INTRODUCTION

Authority to Plan and Purpose of Planning
The authority to plan is a power delegated to Virginia localities in Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 3, Code of Virginia (1950) as amended. The local planning responsibility is vested with a planning commission which acts in an advisory capacity to the local governing body. The law requires each locality to have a plan of general development and to review it at least once every five years. Unexpected development or population increases may necessitate more frequent revisions.

The St. Paul Comprehensive Plan is a general guide for decisions and actions that determine the Town’s physical, social, and economic development. The plan identifies goals and objectives, suggests policies for the future development of the Town, and proposes programs to carry out these policies.

Plan History and Data Collection
Virginia's local planning legislation requires all localities to have planning commissions and to adopt subdivision ordinances and comprehensive plans. Virginia localities may also adopt zoning ordinances. St. Paul appointed a Planning Commission in 1992.

This comprehensive plan was developed with assistance from the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission. Data for the plan were obtained from several sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, state agencies, citizens and officials of the Town of St. Paul and Wise County, the Wise County Comprehensive Plan, and local business establishments.

Plan Format
The St. Paul Comprehensive Plan has four parts:
1. Introduction – authority and purpose of the plan.
2. Inventory and Analysis – economic and population characteristics, and inventory of land features and a discussion of land use, housing, transportation, and community facilities.
3. Goals, Objectives, and Policies – identification of programs and facilities that the community is trying to achieve.
4. Implementation – a discussion of methods for carrying out the Plan such as zoning, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements programming.
Plan Adoption

After the required public hearings, the Planning Commission will amend the plan, if necessary, then recommend it to the Town Council for adoption. Upon receiving the Planning Commission's recommendations, Town Council has 90 days to adopt the plan. If adopted, the plan becomes a development guide. If it is not adopted within the 90-day period, the plan is returned to the Planning Commission for additional consideration. It must be resubmitted to Council within 60 days. The Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time provided that the necessary public hearing and adoption procedures are followed. The Code also provides for review of the plan by the Planning Commission at least once every five years to determine whether amendments are needed.
CHAPTER 1
NATURAL RESOURCES

Location

The Town of St. Paul is located in both Wise and Russell County in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia. The town functions primarily as a trade center for its surrounding area and as an area rich in historic resources.

Topography

St. Paul lies within the Clinch River Basin above the Tennessee-Virginia state line. The total basin of the river to its mouth in the Tennessee River comprises 4,413 square miles, of which 14 percent is up river from the town.

The Clinch River has its source in the mountainous section of Tazewell County, with the mountain ranges running in a northeast-southwest direction and having elevations up to 4,700 feet. Upstream from St. Paul, the Clinch Valley is approximately 52 miles long and 12 miles wide. The ridges forming the basin divide average near 4,000 feet in elevation. Floodplains are usually narrow, and in some sections there are sheer rock bluffs along the river. At St. Paul the elevation of the river is 1,450 feet.

Climate

St. Paul has mild winters and warm summers, with average monthly temperatures ranging from 32° to 40° Fahrenheit during the winter, and from 67° to 71° during the summer. Record temperatures have been -23° at Wise and 105° at St. Paul. Such extremes are quite rare, although freezing spells do occur during the winter months, while the summers may have periods when daily high temperatures are in the 90’s. The frost-free season normally lasts from early May to late September. Temperatures may be five to ten degrees lower in the mountains than in the valley portions of the area.

With total annual precipitation between 45 and 50 inches, St. Paul is part of one of the wettest regions of the United States. Due to the mountainous terrain, a wide variation in rainfall can occur within short distances. Precipitation is reasonably well distributed throughout the year but is noticeably less in late summer and early fall. The driest month is usually October, with July generally the wettest. During the summer, hard showers or thunderstorms appear from the west and northwest. Slow, steady rains and light snows occur in the winter, with snow and sleet sometimes falling at higher elevations while rain is falling in the valleys. Snowfall is generally not a significant part of total precipitation, with
annual depths in the vicinity of Wise at about 30 inches. Although severe storms have produced snowfall totaling from 41 to 68 inches in depth, there is rarely more than six inches of snow on the ground at one time.

Although roughly 51 percent of the annual rainfall occurs during the growing season, its poor distribution during critical periods may cause drought damage. About ten drought days, or 50 percent of the total drought days, occur in June, July and August. Drought in April and May is of negligible consequence.

Flooding occurs in most streams on an average of almost once a year, although this flooding seldom directly impacts the Town of St. Paul. For streams with drainage areas greater than 20 or 30 square miles, about 75 percent of the floods occur from December through March, 15 percent in April and May, and ten percent in June, July and August. Very few floods are experienced in the dry fall months of September, October, and November. For very small drainage basins, locally intense thunderstorms cause floods throughout the year, and the frequency of spring and summer floods approaches that of the winter season.

Geology

The general surface configuration of St. Paul serves to reflect the underlying geological structure. Rock types exposed in the area are of sedimentary origin and consist of sandstone, shale, coal, dolomite and limestone. These rocks range in geologic age from Cambrian (600 million years old) to Pennsylvanian (280 million years old).

The geological environment of St. Paul is characterized by generally flat-lying, relatively undisturbed, alternating beds of sandstone, shale and coal. In this area, mineral rights are sometimes owned by other than the present owner of the surface rights, or mining may have taken place under the surface and not be evident from the surface. Development should not be encouraged in areas where mining has been undertaken relatively close to the surface and may cause problems of settling and unstable bedrock. Coal reserves under any given piece of property should be evaluated in light of past/future subsurface mining.

Soil Characteristics

General soil conditions of an area are important factors in the formulation of future development plans. Certain soils have better permeability, drainage characteristics, and bearing strengths than others and are more suitable for urban and industrial uses.

Soil types in St. Paul are grouped into four general classifications that relate to the suitability to urban development. The desirability and suitability of specific tracts should be determined by a detailed site investigation of the soils by a qualified professional. The complexity of soil types warrant such an investigation before any extensive use is made of
the land. More detailed data and mapping are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.

**Water Resources**

A potable water supply is necessary to sustain human life. A safe, dependable water supply is required for many commercial, industrial, agricultural and recreational purposes as well. Water availability and quality is thus an important consideration in assessing development potential.

Water resources exist as ground water and as surface water. Ground water occurs beneath the earth's surface, stored in open spaces in rocks, while surface water occupies the earth's surface in such forms as streams, rivers and lakes.

Both ground and surface water depend upon precipitation for replenishment. Surface water is replenished directly through runoff of rain and snow melt and indirectly by surface flows of ground water such as springs, and ground water either by direct infiltration of rain and snow melt or by seepage from surface water.

In addition to the intensity, frequency, duration and distribution of precipitation, a complex set of factors influence the water resources of the area. Such factors as topography, geologic structure, temperature, soils, vegetation and land use activities contribute to both the quantity and quality of water available.

**Surface Water**

The streams and rivers of Wise County are headwaters of two major rivers, the Tennessee and the Big Sandy. The Powell and Guest Rivers and their tributaries lie within the Tennessee River Basin, while the Pound River and its tributaries are a part of the Big Sandy River Basin.

