keep individuals and families in place and safe, and it significantly reduced housing becoming available. It is increasingly difficult to find housing in an already small market. Many individuals and families who were homeless and came to shelter were unable to find permanent housing to move into, despite being

employed and ready to move.

Finding adequate housing for those who are hard to serve, e.g. individuals with criminal history, underemployed, poor credit, etc., will continue to be a struggle and challenge for our community. These barriers are not easily remedied and often serve as permanent roadblocks to safe and affordable housing. Housing instability affects an individual’s ability to maintain employment, to stay in recovery, and may place them in unsafe relationships.

c. Lack of Resources for Food, Rent & Utilities/Emergency Services:

According to the chart below, which features information from the 2000 Census and the 2020 American Community Survey, Tazewell County has continued to have a portion of its population living in poverty. The survey shows that 17.0% of the Tazewell County population lived in poverty, compared to 15.0% in Virginia.

**FIGURE 21.1
General Poverty Demographic Characteristics**

Families in Tazewell County	2000	2020
% in poverty	11.7%	12.2%
% with children under age 18	16.7%	23.5%
% with children under age 5	18.9%	14.5%
Female Head of Household, No Husband Present		
% in poverty (100% of poverty level)	28%	36.6%
% with children under age 18	35.4%	53.9%
% with children under age 5	42.9%	59.1%

Individuals in Tazewell County	2000	2020
% in poverty	15.3%	17.0%
18 years and older	13.9%	16.5%
65 and older	13.9%	10.4%
% related children under age 18	20.3%	25.7%
Related children 5 to 17	19.9%	26.2%

Due to unemployment and underemployment, families and individuals seek public benefits, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and Women, Infants & Children Program (WIC). According to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment Survey, 68.4% of respondents indicated that they used food assistance services, such as food pantries, SNAP, WIC, churches, reduced and/or free meals at school, etc., in the past twelve (12) months. Families are heavily relying on public assistance to maintain their standard of living, and many are typically unable to sustain this standard monthly. We definitely observed an increase in individuals and families relying on food assistance services and public benefits because of the pandemic.

Families are working more than on job to make ends meet and are often faced with difficult

economic choices such as pay this month’s rent or pay for medications and utilities. Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc., has experienced an increase in requests for rental assistance and crisis and/or emergency assistance over the past twelve (12) years based on this type of situation. According to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment, individuals and families in Tazewell County have experience the following financial challenges:

- Fell behind in paying rent or mortgage -- 45
- Pressured to pay bills by bill collectors --57
- Pawned off valuables to make ends meet -- 38
- Debt from medical/dental bills -- 52
- Too much credit card debt -- 38
- Borrowed money from friends or family – 90

Local data from Family Crisis Services, our sexual & intimated partner violence program shows that the needs for crisis & supportive services continues to be significant. According to the FCS 2020-2021 Annual Report, 321 individuals received services.

Services that these individuals received include:

- 418 hotline calls
- 524 units of crisis intervention
- 1,705 unit of supportive counseling
- 454 units of advocacy (legal, medical, personal)
- 275 requests for information & referrals
- 237 trips-transportation

We know that as individuals and families in our community experience trauma and violence, as well as face challenges with addiction, mental health crises, and poverty, they will continue to need emergency services to help them survive. Family Crisis Services and our Emergency Services program assist individuals and families with basic needs – food, water shelter, utility assistance, safety – in order to stabilize them before they can access other services offered by CVCA and/or services in the community to improve their current situation.

d. Independent Living

8,940 people, or 22% of Tazewell County’s population, are over the age of 65 according to the 2020 American Community Survey. Of this population, approximately 44% have a disability. For many of these individuals, family members work, live out of the area, or are otherwise unable to help them remain independent.

The Senior Companion Program works to meet the needs of this population in maintaining their independence. The program is not only a benefit to the client but also to the companion and the community. Companions are also individuals with low-incomes, and the stipend paid to cover their cost in volunteering helps ease their household financial needs. The program averages having a waiting list of over 100 area citizens in need of a companion. The approximate cost for a Companion to serve in 2021 was \$3,264. The 2021 average cost for residency in a skilled nursing or assisted

living home in Tazewell County was \$68,500. CVCA continues to search for new grant and foundation funding that will allow us to add more companions to fill this critical need in our community.

A study conducted by Boston University stated that volunteering helps older people remain healthy and helps them live longer. Volunteering brings older people, who are isolated, in contact with other individuals, and the feeling of being valuable actually increases healthy attitudes. During FY21, 250 AmeriCorps Senior RSVP volunteers served in Tazewell, Russell and Buchanan Counties. Helping neighbors is a strong part of the culture of rural areas, and last year, these volunteers provided 51,598 hours of service to their neighbors and communities.

These dedicated volunteers donated 19,700 hours to 2,839 area citizens with a vast variety of needed and vital activities, many of them on the behalf of individuals who are homebound, at-risk or who have a disability. Volunteer activities included preparation and delivery of meals; transportation to attend medical appointments, purchase groceries, and take care of personal business; honored Veterans providing military rites at funerals; reassurance , wellness and safety checks by phone; addressing food insecurity at food banks, mailing birthday, get well and sympathy cards; provision of free income tax preparation for low to moderate income households through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program; and personal services such as haircuts, collecting mail, lawn care and other daily tasks.

B. Healthcare Facilities and Services

Tazewell County is home to two hospitals: *Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital* is a 56 bed acute care facility, approved by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. It is a part of the *Carilion* family of hospitals. It admits roughly 1,100 patients per year, offering emergency, diagnostic, medical, and surgical care for residents. *Clinch Valley Medical Center* is a 175-bed acute care hospital offering specialty care for the heart and lungs, complete cancer care and 24 hour emergency services, plus rehabilitation and physical therapy, skilled nursing, orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology, and advanced diagnostics and laboratory testing. Clinch Valley Health also celebrated the grand opening of Clinch Valley Family & Specialty Care of Bluefield. Clinch Valley Health is committed to the community and this year has added 57 employed and independent providers, made approximately \$2.7 million in capital improvements, donated \$8.7 million in services to those in need and paid \$9 million in taxes. Each hospital is independently owned (investor owned) by an out of county entity and receives little or no input regarding quality and services for area citizens.

Additionally, the county is home to the Tri-County Health Clinic and the Tazewell Community Clinic that provide services to low-income families at no cost as well as the Tazewell County Health Department that provides regular and emergency care to residents and visitors to the county. WVU Medicine formerly Bluefield Regional Medical Center supports Bluefield Family Medicine, Radiology Diagnostic Center and Emergency Room Care. Additionally, the County now has a private Urgent Care facility in the *MedExpress, Inc.* facility in Bluefield, VA.

Tazewell County over the past decade has had access to average and above health care services whereas the emergency transportation system has struggled, and has been disjointed and not available on a timely basis to all areas of the county. The patient emergency receiving systems at the county's two acute care hospitals has been good.

Health care professional and physician shortages continue to be an area of concern. Southwest Virginia Community College and the Tazewell County School System (LPN) have done an excellent job educating and supplying health care employees in some disciplines of the health care field. Adequate numbers of physicians in Family Medicine, medical/surgical specialties and subspecialties continues to be a major concern. A new Registered Nurse (RN) Program at Bluefield University has been formed and will assist in meeting this shortage in part.

Tazewell County is fortunate to have multiple nursing homes, all of which are well established with reputations of adequate patient care. Unfortunately, as the residents of the County grow older, there is a greater need for such facilities. The need for a long-term care nursing facility in Tazewell County can be adequately supported. While several assisted care facilities are located in the western section of the county, there is a need for more assisted care facilities in the central and eastern sections of the county.

Generally, the population of Tazewell County has been very dependent on state medical assistance for payment of health care services. The general trend is 10-15% of all health care services are paid for by Medicare or other forms of state subsidized payments.

In the past, the employment base in the Western and Northwestern districts of the county allowed commercial insurance payments for health care services to be above state and national averages. It remains to be seen if this is still the case. Commercial third-party insurance coverage in the center part of the county lags, while the eastern section's is just below average. In general, Tazewell County's coal mining, gas exploration, state and local government, and manufacturing sectors have provided above average third-party commercial insurance for its citizens.

Cost of health care in Tazewell County is higher than the state average. A portion of the high cost can be contributed to the very high cost of malpractice insurance for all facilities and health professionals.

Tazewell County has an aging population which creates challenges for health care providers both from a service standpoint and payment perspective.

The Virginia Health Department continues to provide many health services to the area's citizens especially low-income families with children.

One item of importance is the impact on the Affordable Care Act on the health of the area. This law allows for those without insurance to gain access to health insurance at a subsidized rate through the federal government. This plan does not replace Medicaid or Medicare, instead providing services to those of working age and their dependents. The impact of the law is currently an unknown, with very little data to substantiate its success or failure.

The development of a Hospice program for portions of the county has been well accepted and extremely beneficial.

