

# 2015-2025 City of Franklin COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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*R. Randy Martin, City Manager*

*Donald E. Goodwin, Director of Community Development*

*Beth Lewis, Deputy Director of Community Development*

*Shelia Baker, Administrative Assistant, Community Development*

*Daniel K. Peak, Jr., Chairman, Planning Commission – Ward 2*

*Lawyer A. Artis, Jr., Vice-Chairman, Planning Commission – Ward 3*

*R.W. “Bobby” Tyler, Planning Commission – Member At-large*

*Carolyn Williams, Planning Commission – Ward 5*

*Harvey Darden, Planning Commission – Ward 1*

*Dennis Murphy, Planning Commission – Ward 4*

*Oscar W. Babb, Planning Commission – Ward 6*

*Raystine Johnson-Ashburn, Mayor, City Council – Member At-large*

*Barry Cheatham, Vice Mayor, City Council – Ward 1*

*Benny Burgess, City Council – Ward 2*

*Gregory McLemore, City Council – Ward 3*

*Mona Murphy, City Council – Ward 4*

*Mary E. Hilliard, City Council – Ward 5*

*Frank M. Rabil, City Council – Ward 6*

*Brian Reagan, Community Planning Partners, Inc.*

*Kelly Hall, Community Planning Partners, Inc.*

*Jimontanae “Jai” Rax-McBride, Principal Regional Planner, Hampton Roads PDC*

*Sara Kidd, Senior Regional Planner, Hampton Roads PDC*

Department of Community Development  
Prepared for:



Community Planning Partners, Inc.  
Assistance provided by:



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**The following documents are hereby incorporated and made part of this Plan:**

**Neighborhood Needs Assessment, Nov. 2012**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2009**  
**City of Franklin Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan2003**  
**2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan**  
**Gateway Enhancement Plan, 2009**  
**Franklin All Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2011**  
**Southampton Franklin Transit Development Plan, 2012**  
**City of Franklin Master Water and Sewer Plan**  
**VDOT 2020 Transportation Plan**  
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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Franklin, located in the Hampton Roads region of southeastern Virginia, combines small town ambiance and exceptional growth potential. Franklin is a retail and service center for the surrounding counties. Both population and employment are projected to grow significantly through the year 2036, reinforcing Franklin's importance as an economic center for the southwest section of Hampton Roads.

Franklin has a rich history as a main street community on the banks of the Blackwater River. The historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods convey a traditional neighborhood charm. The Town of Franklin was incorporated as a City in 1961 and has continued to grow as a business and residential center.

### Location

The City of Franklin is located in southeastern Virginia, forty miles west of Norfolk and nine miles north of the North Carolina border. Within an hour's drive to the east is the Virginia Beach resort area. Within an hour's drive to the northwest are the historical attraction of Richmond and Petersburg. An hour's drive to the south is the resort area on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. An hour's drive to the north is Colonial Williamsburg.



The City, located at the head of the navigable portion of the Blackwater River, lies in the highly agricultural Coastal Plain. Situated on the eastern edge of Southampton County, adjacent to Isle of Wight County, it has always been a center of trade and transportation for the surrounding countryside.

### History

As with most communities, Franklin's location has affected its history. Since the City is adjacent to the Blackwater River, water transportation has played a large part in Franklin's development. Franklin has also become an important rail point between the City of Norfolk and the Western Roanoke Basin.

Franklin first developed as a town located in the eastern part of Southampton County. The railroad had first arrived in 1835 when the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad bridged the

Blackwater and Nottoway Rivers and extended its line across the county. The railroad brought with it people and commerce, leading to the development of the town of Franklin in the 1840s.

During the Civil War, federal gunboats bombarded Franklin, effectively halting development in the area. Recovery from the Civil War came slowly, but railroad construction finally resumed with the construction of the Atlantic and Danville Railway in 1888 (which later became the Norfolk, Franklin and Danville Railway).<sup>1</sup>

Franklin developed considerable steamboat commerce along the Blackwater River southward to North Carolina ports in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The combination of rail and water transportation led to more rapid growth here than in the other towns. The steady growth of the Camp family's lumber business after the Civil War accelerated this growth.<sup>2</sup> St. Regis Paper Company came to Franklin in 1954 and Hercules Chemical Company in 1955. And in 1956, Union Bag and Paper merged with Camp Manufacturing Company, to form Union Camp. In 1999 Union Camp and International Paper merged.

Franklin also became a major collection point for peanuts, which had become popular nationwide during the steamboat period, and is now the major center of commerce and industry for the County. Franklin remained part of the county until it was chartered as an independent city in 1960.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Southampton County, %Our History+(<http://www.southamptoncounty.org/history.asp>).

<sup>2</sup> Landmark Design Group, Vision 2020; County of Southampton, Virginia, 2000 Comprehensive Update (Adopted August 27, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Southampton County, %Our History+(<http://www.southamptoncounty.org/history.asp>).

The City of Franklin faces numerous challenges similar to many smaller localities throughout the State of Virginia. A changing economic role in the region, transportation issues, downtown revitalization, an expanding need for social services, and shifts in the development patterns within and outside the community continue to demand attention from local officials and the City's citizens. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that identifies and addresses these issues and establishes a vision for the future direction of the City.

Virginia planning legislation under Chapter 15.2, Code of Virginia, requires the Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years providing short and long-range strategies and specific recommendations for general growth and development. The plan includes an analysis of existing conditions and problems, growth trends, future land use, transportation, public facility requirements and a plan of action to accomplish specific objectives that address future needs of the community.

The Planning Commission is required to conduct public hearings and recommend the comprehensive plan, or parts thereof, to the City Council. The Council then considers the plan and possible amendments at public hearings and adopts the plan. In developing this Plan, the City has solicited citizen participation throughout the planning process through public forums, meetings and community surveys. These afforded specific comments on priority issues, strategies and proposed plans of action that served as a basis for plan recommendations.

Code of Virginia 1950, Title 15.2 generally defines the fundamental elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

*...(It) shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general and approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be excluded, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be. The 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, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;*
2. *The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;*
3. *The designation of a system of community service facilities, such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;*

4. *The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;*
5. *The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;*
6. *An official map, 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;*
7. *The location of existing or proposed recycling centers; and*
8. *The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.*

The Purpose of the Plan is to provide the basis for future decisions by City Council on land use development and supporting infrastructure issues and other priorities deemed important by the community. These include such items as quality of life, property rights, land use relationships to economic growth and development. The Plan is intended to provide both the necessary direction and foundation to assist City Council in its decision-making responsibility.

## **Executive Summary**

Through this thoughtful evaluation process regarding the City's future, we are constantly evaluating our desired destiny as a city; and, questioning whether we are exercising the type of forward thinking wisdom that our predecessors did when they invested in Franklin Power and Light or our street and roads, or our water and sewer systems. As the City of Franklin is in the center of the revenue sharing areas of Southampton County and Isle of Wight County, it is easy to identify the local impacts from recent growth spurts . the repurposing of the International Paper facilities, Franklin Lumber, the Love's Travel Center development, the Enviva Pellet Plant and many others. As these and other factors compel us to look toward the future, of key importance are the questions of %what type of city do we want to be in the future+and %what steps are we going to take to ensure that we manage the attainment of our vision once determined?+. A mix of housing opportunities and affordability, neighborhood businesses that can be accessed from walkable neighborhoods, parks and open space, active and passive recreational facilities, a vibrant historical downtown with a mix of professional services, retail sales, restaurants and entertainment establishments are certainly in the mix of, what the City wants to be. These are also elements of what we believe that our citizens want the city to be. Our progenitors did a pretty fine job. It is the City's intent to continue on with that tradition.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

#### **A. In General**

Examining current population characteristics and trends can provide a basis for predicting future growth needs and estimating residential and non-residential land use requirements. An understanding of historic and existing population conditions provides the background for future population projections. Sound population projections then render predictions of the future need for housing, community facilities, infrastructure, and other types of services and development, the details of which will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

This chapter provides an overview of several important characteristics of the citizens of the City of Franklin. The population section contains a discussion of trends and projections for the population as a whole and specific analysis by gender, race, age and disability. Subsequent sections provide similar analysis of households in Franklin, educational attainment, income levels, and labor force characteristics.

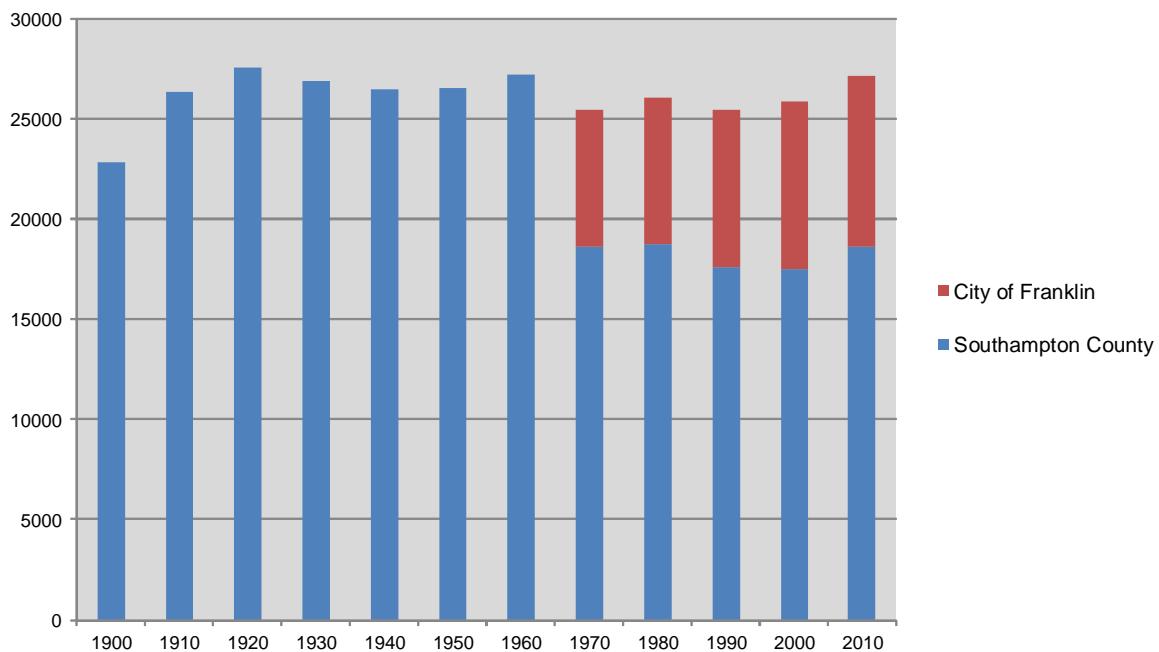
#### **B. Population**

##### **Population Estimates and Projections**

The City of Franklin was incorporated as a city separate from Southampton County in 1961. Over the past forty years, Franklin's population steadily increased from 6,880 persons in 1970 to 8,582 persons in 2010. During this time period, the city annexed land twice from Southampton County, altering the total population of both localities. The first annexation in 1986 transferred a total of 2,518 acres in three parcels from Southampton County to Franklin. The 1996 annexation added a fourth parcel, 436 acres of land from Southampton County, to the northwest corner of Franklin. Map 1-1 shows the series of annexations that brought Franklin to its present dimensions. Franklin's 2010 population by Census Block is portrayed in Map 1-2. The voting district boundaries for the City of Franklin are depicted in Map 1-3.

Because the city originated from Southampton County and because of subsequent land transfers, it is important to consider that the combined population for Southampton County and Franklin has been remarkably stable during the past 100 years. As shown in Figure 1-1, the total combined population has fluctuated slightly and currently stands at 27,152 persons in 2010.

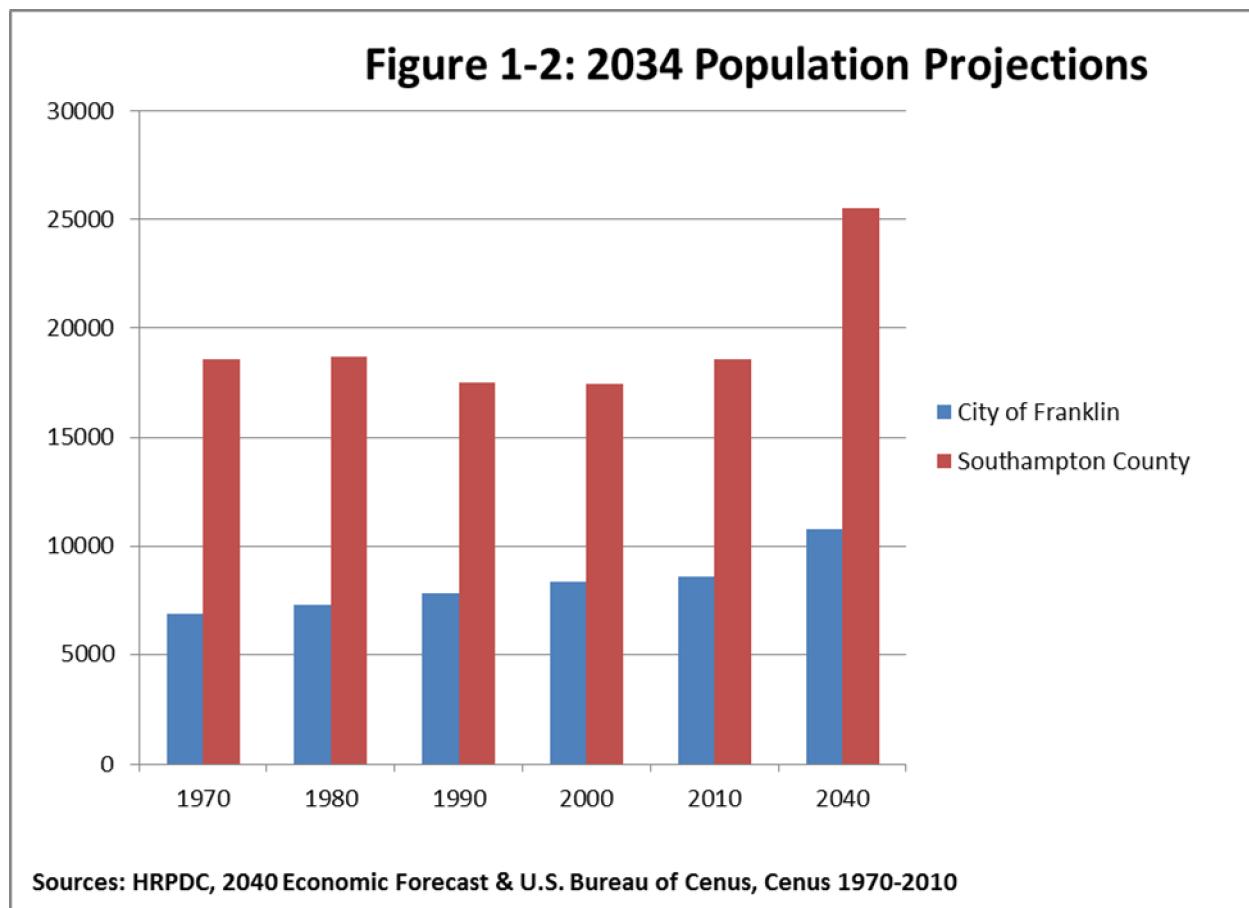
**Figure 1-1: Combined Population, City of Franklin and Southampton County**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990-2010

The year 2040 population projections were produced by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Demographics & Workforce Group, published November 13, 2012. The population of Franklin is projected to increase from 8,582 in year 2010 to 9,261 by 2020, to 9,983 by 2030, and to 10,661 by 2040, an increase of 24% by 2040. By comparison, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) projects a 2040 population for Franklin as 10,800, an increase of 26%. For planning purposes, this Plan considers the higher number as the one used for planning purposes, although it is acknowledged that the higher number may not be achieved. The Franklin Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2005 included a population projected to increase by 49%, to 12,400 by 2026, considerably faster growth than is being projected now.

Note that the Weldon Cooper Center projects a population decrease for Southampton County, from 18,570 in 2010 to 18,412 by 2040. The County, however, includes the more aggressive projection from HRPDC of growth to 25,500 by 2040 for planning purposes as well, acknowledging that it may be unlikely that the County population will grow to that extent, but that preparations for that population are the more prudent course of action.



## Population Characteristics

In 2010, Franklin's gender mix was 45% male (3,821 persons) and 55% female (4,761 persons). Table 1-1 shows how Franklin's gender mix compares to Southampton County and the State of Virginia.

Table 1-1 Gender, 2010

	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total Population
City of Franklin	3,821	45%	4,761	55%	8,582
Southampton County	9,666	52%	8,904	48%	18,570
State of Virginia	3,925,983	49%	4,075,041	51%	8,001,024

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 2010

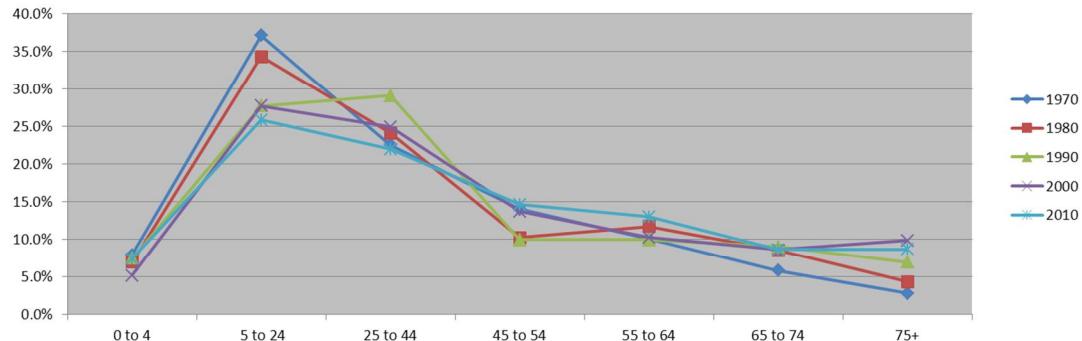
The City of Franklin's population is getting older. Table 1-2 portrays the age distribution of the city's 2010 population. Over the forty-year period from 1970 to 2010, the Census reports that the **average** age of Franklin's population increased from 29.3 to 40.7. As illustrated in Figure 1-4, the change in Franklin reflects a decrease in the percentage of persons under age 25 and an increase in the percentage of persons 55 & over.

Table 1-2: Population Age Distribution and Projection, City of Franklin

Persons	Percent of 1970 Pop.	Percent of 1980 Pop.	Percent of 1990 Pop.	Percent of 2000 Pop.	Percent of 2010 Pop.
Under 5 years	7.90%	6.90%	7.40%	5.10%	7.36%
5 to 24 years	37.10%	34.30%	27.70%	27.70%	25.83%
25 to 44 years	22.50%	24.10%	29.10%	24.90%	21.95%
45 to 54 years	14.00%	10.20%	9.90%	13.70%	14.62%
55 to 64 years	10.00%	11.70%	9.90%	10.20%	12.98%
65 to 74 years	5.80%	8.50%	9.00%	8.60%	8.59%
75 and over	2.80%	4.30%	6.90%	9.80%	8.66%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 2010

Figure 1-4: Franklin Population Age Distribution Trends  
1970-2010

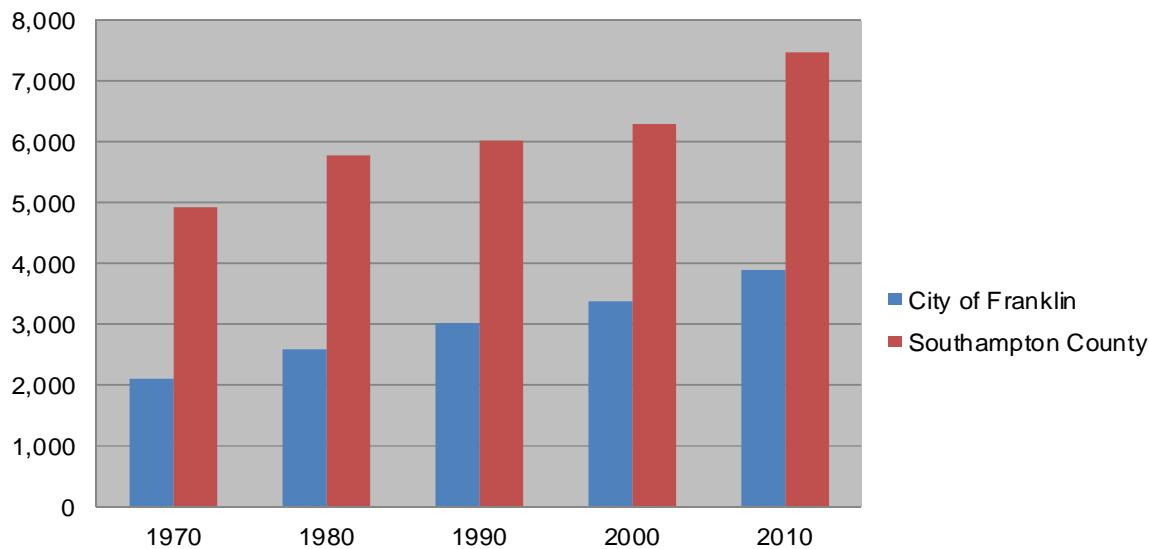


Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1970-2010

## C. Households

As shown in Figure 1-5 below, the number of households in Franklin increased 15% from 3,384 in 2000 to 3,901 in 2010. During the same timeframe Southampton County households increased by 20% while the Hampton Roads region increased by 22%. Additionally, based on 2010 Census data, the average number of persons per household in Franklin slightly decreased from 2.39 to 2.37. Increasing median age coupled with decreasing household size is found in many areas of the country as the US population ages and fewer households include children.

**Figure 1-5: City of Franklin, Number of Households**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1970-2010

#### D. School Enrollment and Educational Attainment

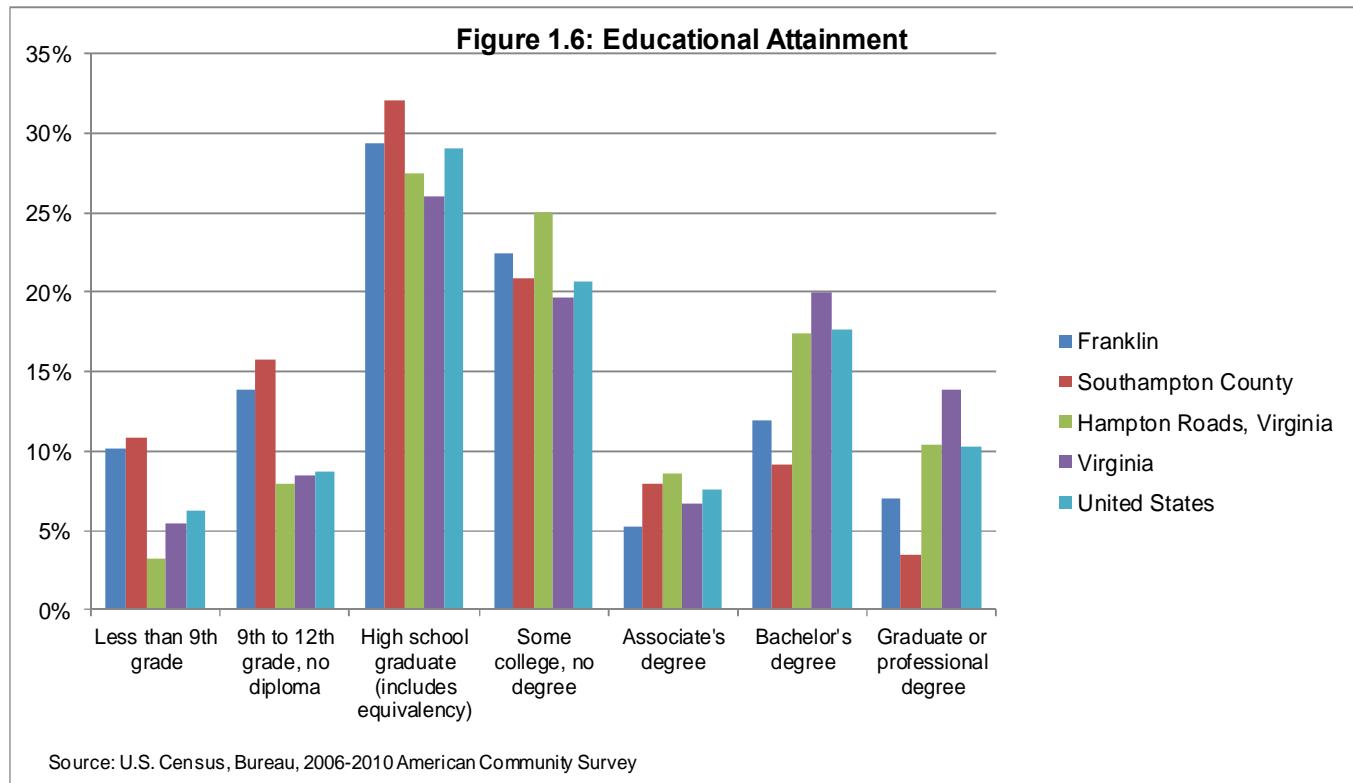
School enrollment is depicted in Table 1-3. In spite of overall population growth, Franklin experienced a decrease in school enrollment between 2000 and 2010. During the same timeframe black student total enrollment and the white student total enrollment decreased while the other racial category student enrollment increased.

**Table 1-3: Franklin School Enrollment, 1990 - 2010**

<b>Persons 3 yrs. and over</b>						
<b>1990</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	
Enrolled in preprimary school (nursery-K)	85	102	0	187	10%	
Enrolled in elementary-high school (gr. 1-12)	607	829	0	1,436	76%	
Enrolled in college or graduate school	170	109	0	279	15%	
Total	862	1,040	0	1,902	100%	
% of Total	45%	55%	0%	100%		
<b>2000</b>						
Enrolled in preprimary school (nursery-K)	73	207	0	280	13%	
Enrolled in elementary-high school (gr. 1-12)	531	981	27	1539	71%	
Enrolled in college or graduate school	117	232	7	356	16%	
Total	721	1,420	34	2,175	100%	
% of Total	33%	65%	2%	100%		
<b>2010</b>						
Enrolled in preprimary school (nursery-K)	69	237	14	320	15%	
Enrolled in elementary-high school (gr. 1-12)	337	883	81	1301	62%	
Enrolled in college or graduate school	204	262	24	490	23%	
Total	610	1,382	119	2,111	100%	
% of Total	29%	65%	6%	100%		

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, American Community Survey 2006-2010

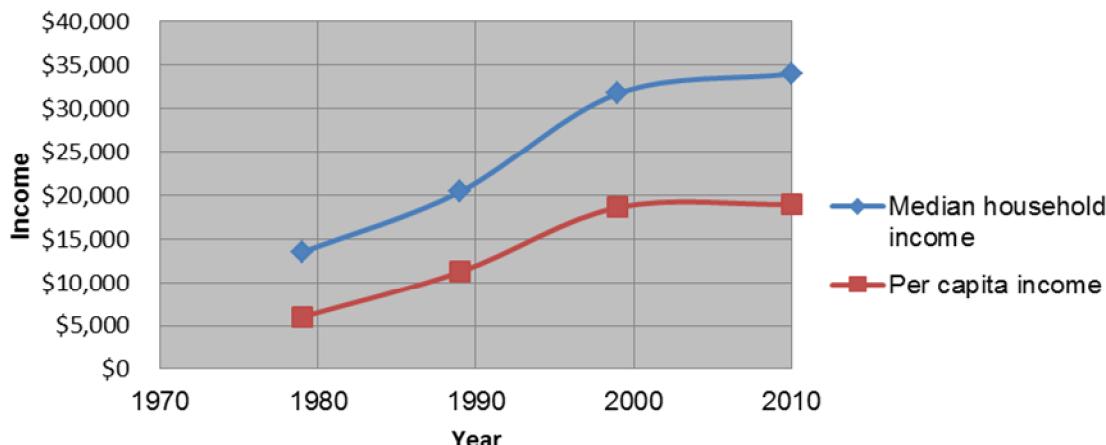
Figure 1.6 displays a comparison of Educational Attainment for the City of Franklin, Southampton County, the Hampton Roads Region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, & the Nation. According to the 2006- 2010 American Community Survey approximately 76% of the persons living in the City of Franklin have a high school diploma or above. This percentage is lower than the Hampton Roads Region (89%), the Commonwealth of Virginia (86%), and the Nation (85%) but slightly higher than Southampton County (73%).



## E. Income and Poverty Levels

According to the U.S. Census 2006-2010 American Community Survey, the median household income in Franklin is \$33,174, and the per capita income is \$19,453. Figure 1-7 shows how these income levels have increased over time. As noted in Table 1-4, Franklin's numbers were below the medians reported for Southampton County, the Hampton Roads region and Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Figure 1-7: Franklin Income Trends**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Cenus 1970-2000 & American Community Survey 2006-2010

**Table 1-4: Income Summary, 2010**

	City of Franklin	City of Franklin By Census Tract Tract 901	Tract 902	Southampton County	Hampton Roads	Virginia
Median household income	\$33,956	\$54,038	\$19,628	\$45,426	\$57,605	\$61,406
Per capita income	\$18,920	\$25,964	\$10,351	\$21,201	\$27,950	\$32,145

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2010

Poverty status is determined by comparison of a family's income with a threshold appropriate for its size and composition. The matrix used in this determination factors in total family size along with the number of family members under the age of 18. According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, approximately 1,838 individuals (22%) were identified as being below the poverty level in Franklin. This number reflects a net increase of 238 individuals below the poverty level since 1999 when 1,600 persons (19% of the population) were classified as being below the poverty level. Table 1-5 notes the changes in numbers of individuals and families below the poverty level from 1969 to 2010.

**Table 1-5: Poverty Status, City of Franklin**

	1969	1979	1989	1999	2006-2010	Change 1999-2010
Individuals below poverty level	1,812	1,600	1,594	1,600	1,838	14.88%
Percent of individuals	26.50%	22.10%	20.60%	19.20%	22.10%	15.10%
Percent of families below poverty level	18.10%	18.60%	17.20%	16.80%	20.50%	22.02%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2010

Table 1-6 shows the individuals and families below the poverty level by race. Of the estimated 1838 individuals living below the poverty level reported by the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, the vast majority (92%) was black. Additionally, out of Franklin's 2,390 total families, an estimated 20.5% were below the poverty level.

**Table 1-6: Franklin Poverty Status by Race, 2006-2010**

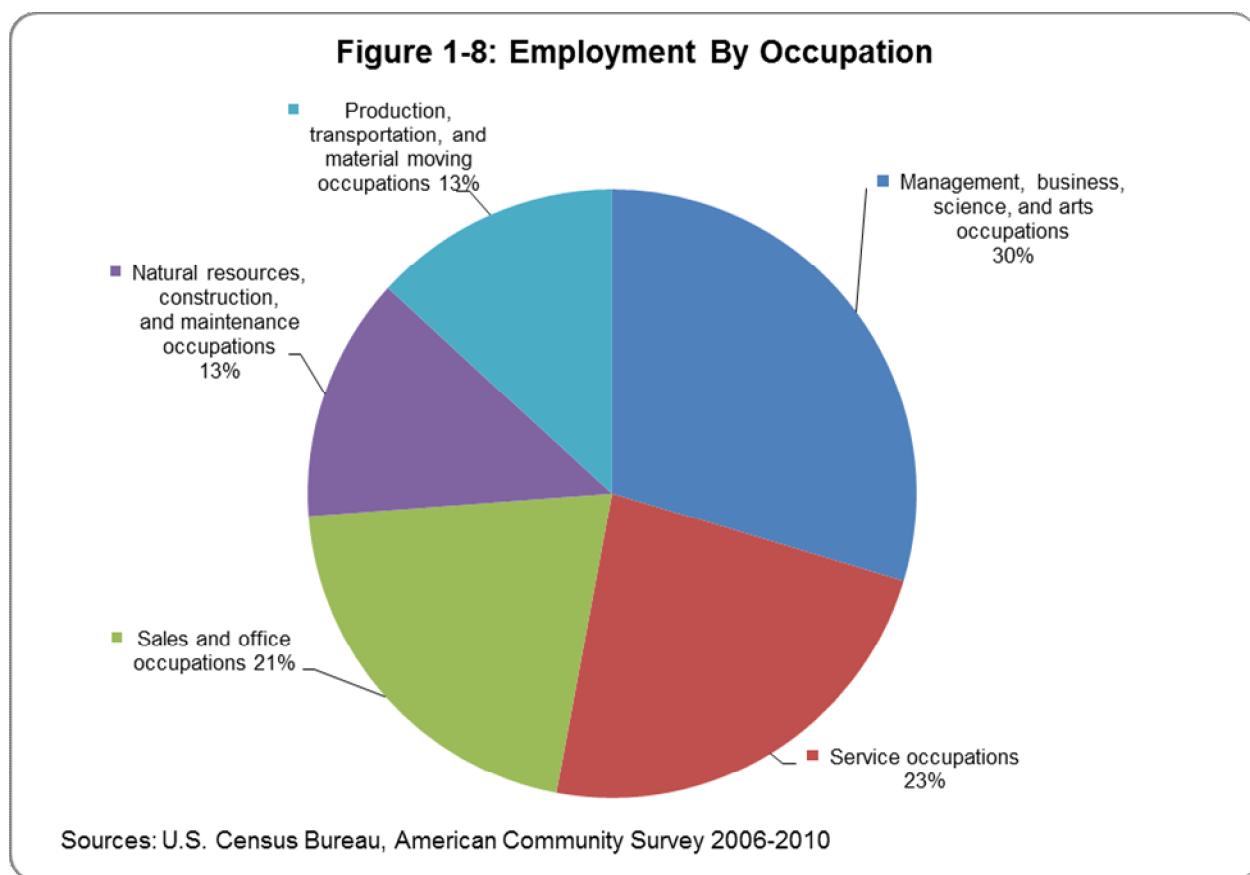
	White	Black	Other	Total
Individuals below poverty level (of 8,330 total individuals)	143	1,695	0	1,838
Percent of individuals	4.30%	35.40%	0.00%	22.10%
Percent Families below poverty level (of 2,390 total families)	2.50%	34.60%	0.00%	20.50%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2010

## F. Labor Force

### Employment by Occupation

Figure 1-8 identifies employment by occupation for Franklin. This information was obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Census, 2006-2010 American Community Survey which identifies employment by place of residence, rather than place of employment. Half of Franklin's employed citizens worked in management and professional or sales and office jobs. The industries employing the greatest number of Franklin residents included manufacturing and educational, health and social services. Most of the residents with manufacturing jobs work in the surrounding counties.