As headwater streams, these rivers and streams have relatively small watersheds and are particularly subject to the wide variation in rainfall that can occur within the county due to the mountainous terrain. The terrain also contributes to rapid runoff during periods of heavy rain. These factors cause stream flows to change dramatically, often in a matter of hours, creating flash flooding situations. The small size of the watersheds and the fluctuation of stream flows mean that these streams can provide only moderate supplies of surface water unless impoundments are used, allowing water stored during periods of high stream flow to be used during periods of low stream flow. Several impoundments have been constructed in the county, serving as raw water sources for public water systems.

The Clinch River subbasin, which incorporates the eastern portion of Wise County and the Town of St. Paul, draws moderately impaired biologic readings, likely the result of runoff from active or abandoned mining activities.
Ground Water

The southeastern section of Wise County (including St. Paul) is underlain by moderately and steeply dipping shales and sandstones. Wells drilled into these rocks average 100 feet in depth and yield an average of 20 gallons per minute. A few deeper wells near the Guest and Clinch Rivers are reported to yield more than 100 gallons per minute. Ground water is developed at depths between 70 and 150 feet in most wells. Water quality in this area is similar to that of ground water in the northern section of the county.

It is difficult to estimate the overall ground water potential in the county due to a lack of sufficient well data. Additionally, extensive mining activity in the northern section of the county has adversely affected the water table. It is unlikely that ground water will meet any appreciable amount of future water demand.

Mineral Resources

Mineral resources have dominated the history and development of Wise County. While coal has been the most abundant and important of these resources, others such as iron ore, natural gas, shale, limestone, sandstone, manganese and clay are also present in varying quantities and qualities. The importance of these resources to the nation's economy has changed in the past and will continue to change in the future, with the economy of Wise County in turn greatly affected.

Coal

In recent decades, increasing mechanization and technological advances in the mining industry have resulted in ongoing decreases in demand and employment. More recently, natural gas prices and federal regulatory actions have had substantial impacts on the industry.

Wise County Coal Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production (million tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>12.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Energy Information Administration
Natural Gas

Natural gas exploration in Wise County began in the late 19th century. Production over the past two decades is shown below.

Currently, the Town of St. Paul is not served by natural gas. Plans and discussions are in the making though to provide this service either via Wise County or through a cooperative effort with Russell County.

Wise County Natural Gas Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production (Mcf)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>8,994,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8,440,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8,264,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9,142,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7,770,564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy

Other Mineral Resources

Limestone deposits are quarried and crushed for use as road stone, agricultural stone, concrete aggregate and in asphalt. Locally available supply easily meets local demand, and limestone has not been marketed in the past beyond the limits of Wise County due to its general availability.

An abundant supply of sandstone is available in the county. In past years, it has been quarried, crushed to sand, then marketed as mortar and concrete sand, traction sand and for coal production. Although high-grade glass sand is present, its being recovered profitably under present conditions is questionable. Further study of this mineral would also be helpful in evaluating its marketability.

Samples of clay materials occurring in the county have been tested and found potentially useful in the manufacture of brick, tile, quarry tile and lightweight aggregate. Some of the coal refuse accumulations also contain slate potentially suitable for making brick and lightweight aggregate.

Forest Resources

Forests are unique among the major raw materials in that they are renewable. They are grown, harvested and grown again. With good management practices, forests not only produce wood but also protect watersheds, provide habitat for a diversity of game and non-game wildlife species, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and, in general, enhance the environment.
Lumbering operations began in Wise County during the late 1800s with the harvesting of yellow poplar. It is estimated that by 1923, less than one percent of the county's 227.3 thousand forest acres remained virgin. The practice of taking the best trees and leaving low-quality stands may have reduced the genetic base for today's forest. Burning logged areas, often more than once, resulted in erosion and site degradation. Timber on the steeper slopes was logged later, when the need for wood increased during World War I. As farms were abandoned during the Great Depression, forests reclaimed the landscape naturally.

Fire, environmental conditions, people and pests have produced a relatively even-aged forest. Chestnut blight has eliminated the American chestnut from the area's forest. As oak stands mature, stresses alter tree physiology, rendering them susceptible to root disease and insects. Susceptible trees decline and eventually die, a natural process compounded by past land use, loss of species such as the American chestnut, replacement with species less adapted to the site, and other forces and conditions. This problem, referred to as "oak decline," can be managed by enhancing stand vigor, increasing age and species diversity, or reducing the rotation age, according to Forest Service field researchers.

It is evident that Wise County's forest resources have the potential to contribute significantly to the county's economy. The county's soils and climate are conducive to rapid tree growth. With proper management, the variety of native woods promises the production of quality raw materials for future markets.

Summary

Physical characteristics of an area such as topography, drainage, soils, flooding conditions and large tracts of forested land contribute to the type, location and nature of development within the town. In St. Paul, the physical elements are highly restrictive and therefore must be a major consideration in the construction of this plan.

Although considered restrictive in terms of urban development, the same factors are also the physical assets of St. Paul, that is, the physical amenities of the environment that should be preserved and protected because of their contribution to the unique character of the mountainous area.
CHAPTER 2
ECONOMY

Information presented in this section pertains to the labor force characteristics of Wise County, Russell County and the Town of St. Paul, as well as insights into the local economy. Some of the more pertinent factors to be examined are employment sectors, labor force data, retail sales and income.

Labor Force Participation
Any individual 16 years of age and older, who is employed or seeking employment, is designated a member of the labor force. The table below shows labor force participation data from 2000 and 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labor Force Participation Status</th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 16-over</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>32,114</td>
<td>24,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Labor Force</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>16,063</td>
<td>11,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian LF</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>16,062</td>
<td>11,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>14,912</td>
<td>10,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Labor Force</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>16,051</td>
<td>13,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF Participation</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 estimate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 16-over</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>33,762</td>
<td>23,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Labor Force</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>16,228</td>
<td>11,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian LF</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>16,182</td>
<td>11,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>14,455</td>
<td>10,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Labor Force</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>17,534</td>
<td>11,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF Participation</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
**Unemployment**

Unemployment rates in Russell and Wise Counties have mirrored national economic trends, while continuing to track higher than statewide figures.

**Unemployment – Annual Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wise County</th>
<th>Russell County</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

**Occupation and Industry**

The following table illustrates occupation and industry trends for the Town of St. Paul.

**Occupation and Industry Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Wise County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional and related occupations</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation and material moving occupations</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Wise County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, warehousing and utilities</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance and real estate</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, management, waste management</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and health care</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation and food services</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*
Commuting Patterns

In 2013, of the 535 estimated workers in the Town, 65.3 percent drove to work alone, 25.9 percent carpooled, 7.4 percent walked to work, and 1.3 percent worked at home. These figures are consistent with past data.

Taxable Sales

Another indicator of economic trends in Wise and Russell Counties is retail sales. While retail sales increased in both counties over the past decade, sales in Wise County and Norton, more susceptible to losses in mining employment, have decreased significantly in more recent years.