An area that should not be overlooked is cost of burials. While most funeral homes and mortuaries are locally owned, most grave yards in Tazewell County are owned by out of county, out of state companies. These companies have no charge controls thereby creating more pressure to utilize burials in unregulated grave yards or private burial plots.

C. Veterinary Services

Another area of community health is veterinary services. This is a vital component to community health (One Health Initiative). Tazewell County is home to three veterinary care clinics and several smaller providers. Due to the rural nature of the county, many of these providers and clinics have the ability to treat not only house pets, but also larger animals, such as livestock. Veterinary services are also provided in adjacent counties, both in Virginia and West Virginia. In addition, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University is home to a highly lauded School of Veterinary Medicine, graduating many of the area's providers, and allowing for more complicated treatments for sick or wounded animals. Lincoln Memorial University also has a veterinary school but does not have a referral hospital.

Local veterinarians' employee approximately 35 employees and play an important role in public safety and biosecurity. Zoonotic diseases are those that both humans and animals can share and need to be monitored and recognized for reporting. According to the Mars Study there is an unrepresented shortage of veterinarians across the country. Tazewell County could be identifying residents that have rural agricultural backgrounds and developing these students into veterinarians.

D. Public Safety Services and Facilities

The citizens of Tazewell County have access to a myriad of services throughout the county. These facilities include buildings and services that provide for the quality of life, safety, and well-being of a community. The county provides these services and amenities to residents, which are paid through taxes and state and federal programs.

The Public Safety Department is dedicated to serving the Citizens of Tazewell County during times of county-wide crisis or single emergencies. It is the role of the Director of Public Safety to coordinate the efforts of the fire and rescue departments for the county.

a. Fire and Rescue

The county is home to twelve county fire agencies, four town fire departments and five EMS agencies. Tazewell County Fire-Rescue was founded with the purpose of providing fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services to Central and Western Tazewell County, Virginia. This department serves approximately 12,000 citizens for fire suppression and approximately 28,000 with emergency medical services. Several



communities and towns have volunteer fire departments that support the fire suppression efforts of the county within the towns and surrounding area. The Fire and Rescue Director is currently working to coordinate a central location for all fire and EMS stations to work under. The primary purpose is to foster cooperation between all of the emergency operators, as well as plan and budget for advancements in equipment and training for all departments.

Several factors are influencing Fire, Rescue and EMS:

- Aging workforce
- Low Volunteerism
- Equipment Needs
- Wages

Even with these factors influencing Tazewell County, in the Boissevain, VA section, it received a newly renovated fire station and a new station went in at Bluefield, VA. Ground breaking has already taken place for the new station at the Bluestone. Our goal for the future is to have stations along the 460 corridor that will make access more readily available to the county.

b. Tazewell County Sheriff's Department

The mission of the county Sheriff's Department is to provide for the welfare and safety of the surrounding communities, its citizens and environment while enforcing the law and maintaining safe responsive emergency services throughout Tazewell County.

The Tazewell County Sheriff's Department has eight divisions to serve the residents of the County with 24 hour a day law enforcement service:

- Patrol
- Detective
- Civil Processing
- Code Enforcement
- Court Security
- School Safety
- 911 Center/Communications
- K-9 Division
- Assign-a-Highway

There are 63 full time sworn officers, 5 part-time sworn officers, and 24 Communications Officers that run the 911 Center. K-9 units serve with two primary purposes, narcotics cases and patrol duties. Three (3) full time K-9 animals are trained and on-duty for the County. Litter Control and Animal Control are handled by the Code Enforcement Division. Litter pickup, an excellent and active program have two (2) employees that coordinate the program through the court and patrol system. Drug issues are handled by the patrol units and K-9 units, as well as working on educating our youth through the DARE Program. The Sheriff's Office is also part of the county wide multi-agency joint Drug Task Force program. Two (2) full time officers are assigned to the drug task force and Tazewell County has become part of Appalachian HIDTA which offers funding and assistance to combating

illegal drug use. Deputies and civilians are also members of several specialized programs organized within the agency, such as the Special Response Team, Project Lifesaver, Peer support, TRIAD and more. One of the programs is the Law Enforcement Emergency Medical Technician (LEEMT) where several Deputies have been cross trained as EMT's to help out in medical emergencies. The School Safety Division has Deputies serving as SRO's and DARE Instructors throughout schools within the Tazewell County Public School System, including one Deputy assigned as an Instructor for Criminal Justice Program. The Tazewell County Sheriff's Department has been accredited by the State of Virginia since 2008 and additionally, Sheriff Hieatt is a member of the Virginia Department of _____

c. 911 Emergency Response Center

The Tazewell County 911 Center is a division also under the Sheriff's Office and has been handling emergency calls since April 23, 1997. The 911 Center is comprised of 24 sworn employees under the Communications Division of the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office. The Communications Division is responsible for dispatching Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS Agencies within Tazewell County and its five incorporated towns. Yearly, the Communications Division processes over 23, 000 emergency phone calls and over 89,000 non-emergency phone calls. Additionally, they process over 50,000 incident reports and over 900,000 radio transmissions.

The Communications Division has six (6) Dispatcher workstations within the 911 Center. Each of these use state of the art technology in processing calls for assistance. This includes a touch screen radio system, emergency medical dispatch (EMD) system that provides instructions on how callers can help prior to the arrival of emergency responders, two weather monitoring systems that provide up to the minute weather conditions and forecasts, mapping software that quickly plots a caller's location, a Text-to-911 system, and various software applications that assist the Dispatchers in their duties. The Sherriff's Office also utilized a Mobile Crime Scene/Command Vehicle that assists in processing crime scenes and communications support at large incidents.

The Communications Division, along with the Board of Supervisors are implementing improvements to the communications system countywide as detailed in various studies and reports completed in recent years. These improvements, such as the RAVE Emergency APP and Emergency Radios for School Buses, are to better strengthen the communications system to handle the increasing call volumes, improve radio coverage in the valleys, and to better withstand the unique weather conditions in Tazewell County.

d. Pocahontas State Correctional Center

Pocahontas State Correctional Center (PSCC) is a medium security correctional facility (Levels II and III) within the Virginia Department of Corrections. Located on County Route 734 just outside the Town of Pocahontas, the facility is located on 950 acres of land.

Construction of this facility began in 2004, with PSCC receiving its first offenders on October 2, 2007. Maximum capacity of the center is 1,024 general population offenders. The prison

population is managed in a housing unit style environment and lends itself to program participation. The institution provides a variety of program and educational opportunities, including substance abuse classes, vocational classes, and a high school completion or GED class.

The physical plan consists of four (4) offender housing units with a 256-bed capacity for each. The inside support building contains Special Housing, Property, Intake, Commissary, Medical, Food Service, DCE and Vocational, Treatment, Laundry, Offender Gymnasium, and Offender Visitation. There is also a Warehouse / Maintenance Building and the Staff Range, which is also utilized by the Tazewell County Sheriff's Department for training. Security at the facility includes a double perimeter fence (with electronic motion detection equipment) with razor wire, a video surveillance system, and two sally ports for entry and exit.

Currently PSCC has 300+ classified positions, in the following arenas: facility management, correctional security, business and accounting management, human resource management, counseling, mental health care, postal services, food services, offender records, warehouse, laundry, building and grounds, clerical support, medical, and educational services. Pocahontas State Correctional Center has been a welcome addition to the County, and enjoys a close and cooperative relationship with local citizens, businesses, and public officials.

e. Recreational Services and Facilities

Tazewell, Bluefield, and Richlands all have recreation departments that provide a variety of regional services and facility management. Tazewell County has four established parks: Cavitt's Creek, Lincolnshire, Graham, and Richlands Recreation Park. All have active as well as passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Since the last edition of this document in 2008, additional recreational attractions have



been created. These include the portion of Virginia Route 16, denoted

by the Governor of Virginia as the Back of the Dragon, a 32-mile portion of the highway in Tazewell and Smyth counties, which are major draws for motorcycle/sport car aficionados, including an annual rally that is held in Tazewell. Then there is the new "Original Pocahontas" ATV Trail, constructed by Tazewell County, and managed by Spearhead Trails, an offshoot of the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority (SRRA.) This includes over 30 miles of ATV trails in the Pocahontas area. In order to

serve these new facilities, Tazewell County has also become home to several new cabin facilities which will cater to the ATV and motorcyclist/driver.

Additionally, the Clinch Valley Bioreserve is listed by Nature Conservancy among the “Last Great Places” in the WORLD’s remaining ecosystems. Some of the most sensitive species of the Clinch River include 13 endangered species of freshwater mussels. As stated earlier in the plan, Tazewell County also has many natural and cultural areas that attract residents and visitors worthy of protection and enhancement such as Burke’s Garden, Pioneer Park, and the Paint Lick area that is home to Native American cliff drawings. Jefferson National Forest has a rustic campground facility located along the county border and there are also several private fishing and hunting clubs throughout Tazewell County.