## Commute and Travel Time to Work

The 2006-2010 American Community Survey reported that of Franklin's estimated 3,078 workers (age 16 and older), the vast majority (76%) drove alone to work; however, a significant portion (17%) carpooled. Figure 1-9 illustrates how Franklin residents commuted to work.

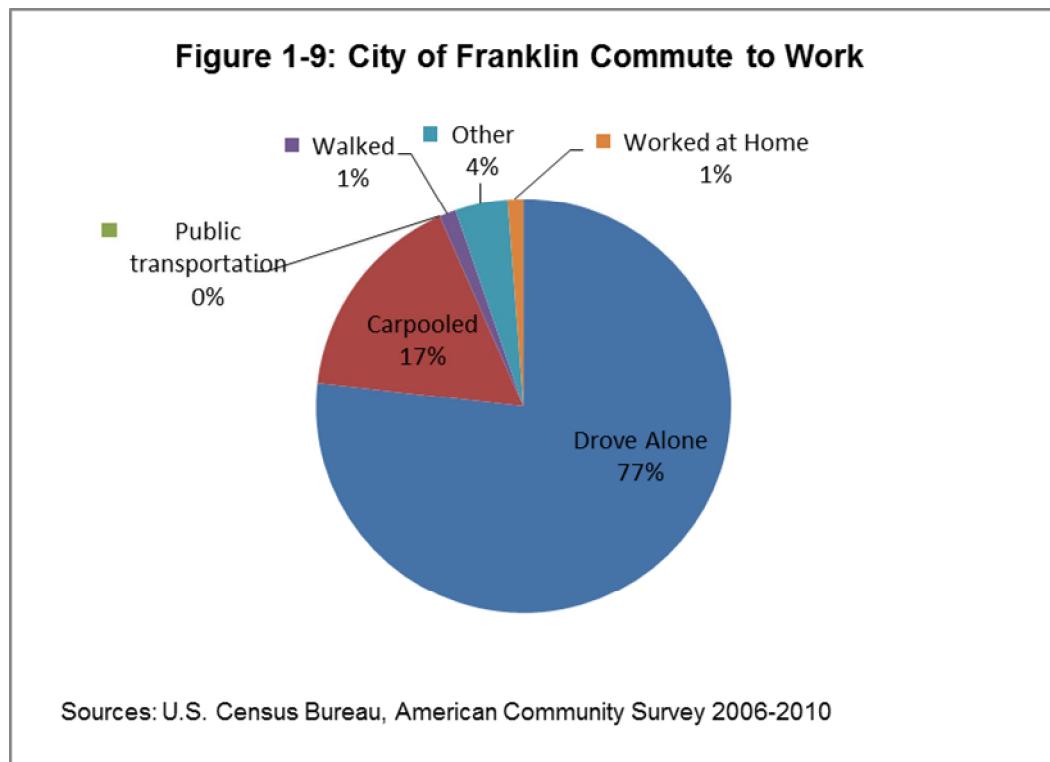
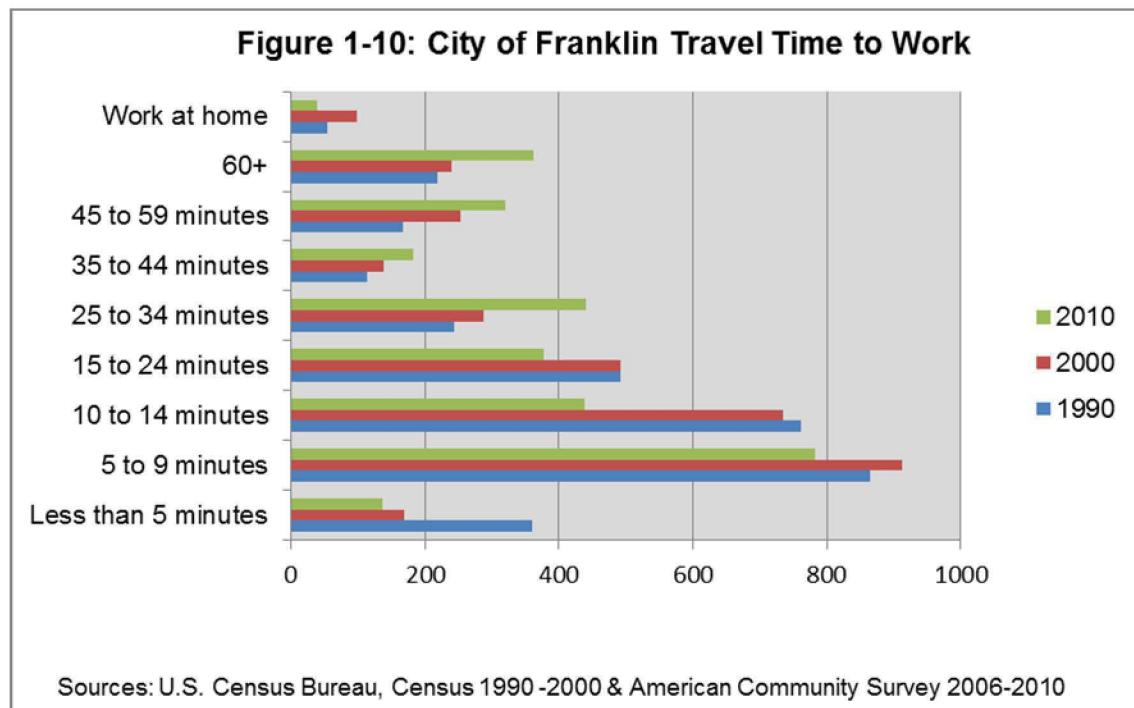


Figure 1-10 displays workers' commute times from both 1990 and 2010. According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey approximately 57% of Franklin residents who worked commuted less than twenty-five minutes daily. Notably, a significant portion of the working population did travel over forty-five minutes to work (24%).



## **CHAPTER 2 HOUSING**

**GOAL: TO PROMOTE THE PROVISION OF DECENT, SAFE, SANITARY AND SOUND HOUSING IN VIABLE NEIGHBORHOODS WHICH MEETS THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AT ALL INCOME LEVELS, AND WHICH ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE CITY.**

### **A. In General**

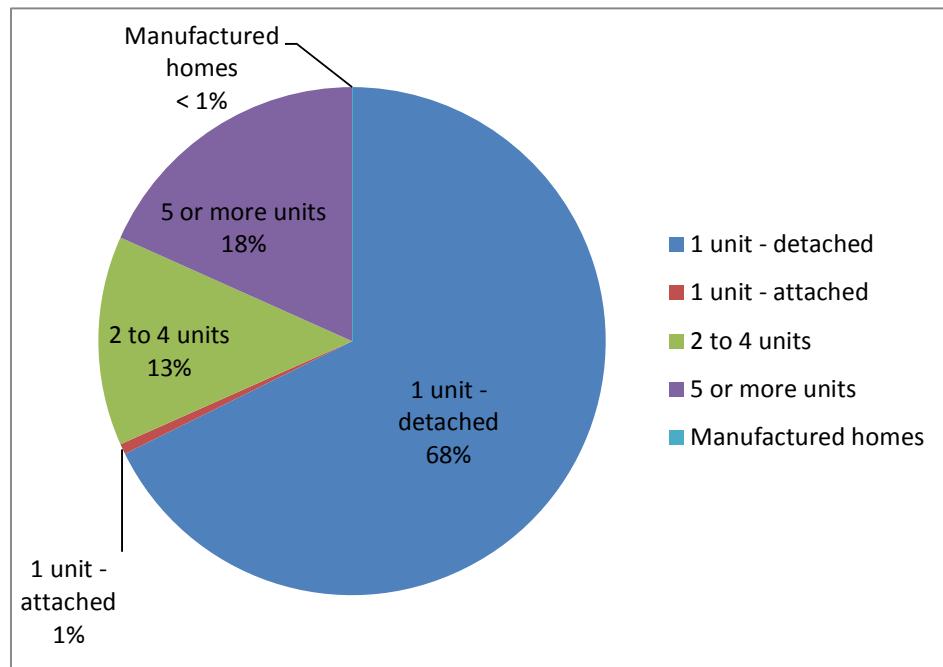
Residential development in Franklin, which formerly consisted mainly of single-family houses, has changed direction somewhat in recent years so that, in relation to neighboring communities, a larger proportion of housing in the City consists of multi-family rental units including a large quantity of public housing and other publicly subsidized units. As a result, the City's homeowner population has not increased proportionally the way it has in a number of other area communities. In addition, the quality and maintenance standards of both owner-occupied and rental housing vary considerably from neighborhood to neighborhood in the City. Failure or inability of owners to properly maintain both owner-occupied and rental properties has resulted in a considerable quantity of substandard residential units in the city, particularly in the area south of the CSX Railroad Line. For this reason, the City has undertaken a comprehensive housing needs assessment of all residential structures in the City. The Neighborhood Needs Assessment dated November 8, 2012 is made part of this Plan by reference.

### **B. Existing housing**

According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau, the City of Franklin contained a total of 3,901 housing units. Of these, 2,646 were one-unit detached structures (predominantly single-family homes), 27 were one-unit attached structures such as townhouses, 522 were two- to four-unit housing, and 715 were five- or more unit housing. Figure 2-1 is a graphical representation of the breakdown of housing units in the city by type for the years 2007-2011. Single-family homes make up the majority of the housing in the City, comprising nearly two-thirds of the total.



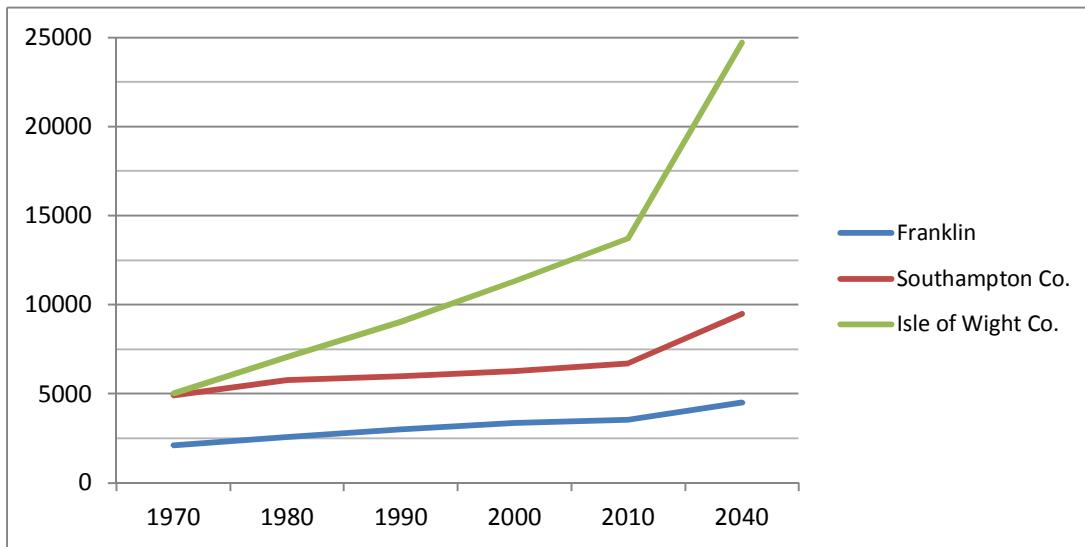
Figure 2-1: Housing Units in Structure . Franklin City



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS)

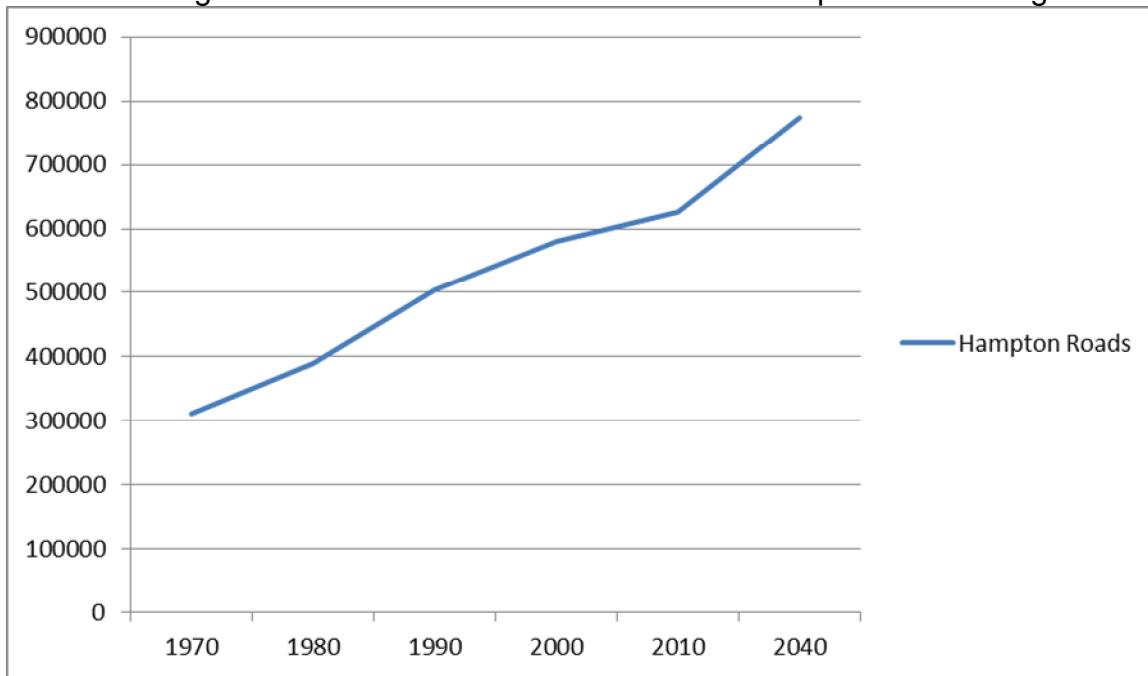
The number of households in the City increased 3.6% from 2000 to 2010, a slower rate than in previous decades. The City completed two annexations of land from Southampton County in 1986 and 1996, therefore accounting for a portion of the growth during the 1980s and 1990s. Figure 2-2 provides a visual representation of the increase in the number of households in the City and the surrounding region from 1970 to 2010 and also forecasts total household numbers for the year 2040.

Figure 2-2: Total Number of Households . Tidewater Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

Figure 2-3: Total Number of Households Hampton Roads Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

In the Hampton Roads region as a whole, the number of households has doubled between 1970 to 2010. From 2000 to 2010, the number of households in the region increased by 8.1% to a total of 626,083 households. Figure 2-3 provides a visual representation of the increase in the number of households in the Hampton Roads Region from 1970 to 2010 and also forecasts total household numbers for the year 2040. As the above figures illustrates, the number of households in Franklin is increasing at a rate similar to that of Southampton County but still behind that of Isle of Wight County and of Hampton Roads as a whole.

At the same time that the number of households increased in Franklin, average household size decreased from 1990 to 2000 and remained steady through to 2010. Table 2-1 summarizes Census and projected household size data.

Table 2-1: Average Household Size in Franklin and Surrounding Region

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	2010	2026	2010 % Change Since	
					1990	2000
Franklin City	2.57	2.39	2.39	2.47	-7.0%	0.0%
Southampton Co.	2.69	2.53	2.53	2.72	-5.9%	0.0%
Isle of Wight Co.	2.75	2.61	2.55	2.60	-7.2%	-2.3%
Hampton Roads	2.69	2.60	2.60	2.58	-3.4%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010, and Hampton Roads 2026 Economic Forecast.

Housing production for the years 1990 through 2011 are shown in Table 2-2. There was a net increase of 612 housing units in the City during this period (excluding the annexation of 1996). The year 1998 included the greatest number of building permits issued in a single year.

<b>Table 2-2: Franklin Single and Multi-Family Residential Building Permits</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b># of Permits</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b># of Permits</b>
2013	5	2001	23
2012	1	2000	56
2011	2	1999	7
2010	1	1998	81
2009	11	1997	11
2008	5	1996	12
2007	21	1995	20
2006	70	1994	11
2005	59	1993	56
2004	41	1992	20
2003	32	1991	19
2002	16	1990	32

Source: Hampton Roads Data Book, 2012 & City of Franklin Data

Table 2-3 shows a comparison of the percentages of multifamily units in the City of Franklin with the same data for other communities in Virginia. The localities chosen for comparison were selected based on similar population and/or geographic proximity. Franklin exceeds every other locality in the percentage of multifamily units but is showing a trend of multi-family units becoming a smaller percentage of the overall available housing units in the city.

**Table 2-3: Multifamily Units in Franklin and Select Jurisdictions Within Virginia**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>2000 Percent Multifamily</b>	<b>2010 Percent Multifamily</b>	<b>Change (percentage points)</b>
Franklin	35.7%	31.6%	-4.1%
Bedford	28.6%	24.1%	-4.5%
Emporia	16.9%	26.0%	9.1%
Isle of Wight Co.	5.6%	7.2%	1.6%
Southampton Co.	4.4%	2.9%	-1.5%
Suffolk	13.4%	14.4%	1.0%
Virginia	21.6%	21.4%	-0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2007-2011 Estimates

The 2010 Census also indicates that of 3,530 total occupied housing units, 1,754 were owner-occupied (49.7%) and 1,776 were renter-occupied (50.3%). Table 2-4 shows this breakdown for Franklin and each of the other jurisdictions listed above. From 2000 to 2010, Franklin has experienced a 4% shift in the number of renter-occupied units.

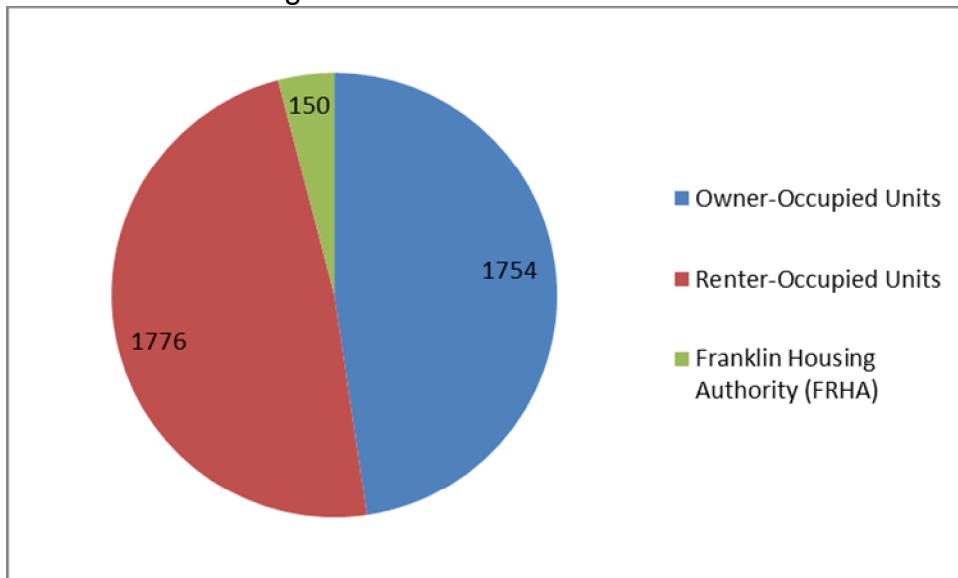
**Table 2-4: Renter- Occupied Housing Units in Franklin and Other Virginia Localities**

Jurisdiction	2000 Percent Renter-Occupied	2010 Percent Renter-Occupied	Change (percentage points)
Franklin	46.3%	50.3%	4.0%
Bedford	39.7%	44.3%	4.6%
Emporia	47.8%	57.3%	9.5%
Isle of Wight Co.	19.2%	19.9%	0.7%
Southampton Co.	25.7%	25.1%	-0.6%
Suffolk	27.8%	27.2%	-0.6%
Virginia	31.9%	32.8%	1.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010, SF1

As the preceding table shows, the 2010 percentage of renter-occupied units in Franklin exceeds that in all jurisdictions considered with the exception of the City of Emporia. Neighboring communities in the region are also experiencing an increase in the percentage of renters with the exception of Southampton County and Suffolk. Figure 2-3 below provides a visual portrayal of housing in Franklin and reveals the near equal amounts of owners and renters in Franklin.

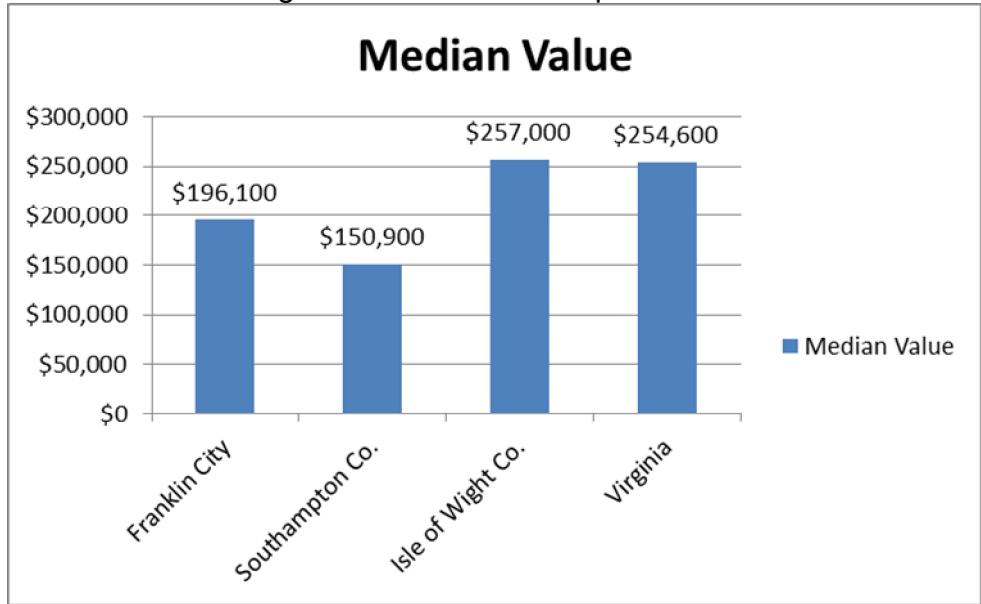
**Figure 2-4: Owners and Renters**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010, SF1 and FRHA Data

Median home value for owner-occupied units in the city has remained near the middle for the region. The average home in Franklin costs markedly less than the statewide average of \$254,600. Figure 2-4 is a graphical representation of the median values of owner-occupied housing units in Franklin, the region, and the Commonwealth.

Figure 2-5: Owner-Occupied Units



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS), 5 year Estimate

Table 2-5 provides vacancy data for Franklin, the surrounding counties of Southampton and Isle of Wight, and the state of Virginia. The rental vacancy rate in the city is nearly equal with the statewide rate and less than the rate in Southampton County. Isle of Wight retains the lowest vacancy rate in the region.

**Table 2-5: Vacant Units and Rates - Region**

Jurisdiction	# Vacant Units	% Total Units
Franklin City	371	9.5%
Isle of Wight Co.	915	6.3%
Southampton Co.	754	10.1%
Virginia	308,881	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010, SFI

The age distribution of the City's housing stock reported in the 2010 U.S. Census, American Community Survey (2007-2011) is as follows:

- Pre-1939 . 13.5%
- 1940 to 1959 . 22.0%
- 1960 to 1979 . 31.5%
- 1980 to 1989 . 9.6%
- 1990 to 2010 . 23.4%

Two-thirds of the housing units in Franklin were constructed before 1980. Because of the relatively old age of the City's housing stock, a considerable portion of the housing, especially that in the area south of the CSX Railroad line, is substandard in terms of facilities and maintenance. However, certain measures of housing quality have indicated improvement in recent years. As noted in Table 2-6, the number of units with more than 1 person per room has steadily decreased over the years. From 2000 to 2013, this number decreased from 41 to 19 units. This indicates a decrease in the number of over-crowded units.

The City has been performing safety and soundness inspections of substandard housing and requiring that unsafe units be repaired or demolished. Upon failure of owners to respond or act after the building official has issued notice of an unsafe structure, the City has contracted with private demolition companies to demolish and clear such structures. At this time, the City is still considering the adoption of a residential inspection program for rental units.

Table 2-6 documents living condition characteristics of the City's housing stock gathered in 2000 and again in 2013 as a five-year average of estimates from 2009-2013. Inadequate living conditions in both censuses were based on the presence of one or more of the following characteristics: more than 1.01 persons per room, lack of some or all plumbing, lack of a complete kitchen, and the payment of more than 30% of income for rent or mortgage.

<b>Table 2-6: Inadequate Living Conditions, City of Franklin</b>						
	<b>2000</b>		<b>2009-2013</b>		<b>Change</b>	
	# Units	% Units	# Units	% Units	# Units	%
1.01 or More Persons/Room	41	1.2%	19	0.5%	-22	-53.7%
30% or More of Income for Rent	668	42.7%	1377	67.4%	709	106.1%
30% or More Income for Mortgage	417	24.6%	445	29.5%	28	6.71%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2013 Five-Year Estimate

The number of renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing more than doubled over this time period. This is a disturbing number and indicative of the long-standing problems in the economy and the housing market. The 30% threshold of income dedicated to housing (mortgage or rent) is one measure set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assess housing affordability. The drastic increase in the number of units spending more than 30% of income on housing payments reveals the need for more affordable housing in Franklin.

## C. Zoning

Within the City's corporate limits, there are 5,297 acres or 8.7 square miles of land. Of that total area, 3,784 acres, constituting 71.4% of the whole, are zoned residential. There are seven residential zoning districts with total areas set forth as follows:

- (1) The R-O Zoning District (2,697 acres or 50.9% of the total area of the City),
- (2) The R-OA Zoning District (136 acres or 2.6% of the total area of the City),
- (3) The R-1 Zoning District (384 acres or 7.2% of the total area of the City), and
- (4) The R-1B Zoning District. No property in the City is currently zoned R-1B.



These districts permit single family residential development only, with minimum lot size requirements ranging from 40,000 square feet in the R-O District to 7,500 square feet in the R-1B District.

- (1) The R-1A Zoning District (65 acres or 1.2% of the total area of the City), which permits single-family, townhouse and multifamily residential development. Multifamily residential development is only permitted on tracts of five acres or more with a minimum of 3,000 square feet per unit.
- (6) The R-2 Zoning District (482 acres or 9.1% of the total area of the City), which permits single-family only, and
- (7) The R-3 Zoning District (20 acres or .4% of the total area of the City), which permits single family attached residential development only.

In addition to the above permitted residential uses (1) cluster residential development on lots five acres or more is permitted in all residentially zoned districts except the R-1A and R-3 Districts, (2) single-family and duplex residential developments are permitted in B-1 and B-2 Business Districts, and (3) mobile homes in mobile home courts are permitted as conditional uses in B-3 Business Districts. Currently there are 2 cluster residential developments for detached single family dwellings proposed in the City. The Riverwood

Estates subdivision comprised of 77 acres and Village at Lake Charles comprised of 126 acres. There are no mobile home courts in the City.

Development patterns can have either a positive or negative effect on the incidence of crime. A portion of the South Street corridor was rezoned in 2000 from B-3 General Commercial to an R-2 District, and the City is making use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in its efforts to develop affordable single family housing in the area. Also in this neighborhood, the area surrounding the intersection of Pretlow and South Streets and the area between Stonewall and Madison Streets have been zoned B-1, allowing for a mix of neighborhood businesses and residences. In addition, Franklin adopted a new residential zoning district termed the Single Family Urban Revitalization District, or R-UR, in May 2004. This district provides for higher-density residential development, and will facilitate CDBG conservation and revitalization efforts within the South Street corridor.

#### **D. Plans to Improve City Housing**

The City does not have the same control over residential housing as it does over public utilities, roads, and community facilities since it owns no single-family or multi-family residential units, and no lots subdivided for residential purposes. However, it does exercise indirect control over housing through zoning, subdivision, building code and related ordinances which govern among other things (1) what properties can be utilized for residential development, (2) the density limits of residential development, (3) the subdivision of land for residential development, (4) the infrastructure improvements which must be installed by developers in order to subdivide and sell residential lots and to construct and sell or lease multifamily units, and (5) the construction, alteration, maintenance and demolition of residential units.



The City can assist in the voluntary improvement of residential properties utilizing monies such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds. The City recently applied for and received CDBG funds to assess the condition of housing and infrastructure throughout the city and identify those areas that are most in need of assistance. The City-Wide Neighborhood Needs Assessment is attached by reference to this plan.

#### **E. Recommendations to Assist in the Improvement of City Housing**

The following are recommendations that should assist in improvement of the City's housing stock with sources of funding indicated where required:

##### **Short or Medium Range Recommendations**

- Consider the adoption of an ordinance to allow for the repair or removal of building that are declared to be derelict as authorized by state code.
- Provide assistance for and encourage homeownership throughout the city.
- Explore the inclusion of a mix of housing types and price points in mixed use, cluster and planned unit developments as a means to improve availability of affordable housing.
- Given the relatively old age of the city's housing stock, expedite the City's identification and required repair or demolition of unsafe, unsanitary or hazardous housing and other structures.
- Promote spot housing rehabilitation and project-based rehabilitation depending on the availability and appropriateness of HOME and CDBG funds.
- Expedite Mixed-Use zoning for the Downtown Special Taxing District.
- Encourage first time homeownership
- Amend the Cluster zoning district to provide for higher density with more open space
- Encourage and support housing interest in Downtown Special Taxing District.
- Amend the B-2 district to permit mixed use development by right.
- Amend the B-3 district to allow mixed use development either by right or as a conditional use.
- Add %granny pods+, auxiliary dwelling units, garage apartments, and pool houses by right in the single family residential districts to provide additional housing opportunities.
- Work in conjunction with the Franklin Redevelopment and Housing Authority to continue to improve public housing. Also, encourage and support their efforts to provide client training including credit counselling, budgeting, job training etc. to assist households in becoming independent.

## **Long Range Recommendations**

- Ensure that the Planning Commission and City Council periodically consider the housing needs of the community, what property is available to meet these needs,

and whether any changes in zoning, subdivision or other housing related ordinances or regulations are required to meet these needs. (No funding required)

- Develop cooperative undertakings with the Franklin Redevelopment and Housing Authority to encourage and assist single-family home ownership, to rehabilitate deteriorating neighborhoods, to encourage welfare to work and self-sufficiency programs, and to encourage and assist the conversion of public housing residents to owner occupants. (Funding depending on projects undertaken)
- Maximize participation in neighborhood revitalization projects such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), HOME and other programs that support the improvement of neighborhoods and housing.
- Continue to pursue interest in housing downtown.