Annual Taxable Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wise County/Norton</th>
<th>Russell County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$394,881,236</td>
<td>$138,753,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$480,403,254</td>
<td>$157,889,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$426,361,296</td>
<td>$159,893,054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Department of Taxation

Income

Income distribution can be used to analyze the utility of a community. Income levels are often reflective of the level of needs the citizenry may demand. While increases noted below are impressive, it must be noted that local figures still fall well below state levels. At the same time, the Town has outgained its surrounding counties, both in income levels and rate of increase.

Income Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Capita Income</th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$17,735</td>
<td>$14,271</td>
<td>$14,863</td>
<td>$23,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$28,590</td>
<td>$17,944</td>
<td>$17,909</td>
<td>$32,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$26,114</td>
<td>$19,107</td>
<td>$19,735</td>
<td>$33,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$24,833</td>
<td>$26,149</td>
<td>$26,834</td>
<td>$46,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$39,028</td>
<td>$33,608</td>
<td>$32,780</td>
<td>$61,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$50,500</td>
<td>$36,218</td>
<td>$33,872</td>
<td>$63,907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
CHAPTER 3
POPULATION & HOUSING

Analysis of local population characteristics provides a great deal more information than just the number of persons residing therein. Historic accounts of population data, as well as analysis of natural increase and migration rates, allow for reasonable population projections. Such projections are extremely valuable for planning purposes. Realistic projections enable the Town and Counties to plan what types and amounts of various land uses will be required in the future. Population distribution trends reveal where residential development will most likely occur and where services must be provided. Residence, age and educational composition changes in the population indicate what types of services will be necessary in the future.

Population Trends and Projections

Population changes in recent decades are shown in the table below, with local decline or stagnation standing in stark contrast to the Commonwealth's marked growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wise County</th>
<th>Russell County</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>39,573</td>
<td>28,688</td>
<td>6,187,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>42,209</td>
<td>29,258</td>
<td>7,079,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>41,452</td>
<td>28,897</td>
<td>8,001,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>40,841</td>
<td>29,051</td>
<td>8,811,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>40,357</td>
<td>29,296</td>
<td>9,645,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>39,976</td>
<td>29,534</td>
<td>10,530,229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Decennial Census, Virginia Employment Commission - population projections

The table on the following page presents the age composition of the population by broad age groupings. The "65 and over" age group represents an increasing segment of the local population, and a significantly higher percentage than that of the state as a whole. The local median age is also consistently increasing, while remaining noticeably higher than that of the Commonwealth.

When coupled with an ongoing marked drop in the local 18-under population, this constant "aging" of the overall population can present various challenges, serving as a rough indicator of the level and type of services desired and needed, both present and future, as well as suggesting potential issues with future labor force supply.
## Population Change by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>40,123</td>
<td>30,308</td>
<td>7,078,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 &amp; Over</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2010** |         |         |            |          |
| Total Population | 970     | 41,452  | 28,897     | 8,001,024 |
| Under 18         | 20.5%   | 20.8%   | 20.3%      | 23.2%    |
| 18-64            | 62.0%   | 65.1%   | 63.3%      | 64.6%    |
| 65 & Over        | 17.5%   | 14.1%   | 16.4%      | 12.2%    |
| Median Age       | 44.8    | 39.0    | 43.0       | 37.5     |

| **2020** (projection) |         |         |            |          |
| Total Population     | 40,841  | 29,052  | 8,811,485  |
| Under 18             | not avail | 20.6%   | 18.8%      | 22.5%    |
| 18-64                | at town level | 61.4%   | 59.9%      | 62.1%    |
| 65 & Over            | 18.0%   | 21.3%   | 15.4%      |

| **2030** (projection) |         |         |            |          |
| Total Population     | 40,354  | 29,295  | 9,645,271  |
| Under 18             | not avail | 20.0%   | 17.6%      | 22.4%    |
| 18-64                | at town level | 59.7%   | 56.4%      | 59.3%    |
| 65 & Over            | 20.3%   | 25.9%   | 18.3%      |

| **2040** (projection) |         |         |            |          |
| Total Population     | 39,978  | 29,536  | 10,530,231 |
| Under 18             | not avail | 19.5%   | 17.8%      | 22.6%    |
| 18-64                | at town level | 59.6%   | 55.6%      | 59.3%    |
| 65 & Over            | 20.9%   | 26.6%   | 18.1%      |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Decennial Census, Virginia Employment Commission - population projections
The racial composition of the area’s population has historically varied greatly from that of the Commonwealth. For decades, the non-white population stood well under two percent of the district’s total population. The table below reveals the racial distribution of the area and the state since 2000. While the non-white population is still a relatively small percentage of the local population, especially when compared to Virginia’s diverse population, the relative increase in non-white and Hispanic populations in the past decade is not insignificant.

Racial Composition of Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 White</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Black</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 American Indian</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Asian/Pac Isl/Other</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Hispanic (Any Race)</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 White</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Black</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 American Indian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Asian/Pac Isl/Other</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Hispanic (Any Race)</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

One historic, ongoing characteristic of the region’s population is relatively low education levels. The table below reflects the significant portion of the population with less than a high school diploma and, concurrently, the comparatively small portion of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher. While southwestern Virginia has long held a strong reputation for its citizens’ hardy work ethic, educational levels continue to be an obstacle to true economic diversification.

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years and Over)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St Paul</th>
<th>Wise Co</th>
<th>Russell Co</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School diploma</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010
CHAPTER 4
TRANSPORTATION

Highways
Two major U.S. highways, seven primary highways and numerous state secondary highways serve Wise County. U.S. 23 is a major north-south artery connecting Michigan and Florida. U.S. Alternate 58, which passes through the Town of St. Paul, is an alternate route of U.S. 58, an east-west highway that connects Norfolk, Virginia with Middlesboro, Kentucky. U.S. 58A, four-lane from Norton to Abingdon, is the major arterial route that passes through St. Paul and provides the only through traffic route for the Town.

Traffic Volumes
The following table shows average daily traffic volumes on St. Paul’s streets and roads.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Number</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>AADT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US 58A</td>
<td>West Corp. Limits St. Paul</td>
<td>Wise Street</td>
<td>8,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 58A</td>
<td>Wise Street</td>
<td>Russell County Line</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA 63</td>
<td>US 58A</td>
<td>North Corp. Limits</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Avenue</td>
<td>US 58A</td>
<td>Wise Street/VA 63</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Road</td>
<td>Route 63</td>
<td>Dickenson Street</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Drive</td>
<td>Fourth Avenue</td>
<td>Dead End</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnnie Ramey Dr</td>
<td>US 58A</td>
<td>Route 63</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, 2014

Secondary Highways
Allocations of state funds used for improvements to secondary highways are made through a cooperative effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Wise County Board of Supervisors. Reference should be made to the current "Six-Year Plan" for planned secondary road improvements.