Human services agencies such as Tazewell County Department of Social Services and Clinch Valley Community Action provide resources, training, outreach, referral, and advocacy to meet the needs of those least able to provide for themselves. While no longer the highest, Tazewell County still has a high number of children in foster care, when compared to the other counties of Southwest Virginia. This is due in great part to the substance abuse problems that are prevalent. Finding an adequate number of foster homes within the county is a challenge. Some children must be housed in specialized foster care outside our area, since those homes are not always available locally.

Due to the aging population of the county, services are also provided by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens. They provide a vast array of services for Tazewell County’s senior citizens that aren’t met by any other program. These include transportation, nutrition, day care and health care. Most of these services are on a sliding fee scale or free to the participant.

Tazewell County also has Taking Action for Special Kids (TASK) and the Center for Independent Living (CIL) to assist citizens with special needs. There are food pantry programs in each town that help those who need help providing food for their families. These agencies all provide a valuable service for those in need.

The county also offers a robust Public Safety Program. This includes fire and rescue services for all areas of the county; emergency services for any natural or man-made disaster; and law enforcement through the Tazewell County Sheriff’s office, town police forces and Special Police. One challenge that faces the Public Safety Program is the terrain of the county. While providing natural beauty, it also tests the communication systems of these services. These needs have been addressed by a state communications grant to upgrade the radio systems for emergency services personnel throughout the county. A continuous effort is underway to upgrade these facilities to serve the citizens of Tazewell County.

Recreational opportunities abound in the county due to its terrain and natural beauty. The new motorsport facilities help showcase this beauty to visitors and residents of the "gearhead" persuasion. For others, the four established parks within the borders of the county will allow visitors and residents alike to enjoy the great outdoors. The Nature Conservancy listed the Clinch Valley Bioreserve among the “Last Great Places” in the world’s remaining ecosystems. Some of the most sensitive species of the Clinch River include 13 endangered species of freshwater mussels. These endangered species also

provide special challenges to development in the area, sometimes delaying projects because of the unique species that must be protected before construction can begin.

The county should maintain adequate library services and continue to support development of library services in the county.

VI. Infrastructure and Land Use

The citizens of Tazewell County have access to a myriad of services for health, welfare, education, and recreation throughout the county. These facilities include buildings, lands, and infrastructure that provide for the quality of life as well as the health and safety of a community.

A. Water and Sewer

Tazewell County has continued to make improvements in water and sewer service throughout the county. In 2000, only 1.1 percent of owner-occupied housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities and only one percent of rental-occupied housing units fell into this category. The public wastewater facilities in the county are located in the Towns of Tazewell, Bluefield, Richlands, Pocahontas, Amonate, and the Tazewell County Public Service Authority facility at Wardell. Plans are underway to provide public sewer to several areas along the 19/460 corridor in the Central part of the county as well as to the areas of Kents Ridge, Baptist Valley, Jewell Ridge, Greens Chapel, Red Ash, Road Ridge, Bishop, Abbs Valley, and the Forest Hills and Willow Springs subdivisions. Funding such projects requires a multi-year planning and implementation program. Currently, septic systems provide sewer to the remaining areas of the county.

Public water service is provided by Tazewell County Public Service Authority (TCPSA). Facilities include plants in Claypool Hill and Raven/Doran, along with chlorinated wells in Buskill, Teller, Boissevain and Lake View. Bluefield, Tazewell, Richlands, and Pocahontas also operate water treatment facilities. Most of the 19/460 corridor is served by public water and is the targeted area for intensive development outside the towns. Planning is underway to extend water to many areas of the county and to improve flow and quality of water sources within the current system. Private wells provide water to the remainder of the county.

B. Solid Waste Management

Tazewell County owns a solid waste landfill near Springville on approximately 42 acres of land that is operated by a third-party contractor it also has two transfer stations located in the Northern and Western ends of the county. Tazewell County does not have waste collection in the county so eight convenience sites have been placed throughout the county to help with litter control and provide residents in remote areas a place to dispose of waste. It is permitted to accept non-hazardous and municipal waste. The current cell for the landfill has been operational for approximately 15 years and is projected to be full by September 2024. Tazewell County is currently working on permitting the next phases of the landfill to ensure that the cell will be permitted and constructed by the time the next cell is full. Leachate from the site has historically been hauled to Sanitary Sewer treatment plants. Over the past several years the county has worked with the Tazewell County PSA and the Town of

Tazewell to install a sewer line to transport the Leachate to the town of Tazewell treatment plant. Since the installation of the sewer line the need to haul the Leachate with tanker trucks has been reduced. Tazewell County continues to look for ways to reduce the amount of Leachate that needs to be hauled by trucks. Tazewell County does not charge residents of the county to dispose of residential trash. The county continues to look for ways to fund the landfill so it can continue to allow the residents to dispose of household waste at no cost. Tazewell County receives a lot of tires at the landfill. The tires that are brought to the landfill cannot be disposed of at the landfill and the county has to pay to have the tires transported to an offsite location. Due to having to transport the tires to an offsite location there is a fee associated with bringing the tires to the landfill for residents and businesses. Due to the fees associated with tires we see a lot of tires on the side of the road. In order to help with this problem Tazewell County works with the Soil and Water Conservation board and holds a free tire and hazardous waste day to allow the residents of the county to bring tires and hazardous waste so it can be disposed of properly. Tazewell County understands the need for recycling in the county. There are currently two companies that recycle in our area. Tazewell County faces challenges when it comes to Recycling. The major challenge that we face is we are in a remote county and we do not have a lot of facilities to take the recycled materials to. The facilities that take most of the recycling are located long distances from Tazewell County and it makes it uneconomical for the county to recycle. We continue to look for more economical ways to recycle and as we find ways, we work to implement them. The recycling rate for 2020 was 29.3% Tazewell County residents generate approximately 5.71 pounds per capita per day.

Figure 22

Transfer Stations	
BOISSEVAIN	
CEDAR BLUFF	
Convenience Areas	
BAPTIST VALLEY	
BURKES GARDEN	
GRATTON	
RAVEN	
FALLS MILLS	
JEWELL RIDGE	
TANNERSVILLE	
THOMPSON VALLEY	

Figure 23

Refuse Collections

Refuse Collected	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
TONS	58,635	47,799	42,830	50,260	79,297	84,300	73,822	80238

Figure 24

Recycling Materials

LOCATION	CARDBOARD	METALS	NEWSPRINT	ANTI-FREEZE	PLASTIC	USED OIL
LANDFILL	✓	✓		✓		✓
BOISSEVAIN	✓	✓			✓	✓
CEDAR BLUFF	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
BLUEFIELD	✓		✓		✓	
RAVEN	✓					
TAZEWELL	✓		✓		✓	
RICHLANDS	✓		✓			

Tazewell County currently has a solid waste management plan that was updated in 2022. It has been approved by the Department of Environmental Quality. The plan covers a range of topics including: disposal of waste, recycling and the life expectancy of the landfill. The plan is located on the county’s website and on file in the county’s Engineering Department.

C. Telecommunications

In order to assist with providing telecommunications services to citizens outside of the Towns of the County, the Board of Supervisors saw fit to create the Tazewell County Wireless Authority. The first and only project completed thus far by the Authority is the supplying of wireless internet to the community of Tannersville.

Cellular towers provide cellular communications services to most of the Towns within the County, as well as to the areas along the primary corridors. Unfortunately, this leaves a large part of the County without service. Over the last five years, cellular providers have made an impact on many of these areas, but there are many mountain and valley areas without any service at all.

D. Wireless High-Speed Internet

The county is currently working with Cumberland Plateau to bring high speed internet to areas that are currently under served. This includes working to bring the last mile of internet services to Tazewell County Residences. This is where internet is in areas but has stopped due to it not being cost effective for internet companies to continue to provide the services. Typically, there may be one to two homes beyond the stop point for these companies.

E. Energy Efficiency (Electric, Solar, Wind, Natural, Dominion)

Tazewell County has a Ridgeline Ordinance that is not solely for the purpose of wind but it does affect wind turbines. Per the Ridgeline Ordinance, wind turbines of certain sizes cannot be placed

on protected ridges. This does not prohibit wind turbines in other areas of the county for personal use. A map of the protected ridge lines is shown in Figure 39 on page 90. You may refer to the Protected Ridgeline Ordinance for more details.

Tazewell County is currently working on a Solar Ordinance that regulates solar farms. The proposed ordinance does not restrict solar farms or solar panels. The proposed ordinance will be used to help make sure the solar farms are built in a safe manner.

F. LAND USE

a. Land Use

The County is tasked with managing the various land uses within the county to promote the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens. There are tools available to the county staff and governmental bodies to help with this effort. These currently include the subdivision ordinance, health and building regulations and inspections, the future land use map, as well as utility and infrastructure development and investment.