## **CHAPTER 3**

## **ECONOMICS**

Assessing economic conditions and describing economic development goals are major functions of the comprehensive plan. Presently, Franklin is experiencing significant changes to its economy as the city and the surrounding area react and adjust to the recent closing of the International Paper mill and its transformation into a new facility. While a significant number of jobs were lost with the plant's closure, new opportunities exist to restore some if not all of those jobs and add to the city's economic outlook. This comprehensive plan provides an opportunity to discuss the city's economic past, present, and future . where Franklin has been, where it is now, and where its residents see it in the years to come. This chapter includes a description of the city's and region's economy, an outline of goals and objectives, and recommendations.

### **Regional Economic Setting**

Franklin is a member locality of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, the regional planning agency for Southeastern Virginia, which also counts as members the Cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg as well as the Counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry, and York. As part of a large metropolitan area, Franklin's local economy is connected to the larger regional economy centered on Newport News, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach. However, Franklin's economy is more directly tied to the localities to the west of the historic core of Hampton Roads: the Counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton. While this chapter mentions the larger Hampton Roads economy, comparisons and data will focus on Franklin's relationships with those two counties. This sub-region, Western Tidewater, possesses approximately 3.7% of the larger region's population and 2.7% of its jobs.<sup>1</sup>

Franklin, Isle of Wight County, and Southampton County share a tight economic bond, as evidenced by the number of commuters traveling between the three municipalities. Major employers for Franklin residents are located in both Isle of Wight and Southampton, and Franklin is home to major employers for both counties' residents. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census indicates that 23% of Southampton's workers commuted to Franklin, while 11.7% and 13.1% of Franklin's workers commuted to Isle of Wight and Southampton, respectively. While Isle of Wight County is a significant source of jobs for Franklin's residents, Franklin and Southampton County are much more intimately tied together economically.

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<sup>1</sup> Hampton Roads 2010 Socioeconomic Data by TAZ

Table 3-1: Commuting Patterns in Western Tidewater

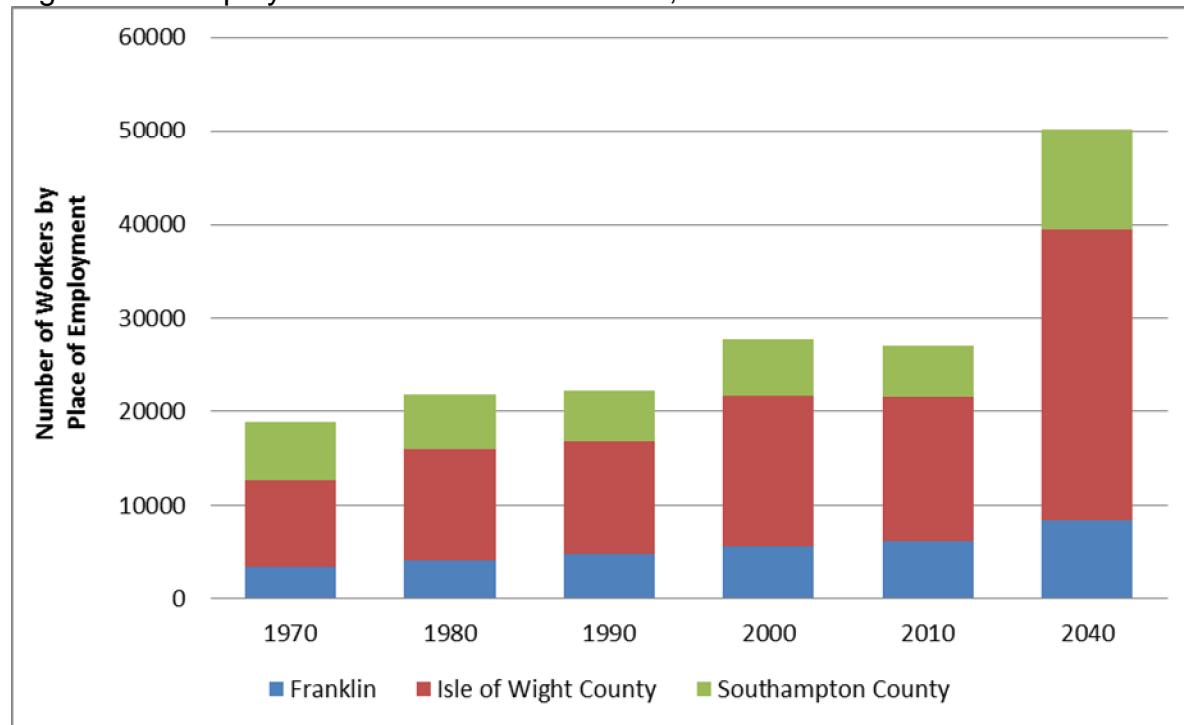
Working In		Franklin	Isle of Wight County	Southampton County	Outside Western Tidewater
Living In	Franklin	1,273	365	410	1,074
	Isle of Wight County	266	5,757	132	11,081
	Southampton County	1,926	926	2,731	2,854
	Outside Western Tidewater	1,179	5,810	1,282	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Employment Trends and Projections

Franklin has experienced significant employment growth over the last few decades, though the rate of expansion has declined in recent years. Between 1970 and 2010, the number of people working in Franklin grew at an average annual rate of approximately 1.5%, compared to 1.3% in Isle of Wight County, while Southampton County's number of workers declined to -0.3%. Growth since 2010 has been slightly slower, averaging 1.2% annually from 2000 to 2010, while future growth is forecasted to average 1.3% annually from 2010 to 2040. According to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, as of 2010 there are approximately 6,182 people employed in Franklin. By 2040, 8,500 people are forecast to be working in Franklin, with significantly more employment growth forecast for the two neighboring counties.

Figure 3-1: Employment in Western Tidewater, 1970 - 2040



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Historic Data, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

Table 3-2: Employment Trends and Forecasts in Western Tidewater . Number of Workers

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2040
Franklin	3,397	4,091	4,685	5,560	6182	8500
Isle of Wight County	9,301	11,880	12,133	16,134	15,346	31,000
Southampton County	6,124	5,927	5,461	6,026	5454	10,700
Western Tidewater	18,822	21,898	22,279	27,720	26,982	50,200
HRPDC	542,081	663,144	870,688	963,231	1,056,035	1,225,200

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Historic Data, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

Table 3-3: Employment Trends and Forecasts in Western Tidewater . Average Annual Growth

	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	1970-2010	2010-2040
Franklin	1.9%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%
Isle of Wight County	2.5%	0.2%	2.9%	-0.6%	1.3%	2.9%
Southampton County	-0.3%	-0.8%	1.0%	-1.1%	-0.3%	2.7%
Western Tidewater	1.5%	0.2%	2.2%	-0.3%	0.9%	2.5%
HRPDC	2.0%	2.8%	1.0%	0.4%	1.6%	1.0%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Historic Data, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

## Employment by Industry

The majority of individuals working in Franklin are employed in the fields of health care and social assistance, retail, education, and accommodation and food service. According to the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), health care and education are both forecast to experience significant growth in the Hampton Roads region in the long-term (between 2008 and 2018), while retail and food services are expected to grow at slower rates. Since the VEC does not provide projections specifically for Franklin, it is unclear how much growth is to be expected for the City's specific industries.

## Major Employers

As mentioned above, many Franklin residents commute to Isle of Wight County and Southampton County, while those localities are also the largest sources of in-commuters for Franklin. The Virginia Employment Commission provides a list of each locality's fifty largest employers. The top ten employers in Franklin are listed below.

Table 3-4: 10 Largest Employers in Franklin

Rank	Employer
1	Southampton Memorial Hospital
2	Wal-Mart
3	Franklin City Public Schools
4	City of Franklin
5	Paul D. Camp Community College
6	Care Advantage
7	LowesqHome Centers, Inc.
8	Farm Fresh
9	Children's Center
10	Bronco Federal Credit Union

Source: Virginia Employment Commission 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2011

Other major employers include James L. Camp Jr. Family YMCA, Nannie Home Health Care, The Village at Woods Edge, Baker's Home for Adults, Manry Rawls Corporation, Fluff paper IP, and Franklin Lumber LLC. Major private employers in Southampton County include the Enviva Pellet plant, Narricot Industries, Hercules Incorporated, Warsaw Health Care Center, Meherrin Agricultural and Chemical Company, Southampton Academy, Valley Proteins, and Food Lion. Major public employers in Southampton County include the Southampton County School Board, Deerfield Correctional Center, Southampton County, and the Division of Institutions.

While major employers make significant contributions to Franklin's economy, their closings or downsizings can also have significant consequences. According to Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc., an area economic development organization, Franklin has experienced four significant closures or downsizings in the last few years, resulting in nearly 2,000 jobs lost.<sup>2</sup> The largest of these events was the closing of the Franklin Paper Mill owned by International Paper. The mill's closure had a large effect on Western Tidewater's economy, as it employed a significant number of workers from Franklin (324), Southampton County (250), Suffolk (139), and Isle of Wight County (115). The mill accounted for nearly 9% of all workers living in Franklin. The mill's closing also continues to affect the larger regional economy through indirect losses in trade and wages. Staff from the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission estimated that the closing would result in the loss of approximately 2,850 jobs, including those at the mill and elsewhere in the region.<sup>3</sup> The IP plant has been repurposed and now, among other products, creates fluff pulp and lumber. While the reopened plant employs fewer than the previous IP plant, over 500 people are employed at the facility itself.

2 <http://www.franklinsouthamptonva.com/page/employer-activity/>

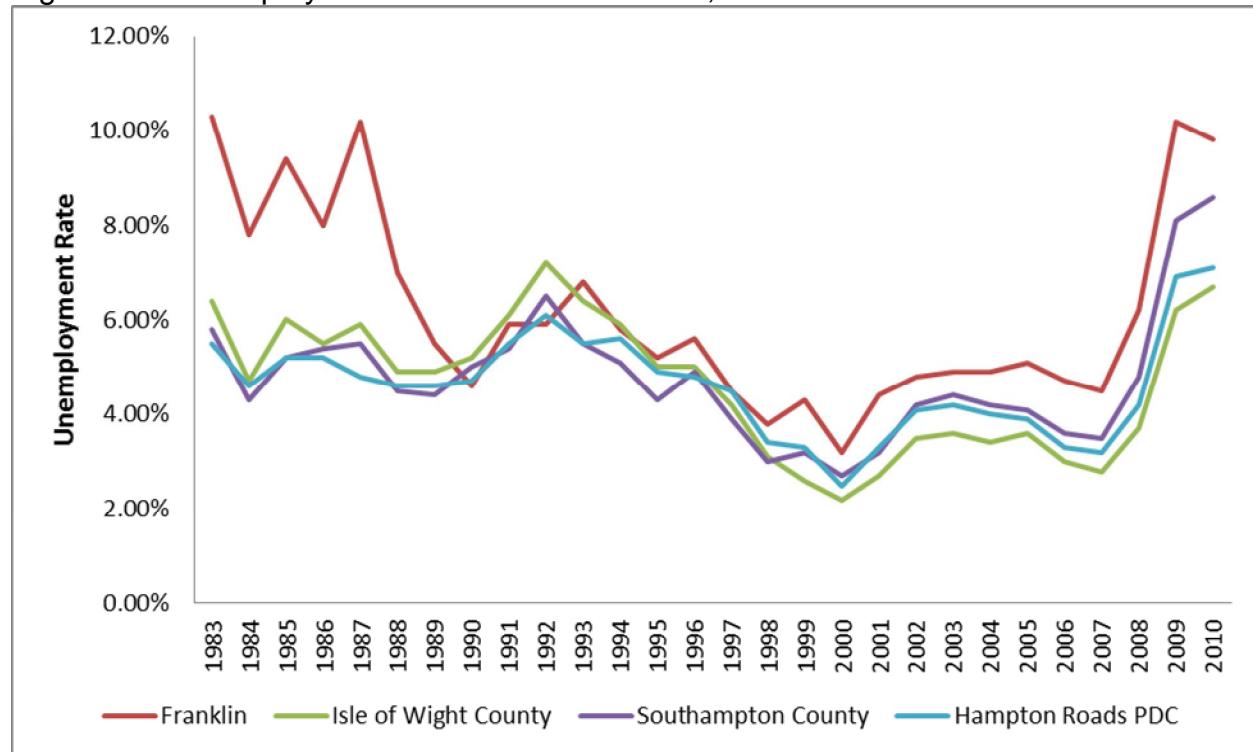
3 Grootendoorst, Greg. "International Paper Announces the Closing of the Franklin Paper Mill." *Hampton Roads Review*. Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. Winter 2010.

[http://www.hrpdc.org/Documents/Quarterly\\_Newsletters/2010/REVIEW\\_Winter10final.pdf](http://www.hrpdc.org/Documents/Quarterly_Newsletters/2010/REVIEW_Winter10final.pdf)

## Unemployment

For much of the last three decades unemployment in Franklin has not been much higher than the rest of the region or of its neighbors. However, during the mid-1980s unemployment was significantly higher in Franklin, averaging three to four percent higher in the city than in Isle of Wight County, Southampton County, or the rest of Hampton Roads. Unemployment declined beginning in 1989 and from that point until the recent downturn was consistently about one percent higher than the region's. Unemployment began to rise in 2008 and in 2009 and 2010 averaged above ten percent. The chart below shows Franklin's unemployment rate since 1983 compared to its neighbors and the region as a whole.

Figure 3-2: Unemployment in Western Tidewater, 1983-2010



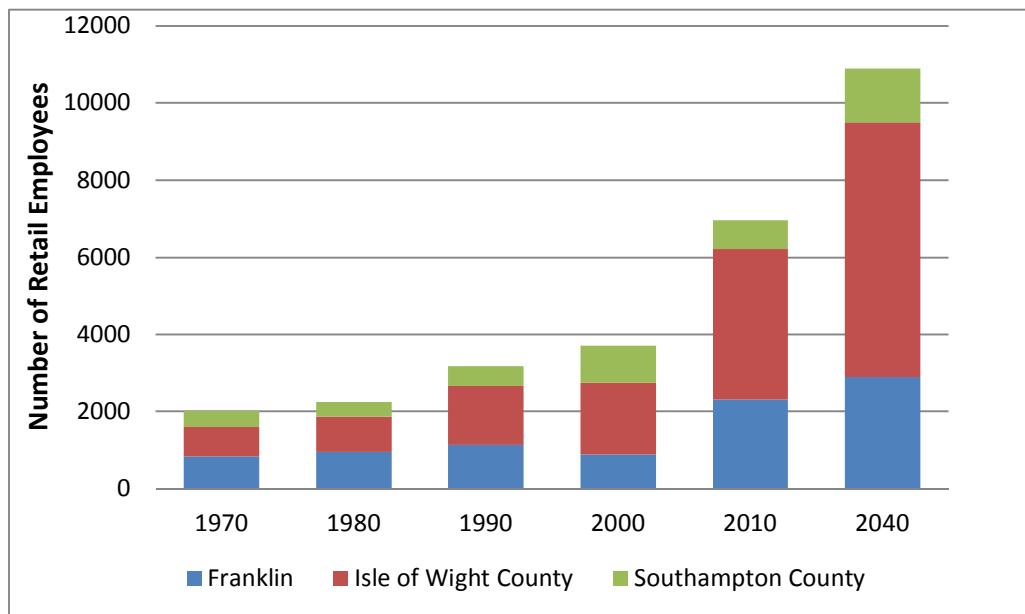
Source: Virginia Employment Commission (2010 Data Book)

## Retail Employment and Sales

Franklin has been a center for the retail trade in Western Tidewater for decades, with both its share of the region's retail employment and sales consistently higher than its share of population. While retail employment declined slightly between 1990 and 2000, it still grew at an average annual rate of 1.5% between 1970 and 2009. However, retail employment growth is forecast to grow slightly between 2010 and 2040 as retailers focus more on Isle of Wight and Southampton. Franklin will still maintain a share of the area's retail

employment that is greater than its population share. The following chart shows Franklin's past and forecast retail employment and share compared with Isle of Wight County and Southampton County between 1970 and 2040.

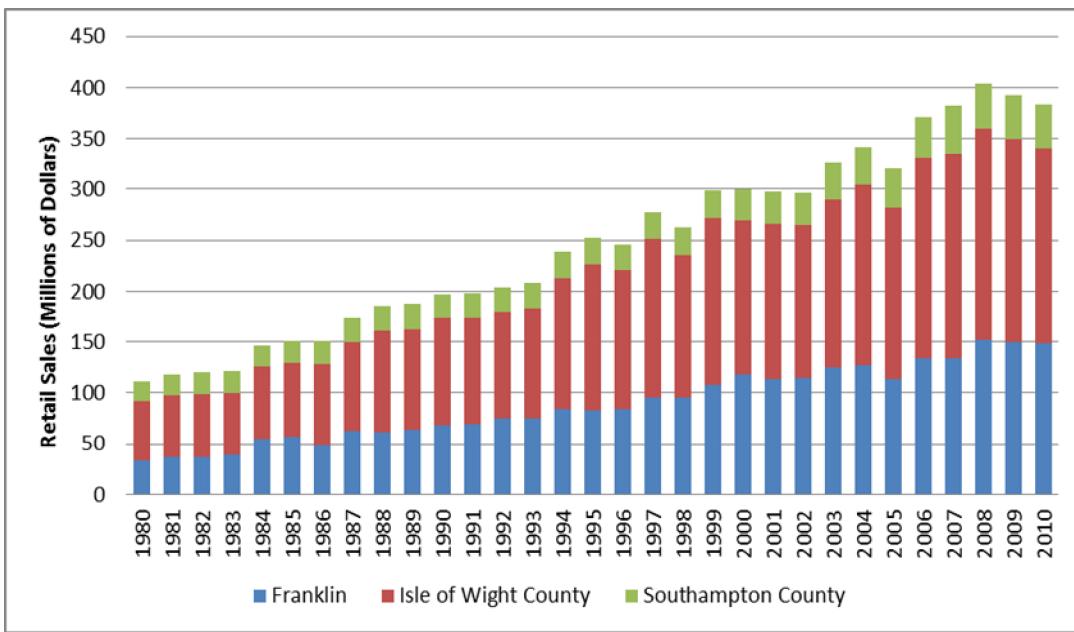
Figure 3-3: Retail Employment in Western Tidewater, 1970 -2040



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Historic Data, and Hampton Roads 2040 Economic Forecast.

Franklin has experienced overall significant growth in retail sales since 1980, marred by major declines only in 1986 and 2005. The same holds true for Franklin's share of the area's retail sales. The City's lowest share of retail sales in Western Tidewater was 27.8% in 1980, and it has not been lower than 30% since 1983. In 2010 Franklin had retail sales of approximately \$148 million, which accounted for nearly 36.1% of all retail sales in Western Tidewater. The following chart shows retail sales and share for Western Tidewater between 1980 and 2010.

Figure 3-4: Retail Sales in Western Tidewater, 1980 -2010



Source: Virginia Department of Taxation (2010 Data Book)

## Tourism<sup>4</sup>

Tourism plays an important role in Franklin's economy and across the Commonwealth. Statewide, tourists spent nearly \$18 billion in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Tourism is a major industry for several Hampton Roads localities, such as Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, and Norfolk, and a significant contributor to the economies of most. In Western Tidewater, Isle of Wight County enjoys the largest amount of tourism, while Franklin and Southampton County have similar but lower levels. The following chart shows tourism expenditures in Western Tidewater between 2003 and 2010. Tourism also contributes to local budgets through various taxes. Between 2003 and 2010, several tourism-related taxes (such as sales, excise, and property taxes) contributed over \$3.5 million to Franklin's municipal budgets.

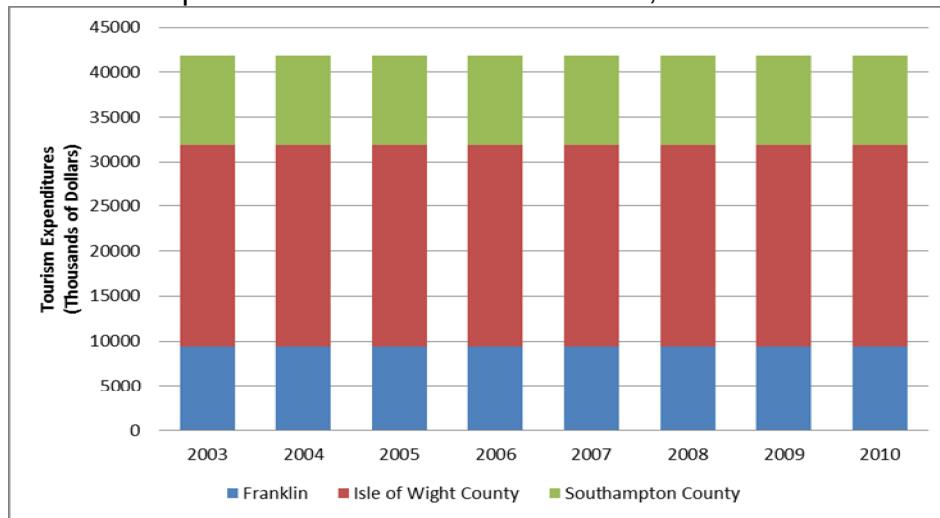
Franklin has participated in several efforts to promote local and regional tourism, including the South Side of the James Attractions effort (along with Emporia, Greensville County, Isle of Wight County, Portsmouth, Southampton County, Suffolk, Surry County, and Sussex County) and the development of the Franklin Southampton Tourism Strategic Plan. The plan, with help from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, documented the impact of tourism on the local economy, existing and undeveloped tourism assets, and incorporated the results and findings of several workshops with local stakeholders. Recommendations from the plan included enhancing cooperation between the city and the county, educating citizens and leaders about the impact of tourism, and providing incentives and resources for businesses, infrastructure, and services related to tourism. Several business organizations, including Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc., the Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Franklin Association, were key participants in the plan's development. These organizations are discussed in greater

4 Tourism data comes from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

5 This estimate includes meals, lodging, transportation, shopping, admissions, and entertainment.

detail later in this chapter. The plan was adopted by both Franklin and Southampton County in March 2010.

Figure 3-5: Tourism Expenditures in Western Tidewater, 2003 . 2010



Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation (2010 Data Book)

The tourism industry is also a significant employer for Franklin and the rest of Hampton Roads, employing over forty thousand workers across the region. In 2010 tourism accounted for over one hundred jobs in Franklin, and several hundred more in Isle of Wight County and Southampton County.

Figure 3-6: Tourism Employment in Western Tidewater 2006-2010



Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation (2010 Data Book)

## Economic Development

Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc., formed in 2005, is a public-private economic development partnership between the City of Franklin, Southampton County, charitable community foundations, and the local business community. Franklin Southampton Economic Development is a member of the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance, a regional organization dedicated to bringing businesses to the larger Hampton Roads region. The organization's mission is to help diversify the area's economy and attract high quality jobs. One of the ways in which Franklin Southampton Economic Development helps improve the local economy is through its management of the Franklin Business Incubator, which is located at 601 N. Mechanic Street in Franklin. The Franklin Business Incubator is a large, modern office building that provides office space, support staff and services, and programs (such as mentorships and training) for new and young start-up businesses.<sup>6</sup> The Incubator is located in a historic building and is the result of efforts to revitalize the downtown area following the flooding from Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The Franklin Business Incubator opened its doors in May 2005 and was completed in 2011. Franklin Southampton Economic Development was brought on board to manage the Incubator in 2006, and since that time the number of resident businesses has grown considerably. Currently, the Incubator is home to twenty-eight (28) small businesses, ranging from pest control and information technology to counseling and graphic design. These businesses together employ nearly one hundred full-time employees and have total revenues of over \$9 million. The Incubator is an important resource to new businesses trying to establish themselves. Since January 2006, six businesses have started in the Incubator and then moved on to other locations in Franklin or Southampton County; an additional four have moved on to other locations in Hampton Roads.<sup>7</sup>

The Downtown Franklin Association (DFA) is a non-profit organization that promotes the downtown district as a %cultural, civic, historical, and commercial center.<sup>8</sup> DFA heads Franklin's Virginia Main Street program, established in 1985. This program, managed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, was established to help revitalize downtown commercial districts by introducing quality design into downtown environments, promoting downtown areas as destinations for commerce and tourism, restructuring downtown economies to capitalize on existing assets, and building partnerships between downtown stakeholders, both public and private.<sup>9</sup> The national Main Street program is administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.<sup>10</sup> Franklin is one of twenty-five Virginia Main Street communities.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the Main Street

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6 <http://www.franklinsouthamptonva.com/page/franklin-business-incubator/>

7 Franklin Southampton Economic Development Inc. Franklin Business Incubator Accomplishments 7/27/12

8 <http://www.downtownfranklinva.org/>

9 <http://www.downtownfranklinva.org/page/about/>

10 <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>

11

<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CommunityDevelopmentRevitalization/VirginiaMainStreet.htm>

program, DFA promotes the Downtown Franklin Farmers Market and community events such as the We Be Jamming summer concert series.

The Franklin Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce was established in 1954 and is a business organization dedicated to improving the area's economy. Over two hundred businesses are members. The chamber provides resources and networking opportunities to members. Many of these resources, including a searchable business directory, are available through the Chamber's website.<sup>12</sup> The Chamber also communicates with area legislators on issues of importance to the Franklin-Southampton business community.

Paul D. Camp Community College, Western Tidewater's Community College, has campuses in Franklin and Suffolk and a smaller center in Smithfield. The campus in Franklin is located near the intersection of Armory Drive and College Drive. The college offers associate degrees and certificates, workforce services and training, and special community interest classes.<sup>13</sup> The Franklin campus is home to the Regional Workforce Development Center, which provides several services and opportunities to industry and business interests in Western Tidewater.<sup>14</sup> Total enrollment for the college is over 2,600 full- and part-time students.<sup>15</sup>

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to support the recruitment of businesses and industries, in order to build a diverse local and regional economy
- Promote industrial and business development within the city by assisting and supporting the Franklin Business Incubator, Franklin-Southampton Economic Development, the Downtown Franklin Association, and similar efforts
- Promote sustained business growth by designating areas for new or growing businesses
- Identify and designate locations appropriate for industrial, commercial, and office development
- Encourage cooperation between educational institutions and local businesses to provide professional development opportunities and career preparation to potential and existing workers
- Coordinate with local, regional, and state organizations to encourage sustainable economic development in a variety of fields, including industry, tourism, and others

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12 <http://www.fsachamber.com>

13 <http://www.pdc.edu/about/>

14 <http://www.pdc.edu/workforce-development/>

15 <http://www.pdc.edu/about/quick-facts/>

- Work with Southampton County and Isle of Wight County to promote tourism in Western Tidewater
- Work with Paul D. Camp Community College to identify and develop new programs to train and retrain local workers
- Focus on the downtown area as a site for office, retail, and mixed-use development
- Promote Franklin as a tourism destination for historic areas and natural resources throughout Western Tidewater

## CHAPTER 4

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### A. In General

The City of Franklin has been shaped by its advantageous location along the Blackwater River and by the multiple railroads that have served the city since the mid-nineteenth century. Like most cities, Franklin's development has also been influenced by its topography, type of soils, prevailing winds, and the natural resources found in the city and in neighboring localities. The city also benefits from its location between the seashore and the mountains of southern Virginia.

Franklin's location and natural resources made it an ideal site for many industries. For example, the location of a lumber and paper industry immediately east of the city in Isle of Wight County was made possible by Franklin's location at the head of navigation on the Blackwater River and by the forested hinterlands surrounding the city. Furthermore, the location of a peanut processing industry in the city was made possible by the fertile, sandy soils in the rural lands surrounding the city.

This chapter summarizes the principal environmental features of Franklin and its surroundings. This summary aids in defining issues which must be considered in the development of a sound land use plan and the regulatory measures which will be necessary to accomplish the community's development goals.

#### B. Physical Setting

The City of Franklin lays in the western part of Virginia's coastal plain at  $36^{\circ} 40' N$  longitude and  $76^{\circ} 54' W$  latitude. The Blackwater River and Isle of Wight County border Franklin to the east, while Southampton County borders the City to the west, north, and south as shown on Figure 4-1. The total land area of the city is 8.7 square miles with approximately eight miles along the Blackwater River.



#### C. Climate

Figure 4-1: Location of City of Franklin

Although Franklin's climate is influenced by proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, on average, the area experiences slightly lower temperatures and a few more inches of rainfall annually than Metropolitan Hampton Roads. The nearest National Weather Station is located in the Holland community in the adjacent City of Suffolk. Table 4-1 presents recent climate data made available by the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC).

**Table 4-1: General Climate Summary, Holland Weather Station**

Average Jan. temperature <sup>1</sup>	37.7 °F	Average annual precip <sup>1</sup>	49.07 in
Average July temperature <sup>1</sup>	77.1 °F	Average annual snowfall <sup>2</sup>	7.1in
Average annual temp <sup>1</sup>	57.8 °F	Growing season <sup>3</sup>	March 23-October 24
Prevailing winds <sup>3</sup>	SW 9 mph		

Sources: <sup>1</sup>NCDC, 1971-2000 Monthly Normals, Holland, VA; <sup>2</sup>NCDC, 1948-2000 General Climatic Summary, Holland, VA;

<sup>3</sup>City of Franklin, Downtown Development: A Community Profile.

Typically, the city enjoys mild winters with warm, humid summers. In addition to summer thunderstorms, major producers of rainfall include northeasters and tropical storms. According to the NCDC, there has been one tornado reported in Franklin since January 1990. It was an EF0 tornado that touched down near S.P. Morton Elementary on September 26, 2008. No damage was reported.

Hurricanes are typically downgraded to tropical storms before traveling as far west as Franklin. Thunderstorms, severe lightning, high winds, and hail are more frequent. As reported by the NCDC, winter storms, flash floods, and drought were observed in the region during the January 1990 to December 2011 time period.

Wind direction is predominantly from the west and southwest; however, immediately following storm systems, northwesterly winds typically dominate for some time.

#### D. Air Quality

According to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), there are no known air quality problems in the City of Franklin. There is no air monitoring station located within the city limits; the closest station is at Holland in Suffolk (station 183-F) and does not monitor for all criteria pollutants. As reported in DEQ's 2010 Virginia Ambient Air Monitoring Report, all stations in the Tidewater Monitoring Network (to which Franklin belongs) were below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter.

Although the Hampton Roads region has previously been deemed a nonattainment area, it has recently improved and was recommended in 2011 to be designated as %unclassifiable/attainment+ for the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). Franklin is not included in the region in regards to air quality but neighbors Isle of Wight and Suffolk are included.

Additionally, there are no known regular emissions of hazardous air pollutants in the City of Franklin. However, accidents involving the use or transportation of hazardous materials could cause a release of such pollutants.

Facilities manufacturing, processing or otherwise using listed toxic chemicals above certain thresholds are required to report to EPA's Toxic Chemical Release Inventory (TRI) annually. Within the city limits, there are no facilities subject to these reporting requirements. Prior to 2010, three International Paper (IP) facilities (in Isle of Wight County) along with Dominion Resources' Southampton Power Station (southwest of Franklin in Southampton County) were subject to requirements and reported a combined 619,531 pounds of air emissions to the TRI in 2010 (99% of which was emissions from IP).

Although greatly improved since the 1970s, the most recognized air pollution issue in Franklin and the surrounding counties is odor, associated with the Hercules, Inc. plant located west of the city in Southampton County and IP located across the river from Franklin in Isle of Wight County. As noted earlier, the prevailing wind direction is from the west; therefore, the odor from the paper mill did not present a major problem under normal atmospheric conditions while it was in operation. Odor from Hercules, however, is noticed more frequently. In either case, temperature inversions are required for these odors to become significant problems.

In 2012 IP completed the repurposing of approximately one-third of the plant including the lumber yard and is now manufacturing fluff paper. The current operation is capable of producing as much as 270,000 metric tons of fluff pulp per year. In addition, with the new technology, there is very little odor coming off the kraft pulping process.

## **E. Topography, Geology and Soils**

Virginia's coastal plain is relatively flat. This plain is broken up by a series of steep scarps, or sand ridges, that run generally north and south, and by the rivers and streams, which generally flow to the east and southeast. Franklin lies in a portion of the coastal plain known as the Isle of Wight Plain, lying to the west of the Suffolk Scarp. Most topographic variation in Franklin is associated with the eroding action of rivers and streams.

Elevations range from less than five feet above sea level on Franklin's eastern boundary along the Blackwater River to a maximum of eighty feet in the northwestern portion of the city. High Street lies atop a steep slope and parallels the river through the city from north to south. The Blackwater River Floodplain lies east of the foot of this slope. Both Hunterdale Road and Clay Street lie atop a higher ridge to the west. This ridge constitutes the drainage divide between the Blackwater and the Nottoway Rivers. South of and parallel to Clay Street is another steep slope marking the southern boundary of this ridge. Areas of steep slope within the city are shown on Map 4-1.