Coal Haul Roads
One half of the receipts under the coal severance tax program go into a special coal haul road fund. This fund in turn finances needed improvements on roads (both primary and secondary) where heavy coal truck traffic is a problem.
Rail
At the turn of the 20th century, the construction of railroads into Wise County provided the initial stimulus for development and growth. Originally devoted primarily to the transportation of coal, the railroads remain a necessary component of the county’s economy. Two major railroad corporations, Norfolk Southern Corporation and CSX Transportation, serve the county.

Air Transportation
Lonesome Pine Airport
Lonesome Pine Airport, located east of Wise, is "home base" for many business and personal aircraft, serving the general aviation needs of the area's public and corporate community. The facility has a 5,280 foot long, 100 foot wide, asphalt runway, a 35 foot wide taxiway, a 10,875 square yard apron, 6 T-hangers, 3 corporate hangers, a conventional hanger, 12,000 gallon storage for both Avgas and Jet-A fuel, a 4,000 square foot terminal building, and 32 automobile parking spaces. Airport terminal Navaids include an airport beacon; AWOS III; CATF/UMICOM communications; VOR/DME; segmented circle and wind cone; SDF localizer; ODALS; REILS; VASI-4; and MIRL runway lighting.

Tri-Cities Regional Airport
Tri-Cities Regional Airport is a commercial, full service facility, located near Blountville, Tennessee, 60 miles south of St. Paul. The facility provides passenger and air freight service with nationwide connections.

Public Transportation
Mountain Empire Transit (MET) is the only public transit system in the LENOWISCO Planning District. MET is the Transportation Department of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc., the Area Agency on Aging for Planning District 1. MET provides public transit for all members of the general public, regardless of age. MET is funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The system provides paratransit demand responsive and wheelchair van service throughout the LENOWISCO service area. MET also provides contract transportation service to employers and social service agencies and limited charter service as allowed by federal and state regulations.

Routes are interconnected and coordinated so that round trips may be made between these communities, with Big Stone Gap serving as MET's hub of operation. Utilizing vans and buses, MET provides ambulatory and wheelchair passengers both fixed-route and paratransit service, Medicaid and aging services, human service transportation and general public transit at nominal fares.
Pedestrian Facilities

The town has recently utilized Virginia Community Development Block Grant funding to upgrade and replace sidewalk in and around the Downtown area. The Town will continue to monitor sidewalk conditions and repair sidewalks in other parts of town as necessary, or add additional sidewalks.

New VDOT Land Use and Development Regulations

The Virginia General Assembly and VDOT have developed a series of new guidelines and regulations related to land use and development as they pertain to the state highway system. These new regulations can have large impacts on developments, especially large developments. Roads are a critical public resource and constitute a major public investment. Traffic impacts caused by new development – a reduction in the traffic carrying capacity of the highways, more crashes and traffic congestion – can be very costly for state and local governments, as well as the broader community.

Traffic Impact Analysis Regulations

Chapter 527 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly added § 15.2-2222.1 to the Code of Virginia. The legislation establishes procedures by which localities submit proposals that will affect the state-controlled transportation network to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for review and comment. The chapter also directs VDOT to promulgate regulations to carry out the provisions of the statute. The statute intends to improve how land-use and transportation-planning decisions are coordinated throughout Virginia by establishing standardized methodologies (definitions, analytical methods, etc.), procedures for analyzing transportation impacts and providing that information to citizens and policymakers. The Traffic Impact Analysis Regulations (24 VAC 30-155), sets forth procedures and requirements governing VDOT’s review of and submission of comments regarding comprehensive plans and amendments to comprehensive plans, rezoning proposals, and subdivision plats, site plans and plans of development and the accompanying traffic impact analyses. Additional information the Traffic Impact Analysis Regulations can be found online at http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/chapter527/default.asp.

Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements

The Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements (SSAR) regulation establishes requirements that newly constructed streets will need to meet to be accepted into the secondary system of state highways for public maintenance. The regulation became effective on March 9, 2009. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has developed a website to offer all interested and involved parties information, materials, and training opportunities to become more familiar with the SSAR. For more information on these regulations, visit http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/ssar.
**Access Management Regulations and Standards**

Access management focuses on the location, spacing, and design of entrances, street intersections, median openings, and traffic signals. Each of these creates conflict points where vehicles have to stop or slow down, disrupting the flow of traffic. As the number of conflict points increases, so does traffic congestion and crashes. Better management of access to the highway can reduce the number of conflict points and their adverse impact on highway operation and public safety. Roads are a critical public resource and constitute a major investment of the public’s money. Access management can maximize this investment. Because the motorist spends less time waiting in traffic, fuel efficiency is maximized, air pollution is reduced, and commuting times are shortened. Businesses benefit because better mobility expands their market area.

The 2007 General Assembly unanimously approved legislation directing VDOT to develop access management regulations and standards with the goals to:

- Reduce traffic congestion
- Enhance public safety by reducing conflicting traffic movements
- Reduce the need for new highways and road widening by maximizing the performance of existing state highways
- Support economic development by promoting the efficient movement of goods and people
- Preserve the public investment in new and existing highways
- Ensure that private property is entitled to reasonable access to the highways.

The legislative goals will be accomplished through regulations and standards for: spacing entrances, intersections, median openings and traffic signals; locating entrances a safe distance from intersection turning movements and from interchange ramps; providing vehicular, and where appropriate, pedestrian circulation between adjoining properties; and sharing highway entrances. The regulations and standards only apply to VDOT-controlled highways. They do not apply to roads that are maintained by localities (such as cities and towns). For more information on VDOT’s access management tools and guidelines, visit [http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/accessmgt](http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/accessmgt).

**Highway Needs & Project List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US 58A at Wise Street Intersection</td>
<td>Monitor signal operation to determine need for signal timing upgrades or changes to signal operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Avenue, between US 58A and Wise Street</td>
<td>Continue to monitor section of roadway and make needed operational improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise Street / 4th Avenue Intersection</td>
<td>Improve turning radius at intersection to improve operational traffic flow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
LAND USE

Physical Considerations to Land Usage

There are a number of factors that severely limit the amount of developable land in the Town of St. Paul. This chapter will attempt to address the primary constraints, including steep slopes, poor soil conditions, flood prone areas, mineral land under development, land subject to subsidence from underground mining, and National Forest lands and other public and private property not available for development.

Slopes

Areas with slopes in excess of 20 percent are generally considered unsuitable for urban type development. This by itself presents Wise County with severe development problems, since 92.4 percent of the county’s 265,000 acre land area has slopes in excess of 20 percent. Another 2.3 percent has slopes between 10 and 20 percent, leaving 5.3 percent of the county with slopes of 10 percent or less. Approximately 24 percent of the 0-10 percent slope land area is currently classified "urban and built-up." The scarcity of "level" land becomes more apparent when one considers that almost a third (1,743 acres) of the 5,385 acres classified as "urban and built-up" have slopes in excess of 20 percent.