Tazewell County may also pursue various state and national programs that support land preservation. One such program is the Transfer/Purchase of Development Rights (TDR and PDR) program. This program is an economic and conservation tool to protect valuable farmland, forestland, and sensitive environmental areas in the county. It is a voluntary program that compensates owners of targeted property for their willingness to accept permanent deed restrictions on their land that limits future industrial, commercial, and residential development on the property. Easements are executed once fair market value is assessed and compensated to the owner of property. This compensation can come in the form of cash payment from a local government (under the PDR arm of the program) or from a private source who wishes to transfer the development rights of the targeted property to another property designated as a recipient land area (the TDR version). Once the easement is in place, the landowner still owns the land and retains all private property rights, including the opportunity to sell or give the land to heirs. The development rights are the only restricted rights under the compensated PDR/TDR easement.

The future land use map provides a visual representation of what citizens hope for development of Tazewell County. However, without land use regulations, this ideal land development pattern remains just that, a hope. Ownership of property is the driving factor behind its use and the type of development that can be expected under this system is individually motivated and driven. The Code of Virginia allows for a zoning ordinance to be passed as a means of land use management. Tazewell County currently has no zoning outside of corporate limits of the five municipalities. These municipalities each have their own zoning ordinance, which they are responsible for overseeing and enforcing.

b. Environment and Land Use

The landscape provides rolling hills, fertile valleys, and the scenic vistas for both the residents and visitors of Tazewell County, but with this scenic beauty comes environmental problems. The following is a summary of items identified that hamper the preservation of the sensitive areas and open space.

Tazewell County contains surface and ground water resources of varying quality. Even though the diverse landscape and open space available in the county supports favorable conditions for water quality, past development has had harmful impacts within parts of the county. The county has several established watersheds within its boundaries that are being negatively impacted by soil erosion, storm water runoff, and agricultural runoff that has caused our streams and rivers to be designated as “impaired streams” by the Department of Environmental Quality. Another contributor to the stream’s designation is the certain construction of communities near streams that are located within the 100-year flood plain.

Figure 25

Impaired Streams
Bluestone River
Upper Clinch River

Tazewell County has a Flood Damage Ordinance, but construction within the flood plain should be discouraged and preservation of greenways/blue ways should be encouraged. Adequate supplies of clean surface water and potable groundwater are vital to the economic and cultural well-being of Tazewell County.

Flooding is an issue for our county. There are low areas in the county that are more prone to constant flooding. As the Comprehensive Plan is being drafted the county has received a planning and study grant. The purpose of the grant is to identify flooding hotspots throughout the region. Once the hot spots have been identified and the data has been compiled a plan to mitigate these areas will be put in place.

With knowing that mitigating flooding can be a large expenditure the county is constantly looking for ways to fund solutions with this problem that will be presented in this plan. Fixing flooding issues within the county is a high priority for our administrative team and they are always on the lookout for ways to alleviate this burden on the county.

Most of the county is underlain by limestone and dolomite rocks of the Ordovician and Cambrian ages. Usually, the carbonate hardness is high, and water is classified from moderately hard to hard. Acid conditions and iron are also encountered. Springs in the areas underlain by rocks constitute an important source of groundwater that are integral parts of the water supply. Experience has shown however that the water from these formations is susceptible to contamination from surface water and may require treatment. Karst features are severe limiting factors for the building environment of commercial, industrial, and residential development in the county. Adequate availability of clean water to sustain existing development and to foster future growth is critical.

Significant land use has changed from cropland use to grazing land use. Water quality issues of sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorous continue to be problems due to livestock access to streams. Erosion from new construction sites is regulated through the county’s Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance, which requires specific measures to be taken when any land area of 10,000 square feet or more is disturbed, including single-family homes.

Tazewell County supports the concept that proper management of forested property can protect soil, water quality, and wildlife. Erosion and sediment control practices that at least adhere to guidelines outlined by the Department of Conservation and Recreation are important to maintain while conducting forestry activities.

VII. Education and Training

The citizens of Tazewell County have access to a myriad of services for health, welfare, education, and recreation throughout the county. These facilities include buildings, lands, and infrastructure that provide for the quality of life as well as the health and safety of a community.



Tazewell County residents also have a wide and rich variety of learning and training opportunities within easy grasp and there is strong commitment to the maintenance and advancement of the facilities and resources required to provide this important lifelong learning environment. The county is home to 16 public school facilities, Southwest Virginia Community College, Bluefield University, and a satellite campus

program at the community college for Old Dominion University. The county oversees and funds the provision of public educational opportunities for kindergarten through 12th grades. Higher educational opportunities are also available from several institutions within easy driving distance of the county. Due to advances in technology, there are many on-line learning and training opportunities that citizens and businesses can take advantage of without leaving their homes or places of work.

A. Public Education

The Tazewell County School Division, in partnership with parents and the community, is committed to preparing students to become productive members of society by recognizing that each student is unique and possesses the potential to learn.

Figure 26

2022-2023 Tazewell County Public School Enrollment

School	Enrollment	Grades Offered
Graham High	534	9-12 grades
Richlands High	636	9-12 grades
Tazewell High	538	9-12 grades
Graham Middle	372	6-8 grades
Richlands Middle	495	6-8 grades
Tazewell Middle	369	6-8 grades

Abb's Valley-Boissevain Elementary	139	PK-5 grades
Cedar Bluff Elementary	388	K-5 grades
Dudley Primary	357	PK-2 grades
Graham Intermediate	279	3-5 grades
Tazewell Intermediate	346	4-5 grades
Richlands Elementary	547	PK-5 grades
Tazewell Primary	422	PK-5 grades
Tazewell Co. Career & Tech Center	NA*	High school – adult

Tazewell County Public Schools, Fall 2022

**The Center does not have separate enrollment*

The Tazewell County Career and Technical Center is a vocational center located on the grounds of Tazewell High School but is operated as a separate school with its own administration. It offers occupational training to all the high schools in Tazewell County. In addition to the trades offered during the school day and week, there are four trade extension classes in operation two nights per week. Because of the request for additional vocational offerings in Tazewell County, the Tazewell County Vocational Center has plans for an expansion to their building to include four more trade classes. Evening Classes include Welding and Carpentry.

Figure 27

Tazewell County Career & Technical School Enrollment 2021-2022

Class	Enrollment - AM	Enrollment - PM	Total
Auto Body Technician	20	16	36
Building Trades	9	11	20
Diesel Technician	18	11	29
Carpentry	17	12	29
Small Engine Technician	14	17	31
Cosmetology	46	23	69
Nail Technician		6	6
Computer Aided Drafting	13	10	23

Auto Service Technician	19	20	39
Welding	13	16	29
Masonry	14	16	30
Nursing (2nd Year)		14	14
Total Enrollment	183	172	355

Figure 28

Tazewell County Division-State Assessments 2020-2022

% Pass			% Pass			% Pass			% Pass			% Pass		
Reading			Writing			Math			Science			History		
2012-2013	2020-2021	2021-2022	2012-2013	2020-2021	2021-2022	2012-2013	2020-2021	2021-2022	2012-2013	2020-2021	2021-2022	2012-2013	2020-2021	2021-2022
87	78	80	82	N/A	77	60	67	79	93	68	71	81	N/A	81

The Virginia Department of Education maintains school report cards on each public school within the Commonwealth. There is extensive data about curriculum, student performance and overall school assessments found in these reports that are accessible on-line through the Tazewell County Public Schools website, www.tazewell.k12.va.us. Figure 28 shows the Tazewell County High School Standards of Learning scores for the 2021-2022 school years. Tazewell County is meeting state standards in all categories of assessment. In addition to this state assessment process, the county developed a Comprehensive Plan Education Committee in January of 2006 that developed an extensive list of goals, objectives and strategies for implementation around issues and future visions of the educational resources for the county. This committee was made up of public educators and administrators, higher education personnel as well as social, community and economic development representatives from across the county and region. The primary targets for improvement and investment were career awareness and exploration, career readiness, emotional wellness, substance abuse prevention, and nutrition and physical well-being. Specific goals and strategies for addressing these needs can be found in the goal development section of this chapter.

Figure 29

**2012---2022 Graduation Rates for All Students,
Cumberland Plateau Planning District**

Division	2012		2022
Tazewell	74%		83%
Buchanan	76%		89%
Dickenson	81%		84%
Russell	81%		88%
Virginia	83%		89%

*Virginia School Report Card, Virginia Department of Education, 2022.
(Federal Graduation Indicator)*

Tazewell County Public Schools strive to meet the changing needs of students and the communities that are home to the school facilities. Figure 29 indicates that Tazewell County had the lowest graduation rate in the Planning District in 2022. Addressing the barriers for improving graduation rates in Tazewell County is a critical need in the school system. Teachers and administrators continually explore ways to address needs of students and support the development and quality of life desires of the community at large. The core beliefs of the public educational system in the county are reflected in the mission statement: The Tazewell County School Division, in partnership with parents and the community, is committed to preparing students to become productive members of society by recognizing that each student is unique and possesses the potential to learn.