Slope can be a critical factor in determining the developability of certain soils, particularly highly erodible sandy soils. Areas of sandy soils on steep slopes are present in Franklin and include the slope along High Street and the area to the south of Clay Street. Conservation measures would be necessary in some of these areas as a precondition to further development. Some of these locations may be best utilized as parks and open spaces. Map 4-2 presents basic soil types found in Franklin. Roanoke loam (25%), Slagle fine sandy loam (19%), and Bibb sandy loam (11%) are the most dominant soil types present in Franklin. Prior to proceeding with a development project, site-specific soils information should be obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service soil survey or by conducting an on-site survey.

## F. Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetlands are defined based on soil characteristics, the presence of certain types of vegetation, and the presence of water in the soil for all or part of a year. Wetlands fulfill many valuable functions, including flood conveyance and storage, sediment and pollution control, ground water recharge, wildlife habitat, open space, recreation and education. As shown on Map 4-1, there are areas classified as non-tidal wetlands within the city, including extensive areas along the Blackwater River and its tributaries. Generally, these areas should be conserved and are not suitable for development. Permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and State of Virginia are required for development in non-tidal wetlands.

Floodplains are defined as land that has been or may be covered by floodwater during a regional flood. A floodplain includes the floodway (the river or moving water) and the flood fringe, or the area that is covered with standing water during a flood. In September 1999, the rains associated with Hurricane Floyd caused the Blackwater River to flood to record levels and devastate the City of Franklin. As a result of the flood the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency revised the floodplain and floodway boundaries for the section of the Blackwater River in and adjacent to Franklin. Map 4-3 depicts the 1980 floodplain and floodway compared to the 2000 revised floodplain and floodway. The land area within Franklin overlain by both the floodplain and floodway is significantly larger in the year 2000 map, reflecting the magnitude of the 1999 flood. In January 2001, the city released the Downtown Flood Recovery Master Plan, which describes in detail the flood event, resulting damage, and plans for redevelopment. While this plan has served the City and the Downtown well while guiding flood mitigation projects following Hurricane Floyd there needs to be a new focus on the Downtown. The City is currently working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a Chowan River Basin Flood Feasibility Study. In addition, Franklin has developed a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, which makes recommendations for parks and greenways along the floodplain and in other wetland areas within the city limits.

## G. Surface Water Resources

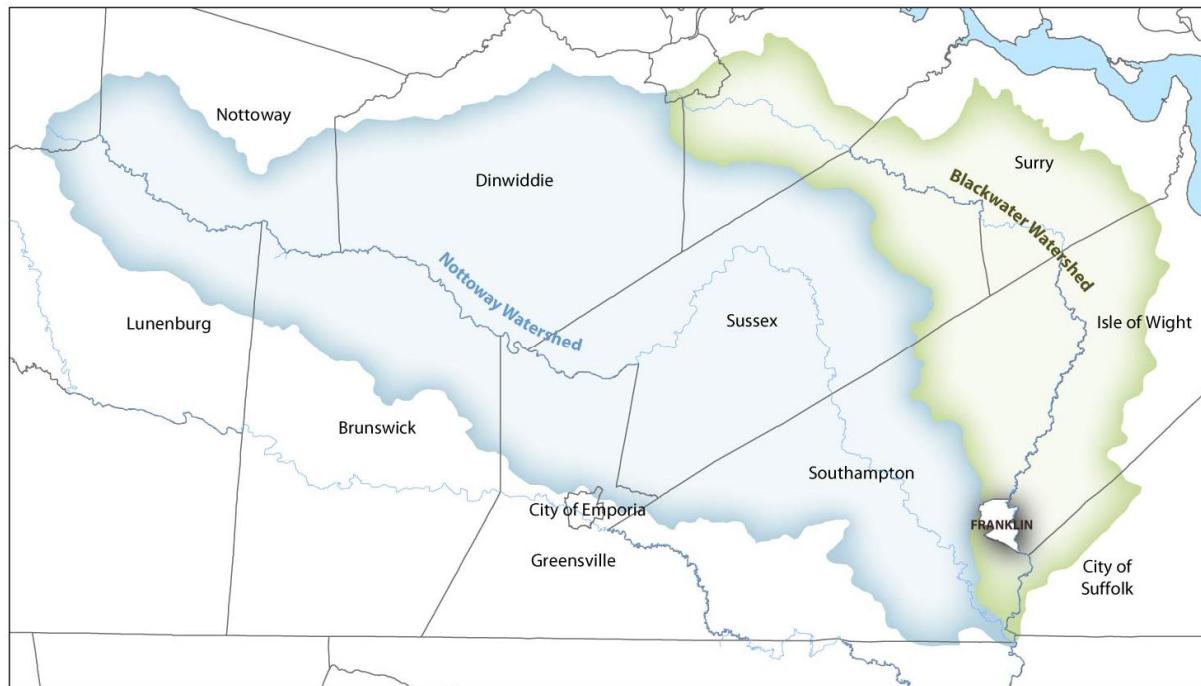


Figure 4-2: Major Watersheds in Franklin, Virginia

The dominant surface water resources in the Franklin area are the Blackwater and Nottoway Rivers and their tributaries. These two rivers join at the State of North Carolina line to form the Chowan River, a tributary of the Albemarle Sound. As shown in Figure 4-2, the majority of the City of Franklin lies in the Blackwater River drainage basin while the northwest corner of the city lies in the Nottoway River drainage basin.

The Blackwater River, a relatively slow moving, dark river, is a valuable resource for the city. Residents rely on the river for recreation, using it heavily for boating and freshwater fishing. In addition, the City of Norfolk withdraws water from the river at Burdette, north of the city, to supplement its water supply during periods of high river flow.

Furthermore, the Franklin Sewage Treatment Plant contributes permitted wastewater discharges to the Blackwater River. The plant is well within DEQ's compliance standards, and has achieved permit requirements on a monthly basis for the past few years with one exception, the 1999 Hurricane Floyd flood event. The color and clarity of the effluent is indistinguishable from drinking water without the use of sophisticated analytical equipment. There are also wastewater discharges to the river north of Franklin in Waverly, Wakefield, and Windsor.

As mentioned in the air quality section, facilities manufacturing, processing or otherwise using listed toxic chemicals above certain thresholds are required to report to EPA's Toxic Chemical Release Inventory (TRI) annually. Within the city limits, there are no facilities subject to these reporting requirements; however, IP resumed operation of a portion of their plant in Isle of Wight County in 2013 and will be required to report to EPA's TRI.

Historically, the Blackwater River has experienced significant water quality problems, including algal blooms and occasional fish kills. While most issues have occurred below Franklin in the Chowan River, the Blackwater and Nottoway Rivers join to form the Chowan River so problems in the Blackwater River in Virginia directly impact the quality of the Chowan River in North Carolina.

In 1996, a 9.84-mile segment of the Blackwater River originating near Franklin Municipal Airport was identified by DEQ as an impaired water body. In DEQ's 2012 303(d) report, data show that violations of Virginia's water quality standard for dissolved oxygen were recorded along this segment of the Blackwater River at nine monitoring stations between 1996 and 2000. The violations were attributed to naturally occurring conditions because the slow moving river flows through swampy areas where the decomposition of vegetation hinders mixing and re-aeration of waters.

In October 2003, a Virginia Department of Health fish consumption advisory for the Blackwater River was issued due to mercury contamination. Sampling efforts by the DEQ had indicated elevated levels of mercury in fish, prompting advice that an individual consume no more than two eight-ounce meals per month of any largemouth bass or redear sunfish. Map 4-4 depicts the stream segments with impairments in Franklin.

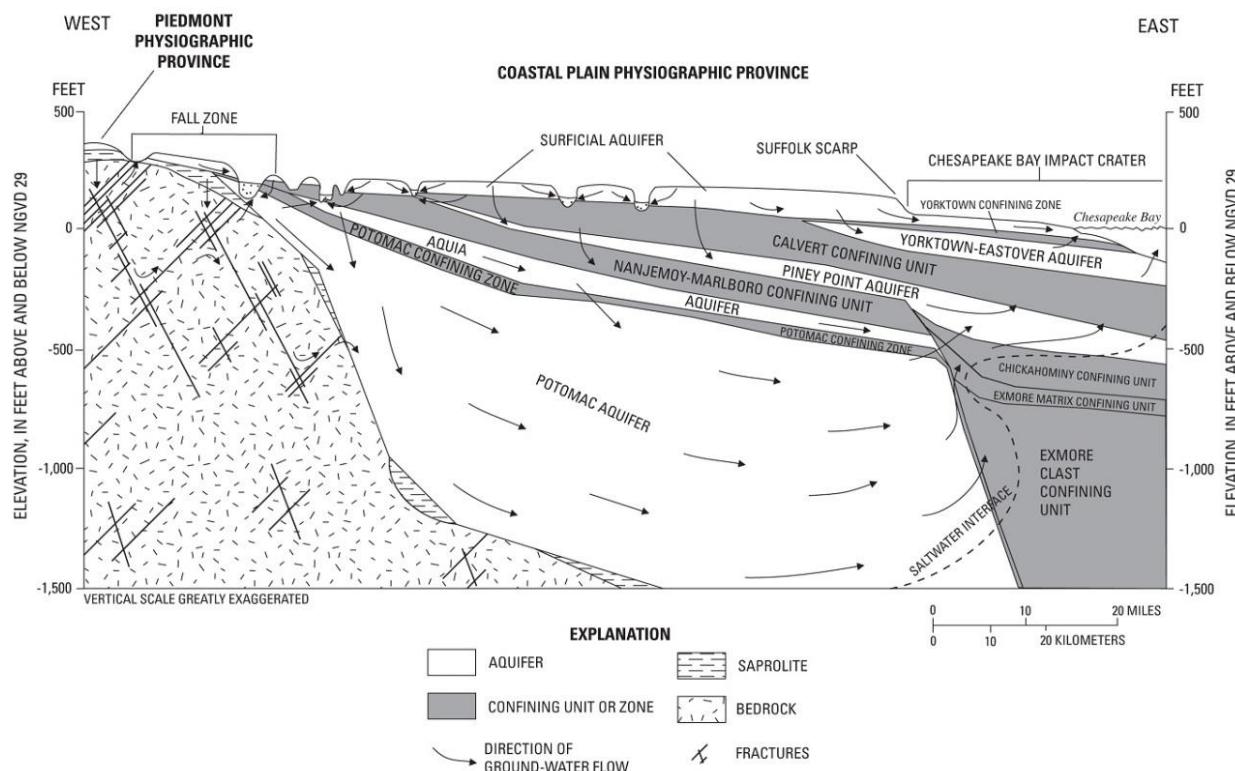
In an effort to coordinate non-point source pollution management efforts within shared watersheds, Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State of North Carolina in October 2001. Instituted through North Carolina's Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program, the MOA commits the States of Virginia and North Carolina to work together. In addition, the states jointly fund a watershed field coordinator to examine water quality problems throughout the Chowan drainage basin.

## H. Ground Water Resources

The City of Franklin and the surrounding communities rely on ground water for water supply. Since Chapter 6, Utilities, discusses Franklin's water usage and supply, this section focuses on the physical environment and the quality of the city's ground water.

The ground water system of southeastern Virginia consists of a series of interconnected aquifers, which are recharged west along the Fall Line, the dividing line between the harder rocks of the Piedmont and the softer strata of the Coastal Plain. As shown on Figure 4-3, the water-bearing layers slope and thicken to the east. In addition to the unconfined Columbia water table aquifer, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) identifies six confined aquifers (Lower Potomac, Middle Potomac, Upper Potomac, Aquia, Chickahominy, Piney Point, and Yorktown-Eastover) beneath Franklin. The most productive aquifers in the area are the deepest, with both municipal and industrial wells using water from them. The water table aquifer is pumped primarily for small domestic, urban irrigation and agricultural purposes.

**Figure 4-3: Cross-section of Coastal Plain aquifer system<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> McFarland, E.R. & Bruce, T.S., 2006, The Virginia Coastal Plain Hydrogeologic Framework. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1731, 118 p., 25 pls. (available online at <http://pubs.water.usgs.gov/pp1731/>)

The Ground Water Management Act of 1992 designated eastern Virginia (east of Interstate-95 and south of the Mattaponi and York Rivers) as a ground water management area. In a ground water management area, withdrawals over 300,000 gallons per month require a ground water withdrawal permit. Studies by the USGS indicate that large increases (already permitted) in the amount and duration of withdrawal may result in significant adverse impacts to the aquifer system. Because little is known about the potential for movement of saltwater into the aquifers, these studies are continuing. Evidence to date shows no saltwater intrusion from pumping; however, the potential still exists and is being monitored.

Limited data indicate that the quality of the region's ground water is generally good. In Franklin, the major ground water issue is the presence of naturally occurring fluoride. Fluoride, which is commonly added to drinking water for its dental benefits, can cause cosmetic dental problems when its concentration is too high. The city's municipal wells, which withdraw water from the Potomac Aquifers, are routinely monitored. As a result of the high fluoride levels in Franklin water, the City has entered into a Consent Order with the Virginia Department of Health and has satisfied the conditions set forth. A discussion of the City's municipal water system can be found in the Utilities Chapter.

Finally, the Virginia Department of Health conducted a Source Water Assessment for Franklin's waterworks in 2002. The College Drive and Downtown wells, both of which are no longer in use, were determined to be of high susceptibility to contamination, largely due to fluoride standard violations in previous years. Hunterdale and Pretlow, the wells currently in use, were determined to be of low susceptibility because they are properly constructed ground water sources located in areas that tend to inhibit contaminant migration, are protected with appropriate aquitards, and have no known detection of contamination within the last several years.

Within a 1000-foot fixed radius of each of Franklin's wellheads, the Source Water Assessment identified several medium and low-risk land use activities, and should be consulted in making land use decisions. The City is currently considering the adoption of a wellhead overlay district as an addition to its zoning ordinance.

## **I. Agricultural Lands and Forest Lands**

Approximately 21% of the city is forested while 21% is devoted to cropland and pastures. Wetlands comprise approximately 16% of the land area, primarily along the Blackwater River. The remaining areas are designated as developed (35%) and undeveloped open space/grass (6%).<sup>2</sup> Map 4-5 identifies forest and agricultural lands in Franklin.

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<sup>2</sup> NOAA, C-CAP Land Cover Data, 2006

## **J. Natural Heritage Resources**

Statewide, natural heritage resources include plant and animal species as well as communities with special status. As of May 2012, the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage database reports no communities or plant species of concern within the city limits.

In previous years, Virginia Fish and Wildlife Information Service has reported that one federal/state listed endangered species, the red-cockaded woodpecker, is known to nest and live year-round in Sussex County in mature, living pine trees (saw-timber), particularly loblolly pines infected with red heart disease. Although this extremely rare forest dweller is not known to reside in Franklin, it is listed as having a likely occurrence and has been observed in the surrounding counties. A federal/state threatened species with known distribution throughout southeastern Virginia, the bald eagle, has been observed in Franklin and is likely to occupy wooded areas along the river year-round. The eastern big-eared bat, a state listed endangered species, is known to inhabit the surrounding counties and is likely to be spotted in Franklin. State threatened species, Mabees salamander and the upland sandpiper, have likely occurrences while the loggerhead shrike (butcher bird) has a known occurrence. In addition to endangered and threatened species, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries designates another twenty-four animals as either federal or state species of concern with known or likely occurrences in the City of Franklin.

Finally, the common white-tailed deer, abundant in the city and surrounding counties, is a valued resource for another reason. Hunting, particularly for deer, is permitted in the City and is a favorite recreational activity. Due to the abundance of deer in the area, they have come to be seen by some as a nuisance in the City. Certainly, all of these species and their habitats should be considered in making future land-use decisions.

## **K. Open Space and Recreation**

Land areas presently classified for open space and recreation uses are further discussed in the Parks and Recreation section of the Community Facilities Chapter (Chapter 7). The preservation of areas for open space presents numerous environmental and aesthetic benefits to a city and is therefore discussed below, as excerpted from Franklin's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. Given the city's projected population growth, now is the time to preserve open space and to create opportunities to improve the quality of life in Franklin.

In the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, the Department of Conservation and Recreation defines greenways as open space corridors that can be managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation. Greenways often follow natural land or water features such as ridgelines, stream valleys, rivers, canals, utility corridors, abandoned rail lines and others. Greenways, publicly or privately owned, connect

recreational, natural, cultural and/or historic areas and can be designed for numerous purposes, including: recreational use, non-motorized transportation corridors, wildlife habitat, and scenery. Greenways not only improve the quality of life of a locality, but also have many environmental benefits. If such a system is developed along a river, it can act as a riparian buffer, protecting areas from floods and erosion and providing valuable wildlife habitat.

The City of Franklin has a large percentage of open space, consisting of forests, agriculture and wetlands. The wetlands are adjacent to the Blackwater River and are largely forested. Map 4-6 shows the most suitable lands for preserving open space, the most suitable lands for future parks and possible alignment for a trail system. The areas designated as ~~Most Suitable Open Space Lands~~ are not suitable for future development and provide the substantial environmental services. Based on the aforementioned quality of life and environmental benefits of greenways, preservation of open space should be accomplished in these areas. These open space areas offer great opportunities for trails, picnic areas, nature programs, camping sites, and access to the Blackwater River.

## **L. Solid Waste Disposal**

Non-hazardous solid waste is regulated by EPA through the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and by DEQ through the Virginia Waste Management Act. Presently, Franklin's municipal solid waste is delivered to the Franklin transfer station to be transferred to the Regional Landfill operated by the Southeastern Public Service Authority in Suffolk. Solid waste disposal is further addressed in Chapter 6 (Utilities).

## **M. Hazardous Waste.**

DEQ and EPA regulate hazardous waste through RCRA and state regulations. Permits are required for the treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste. Presently, there are no permitted hazardous waste disposal sites in the State of Virginia. In addition, there are no Superfund hazardous waste sites in Franklin. There are no large quantity generators (LQG) of hazardous waste in Franklin. Furthermore, EPA's Envirofacts database identifies 25 sites (not all of which are actually located inside the city limits) with hazardous waste activities.

Finally, EPA's RCRA Corrective Action Program requires investigation and cleanup of releases of hazardous wastes and constituents that pose an unacceptable risk at RCRA hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

## CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION

**GOAL: TO DEVELOP A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CAPABLE OF MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY THROUGHOUT THE CITY.**

### A. In General

The City of Franklin's transportation system depends heavily upon its highway and street network. Although private companies in Franklin have provided taxi service in the past this service was discontinued in 2009. However, the City of Franklin's Transit Development Plan has been adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council to address this issue as well as other Transit related issues in the City. Passenger rail service is not available, although Norfolk Southern and CSX lines do cross the City for the movement of goods. The Franklin Municipal Airport, located in adjacent Isle of Wight County, does not offer scheduled air service to the public. The closest commercial airport is Norfolk International, approximately 50 miles northeast. To the north and slightly farther is Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport.



## B. Existing Transportation System

### Roadways

Franklin is served by the U.S. 58 Bypass, which is part of %Super 58,+ a four-lane highway being constructed from the City of Virginia Beach to Interstate 77 northeast of Galax. Route 58 is now at least four lanes well beyond South Hill. It links the City in an easterly direction to metropolitan Hampton Roads and in a westerly direction to North-South Interstate Highways 95, 85, and 77. The following four U.S. 58 interchanges serve the City of Franklin: Pretlow Street, South Street, Clay Street/Camp Pkwy, and Armory Drive.

U.S. 258 links Franklin in a southerly direction with the State of North Carolina and in a northerly direction with Isle of Wight County and the Virginia Peninsula.

The roadway system in Franklin consists of almost 50 miles of publicly maintained roads. It is made up of a network of streets divided into four functional classifications for purposes of urban maintenance funds. From large to small, they are as follows:

1. Principal arterial - These roads are the most significant roads in the City and serve the major centers of activity, constitute the highest volume traffic corridors, serve the longest trips, and carry the major portion of through traffic in the City.
2. Minor arterial - These roads interconnect and supplement the principal arterial roads by providing continuity between principal arterials and collector roads. They have a greater emphasis on land access and a lower volume of traffic than principal arterials.
3. Urban collector - These roads provide land access and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. They collect local traffic and distribute it to the arterial system.
4. Local access - These roads provide direct access to adjacent land and provide access to urban collectors and the arterial system. Service to through traffic is discouraged.

The only principal arterial in the City is Business 58, which extends from the eastern city limits to the western city limits through the downtown area on Second Avenue, Mechanic Street, Fourth Avenue, and Clay Street. It has a length of 3.5 miles.

Minor arterials in the City include (1) Armory Drive, (2) College Drive, (3) High Street from the northern city limits to South Street, (4) Hunterdale Road, (5) Main Street from Second Avenue to South Street, (6) Pretlow Street, (7) South Street and (8) Second Avenue from Mechanic Street to Armory Drive. The combined length of all minor arterials in the City is approximately 12.5 miles.

Table 5-1 shows the 15 streets designated as urban collectors in the City with a total length of over 6.6 miles. The remaining streets in Franklin are local access streets, encompassing a total length of 40 miles.

**Table 5-1: City of Franklin Urban Collectors**

<b>Urban Collector Road Name</b>	<b>Start Point</b>	<b>End Point</b>
Bank St	Morton St	South St
Country Club Rd	Hunterdale Rd	City Line
Crescent Dr	Fairview Dr	North Dr
Fairview Dr	Hunterdale Rd	N High St
Gardner St	Armory Dr	Clay St
S High St	Birch St	South St
Homestead Rd	Clay St	N High St
Maplewood Ave	Thomas St	Washington St
Morton St	Bank St	Pretlow St
North Dr	Hunterdale Rd	Crescent Dr
Oak St	Morton St	South St
River Rd	N High St	N/A
Roosevelt St	Maplewood Ave	South St
Sedley Rd	Vaughans Ln	City Line
Southampton Rd	Clay St	Cypress Ave

Source: VGIN, VDOT 2014

The Virginia Department of Transportation regularly conducts traffic counts using sensors along streets and highways in order to determine daily traffic volumes on specific road segments. The resulting two-day averages provide an illustration of demand upon particular stretches of road. Table 5-2 below provides a listing of the highest 2010 Daily Volumes for streets within the City, along with the length of the segment studied. Included are those with 9,000 or more vehicles per day.

<b>Table 5-2: 2010 Highest Daily Traffic Volumes, City of Franklin</b>				
<b>Route</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Length (mi.)</b>	<b>Volume (Vehicles)</b>
Armory Drive	Bailey Drive	College Drive	0.44	15,000
Armory Drive	Western City Limits	Bailey Drive	0.70	13,000
College Drive	Stewart Drive	Sycamore Road	0.62	9,700
Hunterdale Road	Clay Street	Fairview Drive	0.19	9,700
College Drive	Sycamore Road	Clay Street	0.12	9,600
South Street	College Drive	Bank Street	0.25	9,300

Source: 2010 VDOT Daily Traffic Volume Counts.

Franklin has adopted an ordinance forbidding the through passage of trucks in excess of 10,000 pounds gross weight on any city street. This applies in all cases except those trucks receiving or making deliveries in the City, undergoing repair, and those visiting fuel stations on Armory Drive or Hunterdale Road and exiting via those routes. The new road resulting from the Route 258 Relocation Project opened on June 10, 2003 and bypasses the City to the east, allowing trucks easy access from U.S. 58 to the International Paper plant without passing through the City.

Since 1998, the City has reduced the number of one-way streets from nine to two, both of which are local access streets. Currently, only portions of Third Avenue and Middle Street remain one-way.

Although there are presently no bicycle facilities within the City of Franklin, other than share the road signs located at Armory Dr. from College Dr. to City Limits; Hunterdale Road from Fairview Drive to City Limits; & North High Street from Fairview Drive to City Limits, pedestrian needs are served by sidewalks along the majority of the City's thoroughfares. Especially in light of the complete lack of bicycle facilities, it is crucial to address the needs of both pedestrians and bicyclists in an analysis of Franklin's future transportation goals.

### **C. Access Management**

Effective access management preserves the safety and efficiency of travel as well as helps to preserve community character, advance economic development goals and protect the substantial public investment in roads and highways. As state and local governments strive to cope with traffic problems, limited rights-of-way, rising construction costs and revenue shortfalls, more and more jurisdictions are recognizing the benefits of access management.

Poorly coordinated access systems force more trips onto the arterial roadways, traffic conflicts multiply and congestion increases. As the level of service declines, additional lanes, controlled medians and other expensive retrofitting measures are needed to maintain the capacity of the corridor for regional traffic. Businesses also suffer as accessibility deteriorates. Heavy traffic, difficult left turns and poor sight distances at corners deter customers. Poor access management techniques have the potential to transform a corridor into an unattractive and confusing jumble of signs, driveways, utility lines and asphalt.

As a result of this and increased growth pressures the City of Franklin strives to promote efficient access management techniques wherever possible, especially on major thoroughfares including: Armory Drive, South Street, North High Street, Hunterdale Road and Clay Street.

## Recommendations

- Joint access among parcels shall be implemented whenever feasible.
- As properties redevelop entrance placement shall be examined and closed when necessary.
- Access to property shall be coordinated with adjacent properties and the entire corridor affected shall be considered.

## **Other Transportation Systems**

### **(1) I-RIDE**

I-RIDE is operated by the Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSSEVA) and provides fixed route and demand responsive transportation for Franklin, Southampton County, & Isle Wight County residents.

### **(2) Rail Service**

There are two railway companies providing freight service, but not passenger service, to and from the City. The Norfolk Southern Railway has a rail line running through the City along a generally northwest-southeast axis with an infrequently staffed office located off Mechanic Street. The CSX Railroad has a line running along a generally northeast-southwest axis through the City. Its predecessor company abandoned the passenger terminal/office located on Main Street at the railway crossing.

### **(3) Franklin Municipal Airport**

The Franklin Municipal Airport owned by the City is located approximately one mile east of the city limits on U.S. 58/258 Business in Isle of Wight County. It is a General Aviation Community Airport according to the Virginia Air Transportation System Plan, with a service area defined by a circle with a radius of 20 miles. The airport has one paved runway as follows: Runway 9-27 is asphalt with a width of 100 feet and a length of 4,977 feet, and is equipped with Medium Intensity Runway Lights (MIRL) lighting.



Runway 4-22 was closed in December of 2001. Franklin Municipal Airport is one of only four General Aviation Airports in Virginia with more than one runway, and Federal Aviation Administration policy is to fund only one runway at an airport of this type. Due to these funding limitations, Runway 14-32 closed in July 2005, with a portion of it converted into a taxiway at that time. Grant funding is expected to allow increasing the length of Runway 9-27 from 4,977 to 5,000 feet.

The airport has two maintenance facilities, one corporate hangar, two eight plane T-hangars, one six plane T-hangar, and a new state of the art terminal building erected in 1999. In addition, efforts are currently underway to lease airport land for the construction of a new private maintenance hangar. The airport is used by corporate and general aviation aircraft. Marketing efforts to north-south traffic have significantly increased use of the Franklin Municipal Airport, increasing fuel sales and creating business for local restaurants and motels.

### **(3) Waterways**

The Blackwater River Landing created by the City of Franklin in cooperation with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries provides the only public access to the river in the City of Franklin. The boat landing consists of two slot ramps, and provides 35 paved parking spaces with an additional 35 spaces on an overflow grass parking area. The boat landing now makes the City of Franklin accessible to small water craft and could provide passage to the Albemarle Sound.

The boat landing serves as ideal location for fishing tournaments, educational opportunities, and is an enormous asset to the Downtown Franklin area.

### **(5) Emergency Evacuation**

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has established emergency evacuation routes in the event of a natural disaster for the Hampton Roads area. In the event that an evacuation is necessary, residents of the City of Franklin are encouraged to use Highway 58 and head in a westerly direction. Additionally, in an effort to leave the area, residents of portions of Isle of Wight and the City of Suffolk will also utilize Highway 58. Traffic control will be monitored by the Virginia State Police and employees of VDOT.

### **(5) Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

The City of Franklin adopted the City of Franklin Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2009. The planning process included forming an advisory committee, assessing the existing sidewalks and roadways, reviewing local and regional plans and policies, soliciting public input, and developing policies, programs, and recommendations to implement bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link destinations in the city. As part of this process, the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) reviewed

and updated the sidewalk inventory for the City of Franklin in VDOT's Statewide Planning System database.

Prior to adopting the 2009 City of Franklin Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2003 the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission assisted the City in the Franklin Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. This plan provides a basis for a possible future open space corridor system that could include hiking and biking trails, natural areas, and shoreline access. The plan also addresses the need to develop multi-use trails to provide access to recreation facilities, cultural and natural areas, and the Blackwater River.

### **Traffic Crash Data and Trends**

Table 5-3 shows crash data obtained from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This table provides a statistical overview of traffic crashes occurring in the Tidewater Region including the City of Franklin, Isle of Wight County and Southampton County.

**Table 5-3: Tidewater Region Crash Data**

Tidewater Region Crash Data									
	Year	Total			Alcohol-Related			Licensed Drivers	*Death Rate Per Drivers
		Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries		
	2011	91	0	56	5	0	4	5386	0.00
<b>F r a n k l i n</b>	2010	81	0	51	2	0	1	5345	0.00
	2009	53	0	14	2	0	1	5386	0.00
	2008	50	0	32	4	0	3	5418	0.00
	2007	82	1	36	8	1	5	5474	0.18
	2006	97	0	49	10	0	1	5587	0.00
	2005	98	0	64	6	0	3	5567	0.00
	2004	47	0	14	2	0	2	5421	0.00
	2003	75	0	37	7	0	3	5367	0.00
	2002	74	0	31	3	0	3	5295	0.00
	2001	110	1	51	7	0	3	5248	0.19
	2000	107	2	59	8	2	5	5289	0.38
	1999	117	0	74	5	0	8	5417	0.00
	1998	120	0	85	8	0	6	5483	0.00
	1997	136	0	65	8	0	8	5693	0.00
	1996	76	0	43	7	0	2	5651	0.00
	1995	81	0	48	6	0	2	5317	0.00
	1994	106	0	71	7	0	3	5287	0.00
<b>I s i e o f W i g h t</b>	Year	Total			Alcohol-Related			Licensed Drivers	*Death Rate Per Drivers
		Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries		
	2011	402	3	249	41	2	36	27182	0.11
	2010	349	6	221	39	3	33	26553	0.23
	2009	439	6	315	49	3	47	26780	0.22
	2008	538	9	330	71	3	60	26605	0.34
	2007	528	11	306	53	2	32	26196	0.42
	2006	595	10	311	60	5	43	25625	0.39
	2005	586	6	395	62	1	53	24769	0.24
	2004	592	7	341	60	3	42	24004	0.29
	2003	567	7	354	64	6	52	23462	0.30
	2002	568	5	370	76	1	65	22959	0.22
	2001	516	7	381	69	3	64	22218	0.32
	2000	517	6	382	60	1	59	21935	0.27
	1999	488	9	421	73	3	83	21725	0.41
	1998	526	12	372	51	3	31	21234	0.57
	1997	480	7	422	62	3	75	21459	0.33
	1996	519	11	451	56	4	60	21097	0.52
	1995	492	4	419	54	2	41	20656	0.19
	1994	457	8	416	69	3	65	20245	0.40
<b>S o u t h a m p t o n</b>	Year	Total			Alcohol-Related			Licensed Drivers	*Death Rate Per Drivers
		Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries	Crashes	Fatalities	Injuries		
	2011	210	2	153	26	1	23	12980	0.15
	2010	220	9	155	17	4	9	12951	0.69
	2009	297	7	166	36	2	28	12876	0.54
	2008	312	4	205	22	0	22	12852	0.31
	2007	274	10	209	24	2	25	12895	0.78
	2006	321	8	243	28	2	34	12669	0.63
	2005	296	10	239	34	5	40	12321	0.81
	2004	410	8	263	35	4	30	12075	0.66
	2003	376	4	262	41	2	24	11980	0.33
	2002	277	3	219	32	1	32	11835	0.25
	2001	314	7	260	33	3	25	11765	0.59
	2000	320	8	284	43	4	38	11861	0.67
	1999	333	8	266	47	4	45	11969	0.67
	1998	327	7	255	47	3	33	12087	0.58
	1997	303	9	271	37	1	43	12144	0.74
	1996	350	13	320	40	3	36	12128	1.07
	1995	370	13	338	54	2	59	12295	1.06
	1994	406	14	347	60	6	52	12289	1.14

Sources: NHTSA, Virginia Traffic Crash Facts

\* Death rate per 1,000 Virginia licensed drivers in each locality

## **D. Planned and Recommended Improvements to the Transportation System**

Most of the recommended improvements to the transportation system in the City consist of improvements to the roadway system. These and others are described below.