Soil Conditions

The engineering suitability of soils, or the ability of a particular soil to support various land uses, is of primary consideration in evaluating the suitability of land for development. Soil properties such as percolation, compaction, density, slope, depth to bedrock, underlying material, location, water table and composition are factors considered in determining the suitability and limitations a soil may possess for different land uses.

Each soil type as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Survey of Wise County, Virginia, was rated with respect to its engineering suitability for home sites; large building foundations; basements; lagoons; roads, streets, and parking lots; and septic tank drainfields. Each soil type was given a rating of either good, fair, poor or unsuited for each usage category.

Public sewage collection systems do not generally provide service outside municipal corporate limits although the C-N-W regional wastewater plant near Coeburn does serve a significant portion of the county. With the incorporated areas of the county having limited quantities of remaining land suitable for development, future residential development will be forced to occur in areas not now served by public sewage collection. The suitability of future
residential areas for the construction and use of septic tank drainfields is of great importance to the health of Wise County residents. Existing developed areas may be experiencing health hazards if not served by sewage collection systems.

**Flood Prone Areas**

The topographic and rainfall conditions typical to St. Paul are conducive to high velocity flash floods that may inundate the entire valley floor of the narrow V-shaped mountain valleys. Such floods are particularly destructive to both life and property.

The simplest method of not risking costly and deadly destruction from the ravages of floods is by reserving areas known as "floodways" for the unobstructed flow of flood waters. In the adjacent floodplains, new structures should be elevated above the level of the one percent chance flood (that flood which has a one percent annual chance of occurring) and existing buildings should be floodproofed to at least the level of the one percent chance flood. Those people unable or unwilling to relocate out of flood prone areas should be encouraged to acquire flood insurance.

**Land Owned by Resource Companies and the U.S. Government**

Land ownership can be divided into surface ownership, mineral ownership and "fee simple" ownership. The vast majority of Wise County's mineral acreage is owned by various private coal and resource development companies. A land ownership study conducted from 1978 to 1980 showed corporate ownership of land in the county, usually held in fee, to be approximately 45 percent of the total surface land. Most of this land was owned by major resource development companies. There is no obvious indication of any major change in this ownership pattern since that time. At the same time, the USDA Forest Service controls approximately 13 percent of the county's surface lands. Thus, nearly 60 percent of the county's surface is, for all practical purposes, not available to private individuals and non-resource companies for purchase or development. In addition, corporate ownership of most of the minerals beneath the surface create concerns about potential mining and possible subsidence.

**Land Subject to Potential Subsidence**

Only rough estimates are available for total surface acreage disturbed by surface mining in Wise County. Approximately 23,550 acres (8.9 percent of the county) had been mined by August 3, 1977 (the enactment date of the Federal Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977; P.L. 95-87), and 38,783 acres (14.6 percent of the county) were disturbed between 1975 and 1994. It is not clear, however, how many of these acres have been mined more than one time, thus the total acreage disturbed is not available from current data.
What is clear is that surface mined land is second only to forest land as the county’s largest land use. The Virginia Division of Mined Land Reclamation notes that since the Commonwealth's permanent reclamation program was established in 1981, 80 percent of the permits have designated forestry as the post-mining land use, 12 percent were designated as pasture, and eight percent as commercial/residential/recreation. Although surface mined land has been used for a variety of urban type land uses, including residential development, mobile home parks, school sites, commercial development and industrial sites, the development of surface mined land should be approached with caution. Subsurface conditions are often unstable, and there have been many problems with subsidence and settling after these areas have been developed. Some of these mined areas can be used if the site is properly engineered and subsurface conditions are evaluated carefully. Because of the development costs involved, these areas are generally more suited for commercial rather than residential development.

Approximately two-thirds of Wise County has been deep mined on at least one coal seam. Any time a void is created below the surface, the possibility of subsidence is present. This problem has grown in recent years with the use of high extraction mining methods, either "longwall" or "room and pillar." In conventional room and pillar mining, only 50 to 60 percent, or less, of the coal is actually removed, with the remainder left in place to provide surface support. In high extraction room and pillar mining, as much as 80 percent of the coal is removed and "controlled" or "uncontrolled" subsidence occurs. In longwall mining, the extraction rate is nearly 100 percent. As the longwall panel moves through the seam, the roof is allowed to cave in behind it. The extent of surface damage due to subsidence depends on many factors, including geology and seam depth.

Deep mining is prohibited by zoning ordinances in all of the county's incorporated towns and the City of Norton, and surface mining is restricted. Deep mining is allowed in all unincorporated areas of the county by the county zoning ordinance, with surface mining restricted only in heavily developed areas.

**Existing Land Use**

The existing pattern of land use in the Central Business District is illustrated on the Existing Land Use map as a part of this Plan. Commercial uses have developed in an elongated manner with frontage of each establishment along Main Street. The development pattern occurred because of the topography and the location of the railroads and US 58A.

Future retail growth in the center of town will depend on the redevelopment of commercial land, conversions from noncommercial uses, and better utilization of all parcels, vacant and occupied. Many existing buildings are substandard, vacant and could be replaced or rehabilitated.
A Farmer’s Market was established in 2009 and has proven to be very successful. The market is located on the property adjoining the Lyric Theatre on “Market Square.” The Town secured public grant funding to permit the construction of a permanent structure for the Farmer’s Market.

The Industrial Park has seen expansion in the following areas:

- Medical clinic
- Fabrication building
- Auto Parts store
- Dollar General store
- Fast food and restaurants

An area adjoining the car wash has been filled in and will be a site for a new fire station. The building commonly referred to as the Willis Building consists of six storefronts at street level and two additional floors that once housed apartments. A total renovation will take place, with a boutique hotel planned.

Current Land Use

Wise County's present land use pattern was created by past decisions and actions based on the highest quality information available to decision makers at the time, who likely put individual parcels of land into those uses they felt would prove most beneficial. Many decision makers, individuals as well as representatives of corporate and public interests, have over time created the composite picture which is Wise County's existing land use. Economic conditions, technology and social attitudes are continually changing. As these changes occur, they are reflected in an area’s land use pattern. An existing land use map provides a "picture" of the land use pattern at a point in time, the composite of many decisions put into action over time.

Some land use patterns reflect dying trends, i.e., land uses that are ceasing to be functional. Other land use patterns reflect emerging trends, i.e. land uses that will continue to be functional long into the future. It is the purpose of an analysis of existing land use to discern these trends as a basis for future plans.

Following is a more detailed explanation of each category:

- **Agricultural** - Predominantly rural uses such as agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, open space and residential use within a rural environment.

- **Single-Family or General Residential** - Low- or high-density concentrations of residential units of all types (single- and multi-family and manufactured homes), plus certain public and/or commercial uses in small concentrations.

- **Limited or General Business** - A wide range of retail, wholesale, service and office uses, either catering to the needs of residents of nearby neighborhoods (limited) or the traveling public (general).
Light or Heavy Industrial - Light or heavy industrial and manufacturing uses, as well as related service, support and business uses.

Conservation-Recreation - Those areas uniquely suited for conservation or recreational uses due to their natural features, association with area history or potential to support development of recreational facilities serving the public welfare.