B. Higher Education



The Commonwealth of Virginia offers many higher educational opportunities throughout the state and Tazewell County benefits from the location of a valuable and community-integrated community college (SVCC). Additionally, Old Dominion University offers course work through the SVCC curriculum. Bluefield is home to an excellent private Baptist college, Bluefield University. Many graduating high school students from Tazewell County choose to attend these local institutions of higher learning as do other, non-traditional students and participants. The College Choices table (Figure 30) shows the distribution of students at schools in Virginia.

Figure 30

College Enrollment Fall 2022

Virginia Institution	Number of Students Enrolled	Percent of Total Students attending VA Institutions
Appalachian College of Pharmacy	190	.082%
Southwest VA Community College	2,864	1.234%
Virginia Tech	37,024	16%
Radford University	10,695	4.611%
Bluefield University	1,012	.4363%
University of Virginia at Wise	1,906	.8217%
Wytheville Community College	2,244	.9675%
Liberty University	93,349	40.2458%
Old Dominion University	24,286	10.4705%
Virginia Commonwealth University	29,417	12.6826%
Emory & Henry College	1,232	.5312%
Virginia Highlands Community College	2,086	.8993%
University of Virginia	25,642	11.0551%
Total Listed	231,947	

State Council for Higher Education-VA-2022-2023

C. Continuing Education

Offering opportunities for training and personal growth are important aspects of the quality of life for Tazewell County residents. SVCC and Bluefield University offer many opportunities for job training and personal development and advancement to adult learners in the county. Additionally, the community facilities made available to residents through the public school systems create a myriad of opportunities for learning and recreation. Maintaining these facilities for full community enjoyment is an important aspect of the county government. The cooperative and efficient use of these community assets is critical to getting the most benefit for all citizens from these significant facility investments.

In order to maintain the highest quality facilities that benefit the greatest number of citizens, the county government and staff must assess investment in the best cost-benefit scenarios. As with all community facilities, the initial investments are very large and the maintenance is an annual commitment that can often be costly. Creating facilities in areas that are accessible and convenient to a broad range of citizens is necessary to meet the needs of residents and create the highest cost-benefit situation.

All residents are contributors to the construction and maintenance of community facilities, the largest and most predominant of which are schools. Neighborhood schools can be the anchor to a community and create opportunities for citizen engagement and learning at all levels. Multi-generational access to these facilities is not only cost effective, they are community-building opportunities. Learning is a lifelong adventure and Tazewell County supports that pursuit with programming and facilities for all residents.

Figure 31

Education Attainment Comparison for Tazewell County

Statistic	2010			2012			2021		
	Tazewell	VA	US	Tazewell	VA	US	Tazewell	VA	US
Persons 25 & Up	32,115	5,208,536	199,726,659	32,328	5,544,053	206,597,20	29,512	5,882,521	225,152,317
Less than 9 th grade	3,833	286,383	12,435,227	3,488	278,157	12,299,194	2,085	217,549	10,793,507
9 th -12 grade no diploma	4,017	438,680	17,463,256	3,784	406,591	16,728,426	2,393	322,050	14,256,849
High School Graduate	10,645	1,353,923	57,903,353	11,277	1,382,317	58,410,105	11,030	1,402,487	59,636,386
College, No Degree	6,512	1,020,903	41,175,904	7,142	1,090,832	43,925,780	6,039	1,102,111	45,042,031
Associates Degree	2,501	347,485	15,021,920	2,941	377,135	16,069,996	3,170	465,927	19,914,710
Bachelor's Degree	3,243	1,038,321	35,148,428	2,600	1,106,898	37,090,877	3,076	1,338,831	46,354,331
Graduate or Prof Degree	1,364	722,841	20,578,571	1,096	791,123	22,073,005	1,719	1,033,566	29,454,503
% High School Grad or Higher	75.6%	86.10%	85.00%	77.50%	87.40%	85.90%	84.8%	90.80%	88.90%
% Bachelor's Degree or higher	14.30%	33.80%	27.90%	11.40%	34.90%	28.60%	17.70%	40.30%	33.70%

American Community Survey S1501 Educational Attainment 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Educational attainment has long been a measure of the growth potential and diversity of a community. Tazewell County has shown an increase in all categories of educational attainment. In today's dynamic workforce, educational advancement is critical for success and Tazewell County residents are mirroring state and national trends. Though still lagging in actual percentage numbers of people with advanced education compared to state and national averages, Tazewell County actually grew at a higher rate than the state and federal averages in several categories (significantly in the category of high school grad or higher).

Much progress has been made in Tazewell County Schools yet problems remain. The county developed a comprehensive Education Plan to address needed improvements and investments in career awareness, emotional wellness, substance abuse prevention and nutrition and physical well-being. Tazewell County’s high drop-out rate also highlights the need for innovative strategies to meet the needs of at risk students. It is also important that school administrators closely evaluate teacher performance before acquiring tenure.

VIII. Economy

Every community has a unique history. Though Tazewell County shares historic references with other westward expansion communities along the eastern coast of the United States, there are many attributes and influences that created this distinct community of work and culture. This area is connected to the geography both from economic connections of the natural resource bases that support agriculture, mining, and timber to the natural scenic beauty area reflected.

The core values held by Tazewell County citizens include the preservation of historic resources, a strong sense of community and family, and enjoyment of the environment. These values are evident by the local support of community associations, local chapters of the Chamber of Commerce, growth of historical societies, and preservation of cultural and historic sites and buildings.



A. Development and Structures

Prior to 1880, Tazewell County’s economy was based in agriculture. Crop production and livestock were the basis for trade and wealth development along with a few trading post communities in the northern and western sectors of the county. With the discovery of rich coal seams near Pocahontas in the early 1880s, the economy took a major shift toward mining and coal-related industrial development. Boomtowns were literally erected overnight and although few of these coal-development based communities survive today, both Richlands and Pocahontas owe their existence to this era in the county’s history. The national decline in both the mining and agriculture economies has been felt here in Tazewell County. Though not as dramatic as the economic shift of the 1880s, Tazewell County faces challenges and opportunities in this time of economic change and redirection. Industry and manufacturing related to the natural resources of the county remain important, but are not the growth industries of this century.

The Tazewell County economic development mission is to aggressively seek economic opportunities that enhance the business and residential communities of the county. The Tazewell County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors are dedicated to building and supporting a strong economic base that enhances the quality of life for citizens of the county. Realizing the importance of a diversified economic base, Tazewell County has a progressive labor environment and is positioned among the country's northern most right-to-work counties. Continuing to work toward closer parity with the state's average income is an important goal and maintaining pace with income increases is absolutely necessary to ensure Tazewell County's residents gain economic opportunities thus keeping them in the county.

The county supports strong and accessible educational and medical systems, low electric utility rates, and below average construction costs. Tazewell County has five successful existing industrial parks strategically located along U.S. 19/460 with a new development, The Bluestone, having been recently completed in the eastern section of Tazewell County.

Tazewell County's community organizations, museums and libraries contribute greatly to the way of life in the county. The county's lead organization for promotion of cultural arts is the Citizens for the Arts (CART) whose purpose is to provide a variety of cultural experiences and opportunities to area citizens and visitors. The Historic Crab Orchard Museum and Pioneer Park strive to preserve the history of the past. An active Arts-In-Education program provides the area schools with artist residencies in the performance fields that include art, music, and drama.



B. Current Industry and Development

For more than 100 years, the basis employment of Tazewell County has been coal mining or mining related industries. Basis employment, by its nature, is found in industries that sell the majority of their goods and services outside of the area of the industry. Because this employer is also based in resource extraction, Tazewell County cannot rebuild the source of this employment nor has it benefited from the value-added industries related to the coal industry. This traditional economic driver has been underutilized for the county as the raw mineral extraction is the primary economy of the region while the value-added processing and retailing of this resource is sourced outside of Tazewell County. Figure 32 shows the major employers in Tazewell County today. These businesses, though not always offering as high a wage as the mineral extraction industry, are building the new economy base in the county. The chart shows the major employers to largely be governmental and healthcare facilities, both with living wage opportunities for employees. Retail also holds a sizable share of the employers in the county and with their relatively low wage job opportunities, this growing segment merits notice and assessment from the view of long term sustainability.

New expansions into tourism, primarily recreation related will affect the county positively. Both the Back of the Dragon and the "Original Pocahontas" ATV trail will boost the number of visitors who come to stay

and play in our region. As time continues, this industry will play a greater part in the overall economics of the area, with lodging, restaurants, and other connected businesses.

The Bluestone Technology Center will also play a vital role in the economic success of the County in the future.