### **(1) Franklin Municipal Airport**

#### Short, Medium, and Long Range Recommendations

1. Continue construction of T-Hangars as needed.
2. Build taxiway to Runway 9.
3. Install a Precision Approach Path Indicator on Runway 9.
4. Provide parallel taxiway to Runway 27.
5. Rehabilitate runway lights and asphalt on Runway 27.
6. Construct a new maintenance hangar.

### **(2) Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Recommendations**

The City of Franklin Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2009) identified policies, programs, and recommendations for specific facilities. The recommendations are included here.

#### Short Term Projects (0 to 5 years):

1. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Initial Segments)
2. Armory Drive Restriping
3. Downtown Walking Route
4. General Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements (e.g. racks, maps)

#### Medium Term Projects (5 to 10 years)

1. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Additional Segments)
2. Shared-Use Paths
3. Bicycle Access to US 58 Bypass
4. Promote Construction of Northern Walking and Bicycling Activity Area

Long Term Projects (10 to 20 years)

1. Additional Shared-Use Paths
2. Blackwater River Greenway Trail System (Additional Segments)
3. Additional Network Links

### **(3) Roadways**

VDOT has also developed a Franklin 2020 Transportation Plan which is made part of this Plan by reference, which includes recommended improvements to address the transportation and travel needs of the community through the year 2020 and is made part of this Plan by reference. The Plan is part of the agency's Small Urban Areas Transportation Plans project, which is an effort to update plans for towns and cities with less than 50,000 people. The study was based on traffic counts, accident reports, roadway geometric conditions, and a review of the City's tourism and goods movement issues. The Plan was presented to City Council on April 22, 2002 and approved on June 24, 2002. VDOT has recently advised the City it will begin the process of updating the 2020 Plan in 2014.

### **(4) Rural Long Range Transportation Plan**

The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan provides a blueprint for the development and maintenance of a rural multi-modal transportation system in the City of Franklin and Southampton County that supports existing and projected travel demands to the year 2035 and complements previously established metropolitan area plans throughout the State. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the region's rural transportation system and recommend a set of transportation improvements that could best satisfy existing and future travel needs. The study identified needs for all modes of transportation, and interaction between modes where a reduction in vehicle trips might be possible. Table 5-4 of the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) which is hereby made part of this plan shows the location of various roadway system deficiencies and recommendations for the City of Franklin. These deficiencies and recommendations are outlined in the RLRTP. It should be noted that the Hunterdale Road project from Clay Street to the Norfolk & Southern Railroad was completed in November 2014. The 2 million dollar project improvements included pavement widening of 10q the travel lanes were widened to 11q with the shoulders extended 4q for each travel lane to allow for limited bike and pedestrian access. In addition, the turning lane radius on Hunterdale to Fairview was softened for larger vehicles and signal upgrades were made to include CT video detection at Hunterdale and Fairview.

**Table 5-4: Roadway Deficiencies**

Operation Deficiency			
Intersection Deficiency	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
	US 258 (2nd Ave.)/US 258 (Main St.)	VA 3907 (Hunterdale Rd.)/VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.)	Bailey Dr./Stewart Dr.
	2nd Ave./VA 3905 (High St.)	VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.)/VA 3905 (High St.)	
	Safety Deficiency		
	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
	US 58 (Mechanic St. N.)/4th Ave.	2nd Ave./VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)	US 58 (Mechanic St. N.)/4th Ave.
	US 58 (Clay St.)/4th Ave.	VA 641 (Hunterdale Rd.)/VA 687	2nd Ave./US 58 (Mechanic St.)
	US 58 (Clay St.)/VA 3907 (College Dr.)	Elm St./US 258 (Main St.)	VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)/VA 3907 (College Dr.)
	US 258 (South St.)/VA 3907 (College Dr.)	VA 3905 (High St.) over CSX railroad	VA 3907 (College Dr.) from US 258 (South St.) to VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)
Segment Deficiency	2nd Ave./US 58 (Mechanic St.)	US 258 (South St.) from Amber Dr. to VA 3905 (High St.)	
	VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)/VA 3907 (College Dr.)	2nd Ave. from VA 3905 (High St.) to US 58 (Mechanic St.)	
	Bowers Rd. over Norfolk Southern railroad	US 58 (Mechanic St. N.)/4th Ave.	
	VA 3907 (College Dr.) from US 258 (South St.) to VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)	US 58 (Clay St.)/4th Ave	
	Beaman St. over Norfolk Southern railroad		
	Both Operation and Safety Deficiencies		
	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
	US 258 (South St.)/VA 3903 (Pretlow St.)	VA 649 (Country Club Rd.)/VA 641 (Hunterdale Rd.)	VA 649 (Country Club Rd.)/VA 641 (Hunterdale Rd.)
		US 258 (South St.)/VA 3903 (Pretlow St.)	
Operation Deficiency			
Segment Deficiency	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
	VA 3907 (College Dr.) from VA 3904 (Armory Dr.) to Stewart Dr.	VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.) from VA 3907 (Hunterdale Rd.) to VA 3905 (High St.)	VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from SCL of Franklin to US 58 Bypass E. Bound off Ramp
	VA 3905 (High St.) from US 258 (South St.) to Beaman St.	VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from Progress Parkway to VA 3915 (Morton St.)	VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from US 58 Bypass E. off Ramp to Progress Pkwy.
		VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from VA 3915 (Morton St.) to 0.17 Mi. N. Morton St.	VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from Laurel St. to US 258 (South St.)
		Council Dr. from US 58 BUS (Clay St.) to VA 671 (Armory Dr.)	VA 3905 (High St.) from Birch St. to US 258 (South St.)
			2nd Ave. from Mechanic St. to Franklin City Line
			Mechanic St. from 4th Ave. to 2nd Ave.
			US 258 (South St.) from SCL of Franklin to Amber St.
	Both Operation and Safety Deficiencies		
Segment Deficiency	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
	VA 671 (Armory Dr.) from Franklin City Limits/US 58 to VA 3907 (College)	VA 3904 (Armory Dr.) from VA 3907 (College Dr.) to VA 3905 (High St.)	VA 3905 (High St.) from VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.) to N. City Limits of Franklin
	VA 3905 (High St.) from Beaman St. to VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.)	VA 3905 (High St.) from Beaman St. to VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.)	
		VA 3905 (High St.) from VA 3912 (Fairview Dr.) to N. City Limits of Franklin	
		VA 687 from Franklin Corporate Limits to VA 641 (Hunterdale Rd.)	
		VA 3907 (Hunterdale Rd.) from Clay St. to Northern City Limits of Franklin	
		VA 3903 (Pretlow St.) from 0.17 Mi. N. Morton St. to Laurel St.	
		Andrew Ave. Extension from Chaucer Ct. to VA 3905 (High St.)	
		Washington St. Extension from Railroad Crossing to VA 3904 (Armory Dr.)	

## **CHAPTER 6 UTILITIES**

### **GOAL: TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN ADEQUATE AND RELIABLE PUBLIC UTILITY SYSTEMS FOR CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES IN THE CITY.**

#### **A. In General**

The City of Franklin provides citizens and businesses in the City with a water supply and distribution system, a sewage collection and treatment system, a stormwater drainage system, a solid waste management system, and an electrical utility system. In addition to providing such services to residents and businesses, the City also supplies water, sewage collection and treatment, and electrical service to portions of adjacent localities. The location of existing water storage tanks, the sewage treatment plant, and the electric plant is shown on Map 6-1.

#### **B. Water System**

Ground water from the Upper and Middle Potomac Aquifers is currently the sole source of the City's water supply, although the City, in conjunction with neighboring localities and International Paper (formerly Union Camp Corporation), participated in studies to identify and determine the costs of developing other sources of water for future needs. These sources were determined to be cost-prohibitive and therefore not feasible.

The City currently draws from three wells . two wells at the Hunterdale site and the Pretlow well. These wells pump water into three elevated tanks with a total capacity of 1.3 million gallons (Hunterdale tank - 500,000 gallons and Pretlow tank - 500,000 gallons). Distribution lines are interconnected so that water may be supplied from one or both of the wells.

The second well at the Hunterdale site is Franklin's newest well and pump. The city completed construction of the well in June 2003 and the pump in 2004 as part of its Consent Order with the Virginia Department of Health regarding elevated fluoride levels in the water supply. This well, named Hunterdale #7, is able to provide 1,500 gallons per minute (GPM). Since the addition of Hunterdale #7, the College Drive and Downtown wells have been shut down due to fluoride levels above Maximum Contaminant Level. The College Drive well serves as an emergency backup.

Another area of potential concern with respect to the supply of ground water involves the International Paper (IP) plant across the Blackwater River in Isle of Wight County. Prior to its closing in the spring of 2010, the IP plant withdrew over 30 million gallons each day from the Lower and Middle Potomac Aquifers, resulting in a large depression of ground water in the vicinity, termed a cone of depression. Since the plant's closing, aquifers have risen, the higher water levels result in more GPM being pumped, and valve adjustments bring the pumped levels back to design GPM. The repurposed plant

uses less water than the previous operation. IP is currently in negotiation with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for their withdrawal permit. It is to be assumed that with the production of the reopened facility being less than before that the withdrawal amount would be reduced accordingly.

All developed areas of the City are served by the water distribution system. In addition, the City provides water to the Cypress Manor subdivision and portions of the Route 671 corridor in Southampton County, and to portions of Isle of Wight County immediately east of the City. The City has continued its contract with Isle of Wight County for the bulk sale of water to the County and has sold the water distribution system in Isle of Wight County to the County.

The City water system is permitted for usage of 2.8 million gallons per day by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, with 1 million gallons of this reserved for the Franklin/Southampton County shared revenue area. The current ground water withdrawal permit from the DEQ was issued in September 2001, and present average usage stands at 1 million gallons daily. The City is currently in the process of permit renewal with DEQ. With the reduced production of the IP mill, it is highly likely that the City's withdrawal amounts will be reduced significantly. Included as part of the most recent ground water withdrawal permit application was a 2001 study regarding water and sewer availability.

The City adopted a Water Conservation ordinance in October of 1997 which should assist in conservation of water during periods of water shortage and a Water Conservation Fixtures and Installations ordinance which should eliminate excessive water usage from new or replacement plumbing fixtures. In addition to efforts to ensure adequate quantity, the City is considering a wellhead protection overlay to its zoning districts to provide safeguards for the quality of its water. It is important to note that no modifications have been made to the ordinance since its adoption in 1997. It is suggested that the City update this Water Conservation ordinance in light of the closing and reopening of the IP plant.

### **C. Sanitary Sewer System**

The City has an ordinance mandating connection of indoor plumbing to the City's sanitary sewer system for any house, building or property used for human occupancy, employment, recreation or other purposes, situated within the city and abutting on any street, alley or right-of-way in which there is now located or may in the future be located a public sanitary sewer. There is an exception for buildings located more than 200 feet from a public sewer line or constructed at an elevation that does not permit gravity flow to such a line. Virtually all properties in the City are connected to the public sewer system except for five properties that have their own septic systems due to the distance from the City's system. Collection and treatment of sewage is also provided for the Edgehill subdivision and parts of the Route 671 corridor in Southampton County, and for parts of Isle of Wight County immediately east of the City.

The City operates a sewage treatment plant with the capacity to treat 2 million gallons of sewage per day. Isle of Wight County continues to be under contract with the City for the treatment of an average of no more than 333,333 gallons of sewage per day at the City's sewage treatment plant. Currently, 900,000 gallons per day are treated at the plant. According to federal and state guidelines, plant expansion should commence when the average volume of treatment reaches 85% of treatment capacity. This figure for Franklin's treatment facility is 1.65 million gallons per day. Based on the above guidelines, when the average daily flow increases by 550,000 gallons per day, plans for plant expansion should commence. The City and Southampton County are in the process of conducting a shared water and wastewater feasibility study with a planning grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development. The study seeks to determine the feasibility of the City and County sharing or merging, in whole or in part, their water and wastewater systems.

From a historic perspective, the City satisfied the requirements of a 1995 Consent Order from the Department of Environmental Quality to reduce inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system. Since that time, there have not been any other consent orders directed towards the City in regards to the sanitary sewer requirements.

#### **D. Stormwater Drainage System**

The City of Franklin consists of 20 major drainage basins totaling 3,875 acres. Stormwater drainage facilities in the City have been constructed by the City, by City contractors, and by private developers. The City maintains its retention ponds, open and piped ditches, and other drainage facilities. The Virginia Department of Transportation maintains drainage facilities on the U.S. 58 Bypass and on other highways in surrounding localities.

In 1988, Baldwin & Gregg, an engineering firm under contract with the City, conducted a master drainage study of Franklin and made recommendations for improvements to the system based on the assumption that all land in the City would be developed to the fullest extent allowed by the zoning classifications then existing. In April 1989 as a result of this study, City Council adopted a Stormwater Management Ordinance that impacts most new development. In addition, a program of public drainage facility improvements was adopted which has continued to the present.

In June 2011, a new storm sewer study was prepared for the City of Franklin by PRISM Contractors & Engineers. For the study, a hydraulic model of the City's entire stormwater infrastructure was created. A hydraulic model maps and provides detail information of every segment within the stormwater system as well as sub-basin information on soil, impervious surface, and land use. With this information, the model assesses the capacity of each segment within the sewer network. One-year, 2-year, and 10-year storms were applied to each sub-basin to identify flooding areas or pipes with insufficient capacity. The study concludes with recommendations and cost estimates based on the assessment's results.

Revisions to the Virginia Stormwater Management Regulations (SWM) became effective on July 1, 2014. The revised regulations require most Virginian localities to operate their own local stormwater management program. In response to the new regulations, the City of Franklin entered into a shared services agreement with Southampton County. The agreement allows the City of Franklin and Southampton County to comply with the new regulations in a cost-effective manner by sharing the costs and personnel requirements of maintaining a local stormwater management program administered by Franklin Southampton Community Development Department the newly created shared services department that became effective July 1, 2013.

## **E. Solid Waste Management System**

Solid waste collection in the City is provided through a combination of public and private sources. The City collects most residential and small business refuse and garbage, and private waste management companies collect solid waste from apartment complexes, medium to large businesses, and large non-commercial entities. The City also collects yard waste and bulk waste from single-family residences.

All solid waste collected by the City is hauled to a solid waste transfer station operated by the Southeastern Public Service Authority of Virginia (SPSA) on Virginia State Route 671 in Southampton County, from which it is transferred via contract trucks to a waste management landfill in Waverley (Sussex County). SPSA has an agreement to haul the City's refuse there until 2018.

Franklin had participated in automated curbside recycling service through SPSA. However, in 2010, SPSA ended curbside recycling. The City's current recycling program is contracted out through AVES, Inc., and only services residential customers.

## **F. Electric Utility System**

As one of the sixteen municipality owned electric systems in the Commonwealth, Franklin Power and Light purchases bulk power from Dominion Virginia Power through the Virginia Municipal Electric Association (VMEA) and resells it to residential and business customers in the City and in portions of Suffolk and the counties of Southampton and Isle of Wight. The City serves approximately 5,500 customers within a 20 square mile area. The City system has 170 miles of distribution lines (150 miles above ground and 20 miles below ground) and three substations.

## **G. Planned and Recommended Improvements to Public Utility Systems**

### **General**

- Pursue continuous purchases or lease of replacement equipment as needed for Public Works Department and Electric Department.

- Lease or purchase a Geographic Information System (computer based mapping system) for use by the Public Works Department and other City departments as needed.
- Continue to charge a user fee for waste collection and make waste collection an enterprise fund.
- Explore the possibility of %stormwater fees+ to help offset the cost of upcoming regulations.
- Enter into discussions with the staff of adjacent localities to determine their intentions with respect to future land use in the areas surrounding the City and their need for City utilities. Specifically, discuss with Isle of Wight County the opportunity to share its Reverse Osmosis Plant.
- Adopt policies and enter into agreements involving utility services with other localities that will facilitate development in areas outside the City that will benefit the City and enhance the appearance and function of outlying areas in accordance with the City's vision for future land use.
- Develop an ordinance to direct the construction of telecommunications towers in Franklin.

## **Water System**

- Replace water mains on Pretlow Street, North High Street, Harris/Thomas Street, Sunset/Barrister Lane, Pace Court, and Hunterdale Road in order to increase capacity and eliminate dead-end lines. These upgrades are based on a water system improvement study conducted by URS Consultants in 1997 and should be completed within the next five years.
- In the long term, identify additional sources of water for future use and determine the feasibility of obtaining such water. This project should be approached, if possible, on a regional basis.
- Develop a wellhead protection overlay to the City's zoning ordinance in order to provide protection for the quality of Franklin's ground water. Continue to utilize the Virginia Department of Health's source water assessment whenever there is development potential within the vicinity of City well facilities.
- Consider reverse osmosis facility in the future.

## **Sanitary Sewer System**

In the short term:

- Upgrade pump stations throughout the City based on level of disrepair, as well as those that have not been upgraded recently.
- In order to address the inflow and infiltration problems of the sewer collection system, continue to annually perform 30-40 sewer manhole rehabilitations, sewer point repairs, sewer line cleaning, and video inspections as well as flow and smoke testing to identify potential areas for future rehabilitation.

In the long term:

- As a requirement of the City's current permit, commence expansion of the sewage treatment plant when the average daily volume of treatment reaches 85% capacity, or 1.65 million gallons per day.
- Continue to study shared services system with Southampton County for water and wastewater systems and begin implementation based on the outcome of the study.

## **Stormwater Drainage System**

- Improve the stormwater drainage system in the following areas of the City: Cobbtown, Hunterdale Road, Railroad Avenue, Stonewall Street, Morton Street, and Woodland Drive. In addition, stormwater upgrades will be conducted in any other portions of the City targeted for Community Development Block Grant revitalization.
- Exploration of the use of regional stormwater management facilities is a priority in planning for Franklin's future needs. The City's Office of Community Development as well as its Public Works Department will continue to encourage all development to be mindful of existing users and emphasizes that runoff should be reduced from pre-development levels as to have no direct effect on existing businesses or residents.
- The City should strongly pursue Federal and State assistance to lessen the impacts of flooding throughout the City, especially on the historically hardest-hit areas of the City that include downtown.

## **Solid Waste Management Stream**

- Continue to pursue long-term, fair and equitable solutions to the current solid waste program by exploring landfill alternatives with other localities in the region.

## **Electric Utility System**

The following are projects to be completed within the next five years.

- Install a new electric substation near the City generation facility in Pretlow Park to allow taking delivery at transmission voltage. This will reduce stress on our three existing delivery points, provide more reliable service to existing customers and prepare our system for future load growth and slightly reduce the City's wholesale power costs as well.
- Reconduct or 20 miles of overhead circuits to upgrade capacity
- Continue replacing and upgrading aging sections of the system
- Relocate the Electric Department to a new facility to allow expansion of the department as well as provide more space to Public Works.
- Continue to work through the VMEA to obtain the lowest cost electricity for the City and its customers

## **CHAPTER 7** **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**GOAL: TO PROMOTE THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES WHICH EFFECTIVELY SERVE THE NEEDS OF FRANKLIN RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE FOR THE GENERAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY.**

### **A. In General**

The City of Franklin provides facilities for its residents in the areas of local government, law enforcement, public safety, education, parks and recreation, and health. Map 7-1 provides an overview of these community facilities.

### **B. Local Government**

The City Hall Building at 207 West Second Avenue opened in early 2003. The structure, built as a replacement for the predecessor destroyed in the floodwaters of Hurricane Floyd, contains the offices of the City Manager, Commissioner of the Revenue, the City Attorney, the Franklin Southampton Community Development Department (including Planning, Inspections, Zoning, and Building Codes), the Finance Department, the City Treasurer, and School Administration.



## C. Law Enforcement

The building at 1018-1020 Pretlow Street was constructed in 2002 and houses both the Franklin Police Department and the Franklin Combined Courts (the General District Court and the District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court). The Police Department moved to its current location from the Public Safety Building it shared with the Fire and Rescue



Department. The Franklin Police Department employs 28 sworn law enforcement officers along with 10 dispatchers and 5 civilian employees.

The Franklin Police Department Patrol Division provides 24 hour protection for the City of Franklin. The Patrol Division consists of four squads. Each squad has a Sergeant, a Corporal, and two Patrol Officers. The Patrol Division is the first to handle most calls for service that have occurred or are in progress within the City of Franklin. The city is divided into two zones that the officers are assigned to with relative consistency.

The Franklin Police Department Special Operations Unit is a multi-faceted unit responsible for the continuing education of the citizens of the City of Franklin as it relates to crime prevention and special programs. The main goal, through this continued education, is camaraderie between police personnel and the citizens of the City, which will foster trust and continued communication. This allows the citizens to live and work more comfortably, and enables police to work, more informed of the needs, for those whom we serve. The Special Operations Unit is responsible for the following areas of the Franklin Police Department and falls under the Patrol Lieutenant's supervision:

- Neighborhood Watch program
- Triad Program
- Law Enforcement Explorer Program
- Crime prevention efforts to include crime prevention surveys for home and business
- Recruitment and retention program

- National Night Out program
- Project Lifesaver
- Franklin Police %Cops For Kids+Christmas program
- Color Guard

The Western Tidewater Regional Jail in Suffolk serves the City's correctional facility needs.

#### **D. Fire and Rescue**

The mission of the Franklin Fire and Rescue Department is to save lives, protect property, and educate the public. We strive to meet these challenges by providing quality, cost-efficient services in the following areas:

- EMS care and transportation
- Quick and efficient response to fire, rescue, and emergency incidents
- Public education in first aid and fire prevention
- Business and industry support through fire prevention and inspection
- Quick system access in conjunction with Enhanced 911

Franklin's main station is located in the Emergency Services Building at 100 South Main Street, the site of the Public Safety Building destroyed by Hurricane Floyd. The Department's Hunterdale Station at 201 Delaware Road and the auxiliary station located on Pretlow Street serve those areas of the City. The Fire and Rescue Department employs 12 career staff, 3 administrative staff, and approximately 30 active volunteers and junior Fire Cadets. The Department makes use of three pumper/engines, one ladder truck, one heavy rescue truck, one technical rescue/support trailer, a rescue boat, and four Medic/EMS units in responding to approximately 2,500 calls each year within the City and in adjacent portions of Southampton and Isle of Wight Counties.



## E. Education

The City of Franklin operates three public schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12 with a total student enrollment of 1,271 for the school year 2011-2012. A significant reorganization of the school system took effect with the opening of the 2003-2004 school year. Joseph P. King Elementary School became Joseph P. King Middle School, and S. P. Morton Middle School became S. P. Morton Elementary School. In addition, the grade levels were redistributed among the City's three schools. The elementary level previously consisted of grades pre-kindergarten through third, with middle school encompassing grades 4-7, and high school grades 8-12. Restructuring placed grades pre-kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the elementary level, grades 6-8 at the middle school level, and grades 9-12 in high school.

- S. P. Morton Elementary School, located on Morton Street, has a 2013-2014 enrollment of 718 students.
- Joseph P. King, Jr. Middle School on West Third Avenue has a 2013-2014 enrollment of 254 students.
- Franklin High School is located on Crescent Drive and has a 2013-2014 enrollment of 301 students.



Paul D. Camp Community College, a member of the Virginia Community College System, has its main campus located within the City of Franklin. Paul D. Camp also has satellite campuses in the Town of Smithfield as well as the City of Suffolk. The Franklin Campus had a 2013 fall enrollment of over 2,600 full and part-time students. The College currently offers:

- Associate degrees, certificates, and career studies certificates in transfer and career/technical programs
- Credit and non-credit workforce services and training for businesses and industries
- Special interest classes for the community and summer classes for youth through the Regional Workforce Development Center.

The Regional Workforce Development Center is a facility which opened in 2002 to serve the community through workforce training and services. The Center offers a variety of training and educational options to meet the needs of new and existing employers, including:

- Business start-up and expansion training
- Community education courses
- Consulting, coaching, and facilitation services
- Customized training
- Online courses
- Open enrollment courses and seminars
- WorkKeys job profiling and job candidate assessment

Important to the overall economy of the City of Franklin, Paul D. Camp is the City's fourth largest employer within the City itself.

## **F. Libraries**

The Blackwater Regional Library, headquartered in Courtland, has branches throughout the region, including the Ruth Camp Campbell Memorial Library in Franklin. This library on North College Drive has more than 40,000 circulating volumes and 90 periodical and newspaper subscriptions, along with audio book and video loans. In addition, the library provides free Internet access for the public and a telephone reference service. The library conducts a number of programs for readers of all ages, especially for small children.

In addition, the Paul D. Camp Community College Library, with approximately 23,000 volumes and 200 periodical and newspaper subscriptions, is available to both students and residents of the City and surrounding areas. The library also provides access to numerous computer resources.

## **G. Health Care**

Southampton Memorial Hospital, a 221-bed facility established in 1963, is located on Fairview Drive in Franklin. The hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations and is licensed by the Virginia Department of Health. It contains a 24-hour emergency room and offers a full range of services, including cardiopulmonary; ear, nose, and throat (ENT); general surgery; gynecology; home health / hospice; intensive care units (ICU); emergency services; full service laboratory; imaging

services; nuclear medicine; obstetrics; physical rehabilitation; and long term care. There are 34 active staff members, 42 courtesy staff, and 20 consulting staff. In addition, the hospital contains a Virginia Department of Corrections Security Ward.



The Franklin City Health Department is located at 200 Fairview Drive and is part of the Western Tidewater Health District of the Virginia Department of Health. Services provided include maternal-child health, family planning, immunizations, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental food program. Home care and educational outreach are also important functions of the local health department.

## H. Parks and Recreation

The City of Franklin currently maintains a number of facilities for use by its residents. The number of activities possible ranges from basketball to picnicking to skateboarding. Table 7-1 below, taken from the [City of Franklin Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan](#) provides a listing and brief description for each of Franklin's facilities. In addition, Map 7-2 shows the location of these within the City.

Also, the City maintains the Hayden Sports Complex multipurpose field and the Paul D. Camp Softball Field. A private YMCA facility is located adjacent to Franklin High School.

<b>Table 7-1: Franklin Parks and Recreational Facilities</b>		
<b>Facility Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Activities/Features</b>
College Drive Park	2.07	Skating, Basketball, Playground, Tot Lot, Picnic Tables
Bruce Street Park	2.83	Basketball, Baseball, Shelter
Barrett's Landing	1.80	Fishing Pier, Picnic Tables, Shelter
Memorial Park	2.20	Picnic Tables
M.L. King, Jr. Comm. Ctr.	2.00	Basketball, Community Center
High Street Park	1.22	Passive Area
Armory Drive Rec. Park and Franklin Skate Park	9.00	Athletic Field, Tennis, Softball, Baseball, Football, Field House, Skate Park, Swimming
National Guard Armory	7.49	Basketball, Meeting Space

<b>Total</b>	<b>28.61</b>	
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Source: City of Franklin Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, March 2003.

## I. Public Utilities

The building at 1050 Pretlow Street was constructed in 1980 and houses both the Franklin Public Works Department and Franklin Power and Light. The Public Works Department, which currently employs 56 full-time employees and 5 part-time employees, moved to its current location from the downtown facility on the corner of Elm Street and Mechanic Street. Franklin Power and Light, which currently employs 16 full-time employees, relocated to this facility from the Old Light Plant on North Mechanic Street.

The Department of Public Works provides services to construct and maintain all municipal infrastructure facilities associated with providing the City with public water, sewer, streets, stormwater, public parks, maintenance of all public buildings, and providing vehicle fleet maintenance for all City vehicles, including City of Franklin Public Schools. This includes the operation and maintenance of the Franklin Municipal . John Beverly Airport located across the City boundary in Isle of Wight County.

Franklin Power and Light is the electricity provider in the City of Franklin and in portions of the City of Suffolk, Southampton County, and Isle of Wight County. Established in 1892, Franklin Power and Light provides reliable, low-cost energy and energy-related services for 5,500 customers in Franklin and the surrounding area. In addition, Franklin Power and Light contributes approximately \$1.8 million to the general fund annually.

## J. Planned Improvements to Community Facilities

### Recommendation

- Ensure the Planning Commission reviews the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) on an annual basis to promote and verify progress in implementing the recommendations of the CIP

### Fire and Rescue

- The City should evaluate the need for a new fire and rescue station in the southern portion of the City, contingent upon new development in that area.

### Education

- Due to declining enrollment, consider options for partnering with Southampton County to meet Franklin's future education needs.
- Support educational initiatives that enhance the development of a skilled workforce.

- Support the training initiatives of the Regional Workforce Development Center.

## **Libraries**

- Consider the expansion of library facilities within the City where feasible.

## **Parks and Recreation**

- Explore funding that would allow the City to carry out a Main Street Improvements Plan and a Downtown Master Plan to include drainage, parking, and landscaping improvements to the Farmers Market and areas in the downtown along the Blackwater River.
- Update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.
- Investigate potential parklands in the Hunterdale area of the City in order to locate a future park facility there.
- Consider upgrades to facilities and expand programming at the King Center and National Guard Armory.
- Consider the construction of a new multi-functional recreation facility and gymnasium on the King Center property
- Pursue locations for walking and biking trails as provided for in the recently adopted City of Franklin Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, including incorporating them into any adaptive reuse of the Hayden School building.
- Consider upgrades to the park on Bruce Street owned by the Franklin Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

## **Public Utilities**

- Consider the future needs for new facilities for both the Department of Public Works as well as Franklin Power and Light.
- Conduct a facility assessment of the adaptive reuse of the abandoned Franklin Residency owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation located on Pretlow Street.

## **Public Buildings**

- Library: The Library located on College Drive is in need of a new roof. There are several trees in near vicinity of the building that should be removed before the new roof is installed. The HVAC system is nearing 30 years and will experience total failure at some point in the near future.
- Public Works Operation Center: The main building and two covered areas for storage need new roofs. In the very near future the HVAC systems will need replacing. The asphalt parking areas are also in need of resurfacing.
- Emergency Services Building: This facility is in dire need of a new roof, internal repairs due to continued leaks, replacing carpets, and painting.
- Health Department: The back roof needs replacing. The building needs interior painting and base boards replaced. Parking lot needs rehab and overlay.
- Social Services Building: Roof needs replacing.

## **Chapter 8 LAND USE**

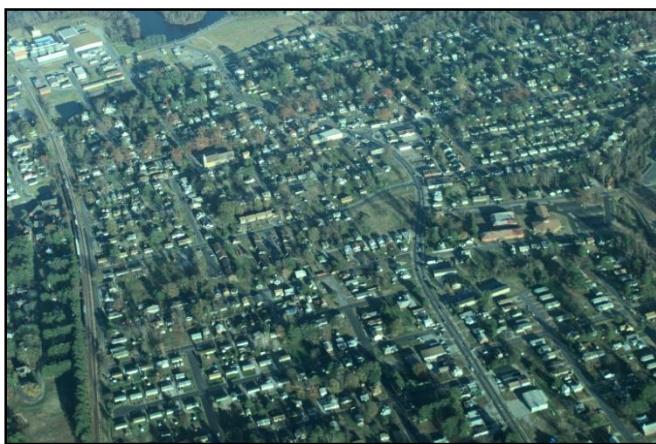
### **GOAL: ACHIEVE A BALANCED LAND USE PATTERN THAT GUIDES DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTAINS AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION OF USES.**

#### **A. In General.**

The proposed Land Use Plan addresses the generalized land use pattern recommended to accommodate future growth in the city. The land use plan recognizes traditional development patterns and generally expands on those trends. Major changes in general land use concepts are not anticipated.

The recommended Land Use Plan intends to preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods for the betterment of living conditions for the residents. New residential development is limited to scattered infill construction in existing residential neighborhoods and larger scale development in targeted areas. Currently, revitalization efforts in existing residential neighborhoods offer the greatest opportunity for improving the overall housing stock. The downtown center has the potential for mixed use facilities including residential use in underutilized spaces on the upper floors of commercial establishments. The growth in single person households and families without children provides a potential market to develop mixed use facilities that carry a residential housing component.