Urban and built-up areas (defined as a reasonably significant number of structures appearing to possess a community relationship and common focal area) are closely aligned with the transportation network that is itself closely aligned with the streams of the mountain valleys. It is only on the flattened mountain tops in the vicinity of Hurricane and Maple Grove and in portions of Powell Valley that the road network, and thus built-up development, does not follow the courses of the county's streams.

The bulk of Wise County's land area is in forest, with 72 percent, or more than 190,000 acres, of the county being classified in this usage by 1985. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is a very valuable resource not presently being utilized to its fullest potential. Nearly 13 percent, or 35,850 acres, of the county's forest land is presently managed by the U.S. Forest Service as a part of the Jefferson National Forest. This land is managed on a "multiple use" basis, not only to produce commercial timber and other forest products, but to provide improved game habitat, protect and improve watersheds and biological diversity and to provide access and facilities for the public to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational experiences such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, swimming and picnicking.

Areas of Expansion

Much of the county's previous urban development has occurred in the south central portion of the county, primarily along U.S. 58A. A major concentration of commercial development has taken place in the Wise/Norton area. This area has the most complete public utility infrastructure in the county and also contains two of the county’s three hospitals, a four-year college, and two of the county's three industrial parks.

Future Land Use

Wise County has many factors limiting the amount of land available for future residential, commercial and industrial development, including steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, sinkholes, poor soil percolation, flooding and potential mining-related subsidence. All these factors can create very high or prohibitive development costs. Moreover, additional burden may fall on the taxpayers when, after initial development is completed and as residential densities increase, problems arise which the public sector is called upon to solve. Another factor limiting the amount of land for future development in Wise County is that
sizeable areas of the county are not generally available for private commercial or residential development, instead held by resource development companies or the federal government. All this makes it extremely important to delineate those areas most suitable for various uses, to acknowledge limitations to development and, where possible, mitigate these limitations through sound planning and public investment decisions. Furthermore, recognition of the limited land suitable for development heightens the importance of developing policies that will maximize the potential of those areas already developed. Careful thought should be given to the determination of population densities that can be supported in a given area of the county without the provision of public utilities. Provision of public water generally spurs residential development, creating potential health hazards unless sewage service is also provided or densities are encouraged to remain low through various land use policies.

One of the positive aspects of Wise County's previous development is that the population is relatively compact in certain areas of the county, and joint efforts among towns and the county have resulted in water and sewer service being made available to a larger area of the county, with the potential for further extension in the future.

Careful, creative, long-range planning can alleviate some of the limitations that presently exist regarding land development in Wise County. Once areas have been developed, especially where public dollars have been spent to provide infrastructure, the county can use all its policies and ordinances to protect those areas from adverse impacts.
CHAPTER 6
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Education
A wide range of educational facilities are located in Wise and Russell Counties and provide services to the counties' residents. These include elementary, middle and high schools, vocational and technical schools and three colleges.

Elementary, Middle and High Schools. The Wise County School Board operates the school system serving Wise County. St. Paul Elementary School is a grade K-8 facility situated on Deacon Drive in St. Paul.

Eastside High School in Coeburn is a grade 9-12 consolidated school consisting of the former Coeburn and St. Paul High Schools. Eastside serves 350 students annually, offering course work in art, music, business, technical, Advanced Placement, and dual enrollment classes.

The Wise County Career Technical Center offers a wide variety of course programs for public school students, including design and technology, drafting, graphic communications, and electronic technology. The learning process includes such technological advances as fiber optics, laser, robotics, and aerodynamics. Regularly scheduled programs include many other trade skills programs common to the business and industrial community. Various adult evening classes are offered based on interest and enrollment.

The Flatwoods Job Corps Center, located near Coeburn, provides education and vocational training. The Center enrolls more than 200 students, who reside at the center for up to two years while being trained in one of seven construction trades. The center is operated jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Forest Service. The center often performs construction services for non-profit organizations within the community.

---

### Fall Enrollment, Wise County Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education*
Colleges. Two colleges located in Wise County and one in Russell County serve residents not only of the county but the region, state and scattered portions of the country as well.

Located in Wise, the University of Virginia’s College at Wise is a multiple-purpose institution with a liberal arts foundation. A four-year branch of the University of Virginia, UVA-Wise is co-educational with dormitory facilities. The college provides undergraduate programs in the arts and sciences as well as select undergraduate professional programs in business, nursing, teacher education and other fields. Its Continuing Education Program is offered at sites both on and off campus. There are 20 academic, administrative and athletic buildings and six residence halls on the campus.

Mountain Empire Community College and Southwest Community College are two-year state-supported colleges offering both university-parallel and occupational-technical degree programs. Both offer Associate of Arts, Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as certificates in a number of programs. Continuing Education courses and services designed to promote economic development, serving persons of all ages throughout the region are also offered. College facilities and personnel are available to provide specialized services to meet the cultural and educational needs of the area through credit and non-credit courses, cultural events, workshops and conferences.

Library System

The Lonesome Pine Regional Library System provides services to county residents through its headquarters at Wise and three branch locations in Big Stone Gap, Coeburn and St. Paul. The library serves outlying areas of the county through a "Books by Mail" program at no cost to the users.

Lonesome Pine Regional Library has developed a network among all the high school, college and public libraries in its service area of Wise, Dickenson, Lee and Scott Counties and the City of Norton. Students at all 15 high schools and both colleges in the service area can, through equipment provided by Lonesome Pine Regional Library, access Lonesome Pine's database and have requested material either faxed or delivered by the library's van. Plans call for the same network access to library collections at UVa-Wise and Mountain Empire Community College when these libraries are automated.

Medical Facilities

Hospitals

There are three well-equipped hospitals in the Wise County area:

- Norton Community Hospital (Mountain States Health Alliance), Norton
- Mountain View Regional Medical Center (Wellmont), Norton
- Lonesome Pine Hospital (Wellmont), Big Stone Gap
Recent construction and expansions have placed the county in good position to address its population's future hospital service needs.

**Clinics, Physicians and Dentists.** Health clinics, affiliated with local hospitals and the Dickenson County Medical Center, operate within the county and provide a base of operations for many of the county's ~60 physicians, while others maintain private office practices. Ten dentists have offices within the county.

**Nursing and Rest Homes, Extended Health Care Facilities.** Four nursing homes operate in the county, with a total 341-bed capacity. Although availability of nursing and rest homes is continuing to improve, projected continued increases in the county's elderly population will likely require additional facilities in the future.

**Governmental Services**

St. Paul provides police, fire and rescue services to the residents of the town. Support is also provided, when needed by both Wise and Russell County governmental services. The town's is served by a second class delivery branch of the United States Postal Service.

**Public Utilities**

**Water**

The Town of St. Paul water distribution system consists of a 0.5 MGD water treatment plant and approximately 20,000 linear feet of 12-inch through $\frac{3}{4}$-inch water line. There are five booster pump stations and seven water storage tanks (1.085 MG storage capacity) on the system. Water is supplied via a 12-inch transmission main line from the Clinch River. The system currently utilizes pump stations and tanks to provide service to the Virginia City, Hardy Hollow and Honey Branch sections of Wise County. It also maintains interconnections with the Castlewood Water & Sewage Authority, through which water can be provided to both the Castlewood and Dante systems.