Figure 32

50 Largest Employers in Tazewell County, 2021

Rank	Company	Ownership Type	Number of Employees
1	Wal Mart	Private	500 and over
2	Tazewell County School Board	Local government 1	1000 and over
3	Clinch Valley Community Hospital	Private	500 to 999
4	Cumberland Mountain Community Services	Local Government	250 to 499
5	Southwest Virginia Community College	State Government	250 to 499
6	Pocahontas State Correctional Center	State Government	250 to 499
7	Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.	Private	100 to 249
8	Bluefield College	State Government	100 to 249
9	Tazewell County, Virginia	Local Government	100 to 249
10	Food City	Private	100 to 249
11	First Community Bank	Private	100 to 249
12	Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens	Private	100 to 249
13	Town of Bluefield	Private	100 to 249
14	Jenmar Corporation of Virginia	Private	100 to 249
15	Heritage Hall	Private	100 to 249
16	Tazewell Community Hospital	Private	100 to 249
17	Food Lion	Local Government	100 to 249
18	Joy Technologies	Private	100 to 249
19	Town of Richlands	Private	100 to 249
20	McDonalds of Gate city	Local Government	100 to 249

21	Aramark Services	Private	100 to 249
22	Spandeck, Inc.	Private	100 to 249
23	Hardee's	Private	100 to 249
24	Clinch Valley Community Action	Private	100 to 249
25	Lawrence Brothers	Private	100 to 249
26	Nash Finch	Private	100 to 249
27	Town of Tazewell	Private	100 to 249
28	Tammie Bostic	Private	100 to 249
29	Pyott Boone Electronics, Inc	Private	50 to 99
30	Consolidated Steel, Inc.	Private	50 to 99
31	Wendy's	Private	50 to 99
32	Clinch Valley Physician's, LLC	Private	50 to 99
33	Tazewell County Board of Social Services	Private	50 to 99
34	Clinch Valley Medical Center	Private	50 to 99
35	Contemporary Builders	Private	50 to 99
36	Pemco Corporation	Private	50 to 99
37	Genesis Rail Services, Inc.	Private	50 to 99
38	Dolgencorp LLC	Private	50 to 99
39	American Power Service Corporation	Private	50 to 99
40	Appalachian Aggregates, LLC	Local Government	50 to 99
41	Wendy's	Private	50 to 99
42	Clinch River Forest Products	Private	50 to 99
43	CNX Gas Company	Private	50 to 99
44	Kwik Kafe Vending Company	Private	50 to 99
45	McDonalds	Local Government	50 to 99
46	Postal Service	Local Government	50 to 99

47	Grants Supermarket	Private	50 to 99
48	12 Enterprises, Inc.		50 to 99
49	Employers Innovative Network, LLC	Private	50 to 99
50	First Sentinel Bank	Private	50 to 99

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 3rd Quarter (July, August, September) 2021.

As shown in Figure 33 Tazewell County’s average weekly wage is significantly lower than the average in the US and the state. The county and region have lost the most ground in the mining and natural resources areas.

Figure 33

**Annual Average Weekly Wage (\$)
Tazewell County, CPPDC, and Virginia**

Industry	Tazewell County	United States	Commonwealth of Virginia
All Industry	\$849	\$1,465	\$1,467

Virginia Employment Commission: Census of Employment and Wages, 2022

A. Mining and Related Industries

The county benefited in many ways from the mining industry. Whole communities were developed in response to the abundant natural resource opportunities found in this area, and several industries continue to employ residents of Tazewell County and the surrounding region that support and enhance the mining opportunities in the area. However, the dependence on this single source of economic development has had dramatic costs to residents and the overall development of the county. Dependence on a basic industry makes the economy of the county highly susceptible to changes in that base industry, and Tazewell County has felt the impact of the “boom-bust” cycles of the mining industry.

The national demand for coal decreased in the 1960s as oil and natural gas began to compete with the coal market for home and industrial heating. Greater mechanization has allowed for higher production with fewer workers in the mines, thus reducing the employment opportunities in the county. Coal had a short-lived resurgence in the 1970s, but this was followed by greater environmental regulations of the industries in the late 1970s that had the greatest impact on smaller mining companies, the very type operating in Tazewell County. Profit margins were shrinking for these firms due to the higher costs of doing business and as the overall market for coal dropped again in the 1980s, the unemployment rates in Tazewell County skyrocketed.

The recent Marcellus Shale natural gas boom has impacted the price of coal negatively in the region, leading many mines to close, or to drastically decrease production rates.

Figure 34

Coal Production and Number of Mines, 2022

(Thousand Short Tons)

	Count		Surface		Total	
	# of Mines	Production	# of Mines	Production	# of Mines	Production
Tazewell	1	67	7	440	8	507
Buchanan	7	4,432	10	1461	17	5893
Dickenson	3	2,766	9	815	12	3581
Russell	0	0	2	68	2	68
Virginia	11	7,265	28	2,784	39	10,049

Energy Information Administration: Annual Coal Report 2022

Current mining production is highlighted in Figure 34 with total tonnage for the region broken down by county. As the chart shows, Tazewell and Russell County have the fewest mines in operation as well as smallest production capacity in the region. Because the average annual wage in the mining industry is still one of the highest, there is still strong commitment to supporting this industry within the county and the region, even with the downturn in production and jobs. Due to the need for alternative energy sources, it is projected that coal production will maintain its current production and possibly increase over the next several years as natural gas prices level off. However, the need for diversification of the economy is a reality particularly for the county and even the region.

Methane gas extraction is a growing industry in Tazewell County. While not located in the larger gas fields, natural gas extraction and coal gasification are growing industries in Tazewell County and merit close observation for development and economic enhancement opportunities.

B. Healthcare and Service Industries

The county and surrounding local governmental partners spent the last two decades developing strategies and incentive programs to build new industry and job opportunities and to diversify the economic basis of the region. As was the national trend, the healthcare and service industries of Tazewell County have seen growth. However, the wage related to these industries are regularly lower than the traditional manufacturing wages associated with the mining and mineral extraction industries but continues to provide a strong employment base for the county. With the development of the Bluestone Technology Park, additional emergency, fire, and rescue services are needed in this area and are likely to be developed to include but not limited to: EMS, Fire and Rescue, Medical Air Evacuation, and general medical facilities.

C. Agriculture and Agribusiness

Agriculture is an important piece of Tazewell County’s economic puzzle. Though the number of farms and acreage of land committed to agribusiness is shrinking in the county, the size of farms is growing. Pasture remains the highest use for Tazewell County Farmland. Beef, cattle, sheep and goats are the primary agriculture commodities sold. The number of cattle that are owned by non-residents and grazed on Tazewell County pastures is increasing as these cattle owner recognize the strength of our cool season forages.

The pandemic and the related supply chain disruptions have had a marked effect on both the producers and the consumers. The need to process beef, pork, milk and vegetables locally has been recognized by both sectors. The Agriculture Food security committee meets annually and suggests the following:

- Acknowledge that Agriculture is the leading production-based industry in Tazewell County.
- Food Hub in county to help compile Ag products to market locally and send out to places of higher demand
- Pursue a local meat packing facility
- Pursue a local milk bottling plant or creamery
- Pursue a local cannery for properly preserving foods.
- Support local Farmers Markets and businesses that do direct marketing of AG Products.
- Protect prime Ag Land from other non-good production industries.
- Encourage programs to control nuisance animals like coyote, elk, Black Buzzard.
- Look for programs to control brush and evasive species.
- Pursue the availability of agriculture grade lime and affordable nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium.

The number of farms in Tazewell County as well as nationwide is declining as shown in Figure 35. The average size and value have increased, but the overall number of acres in active farming is shrinking in Tazewell County according to the US Census. There has been a significant increase in the number of government cost share programs through the US Department of Agriculture and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation that has brought several million dollars into the production phase of the county’s agriculture. These programs enhance production while conserving soil and water resources. Best Management Practices have also been utilized to protect endangered species in the Clinch River.

Figure 35

Agriculture in Tazewell County

Farming Highlights	2017	2012	2007
Number of Farms	512	584	576
Land in Agriculture (acres)	137,943	150,181	153,677
Average size of farm (acres)	269	257	267

Average Value of Production per farm	\$24,636	\$46,268	\$37,308
Average farm production expense	\$21,150	\$45,710	\$34,788
Government Payments	\$16,725	\$572,000	\$137,000

US Census of Agriculture, 2017, 2012 and 2007

Tazewell County has been noted as “The County where bluegrass grows to the top of the mountains.” This is due to the vast under layer of limestone and may explain why the county is well known for its cattle industry. Grazing is a significant activity of the agriculture types found in Tazewell County. Figure 36 shows that cattle, sheep, and goats are the top livestock commodities for the county. Hay and related crops are the top items of acreage use in the county though the actual yield per acre would give a better representation of crop production in the crop categories. Population growth in Tazewell County will continue to remove agricultural land from production. Continued planning must take place to protect and conserve the counties most productive areas. Burkes Garden and the Cove must be off limits for commercial, industrial, and large housing developments. These areas are sensitive karst areas and the Cove serves as one of the primary watersheds for the county.