The City of Franklin is at a crossroads between its past and its future. The historic downtown area and the surrounding residential areas provide a link to the past, to a time period when American urban design created pedestrian friendly neighborhoods. The floodwaters of Hurricane Floyd in 1999 submerged the downtown beneath nearly twelve feet of water from the Blackwater River, but the



past fourteen years have witnessed rebuilding, revitalization and flood mitigation, once again making Franklin's downtown the center of activity it has been throughout the City's history. It is crucial for the City to look to its past in guiding its future.

A clear articulation of the development goals for the City is essential in guiding growth in the

coming years. Sound development principles including those of the urban design approach known as New Urbanism have application to Franklin's situation and should be considered when planning for new development or revitalization. The

movement, emphasis on pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods containing a mix of uses and housing types aims to create unified and sustainable communities.

## **B. Existing Land Use**

The City of Franklin has a broad range of existing land uses including the historic downtown central business district and surrounding neighborhoods, big box, strip commercial and industrial development along Armory Drive, single-family residential development in the northwest quadrant of the city, and agricultural and forestal areas interspersed throughout. Map 8-1 depicts the existing distribution of land uses within Franklin. It is important to note that approximately half of the land within Franklin is currently in agricultural, forested and open space uses that may be converted to more intense uses as population and land values increase.

## **C. Zoning**

The existing zoning in Franklin is depicted in Map 8-2. The majority of the commercial and industrial areas are in and around the historic downtown, along the Armory Drive corridor and in the southern section of the City that includes Pretlow Industrial Park. A recent rezoning of a 60 acre parcel located adjacent to Pretlow Industrial Park adjoining US Route 58 to South Street from residential to B-3 general commercial serves as a major step by the City to incentivize economic growth along the Route 58 corridor and in the adjacent revenue sharing area of Southampton County. Most of the remaining land area is zoned for various types of residential use. Small areas of land zoned for Neighborhood Business are interspersed within the residential areas. The zoning ordinance text amendments in the B-1 Neighborhood Business District recently adopted by City Council now allows for mixed-use facilities in those areas which also provides for a residential housing component. Amendments to the B-2 Central Commercial District have been studied by the Planning Commission and recommended for adoption that would allow mixed use facilities in that zoning district as well.

## **D. Downtown**

The continued preservation and utilization of the historic downtown buildings is a critical aspect of capitalizing on the City's existing strengths. Map 8-3 shows the area encompassed by the Franklin Historic District and also outlines the 2000 Floodway and Special Flood Hazard Area boundaries downtown. Restoration efforts following Hurricane Floyd have been quite successful and today many businesses are thriving but the threat of future flooding remains. The City should continue to vigorously pursue Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for flood proofing non-residential buildings in the downtown area and to elevate existing residential housing units in the special flood hazard area, so as to seek to minimize flooding in the downtown area. The City should also consider seeking brownfields assessment grant assistance through the US EPA to

encourage redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or blighted nonresidential properties in the downtown area, as well as elsewhere throughout the City.

Since 1985, Franklin has been a part of the Virginia Main Street Program. The Program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development in partnership with the Department of Historic Resources, ties historic preservation to economic development. As a designated Virginia Main Street Community, Franklin has access to state and national experts in efforts to promote investment in downtown. In addition, the Program provides assistance with design issues and marketing. The City should consider pursuing Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for a possible needs assessment planning grant and facade grants to help property owners further enhance the downtown streetscape.

In October 2006, City Council adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance wherein exterior improvements and/or development in a designated historic district would require a Certificate of Appropriateness. At this time, an historic district has not been designated.

Following the adoption, the Franklin Historic Preservation Commission was appointed by Council who began working with MdM Historical Consultants, Inc. to develop the Franklin Design Review Guidelines and the new historic district boundaries; however, before this regulatory requirement can be implemented City Council must adopt the proposed boundary. It was recommended in 2006 that the existing downtown historic district boundary be expanded to include residential properties along portions of High Street and Clay Street. It was also recommended in 2006 that Local Historic District Design Review Guidelines be created. Both tasks have been completed, but the closure of the IP mill put the project on hold. The City Council should reconsider the adoption of this boundary so that the integrity of the historic district is maintained.

The introduction of additional housing in the downtown area is also an issue that should be considered. Housing as a mixed use component of downtown businesses would provide additional economic and security benefits for property owners, and would promote activity in the area outside of normal business hours. The city should consider revising the B-2 zoning district to allow mixed-use facilities that support the development of residential housing.

One issue that must be addressed in an analysis of the needs of downtown Franklin is the ability of residents to access the waterfront. The Blackwater River is a valuable asset to the City and should be both utilized and protected. Barretts Landing Park is an example of the type of facility that can enhance residentsq ability to enjoy the river. The use of the area along the river for recreational purposes should be a priority for the City& future. The downtown area is a prime candidate to attract tourism by expanding the existing pedestrian trails along the shoreline to offer greater opportunities for residents to access the

riverfront while helping in the protection of wetland areas. The use of the area along the river for recreational purposes should be a priority for the City's future.



## **E. High Street Historic District**

The residential neighborhood directly adjacent to downtown is historic and worthy of preservation efforts. The High Street neighborhood contains some of the City's oldest homes and expansion of the Franklin historic district to encompass this area has provided incentives for restoration and design integrity. Due to the large size of many of the houses, a number of them have been subdivided into rental units, presenting maintenance issues for the neighborhood. It is important to recognize the importance of the homes in this area to the character of Franklin and take steps to ensure their preservation. The City Council should re-consider this area for adoption within the new historic district boundary so that the integrity of the historic district is maintained. Map 8-3 shows the boundaries of Franklin Historic District.

## **F. Entrance and Transportation Corridors**

A number of municipalities and counties, including Isle of Wight County, have adopted Highway Corridor Districts on designated portions of highways. A Highway Corridor District seeks to improve the visual, and therefore mental, impression of the City's image for residents, workers, and visitors. Most of the localities administer their Highway Corridor District through overlay zone regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance. These regulations contain architectural and aesthetic controls as well as special access and buffering requirements along highways. Examples of standards within a Highway Corridor District include a review of new projects and developments, buffering requirements through landscaping, signage and light standards, designating scenic easements along corridors with significant natural views or vistas, and sectional service roads as a tool to achieve access control within the Highway District. Highway Corridor Districts are not setback requirements, although certain minimum setbacks will be required to protect highway rights-of-way and maintain sight clearances for traffic safety. Furthermore, Highway Corridor Districts are not intended to restrict or prevent the construction of buildings, nor the removal of existing structures. See Map 8-4 for Highway Corridor Districts.

The major entrances and thoroughfares in the City of Franklin deserve special attention, as they are the first impression visitors have of the City. Roads such as Second Avenue, Armory Drive, Pretlow Street, South Street, and Clay Street serve as entry points, and should be addressed both from a functional as well as an aesthetic standpoint. Signage can play an important role in the demarcation of entrances, and street trees and pedestrian amenities can make an avenue more welcoming and tie the major thoroughfares into the urban heart of Franklin. The City has completed through its Beautification Commission a Gateway Enhancement Plan, which includes a tree inventory and the evaluation of design priorities (see Map 8-6). As another example of work in this area, the Downtown Franklin Signage Study completed in January 2004 by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission provides an analysis and recommendations for improved signage to direct travelers to the downtown area, and also to notify them of points of interest.

A major asset to the City and Southampton County as a vast potential for economic growth is the Route 58 expressway bypass. This corridor serves as a major route from the ports of Hampton Roads to Interstate 85 in South Hill, followed by Interstate 95 in Emporia. The City can surely capitalize on this asset by implementing economic growth marketing in both the City and County along this stretch of Route 58. Much of the county located along the route 58 corridor is within the revenue sharing area with the City, (see Map 8-4) thereby warranting a concerted effort on behalf of each jurisdiction to pursue commercial and industrial development in both the City and County. Therefore, the future land use along the route 58 corridor has been designated for future commerce, trade and industry.

## **G. Armory Drive Commercial Area**

As the center of much of the City's commercial activity, the Armory Drive corridor is a thoroughfare under a great deal of development pressure and one that merits close attention. The design of the Armory Drive corridor contrasts sharply with the older sections of Franklin. The application of some of the principles of New Urbanism could remedy, to a degree, the disconnect between Franklin's commercial areas. For example, Armory Drive as a shopping destination is not conducive to pedestrian activity. Many stores, although in relatively close proximity, are not easily accessible by foot. Reworking of the streetscape in the area and the introduction of pedestrian amenities would allow for better integration of this corridor with the urban fabric of Franklin. In addition, reuse of vacant shopping centers and the potential for limited introduction of mixed-use development adjacent to Armory Drive would further enhance the ability of this important corridor to serve the needs of City residents. The City should consider undertaking a revitalization study of this area to address under-utilized buildings, roadway access and storm drainage issues that characterize this commercial area, including participating in a brownfield assessment grant program if available, to understand the potential environmental challenges older properties might face during revitalization.

From a stormwater management perspective, the vast area of impervious cover resulting from the type of development prevalent along Armory Drive creates special concerns. Increased runoff leads to problems with effective stormwater management with respect to both water quantity and quality. One potential solution is application of the principles of Low Impact Development in both new construction and in retrofits. This strategy of dealing with stormwater involves reducing the amount of impervious cover in order to mimic the pre-development hydrology of the site. Principles such as constructing parking only to match demand, along with the use of bioretention areas, permeable pavers, and other infiltration devices can serve to decrease infrastructure costs and provide an alternative to the aesthetic drawbacks of stormwater detention ponds.

## **H. South Franklin Residential Area**

The residential area located north and south of South Street generally from Amber Street to South High Street was identified during the city-wide Housing Needs Assessment as a priority area of the City where revitalization efforts should be focused. The Cobbtown neighborhood was identified as the priority area where initial rehabilitation efforts should begin utilizing Community Development Block Grant funds. These efforts include housing rehabilitation and improvements to city infrastructure such as storm drains, water and sewer lines. An emphasis on mixed uses along the South Street corridor would be especially beneficial in maintaining and furthering the sense of community in this area and future development and revitalization should address the importance of this principle. For example, the commercial area along South Street centered near

the intersection with Pretlow Street provides neighborhood residents with shopping opportunities within walking distance and promotes independence for those without other means of transportation.

In addition, the need for affordable housing of high quality must be a focus of any revitalization strategy within this South Street area. The sense of community resulting from making the neighborhood a defined and close-knit area will foster pride and responsibility for maintaining the quality of the homes there.

Community Development Block Grant funding has and will continue to be utilized in Franklin. The Management Team associated with the Housing Needs Assessment identified additional deficient residential areas of the city requiring rehabilitation assistance after the deficiencies in the Cobbtown neighborhood have been addressed. Those neighborhoods include the Riverview-Meadowbrook area and the Banks-Cobb neighborhood. The City is currently seeking a Comprehensive Improvement Grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development in the Cobbtown neighborhood area as it was considered to have the highest needs. Future housing rehabilitation projects will be considered in these three neighborhoods as a matter of order. However, the City Council should seek recommendations from the Planning Commission prior to planning grant funds being sought in these neighborhoods. The final Housing Needs Assessment document with mapping is hereby made part of this plan by reference.

## I. New Residential Development



The undeveloped areas in many parts of the City of Franklin present both opportunities and challenges for the future of the City. Agricultural and forestal areas in the northern and western reaches of Franklin may begin to feel the pressures of development in the coming years. How the City chooses to deal with opportunities for development will define the character of these areas.

The application of conservation design principles would allow for the preservation of significant open space while still accommodating development needs. Conservation Design in the development of subdivisions involves less land consumption in that housing density is increased in one portion of a developable tract of land, leaving a significant portion of the total subdivision as permanently protected open space. Application of this technique in multiple subdivisions could allow for the creation of a connected network of open lands within these areas of Franklin. The Conservation Design process includes a site evaluation prior to subdivision to identify important natural features such as wetlands, rare and unique habitat areas and forested areas that should be protected during the development process. Other significant features such as historic areas and agricultural lands may also be identified for protection at this stage in the process.

In addition, the introduction of mixed uses in future development in outlying areas would further the creation of unified neighborhoods there. The higher-density housing of Conservation Design combined with interspersed commercial uses would create pedestrian-friendly and functional neighborhoods. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities in currently undeveloped areas of Franklin will be crucial in uniting any new neighborhoods with the rest of the City. Multi-use trails are already outlined in the VDOT Franklin 2020 Plan for widening projects along Hunterdale Road and North High Street. In 2009, the City adopted The City of Franklin Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This Plan is a planning tool which will enable the City to maintain and even strengthen its sense of community even in the midst of recent and ongoing development within the City's limits. The Plan offers recommended bicycle and pedestrian network improvements, policies, and programs for the City of Franklin. Linkage with trails along the Blackwater River would provide residents with abundant recreational opportunities.

## **J. Open Space Network**

The protection of significant open spaces in any new subdivisions and the utilization of public open space along the Blackwater River should be a top priority for the City. While contributing to a network of trails for pedestrians and bicyclists, a network of protected open space can provide benefits for the management of stormwater, the protection of wildlife habitats, and also aesthetic benefits for the City as a whole. Protection of forested areas and agricultural areas should be considered as new development takes place. In addition to considering Conservation Design subdivisions in currently vacant areas of the City, examination of these lands for use as potential City park facilities should be a top priority before development takes place.

The City of Franklin Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, completed in 2003, outlines the need for additional facilities within the City limits and the numerous potential areas which deserve attention and evaluation. Priorities include development of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan which was completed and

adopted in 2009, and construction of the Riverwalk along the Black Water connecting the Pin Point area, the newly constructed public boat landing, and Barretts Landing to the CSX railroad. Protection of Franklin's natural areas will allow the City's character to remain intact in the face of future changes.

## **K. Stormwater Management**

Stormwater management presents a set of challenges and opportunities for the City. As development takes place new stormwater management facilities will be required. Questions to be resolved by the City include identifying the best mix of regional and on-site facilities and insuring that the facilities are properly maintained. One possible option involves setting up a system in which private developers can purchase credits in publicly held open space or stormwater facilities. This type of approach could contribute to the preservation of an open space network.

## **L. Revenue Sharing**

The City of Franklin entered into revenue sharing agreements with Isle of Wight County in 1987 and Southampton County in 1996. The agreements established Designated Areas in each of the counties outside of the corporate limits of the city for the purpose of providing orderly growth that is consistent across jurisdictions. See Map 8-5 for the Revenue Sharing Area.

Under these agreements, The City receives a share of defined tax revenues collected by the counties. Defined local tax revenues include general property tax and other local taxes such as real property taxes, personal property taxes, and business license taxes. Southampton County agrees to share between 17% and 23% of these defined taxes while Isle of Wight provides the City 30% of these defined taxes. The factors that determine the adjusted percentage amount and the defined taxes are detailed within each agreement.

By virtue of these agreements, the City is obligated to coordinate with these jurisdictions on matters of zoning, land use, and the provision of public services. The City may want to designate a portion of the revenue collected from the Designated Areas to improving entrance corridors into the City from these areas, thereby promoting a regional effort to improve quality of life issues on both sides of the corporate line. A recent Memorandum of Understanding for Shared Services was adopted by the Franklin City Council and the Southampton Board of Supervisors wherein it is agreed that each jurisdiction will explore opportunities to share public services when at all possible when the results will create a win-win situation for each jurisdiction. As a result of this MOU and effective July 1, 2013 the Southampton Department of Community Development merged with the City's Department of Community Development wherein all landuse regulations including planning, zoning and building code activities are being shared

throughout both jurisdictions encompassing approximately 610 square miles. Consideration is being given concerning the creation a Unified Development Ordinance that would bring together development guidelines for both localities in a single document that would aid in future development activities.

## **M. Future Land Use**

The Future Land Use map (Map 8-6) depicts the anticipated development patterns for the City of Franklin. Key features include the following:

- Continued commercial and industrial development and revitalization in the Armory Drive corridor.
- Commercial and Industrial development around the Route 58 interchanges and in the Southampton County Revenue sharing areas in the County.
- Residential development in the northern section of the City.
- Establishment of Gateway Corridor overlay districts at the primary entrance corridors to the City including the route 58 expressway bypass.
- The Single Family Low Density area as referenced on Map 8-6, Future Land Use Map, refers to a density of 1 to 3 single family dwelling units per acre.
- Support mixed use development in the downtown area and in the neighborhood business districts and along the north side of Clay Street at the city limits connecting with Southampton County.
- Pursue employment center and institutional / office uses in the northern section of Pretlow Park north of the Dominion Power right of way.

## **Recommendations**

- Make necessary amendments to the zoning, subdivision and other ordinances to facilitate development in accordance with the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Recommend amendments to the zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use facilities in the B-2 Central Commercial District which also provides for a residential housing component.
- Consideration should be given concerning the creation of a Unified Development Ordinance bring together development guidelines for both localities in a single document that would aid in future development activities.
- Consideration should be given to the creation of a new Downtown Master Plan, created with extensive public input as well as input from agencies such as the Downtown Franklin Association.
- Determine the best mix of stormwater best management practices and facilities to accommodate new development and revitalization of existing properties along Armory Drive in accordance with the new Virginia Stormwater Management Program to become effective July 1, 2014.

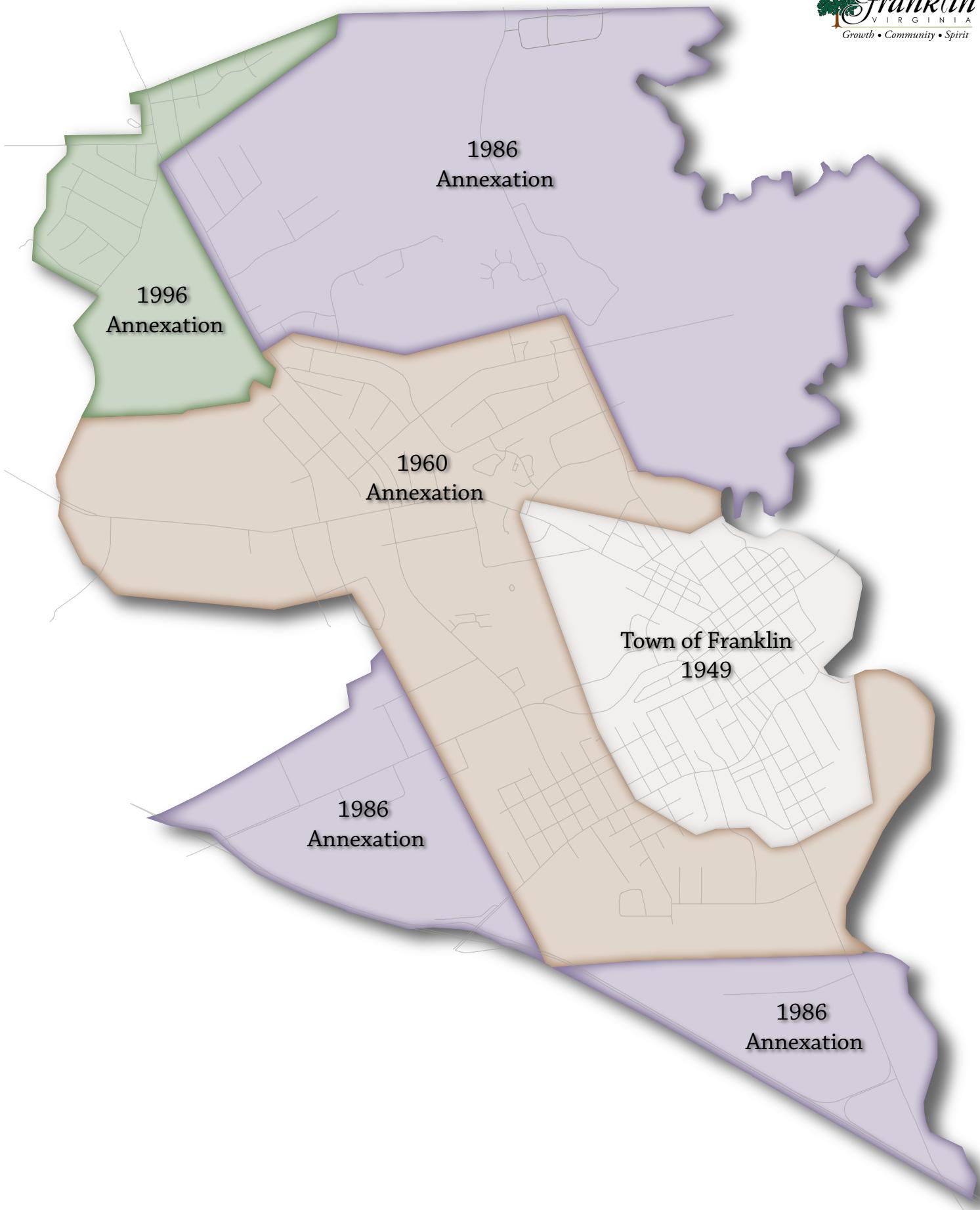
- Consider undertaking a revitalization study of the Armory Drive Corridor to address under-utilized buildings, roadway access and mix-use opportunities that could re-characterize this commercial area. Also, include the possible reworking of the streetscape in the area and the introduction of pedestrian amenities would allow for better integration of this corridor with the urban fabric of Franklin
- Identify and protect significant natural features and open space through the application of conservation design principles as new rural residential development takes place.
- Emphasize quality urban and architectural design as new development takes place.
- Reconsider the adoption of the new historic district boundary so that the historic preservation ordinance may be implemented to insure the integrity of the historic district is maintained.
- Pursue Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for flood proofing non-residential buildings in the downtown special flood hazard area.
- Pursue HMGP funding for elevating residential buildings in the downtown special flood hazard area.
- Pursue US EPA brownfield assessment grant funding to spur revitalization of unused or underutilized nonresidential properties.

# **APPENDIX A**

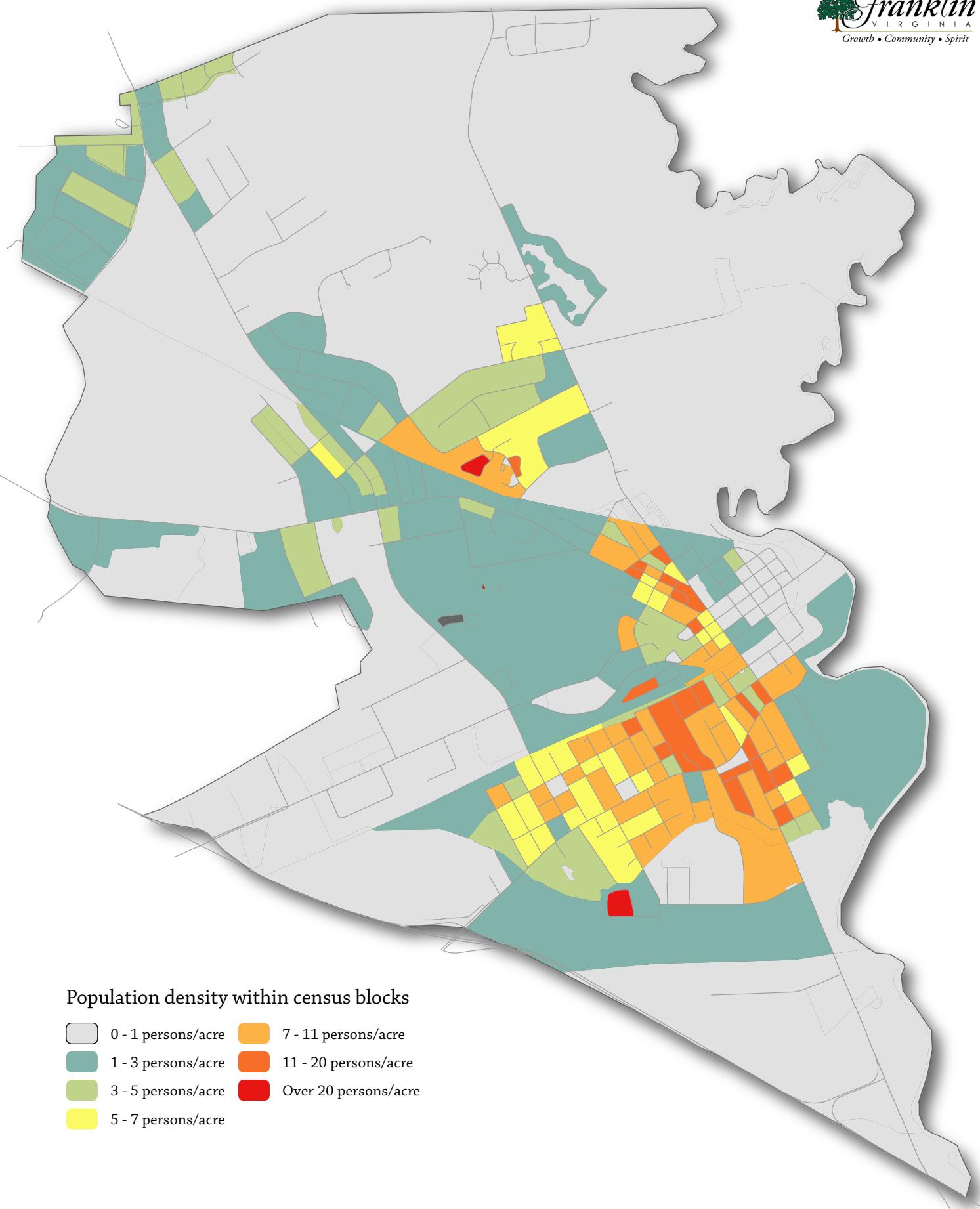
## **LIST OF MAPS**

- Map 1-1: Annexation ..
- Map 1-2: Population Density ..
- Map 1-3: Election Districts ..
- Map 4-1: Slopes & Non-Tidal Wetlands ..
- Map 4-2: General Soil Texture ..
- Map 4-3: Current and Historic Flood Zones ..
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- Map 5-1: 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan ..
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- Map 8-5: Revenue Sharing ..
- Map 8-6: Future Land Use ..

## MAP 1-1: HISTORIC CITY BOUNDARIES



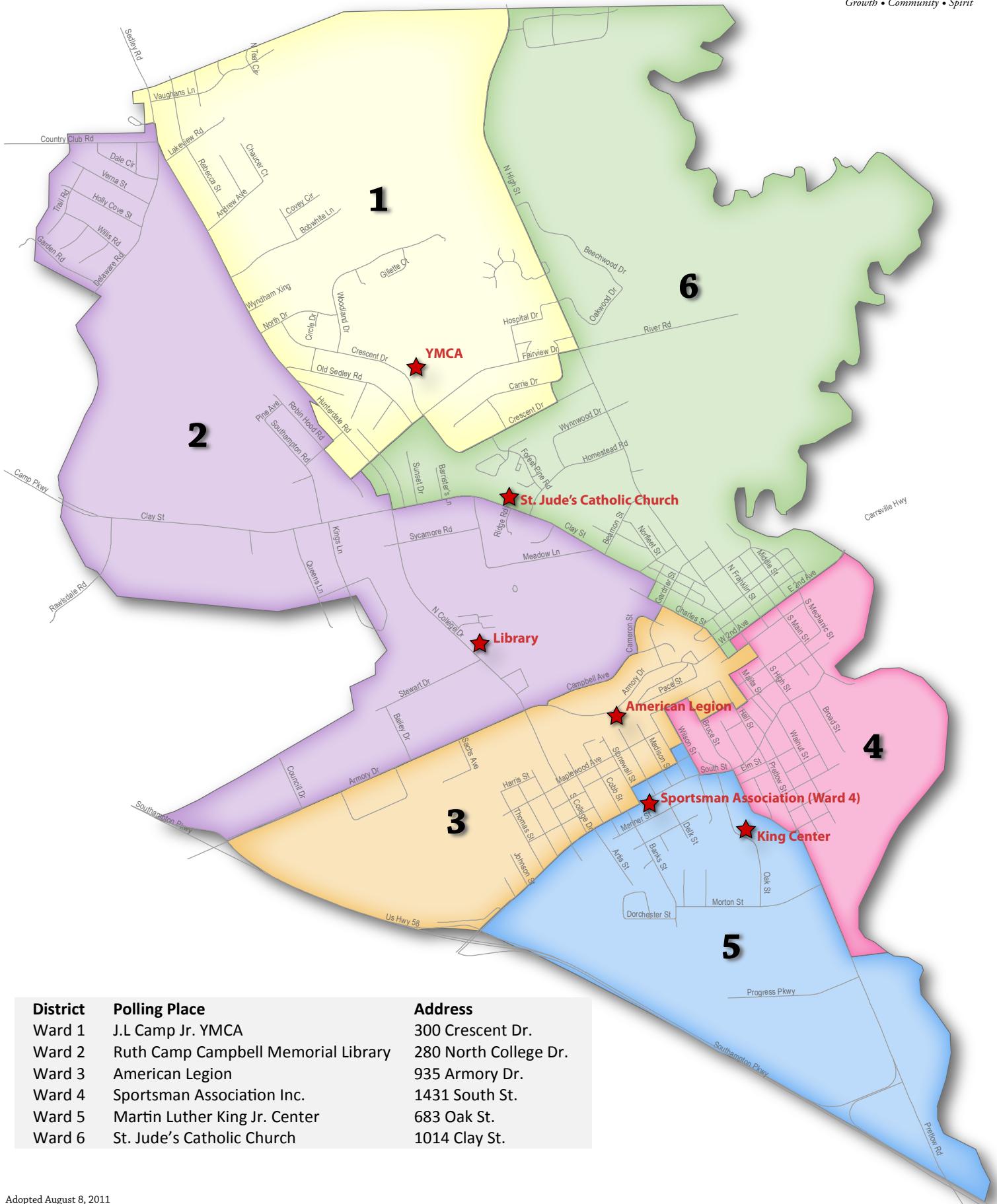
## MAP 1-2: POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS BLOCK



Population density within census blocks

[Light Gray Box]	0 - 1 persons/acre	[Orange Box]	7 - 11 persons/acre
[Teal Box]	1 - 3 persons/acre	[Red-Orange Box]	11 - 20 persons/acre
[Light Green Box]	3 - 5 persons/acre	[Dark Red Box]	Over 20 persons/acre
[Yellow Box]	5 - 7 persons/acre		

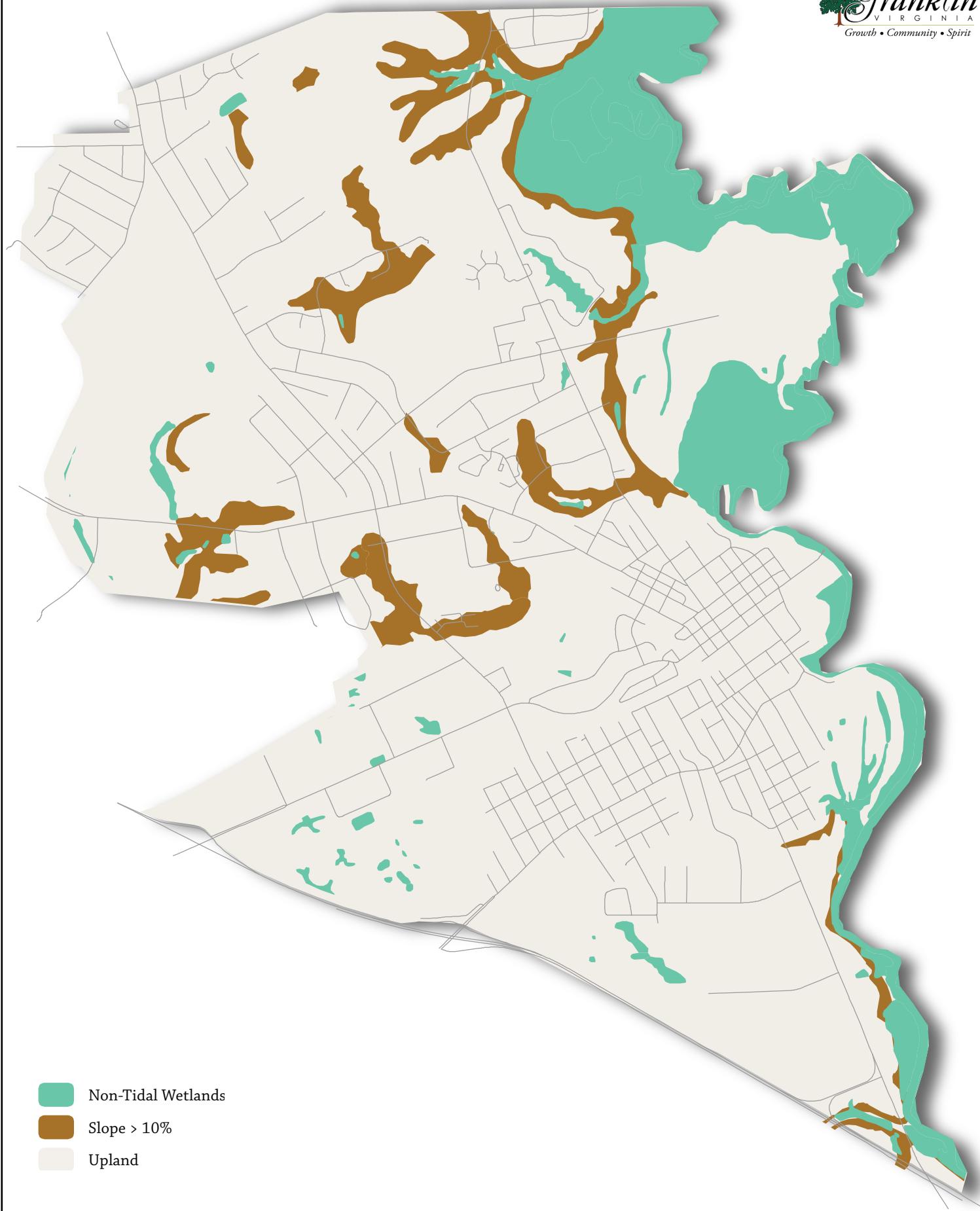
## **MAP 1-3: ELECTION DISTRICTS**



District	Polling Place	Address
Ward 1	J.L Camp Jr. YMCA	300 Crescent Dr.
Ward 2	Ruth Camp Campbell Memorial Library	280 North College Dr.
Ward 3	American Legion	935 Armory Dr.
Ward 4	Sportsman Association Inc.	1431 South St.
Ward 5	Martin Luther King Jr. Center	683 Oak St.
Ward 6	St. Jude's Catholic Church	1014 Clay St.