At the time of this plan, the plant is producing 0.150 MGD, or 30 percent of capacity. The Town has water accountability of 86 percent. The plant is serving 1,010 persons through 655 connections.

**Wastewater**

The Town operates a 0.50 MGD MBR wastewater treatment facility located on the Clinch River. This facility, which utilizes state-of-the-art membrane technology, was placed in service in December 2015, and is designed to expand to 0.75 MGD with minimal upgrades. The facility discharges an average of 0.070 MGD to the Clinch River through a diffuser. The facility is considered a minor municipal wastewater treatment facility. The current sludge disposal plan requires sludge to be placed in the Wise County landfill.
Planned utility upgrades

The Town is planning upgrades in its water, wastewater and storm water distribution/collection systems in the downtown area beginning in late 2015. Among these upgrades – 5,000 feet of 8-inch cast iron water line to be replaced with 12 inch water lines; 5000 feet of 8-inch terracotta collection lines to be replaced with 10-inch collection lines; and current 18-inch terracotta storm drains to be replaced with 30-inch storm drains.

Churches

Religious facilities serving all major and many minor denominations are located either in or around the town. Most of the facilities offer many activities along with worship services.

Recreation

In recent years, the Town of St. Paul has become an epicenter of the region’s numerous outdoor recreation activities. In and around the town, leisure and recreation opportunities – from fishing and hunting to camping and hiking – abound.

The Clinch River, the most bio-diverse waterway in the northern hemisphere, runs through the town, offering fishing, canoeing and kayaking. Oxbow Lake offers picnic areas and walking trails.

St. Paul offers hiking, biking, birding, wildlife and “off highway vehicle” trails. The Spearhead Trails system’s MountainView trailhead is situated in this “ATV friendly” town.

Also in town, Wetlands Estonoa is a student initiated, place-based service learning project, home to numerous woodland creatures, aquatic species and birds.

Lodging

While there are no conventional hotel/motel facilities in or near St. Paul, the aforementioned recent outdoor recreation activities have resulted in an influx of lodging facilities heretofore missing in the town. Visitors to the area now have access to cottages and suites, short-stay rentals, a small lodge, and full hook-up RV park and campground.
CHAPTER 7
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

LAND USE

Goal:
Encourage harmonious and wise use of land through future land development decisions.

Objective:
Investigate the pro and cons of possible town boundary adjustments

Policies:
1. Evaluate the economic gain that this adjustment may generate.
2. Evaluate the infrastructure needs which would need to take place to make such adjustment viable.

Residential Land Use

Objective:
Provide for safe and attractive housing and residential areas.

Policies:
1. Encourage the development of single family building lots.
2. Encourage residential development similar in type and density to other nearby residential development.
3. Continue to locate manufactured homes in manufactured home parks/areas.
4. Coordinate the planning of housing areas and the transportation network.
5. Encourage new housing only in areas where water and sewer service currently exists or is planned.
6. Limit non-residential encroachment on residential areas, where feasible, and in the best interest of the town.
7. Encourage development to occur at a specified setback from streets through the use of the subdivision ordinance.
Commercial Land Use

Objective:
Take measures to improve and strengthen St. Paul’s business district.

Policies:
1. Continue downtown revitalization activities, and seek any assistance from relevant programs to make the business district more attractive to patrons and businesses.
2. Encourage the establishment of new businesses and the remodeling of existing businesses. Special emphasis should be placed on tourism related commercial establishments such as a hotel.
3. Continue to implement the Town’s role as a Virginia Main Street Community, including promotions.
4. Provide for adequate and convenient off-street parking.
5. Work with the business community and citizens of St. Paul to beautify properties within the Town.
6. Encourage fuller use of business buildings and properties.

Industrial Land Use

Objective:
Provide for the expansion of St. Paul’s industrial base.

Policies:
1. Designate and reiterate current/future suitable industrial sites that are accessible to major highways and rail lines.
2. Establish land use codes and regulations to assure adequate protection for industry and nearby land.
3. Encourage buffers such as open space, trees, shrubbery, or fencing between industrial and residential or commercial land uses.
4. Establish land use regulations that will protect the rights of adjacent residential/commercial landowners while also allowing industrial properties to develop fully.
5. Encourage the development of vacant and underutilized properties within the Town to create more commercial and industrial employment.
TRANSPORTATION

Goal:
Promote feasible solutions to relieve current traffic problems and support specific land use objectives.

Objective:
To provide a street and highway system that is compatible to residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Policies:
1. Support the conduction of traffic flow studies in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation.
2. Conduct awareness programs for local trucking companies on preferred routes through the town of St. Paul.
3. Provide additional street lighting and work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to make improvements to sidewalks where needed.
4. Work with residents, county officials and the Virginia Department of Transportation to plan and improve streets where needed. This same process should take place to study proposed or future Corridor studies in and near the town.
5. Work with residents, county officials and the Virginia Department of Transportation to address traffic safety needs to include turn lanes, improving limited turning views, and railroad crossings.
6. Continue the Town’s role as an ATV-friendly town.

Objective:
Provide public transportation for residents of the town who are unable to transport themselves.

Policy:
1. Encourage Mountain Empire Older Citizens to continue providing public transportation to the Town of St. Paul.
**HOUSING**

**Goal:**
Insure a suitable residential environment and adequate housing for citizens of St. Paul.

**Objective:**
Encourage property owners to maintain their land and dwelling units.

**Policy:**
1. Seek legislation, either local or state, that would (1) allow destruction of dilapidated buildings, and (2) cause vacant lots and/or buildings to be properly maintained.

**Objective:**
To encourage development of affordable housing units for St. Paul’s citizens.

**Policy:**
1. Encourage residents to investigate home financing options offered by Virginia Housing Development Authority, USDA Rural Development, Veterans Administration, Department of Housing and Community Development, and local realtors.

**Physical Environment**

**Goal:**
Enhance the natural setting of the Town and promote a greater awareness of the natural beauty, history and positive attributes of the area.

**Objective:**
Continue to use landscaping to beautify the town and make it more attractive.

**Policies:**
1. Through different grant sources, continue to seek funds to renovate historic structures within St. Paul.
2. Encourage the placement of complimentary vegetation along St. Paul's business district.
3. Cooperate with Norfolk Southern to insure that the railroad right of way paralleling Route 58 through St. Paul is clear of brush, litter and other obstructions.
4. Clean up, beautify and maintain all entrances to the Town of St. Paul.
5. Work with appropriate Virginia Department of Transportation officials to have St. Paul located on more directional and mileage signs throughout Southwest Virginia.