Figure 36

Agriculture Types and Rank in Tazewell County

Commodity	Quantity	State Rank	U.S. Rank
<i>Top Livestock Inventory Items (number)</i>			
Cattle and calves	19,916	8	797
Sheep and lambs	236	16	680
Layers	29	58	1,443
Goats, all	236	16	680
Horse and ponies	85	40	1,537
Commodity	Quantity	State Rank	U.S. Rank
<i>Top Crop Items (acres)</i>			
Forage-land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and green chop	18,560	23	900
Corn for silage	743	30	1,160
Corn for grain	D	78	(D)
Short-rotation woody crops	D	6	(D)

Vegetables harvested, all	D	57	1,746
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U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2017.

(D) Cannot be disclosed.

Ranked items among the 98 state counties and 3,078 U.S. Counties, 2017.

Timber is another economic asset within Tazewell County. The wood products industry has struggled in recent years; however the natural resources within the county make this potential economic driver worthy of note and assessment today and for the future.

Dickenson County, within the planning district, is the only county still showing true economic benefit from the wood products industry. As with the coal industry, this economic driver is natural resources based and often does not return equal benefit for the level of long-term impact assessed to the community. Should Tazewell County pursue a renewal of development within this area, it will be crucial to create businesses that enhance the return on investment within the wood products industry so the citizens of the county can benefit from the extraction of these valuable resources.

Figure 37

Wood Product Land & Acres

Land Class	Total Acres
Accessible Forest	232,565
Non-Forest	86,056
Water	1,546
Total	320,167

Forest Type	Total Acres	Public Acres	Private Acres	Percentage
Oak/Hickory	183,692	5,411	178,281	79%
Bottomland Hardwood	4,638	0	4,638	2%
Maple/Beech/Birch	42,815	2,705	40,109	18%
Nonstocked	1,420	0	1,420	1%
Total	232,565	8,116	224,448	100%

Forestry Statistics for Tazewell County, VA 2021 USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory & Analysis

YEAR	HARWOOD VALUE
2007	\$8,990,662
2008	\$5,297,317
2009	\$4,881,754
2010	\$6,732,980
2011	\$5,674,400
2012	\$7,716,296
2013	\$8,717,103

2014	\$9,542,887
AVERAGE	\$7,194,174

Tazewell County’s land area is approximately 73% forest and the county realizes significant economic impact from the products of that land. Based on data from the 2021 forest Inventory assessment, almost 97% of the forest land in the county is in private ownership. Tazewell County relies heavily on its rural land and natural resources to support its population. Loss of forestland will result in loss of both economic vitality and environmental stability in the county. Tazewell County should seek a balance between growth and development and forestland retention

Timberland plays an important economic role in the county. The value of the timber harvested in Tazewell County has averaged over \$8 million dollars annually in the last 10 years as shown in the table above. The Virginia’s Forest Our Commonwealth 2006 publication by the Virginia Department of Forestry estimates that every dollar a landowner receives for their timber generates more than \$35.00 for the state’s overall economy.

Forestry is a major contributor to Tazewell County’s economy through the sale of products, employment, and the generation of support activities. Forestry also provides benefits such as protection of public water supply watersheds, preservation of the natural landscape and open space, and less costly service delivery needs that would be required by scattered residential subdivision developments. In addition, forestland has traditionally contributed to the quality of life in Tazewell County. It provides rural character and scenic quality which distinguished these areas from urban regions.

C. Emerging Technology and Development

High speed fiber optic cabling has been deployed in a backbone fashion to provide access to this utility for opportunities that are expected in the region. Higher wages and stable business opportunities will come with these ventures thus preparations are necessary for this to occur. Information Technology (IT) industries have located in neighboring communities and Tazewell is working to position itself to build on potential expansions and networked business.

An important initiative in that realm is the development of the Bluestone Regional Business and Technology Park overlooking the Bluestone River off plan for this park includes and conference center, golf course, seasonal units. As a result, high work, play, and live in a developed area. The benefit from the recreational, business, and tax-generating resources this park will offer.



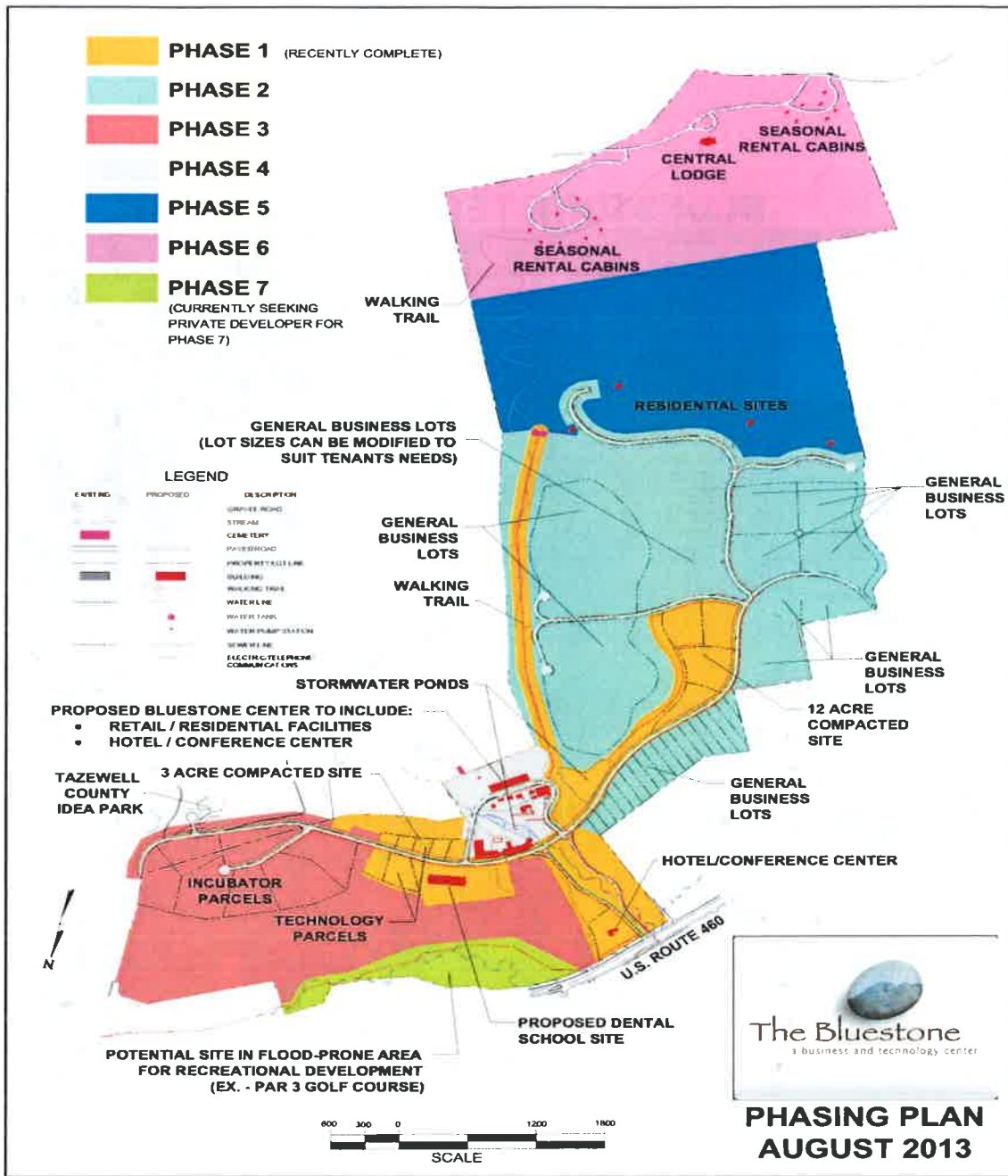
overlooking the Route 460. The master office buildings, a hotel retail shops, restaurants, a lodges, and residential technology workers will well-planned and local community will also

Figure 38

Site Plan Map of Bluestone

BLUESTONE TECHNOLOGY PARK





D. Tourism

Along with business and industry, tourism has also proven to be an engine of growth in Tazewell County. Touted as Four Seasons Country, the Clinch River Basin is considered one of only twenty “Last Great Places” in the world according to the Nature Conservancy. Tourism and cultural heritage also play an integral role in Tazewell County’s economy, and the county offers diverse cultural, and recreational activities, including the [Historic Crab Orchard Museum](#), the Tazewell County Old Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers’ Convention, the Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, beautiful [Burke’s Garden](#) and the [Appalachian Trail](#), just to name a few.



The Crab Orchard’s Pioneer Park is expanding to include a 16-acre tract that will include a Turn-of-the-Century community and include the relocated historic Pisgah Store and a farm heritage center. This facility hosts multiple special events including civil war re-enactments, pioneer recreations, and traveling exhibits from across Virginia and the world. Pocahontas is another leading tourist attraction in far Southwest Virginia and visitation at that museum continues to increase. The exhibition mine was designated a National

Historic Landmark in October 1994 and attracts visitors from across the country. There are efforts underway to enhance the downtown and preserve historic structures within the Pocahontas community.