Adopted August 8, 2011  
Last Update: June 2014

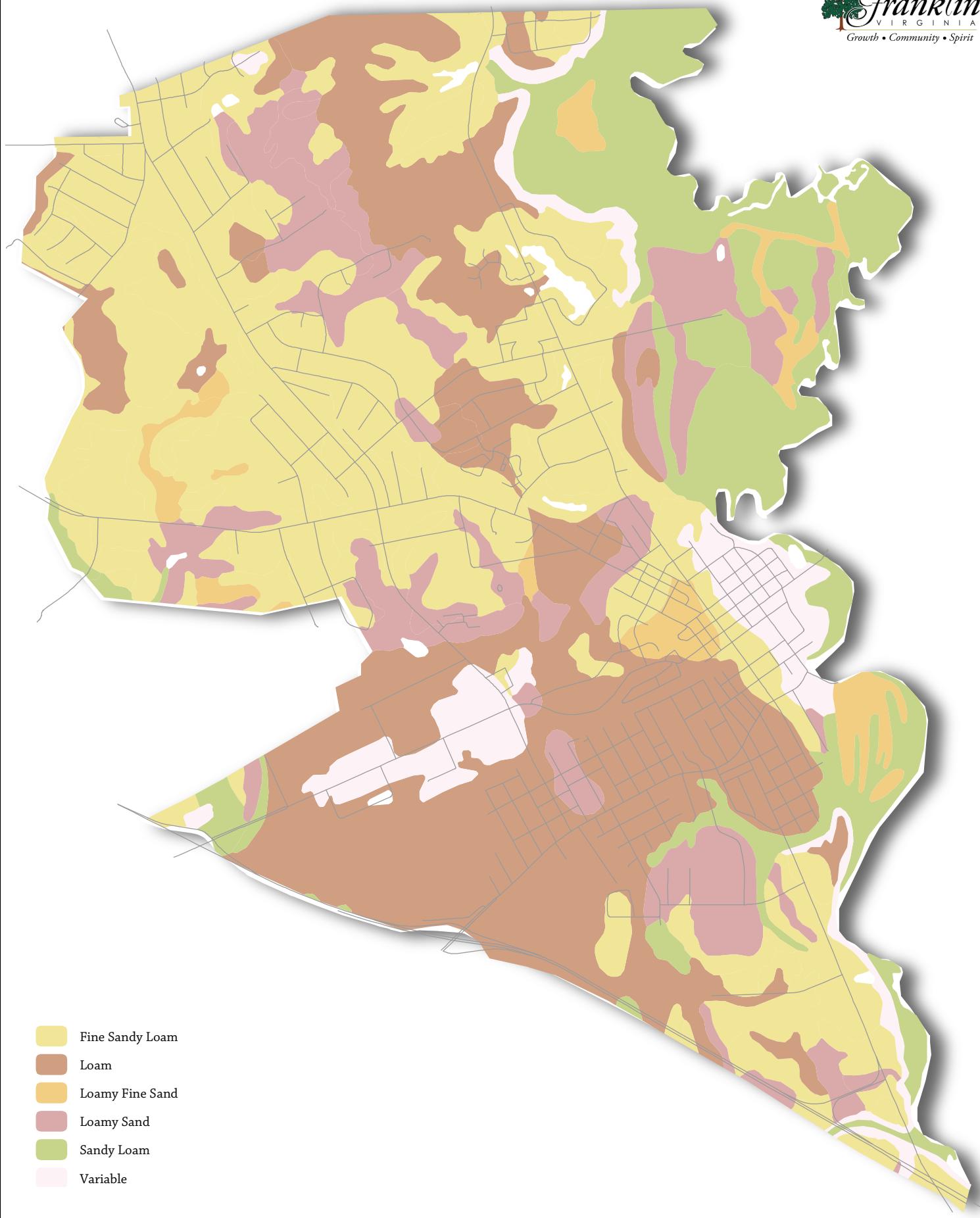
## MAP 4-1: STEEP SLOPES AND WETLANDS



- Non-Tidal Wetlands
- Slope > 10%
- Upland

Data Sources: National Wetlands Inventory, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Last Update: June 2014

## MAP 4-2: GENERAL SOIL TEXTURE

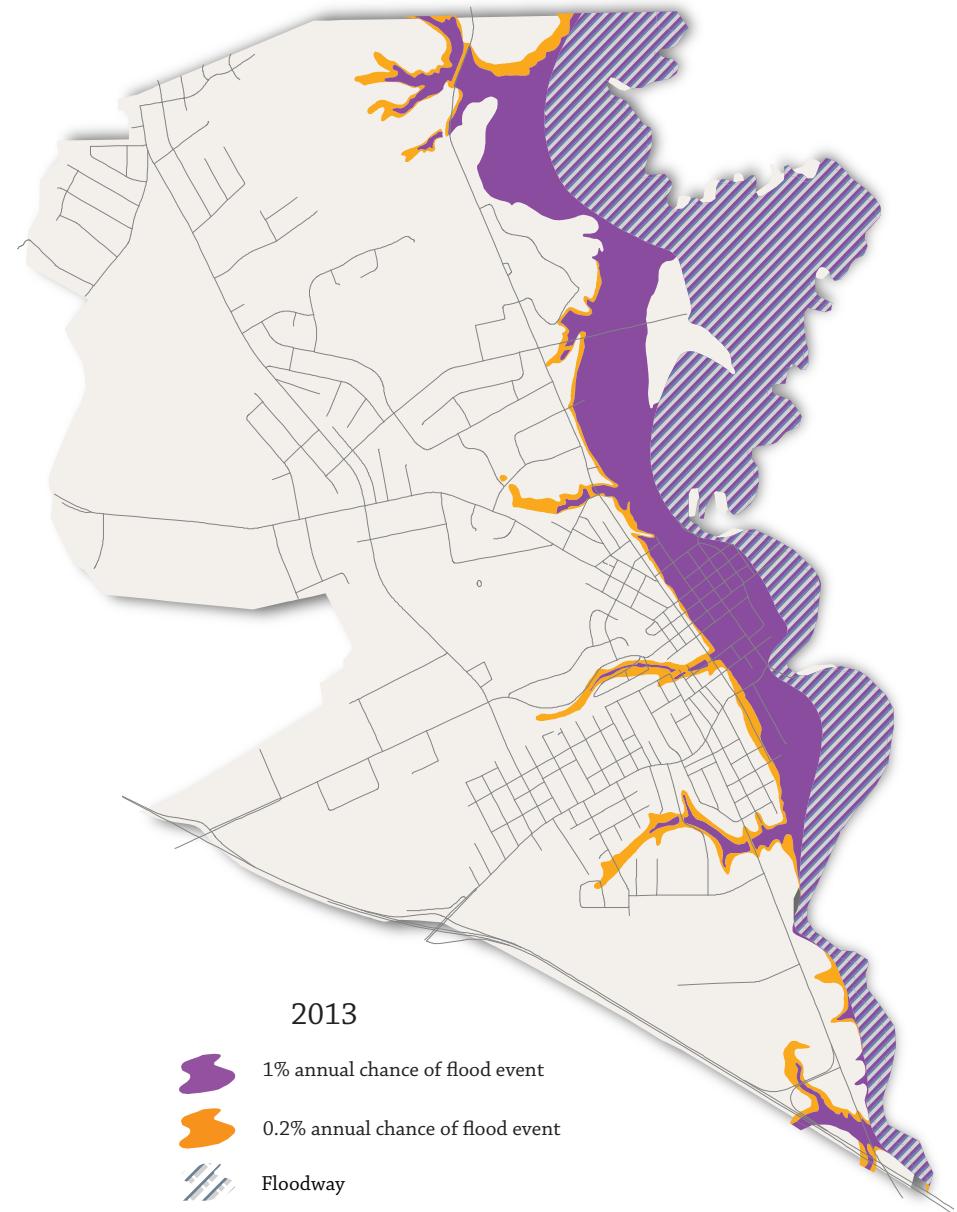
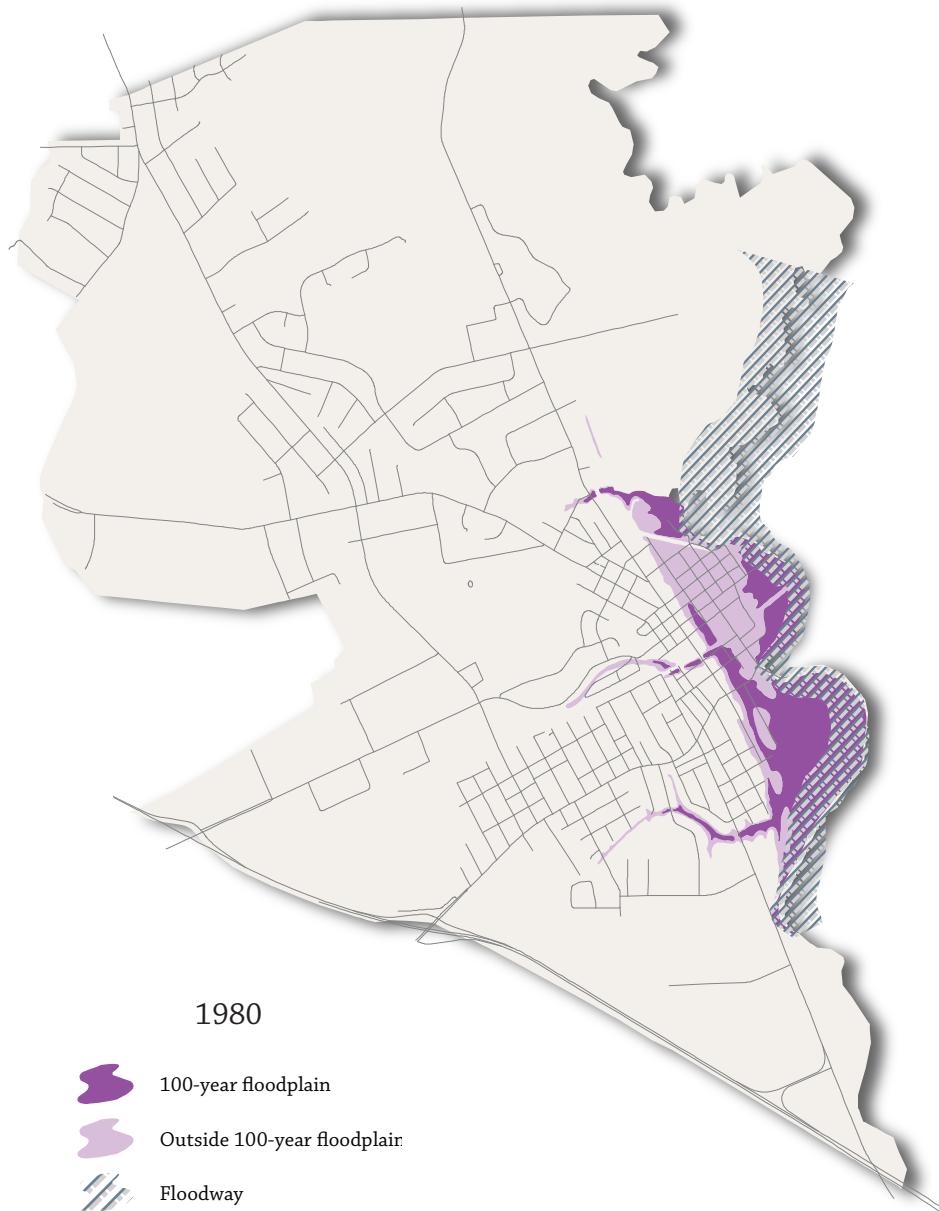


- Fine Sandy Loam
- Loam
- Loamy Fine Sand
- Loamy Sand
- Sandy Loam
- Variable

Data Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Last Update: July 2014

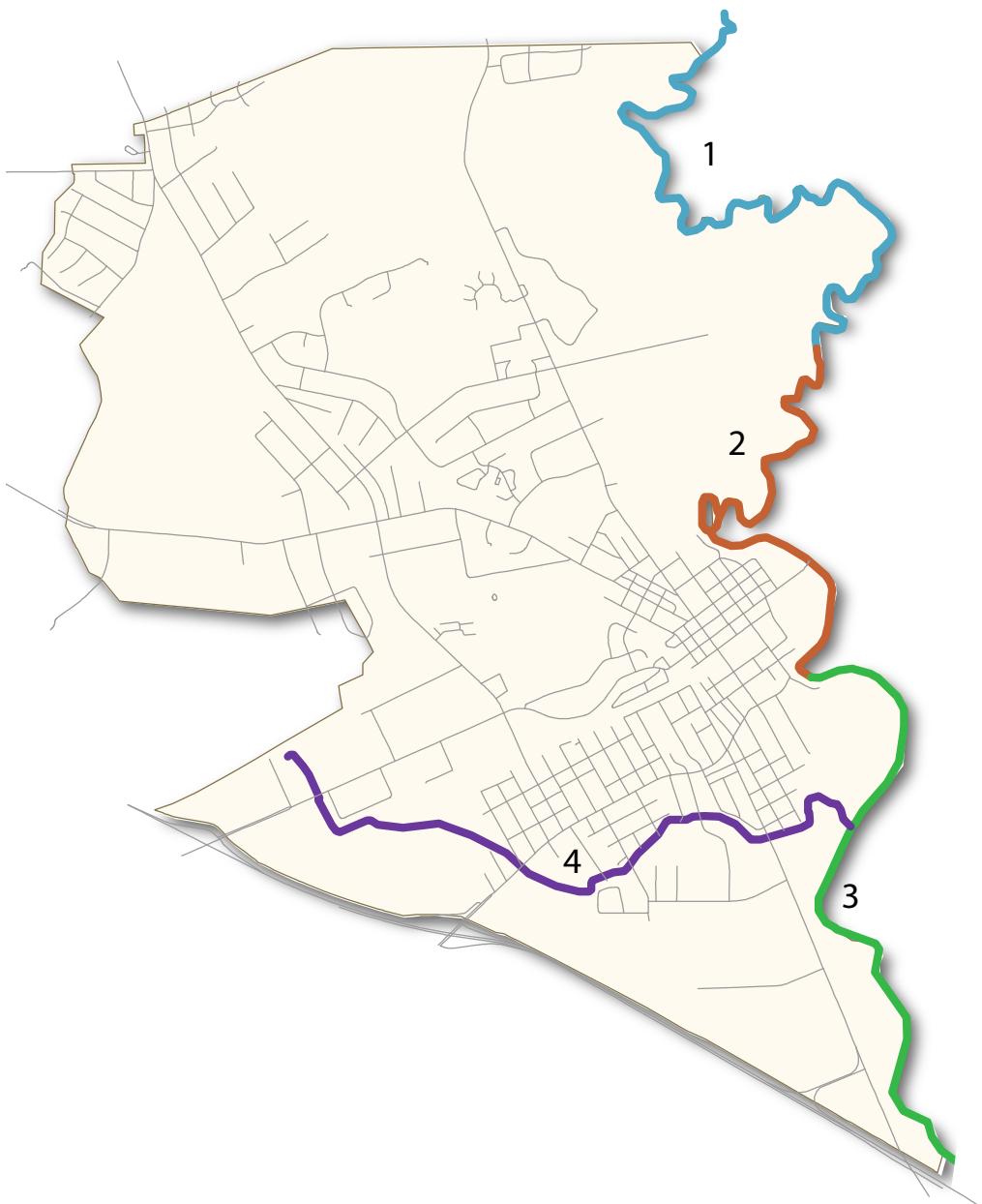
## MAP 4-3: CURRENT AND HISTORIC FLOOD ZONES



Data Sources: US Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA  
Last Update: November 2013

City of Franklin Comprehensive Plan

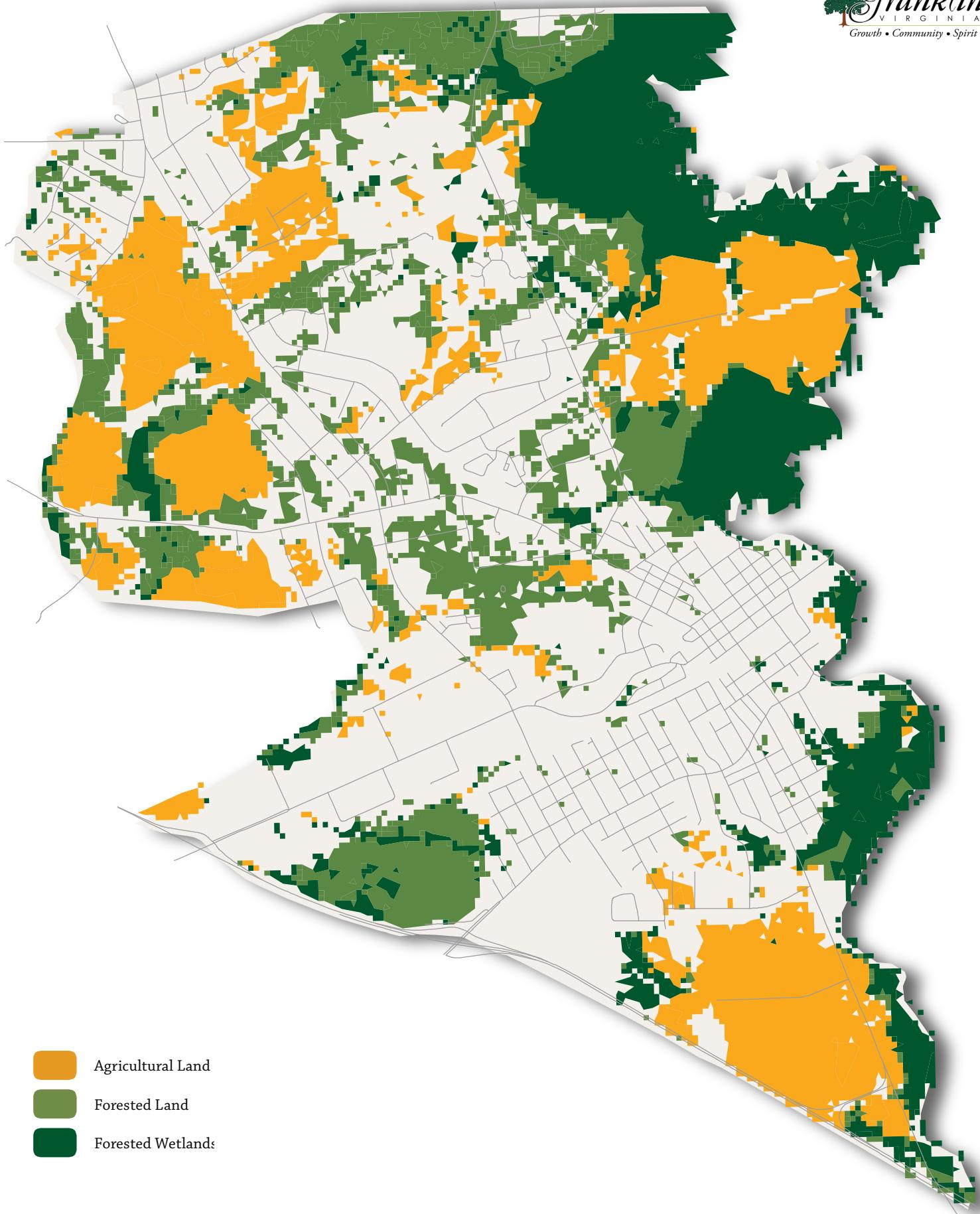
## MAP 4-4: 2012 IMPAIRED WATERS



Segment	Name	First Listed	Length (mi)	IMPAIRMENT			
				Mercury in Fish Tissue	Dissolved Oxygen	E. coli	Aquatic Life
1	Blackwater River - Middle	2004	3.37	x	x		
2	Blackwater River - Middle	2004	2.48	x	x		
3	Blackwater River - Lower Middle	2004	2.88	x	x	x	
4	Unsegmented Tributary to Blackwater	2008	2.69	x			x

Source: Draft 2012 Impaired Waters Fact Sheets, Virginia DEQ. <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/fs2012/Choose.aspx>

## MAP 4-5: FOREST AND AGRICULTURAL LAND

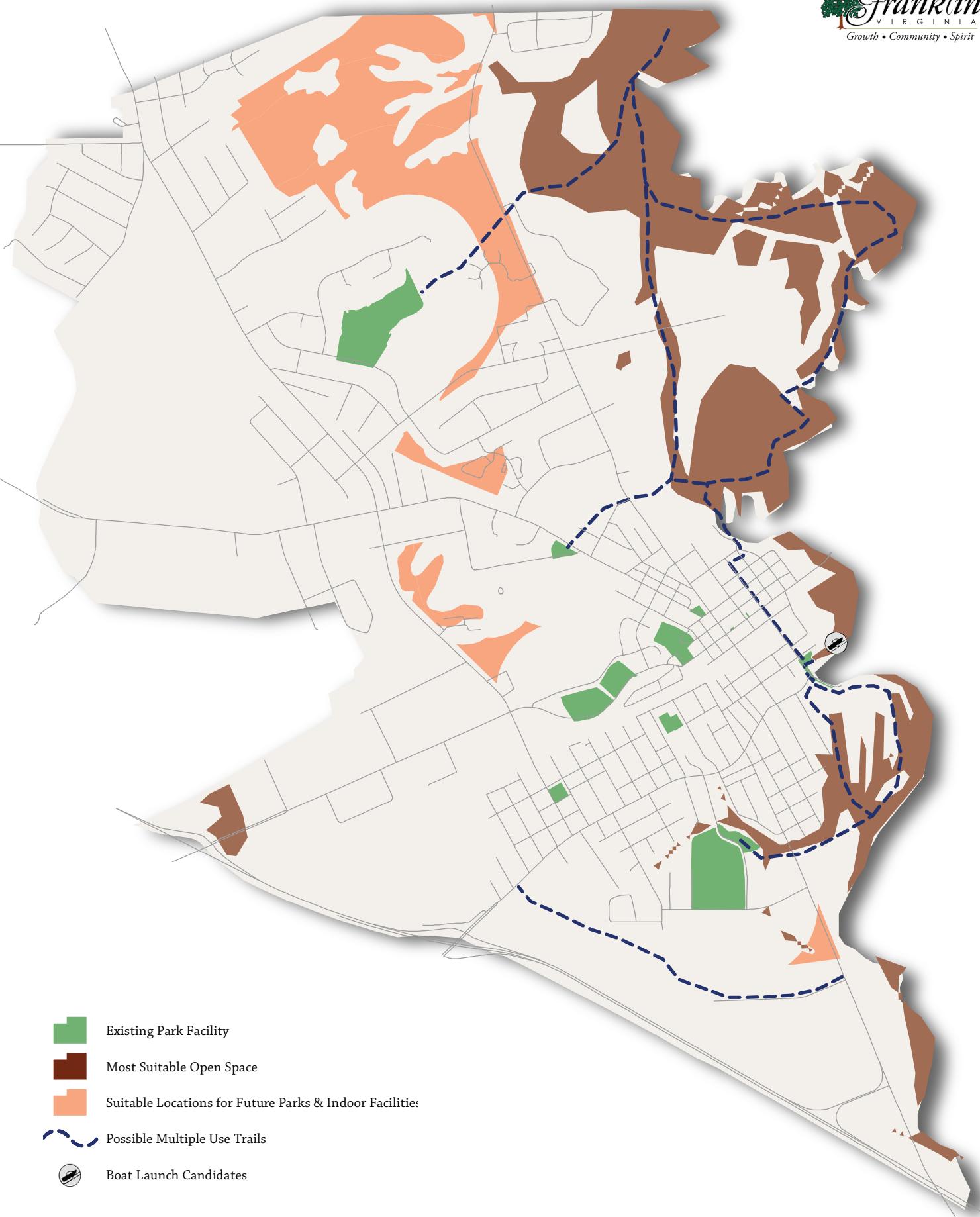


- Agricultural Land
- Forested Land
- Forested Wetlands

Data Source: NOAA C-CAP Land Cover Data 2010

Last Update: June 2014

## MAP 4-6: PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN



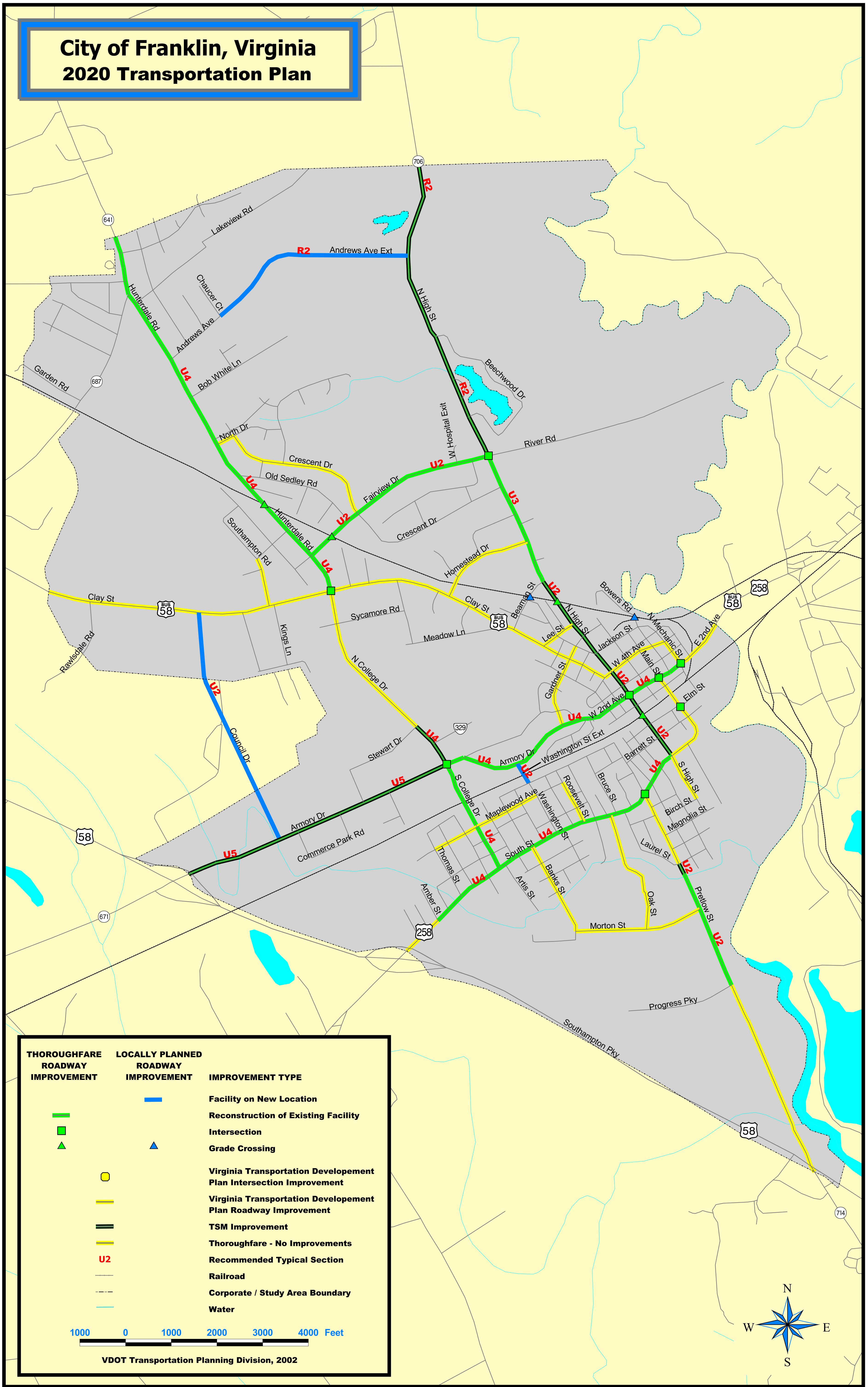
Data Sources: USGS, FEMA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Last Update: June 2014

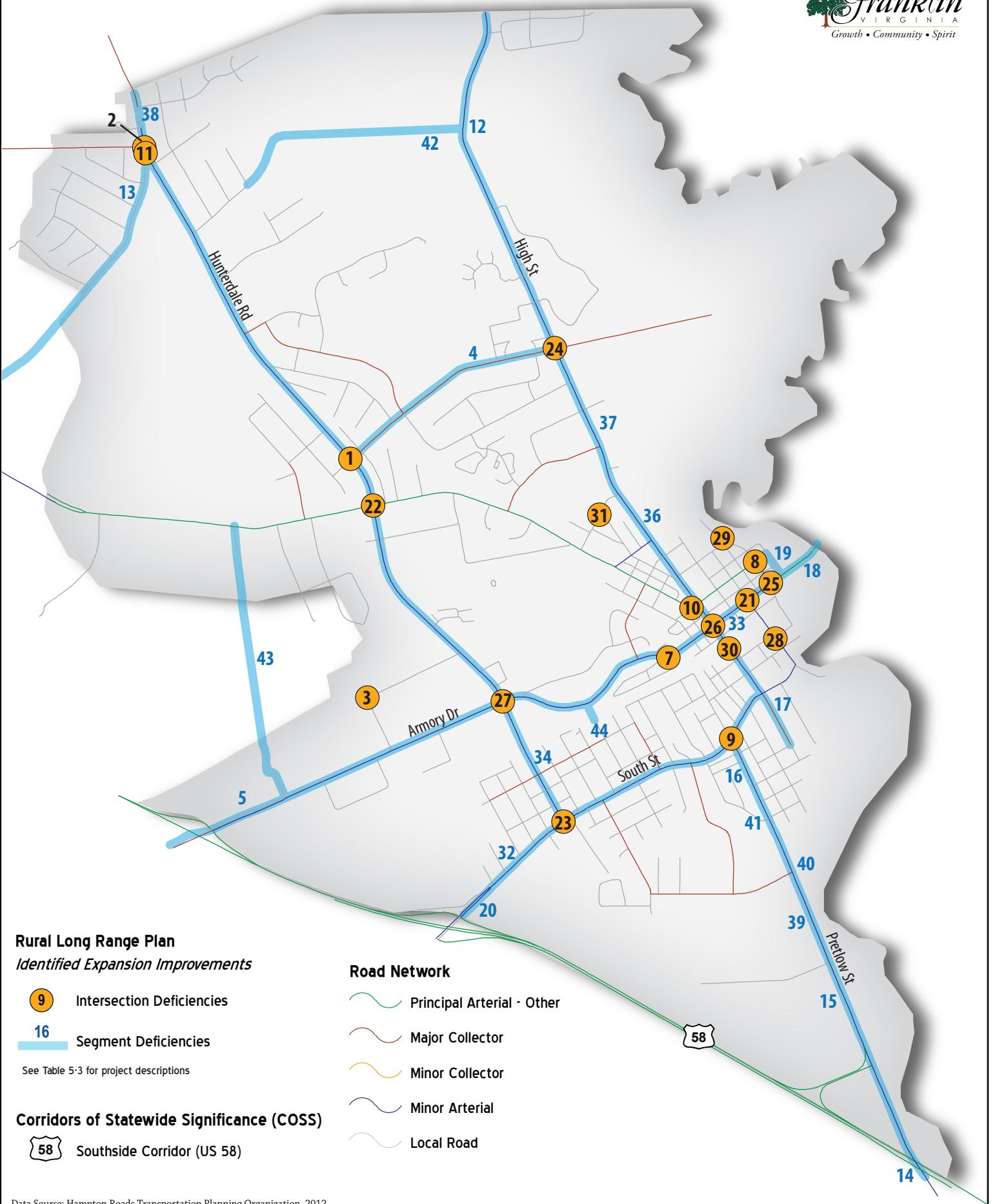
# Map 5-0: VDOT 2020 Transportation Plan