6. Develop wayfaring signage where appropriate.

**Goal:**
Plan for the conservation and protection of St. Paul’s ecologically sensitive sites.

**Objective:**
Control or restrict development within fragile environmental areas such as floodplains and steep slopes.

**Policy:**
1. Continue to restrict development in flood prone areas.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Goal:**
Provide a range of community facilities and services to meet St. Paul’s current and future needs.

**Objective:**
Insure that adequate facilities are provided for St. Paul's municipal needs.

**Policy:**
1. Evaluate needs and resources to help with the town’s emergency response services.

**Objective:**
Encourage the most efficient use and management of public utilities used by the residents of St. Paul.

**Policies:**
1. Encourage water and sewer utilities both in town and in areas surrounding corporate limits, where feasible to provide such services in the most efficient and economical manner.
2. Plan and begin steps to help in the separation of sewer and storm drainage separation.
3. Investigate steps necessary to begin the replacement of above ground utility wires with underground ones.
**Objective:**
Provide for residential and commercial solid waste disposal.

**Policy:**
1. Expand existing solid waste disposal services, as needed, to serve new customers.

**Objective:**
Support and maintain emergency services operations to meet the needs of St. Paul.

**Policies:**
1. Continue the present level of police protection that is currently maintained.
2. Continue to support the St. Paul Volunteer Fire Department.
3. Continue to support area rescue squads and other emergency responders.

**Objective:**
Encourage expansion of St. Paul's recreational activities.

**Policies:**
1. Develop and expand recreational areas within town on adequate property, including hiking/biking trails and a possible track.
2. Encourage the Wise County School Board to continue to allow public use of school recreational facilities.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal:**
Make effective use of implementation tools provided to the Town to carry out the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives.

**Objectives:**
1. Review and update the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan at least once every five years.
2. Review existing zoning ordinance, update as needed.
3. Develop and enforce of the subdivision ordinance.
4. Adopt a capital improvement plan to prioritize the Town's capital facility improvements.
CHAPTER 8
IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan is even more important than its preparation and adoption because the plan will be of little use unless it is carried out. There are several techniques authorized by §15.2-2204, Code of Virginia, that enable the Town of St. Paul to implement the plan once it has been approved by the Council. These include subdivision regulations, a zoning ordinance and capital improvements programming which are discussed below.

Adopting the Comprehensive Plan

The St. Paul Planning Commission and the St. Paul Town Council must advertise and hold public hearings on the completed plan in accordance with regulations set forth in §15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia. After the plan is adopted, it may be amended as necessary to keep it up-to-date. However, the Code requires that the plan be reevaluated at least once every five years. Proposed plan amendments require public hearings and adoption by the Planning Commission and Town Council.

Subdivision Ordinance

The subdivision ordinance allows the Town of St. Paul to control the platting of vacant land and to regulate the layout and construction of new streets and utilities in order to assure that new development will be an asset to the Town. It also assists with the implementation of St. Paul’s Comprehensive Plan by requiring that new subdivisions be developed in accordance with the Town’s plans for streets and utilities. As set forth in §15.2-2240 of the Code of Virginia, every locality in Virginia is required to have a subdivision ordinance.

Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance controls the use of land, lot sizes, the size and height of buildings, and the placement of buildings on the land. It also delineates district boundaries and specifies the activities which may be conducted in each district. Zoning helps preserve the existing character of an area by excluding incompatible uses while permitting those uses which can exist in harmony. However, it does not eliminate incompatible land uses which already exist in an area, but may provide a means of phasing out such uses if they are ever discontinued.
Both Wise County and the Town of St. Paul have adopted zoning ordinances. This ordinance helps implement St. Paul's comprehensive plan by requiring that those areas planned for residential, commercial and industrial uses be limited to their designated type of development.

**Capital Improvements Program**

A capital improvements program (CIP) is a detailed and reasoned schedule for financing and constructing public improvements and facilities needed by a locality. A CIP usually covers a period of five years. It includes major public projects which, because of their size and expected long useful life, are considered inappropriate for the locality's annual operating budget. A CIP identifies projects which the locality wishes to accomplish over a five year period. Every year the CIP is updated and extended another year into the future.

In order to prepare a CIP, St. Paul would have to analyze the way it programs funds for various public improvements. This would help assure that money is being spent wisely. A CIP should be used to schedule projects over a period of time, thus assuring that various development steps logically follow one another.

If St. Paul develops a CIP, capital improvements recommended in the comprehensive plan should be considered among the projects to be included in the document. This would help tie together the timing, location, and financing of public improvements with the Town's planning program.

St. Paul may adopt a CIP in accordance with §15.2-2239 of the Code of Virginia. A CIP involves several stages of development. First would be a review of the comprehensive plan goals and the Town's financial condition and budget. Second would be a preliminary list of projects selected by the Planning Commission after it solicits input from the public. Third, the Council would select specific projects from this list and have a draft CIP prepared. Fourth, this draft would be presented at a public hearing, revised as needed, and tentatively approved by the Town Council. Finally, the CIP data would be transferred to a capital budget. The annual operating budget would be prepared and reviewed together with the capital budget and CIP. The town council has the authority to approve both capital and operating budgets and to pass appropriation ordinances.

**Citizen Participation**

St. Paul should devise a program to inform its citizens of local planning efforts and the purpose and need for such efforts. This program would assist in soliciting citizen participation for the improvement of the Town, as well as improve the degree of public support for the comprehensive plan. The program could be offered as presentations to citizen advisory groups, neighborhood groups or civic organizations. Program subjects could
include the planning process, planning commission function, comprehensive planning efforts, implementation efforts, and citizen participation. Public hearings provide the typical means of citizen participation. Comprehensive plans, subdivision ordinances, zoning ordinances, and CIPs require public hearings prior to adoption. For citizens, these hearings afford a forum where opinions and ideas are expressed. Public hearings are regulated by §15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia.

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

Coordination among public and private decision makers is essential if the comprehensive plan policies are to be implemented. Without coordination, policies will overlap, their effectiveness will be reduced and costs will be unnecessarily high. Consistent decisions and the facilitation of citizen support are likewise essential. The Town must work closely with Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, and state and federal agencies to achieve the stated goals. The Town cannot stand alone. It must be a team member, aware of its neighbors activities and of new programs being considered by state and federal governments.

**Plan Review and Update**

Reevaluation is essential for the plan to remain a current and worthwhile document. Although the Code of Virginia requires that the comprehensive plan be reviewed by the planning commission every five years, it may require amendments at any time should some unforeseen occurrences change the premises upon which the plan is based. The plan must be flexible to change as new ideas and events occur, but should not be subject to change for a minor problem. In this way the plan will function as intended. It will be a useful guide for development, and it will be changed only when consistent with public health, safety, convenience and welfare.

**Legal Status of Comprehensive Plan Enforcement**

Chapter 22, Article 3 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia – in particular, §15.2-2232 – grants legal status to an adopted comprehensive plan. Any violation or attempted violation of these State Code provisions and/or any provision of the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan as referred to in §15.2-2232 may be restrained, corrected or abated as the case may be by injunction or other appropriate proceeding brought by the Town of St. Paul as authorized by the Code of Virginia.