Burke’s Garden is Virginia’s largest rural historic district, and its geography is so distinctive that it is visible from space. The community holds a Fall Festival that attracts crafters and visitors to “God’s Thumbprint” from around the world. Cultural institutions and unique communities like these are important to preserve the county’s cultural heritage and to create economic benefit for the county through the visitor traffic and expenditures. Tazewell County’s institutions of higher learning also contribute to community arts through their offering of special events and promotion to their student populations of local attractions and historic venues.





Other new tourism attractions include the Back of the Dragon and the "Original Pocahontas" ATV Trail. These attractions are for motorcycle/sports car/ATV aficionados. The Back of the Dragon has 32 miles of motorcycling and sports car excitement between Tazewell and Smyth Counties. The O.P. ATV trail

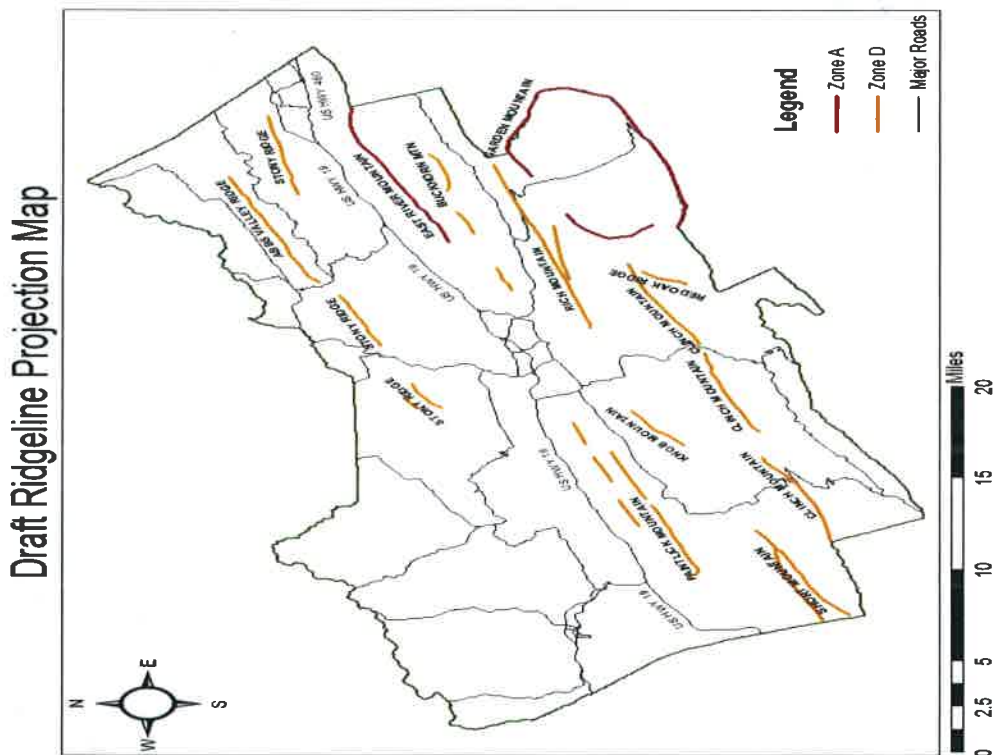


includes over 30 miles of ATV trails near to the Town of Pocahontas, as well as two trailheads and multiple lodging sites.

Local attractions include Tazewell County’s majestic mountains with their scenic ridgelines. East River Mountain exemplifies this with the natural occurrence of the shelf spilling a waterfall of morning fog. This presents a need of the county to protect these ridgelines from uncontrolled development. The following figure identifies these ridgelines within the county that warrant protection.

Figure 39

DRAFT RIDGELINE PROJECTION MAP



Tourism is clearly an important growth industry for Tazewell County and pursuit and support of enhancements in this area are crucial to the diversification of the local and regional economy. Unlike extracted resources, the natural and cultural tourist resources stay in the county, provide long-term benefit to the county and residents, and through support and enhancement, are a continually renewable source of financial and quality of life benefits for the entire county. Figure 40 helps to

reveal the current economic impacts of tourism in the county today. These are based on the spin-off industry impact of visitors to the county such as restaurants, hotels, and gas stations. The growth over the three years that this chart shows is worthy of note as these numbers reflect historic visitor investment without the projected tourism enhancements pointed out in the Tazewell County Tourism Strategic Plan.

Figure 40

Tourism Economic Impacts

Travel Impacts	2019		2020		2021	
	Tazewell	Virginia	Tazewell	Virginia	Tazewell	Virginia
Visitor Expenditures	\$29,100,000	\$17,516,330,000	\$36,000,000	\$29,064,700,000	\$37,000,000	\$25,219,150,000
Payroll Generated	\$11,900,000	\$6,112,900,000	\$14,400,000	\$8,361,100	\$13,400,000	\$7,135,300,000
Employment Generated	394	170,839	479	240.795	406	185,225
State Tax Receipts	\$900,000	\$476,700,000	\$1,100,000	753,600,000	\$1,000,000	\$651,400,000
Local Tax Receipts	\$1,500,000	\$947,200,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,352,400,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,173,200,000

Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2019-2021

The economy and culture of a community are strong indicators of the growth and trends. By understanding how the economic picture is changing and factoring in the cultural history of the county, there are many important lessons and opportunities present that can help direct Tazewell County into the future.

Along with business and industry, tourism has also proven to be an engine of economic growth in the county. Touted as Four Seasons Country, the Clinch River Basin is considered one of the “Last Great Places” in the world according to the Nature Conservancy. With phenomenal natural occurrences such as the East River Mountain shelf spilling a waterfall of morning fog, and the alluvial bowl known as Burke’s Garden, otherwise known as God’s Thumbprint, the tourism industry is clearly an important factor in the economy of the county, region and state.

In the past, the tourism efforts of Tazewell County have been coordinated through the Tourism Committee with limited planning. While the efforts have been productive, the increase of tourism activity have encouraged the Tourism Committee to consider a more organized, planned effort for tourism development and marketing. A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis, facilitated by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, was used as a key method in developing a tourism-related strategic plan for Tazewell County. During the planning process, several issues were identified to include: lack of tourism infrastructure such as attractions, outfitters, and unique and formal restaurants, limited financial support to develop and market the area, and, lack of understanding of the positive economic impact of tourism among various groups such as elected officials, towns, and organizations.

The tourism committee has realized the potential for substantial future growth in many areas. Various opportunities of tourism development are possible through cooperative regional efforts, cooperative marketing, the development of public golf courses, the development of theme specific trails (i.e. Wilderness Road Trail, Virginia Coal Heritage Trail, Civil War Trail, Public Art Trail, Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, etc.), and the development of ATV trails, hiking and biking trails, and Blueway trails. The Tourism Committee further realized the opportunity to attract the tour bus market and other specific target markets such as history and railroaders pleasure trips, ladies retreats, father/son get-a-ways, artisan expos, and mountain music weekends.

To enhance tourism opportunities, Tourism Zones in Tazewell County have been created. The Tourism Zones set aside areas designated for tourism development and to offer incentives that will encourage tourism development in these zones for up to 20 years.

IX. Future Land Use Designations

The following Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is designed to guide future development of the Tazewell County according to the goals and objectives specified in the Comprehensive Plan. This is not a zoning map nor does it represent specific or detailed land uses today or into the future. The map is a broad-brush visual representation of the best understanding of the goals of the citizens as they apply to the use and protection of land resources of the county. The following definitions give context to the map.

A. Agricultural

High resource value areas based on soil types, environmental sensitivity, or other unique land characteristics are included areas that are preserved from development through public or private conservation efforts. Clustering of housing units is supported in this district.

B. Forest

High resource value areas based on soil types, environmental sensitivity, or other unique land characteristics which includes areas that are used for mining and gas production.

C. Rural Residential

Small clusters of residential units with some low intensity agricultural uses are areas intended to preserve open spaces and the agricultural landscape while allowing clustered residential development that minimizes impervious surfaces across properties.

D. Residential

Residential areas located in close proximity to urban services and roads capable of handling higher traffic volumes. These are areas for single-family detached and attached units and apartments/condominiums. Small-scale neighborhood and/or lifestyle commercial (such as small convenience markets and marinas) are allowed where appropriate in this zone.

E. Commercial

Areas designated for intensive commercial development with access to major roads and public utilities. Includes, but is not limited to, wholesale, retail, and service commercial uses.

F. Industrial

Areas designated for manufacturing, fabricating, commercial and agricultural processing and other land uses that are often water intensive and generally characterized as having a greater impact on the surrounding land uses and the environment.

G. Mixed Use

Areas with a mixture of residential, commercial, light industrial and civic uses located along major transportation corridors. Intention of these areas is to provide convenient services for neighborhoods and prevent strip development and multiple access points along major and secondary transportation corridors.

H. Scenic / Heritage Area

Areas with an emphasis on scenery or heritage should be maintained for future generations.

Figure 41
Future Land Use Map