# **City of Franklin, Virginia**

## **2020 Transportation Plan**



# MAP 5-1: TRANSPORTATION PLAN



**Rural Long Range Plan**  
*Identified Expansion Improvements*

9 Intersection Deficiencies

16 Segment Deficiencies

See Table 5-3 for project descriptions

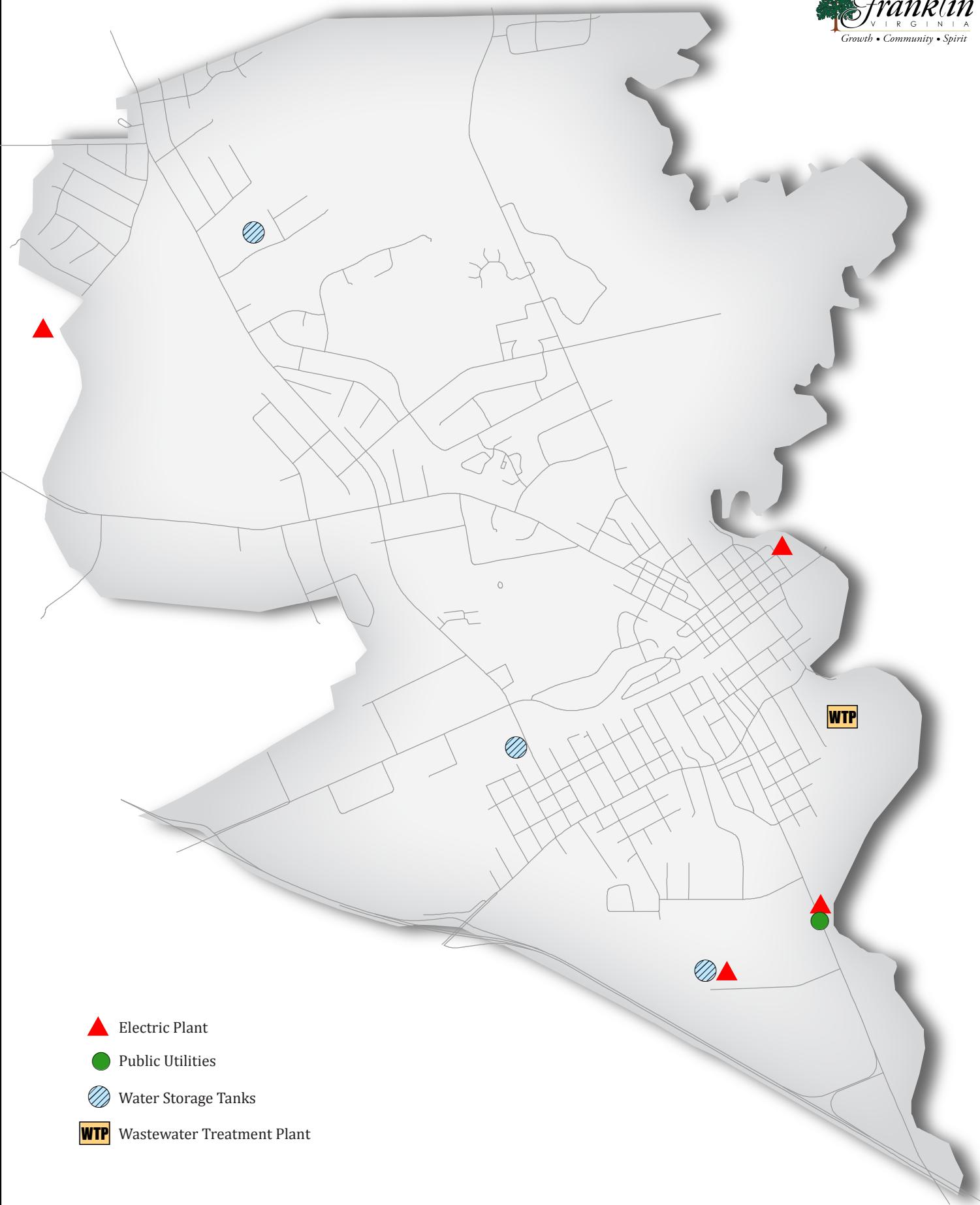
**Corridors of Statewide Significance (COSS)**

58 Southside Corridor (US 58)

## Road Network

- Principal Arterial - Other
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Local Road

## MAP 6-1: PUBLIC UTILITIES FACILITIES



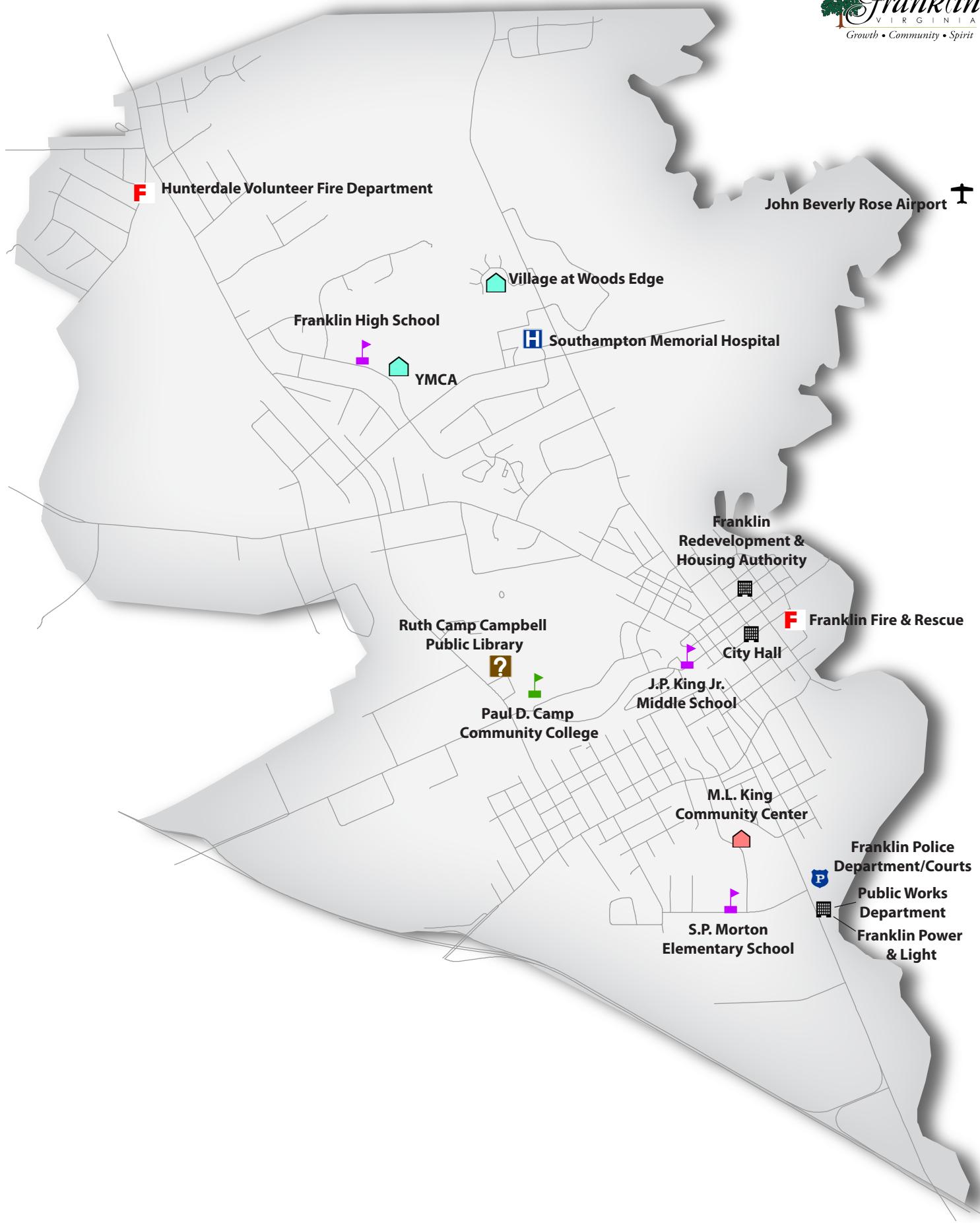
▲ Electric Plant

● Public Utilities

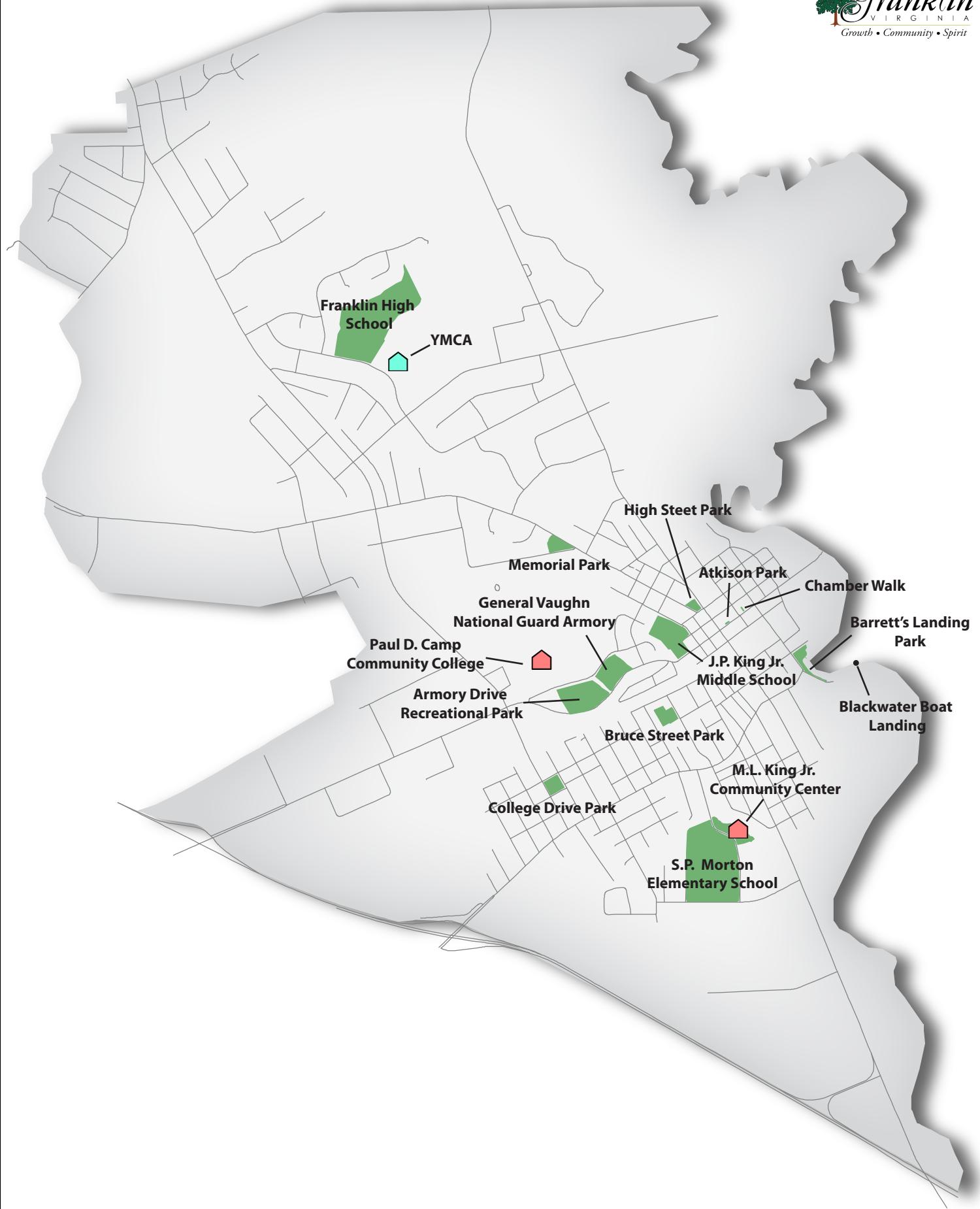
● Water Storage Tanks

■ WTP Wastewater Treatment Plant

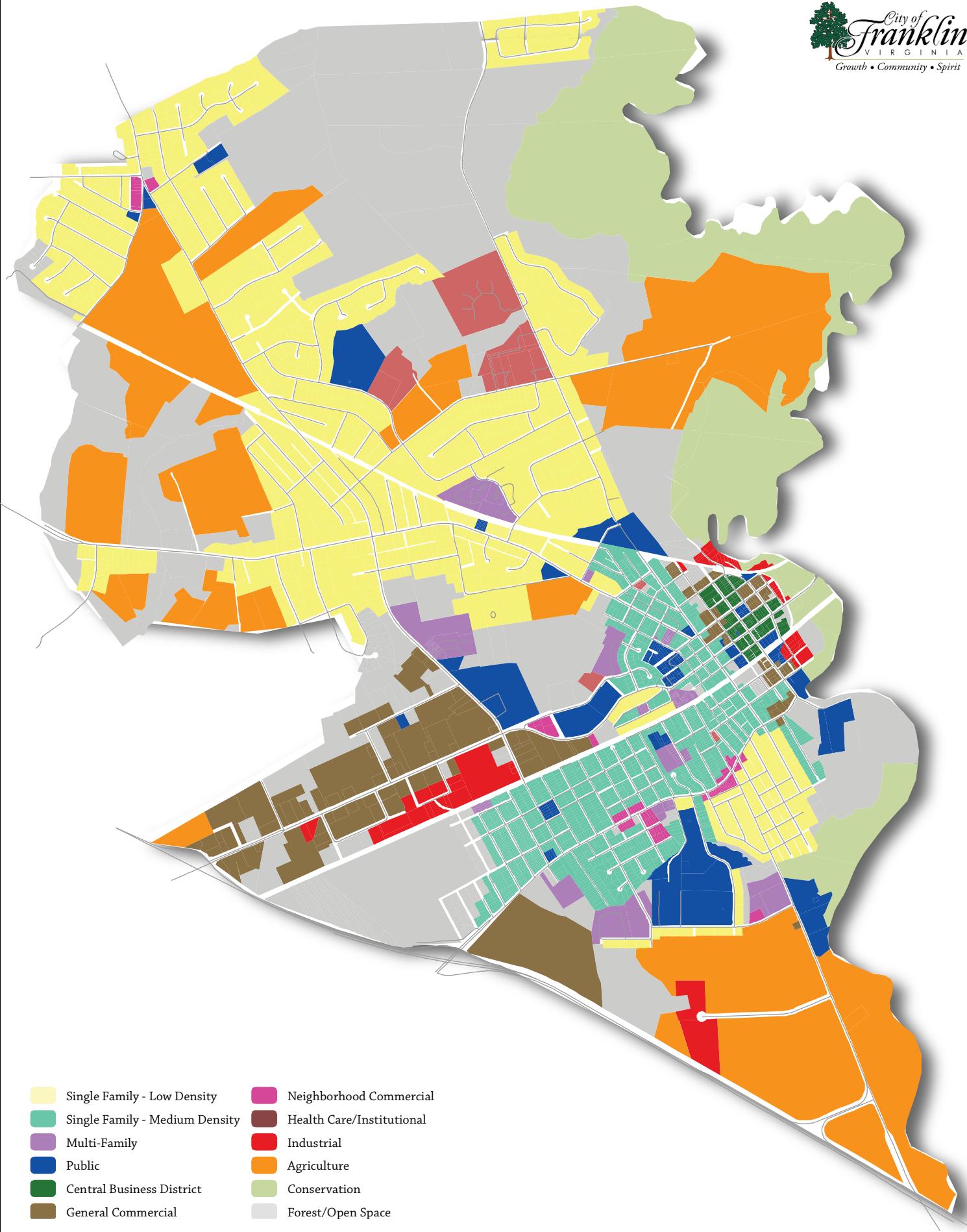
## MAP 7-1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES



## MAP 7-2: PARKS & RECREACTION FACILITIES



## MAP 8-1: CURRENT LAND USE



Single Family - Low Density

Single Family - Medium Density

Multi-Family

Public

Central Business District

General Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial

Health Care/Institutional

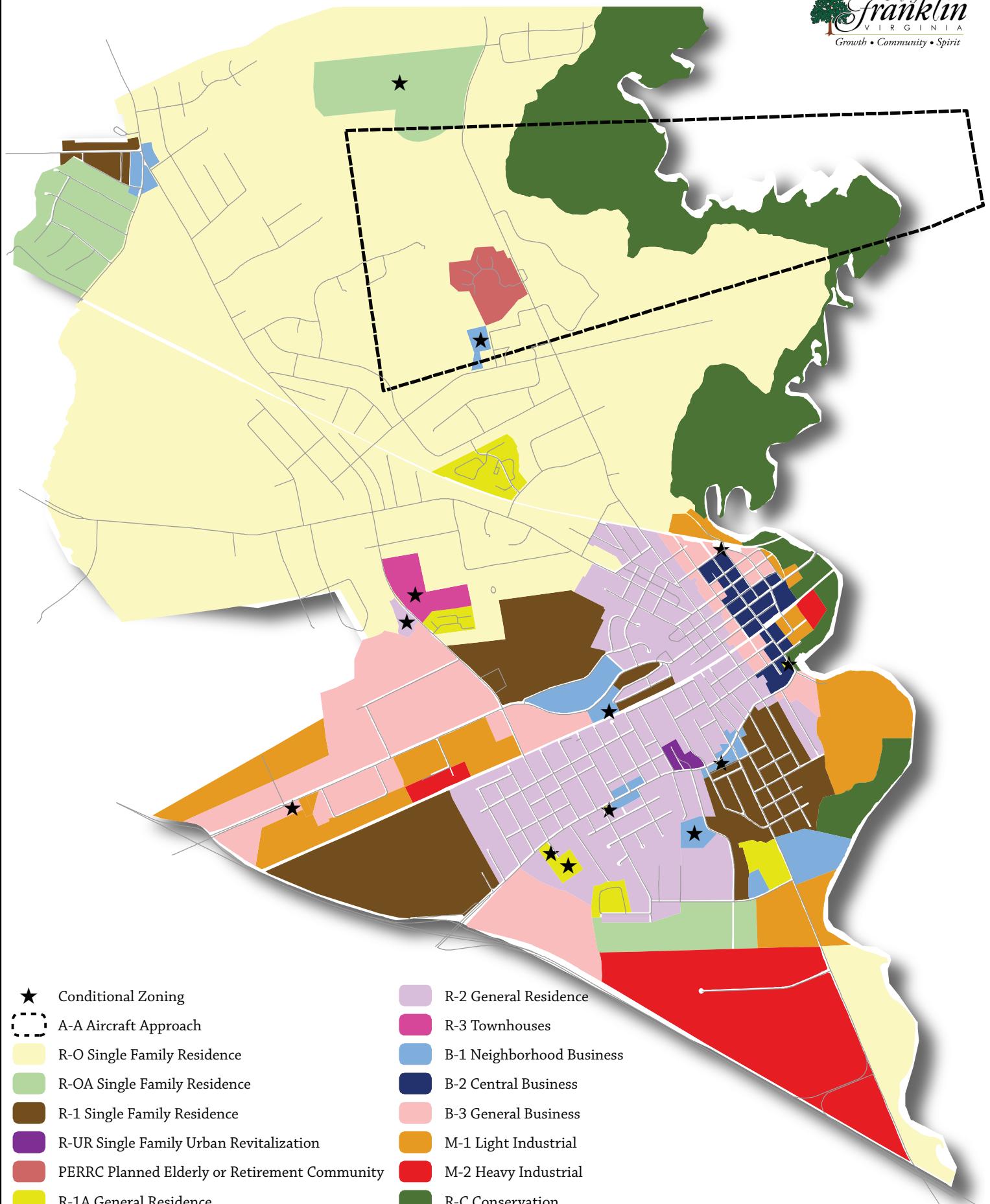
Industrial

Agriculture

Conservation

Forest/Open Space

## MAP 8-2: ZONING DISTRICTS



★ Conditional Zoning

[- -] A-A Aircraft Approach

R-O Single Family Residence

R-OA Single Family Residence

R-1 Single Family Residence

R-UR Single Family Urban Revitalization

PERRC Planned Elderly or Retirement Community

R-1A General Residence

R-2 General Residence

R-3 Townhouses

B-1 Neighborhood Business

B-2 Central Business

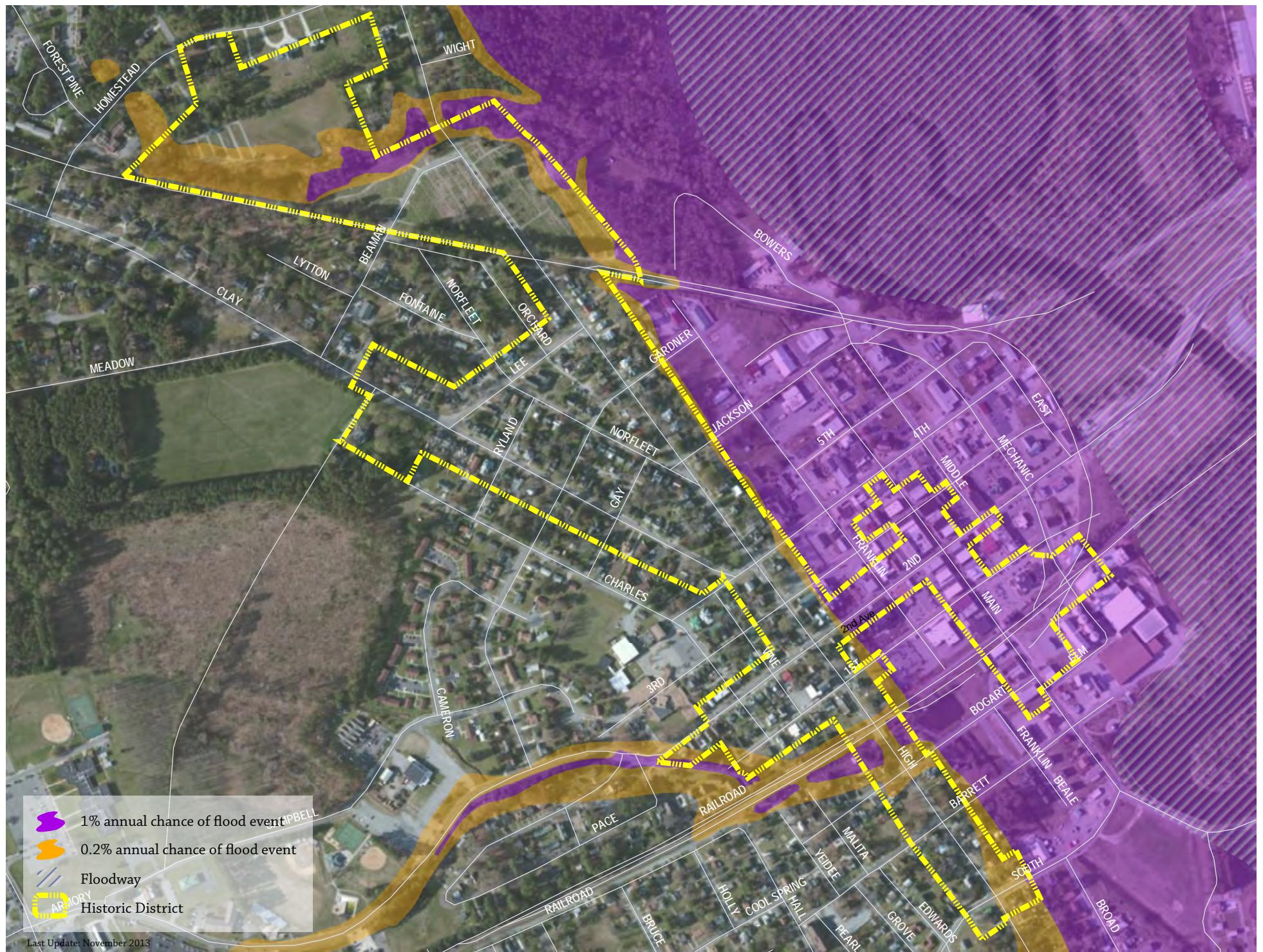
B-3 General Business

M-1 Light Industrial

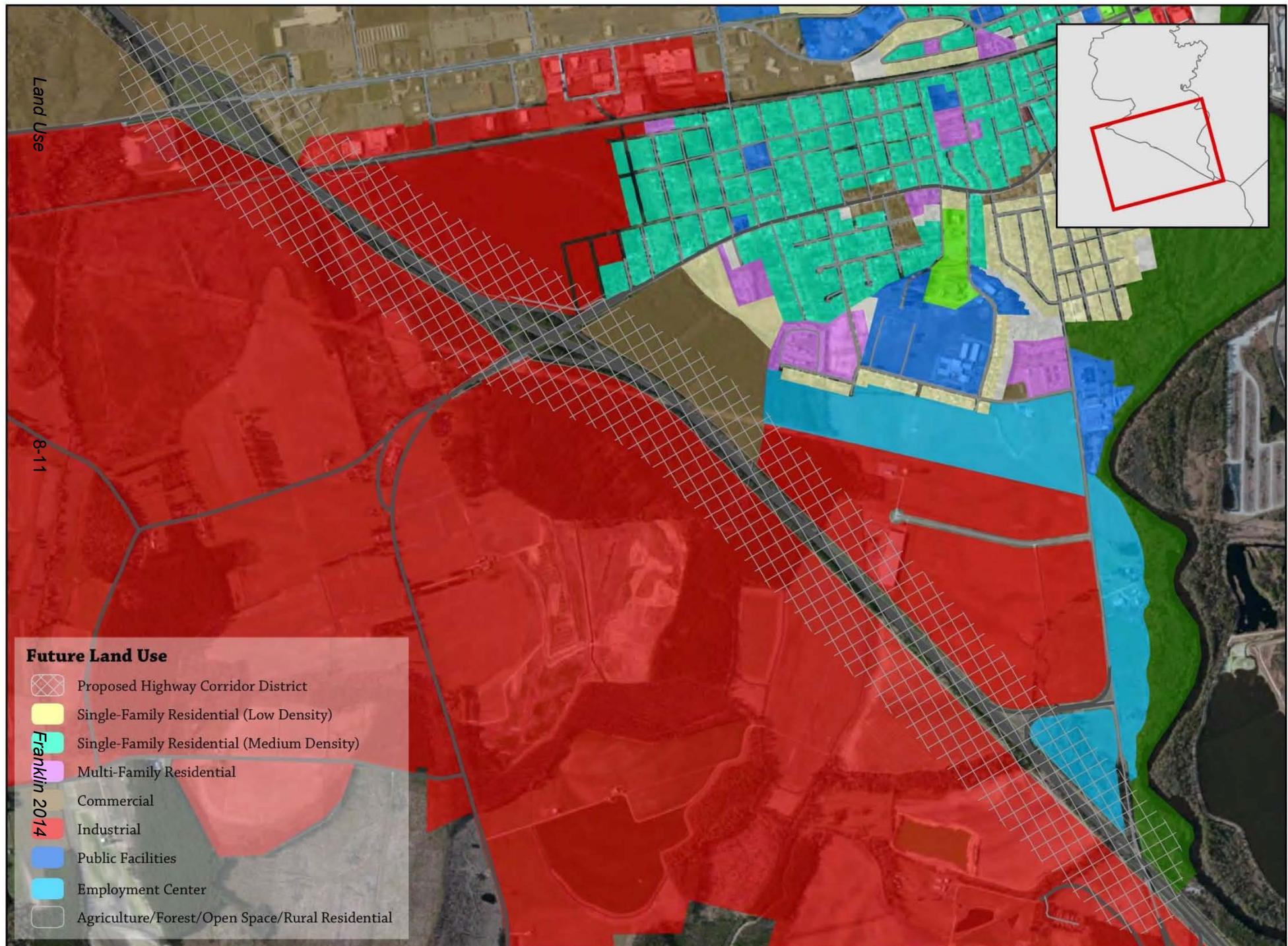
M-2 Heavy Industrial

R-C Conservation

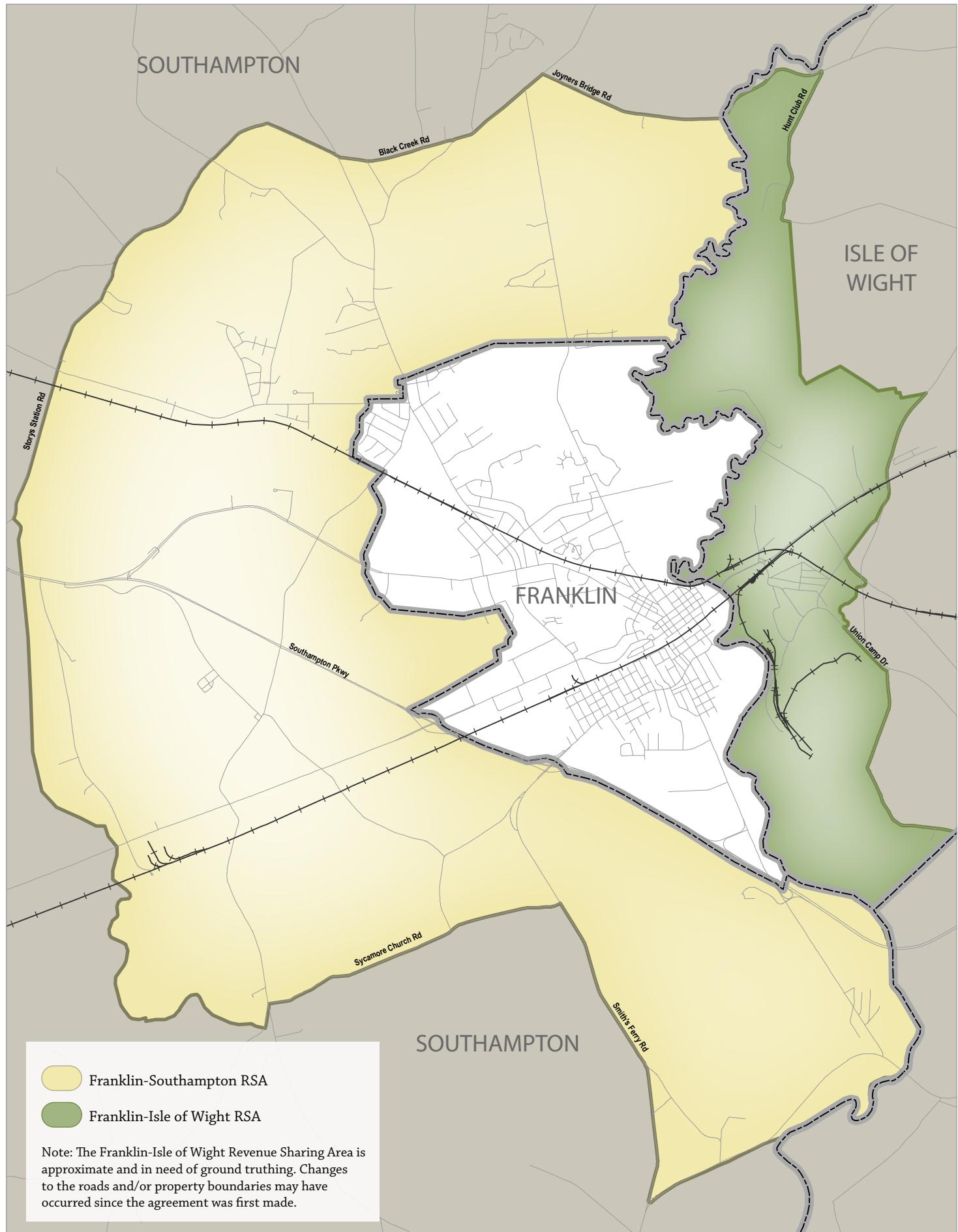
## MAP 8-3: FRANKLIN HISTORIC DISTRICT



## MAP 8-4: HIGHWAY CORRIDOR DISTRICT



## MAP 8-5: REVENUE SHARING AREAS



## MAP 8-6: FUTURE LAND USE

