



VIEWPOINTS

Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan

FINAL DRAFT
November 2011





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The name, ***Viewpoints***, refers to the beautiful views seen throughout the City of Buena Vista, but it also represents the varying ideas, or viewpoints, of its residents as a vision for the City's future was created through this plan.



Resources. Information for the 'Relationship to Other Plan Elements' comes from *Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning* as prepared by Minnesota Planning, September 2002.

This document was prepared by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) with the assistance of the Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan Committee. The CSPDC was chartered on September 30, 1969 and is comprised of five counties, five cities and eleven towns. For over forty years, the CSPDC has been providing assistance to local governments and their citizens with issues including land use planning and regulation, transportation, disaster mitigation and preparedness, solid waste management, economic development, water and waste water, emergency management, housing, water resource management and human services.



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Forward

This comprehensive plan, *Viewpoints*, is designed to be a readable, functional document that will guide the City of Buena Vista's development and redevelopment for the next 20 years. The comprehensive plan's function is to serve the people of Buena Vista by providing guidelines for a safe, livable, economically viable community with which they are proud to identify. The comprehensive plan is intended to respond dynamically to the changes that are inevitable over the next 20 years.

The City of Buena Vista, in the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, is surrounded by natural beauty. The City is situated on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Maury River, a major tributary of the James River. It is partially surrounded by the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests which provides numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation. Additional recreational opportunities are available at Glen Maury Park, a 315 acre multi-use park owned and operated by the City.



A major transportation network adds to this beautiful location. Interstates 64 and 81 intersect just a few miles outside of the City and provide local businesses with direct access to the markets of the Midwest and the East Coast. Additionally, Buena Vista is served directly by U.S. Routes 501 and 60 and indirectly by U.S. Route 11. One of the few entrances to the Blue Ridge Parkway is four miles east of the City. The City of Roanoke is within an hour's drive. The state capital of Richmond is 130 miles east and Washington, D.C. is 185 miles northeast.

Buena Vista's neighboring localities include the City of Lexington, six miles to the east, and Rockbridge County. Buena Vista is considered the traditional manufacturing nucleus of the region. There are four universities and colleges within eight miles of the City. Buena Vista itself is home to Southern Virginia University (SVU) and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC) Rockbridge Regional Center.

The name of Buena Vista's comprehensive plan, *Viewpoints*, refers to the captivating views throughout the City but also represents the varying ideas, or viewpoints, of its residents as it relates to Buena Vista's vision for growth and development. The comprehensive planning process provides the opportunity for residents to share their viewpoint and direct the City's future.

VIEWPOINTS

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the future physical development of the City. The plan considers current community goals and needs, anticipates change, and provides guidance for future actions. It reflects the results of citizen involvement, technical analysis, and the judgment of decision makers. The value in the comprehensive planning process is that the community is able to answer the following four key questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. Where do we want to be?
4. How will we get there?

Comprehensive plans as required for every locality under Section 15.2-2223 of the *Code of Virginia*. The comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by the Buena Vista City Council. Specifically, Section 15.2-2223 states the following about the purpose of the comprehensive plan:

The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

By requiring local governments to adopt a comprehensive plan, it is implied that local development issues are best handled at the local level of government and that the comprehensive plan is a means of doing this. Although not required until 1980, Buena Vista adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1967.

History of Buena Vista's Comprehensive Plan

- 1967 – Buena Vista's first comprehensive plan was prepared by the State Division of Planning.
- 1980 – The City updated the comprehensive plan with funds from a HUD Comprehensive Planning Assistance 701 Grant.
- 1989 – The comprehensive plan was revised with the assistance of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.
- 1995 – The City's Planning Commission was directed to review and modify the 1989 Plan. Census data from 1990 was used to update and analyze current data and trends. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission provided technical assistance.

Plan Structure

The comprehensive plan is organized into several chapters, or elements. A glance at the Table of Contents reveals that the elements of the comprehensive plan address every aspect of the community. Each element except for Chapter 1, Population Characteristics, consists of Strategies for Action.

Goals are broad statements of community aspirations related to an element.

Critical success factors are policy statements that guide land use review, development decision, and operational programs that will be pursued in achieving goals.

Implementation strategies are representative approaches to policy implementation aimed at achieving goals.

The Strategies for Action are provided in table format to promote their review. The implementation strategies are a checklist to measure progress in meeting the goals of the plan. They are to be reviewed on an annual basis with the City Manager responsible for completing this process. A status report on the comprehensive plan will be presented to City Council each year.

The elements of the comprehensive plan contain accompanying maps, charts, descriptive information, and strategies for action. Together, this offers an overview of the present and future needs of the locality, but it also does the following:

- It provides a vehicle for local government officials and residents to express their goals for the future of their community.
- It is a means to anticipate and constructively address the inevitable changes occurring within a community.
- It improves the likelihood that decisions affecting a community's development will be based on the desires and needs of its residents.
- It promotes consistency in decision-making by facilitating reasonable and well-informed decisions and removing the potential for discrimination in the decision process against individual landowners.
- It provides a guide with which the City Council, Planning Commission, and staff may reasonably evaluate development proposals.
- It serves as the basis for more detailed ordinances developed to implement the plan.
- It helps to provide direction for allocating community resources to meet identified needs and protect public investments.

VIEWPOINTS**Plan Development**

At the end of 2008, an eleven-member advisory Comprehensive Plan Committee was appointed to update the City's comprehensive plan. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) assisted the City with the update of the plan. The committee was represented by citizens, City Council members, City Planning Commission members, and City staff. The members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee are listed below.

Comprehensive Plan Committee	
Mr. Lewis Plogger	City Council
Mr. Larry Tolley	City Council
Mr. Tim Petrie	Planning Commission
Mr. Mike Ohleger	Planning Commission
Mr. Richard Roberts	Citizen
Mr. Todd Jones	Citizen
Mr. Robert Huch	Southern Virginia University
Mrs. Lucy Ferrebee	Citizen, Planning Commission
Mr. Tim Dudley	Staff (2008-July 2011)
Mr. Tim Reamer	Staff (2008-April 2010)
Mr. Brian Brown	Staff (May 2010-completion)
Mr. Robert Luke	Staff

The Executive Director of the Lexington-Rockbridge County Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sammy Moore, also participated with committee. The committee met monthly to direct the planning process, gather information, and draft the comprehensive plan.

Residents and property owners in Buena Vista were contacted about the comprehensive plan process and encouraged to participate. The Comprehensive Plan Committee directed a number of activities to inform residents and businesses about the planning process. Specific outreach activities included the following:

Website. Updates on the comprehensive plan development process were available on the City's website, www.buenavistavirginia.org.

Newsletter. Updates were periodically announced in the City's newsletter to residents.

Survey. A comprehensive survey was mailed with water bills in February 2009. A copy of the survey and its results are included in the Appendix.

Community Meeting. A public input meeting was held at the Parry McClure High School on May 19, 2009. The meeting provided an opportunity for residents and businesses to learn about the planning process and to participate in identifying the strengths of the City and needed changes. Responses from the community meeting are presented in the Appendix.



Display. A poster display was presented at Mountain Days in 2010 and later shown at the Municipal Building. The poster described the benefits of a comprehensive plan, its contents, and ways for residents and businesses to be involved in the planning process.

Plan Implementation

Adopting a comprehensive plan is the first step toward realizing the City's vision. The comprehensive plan contains the policy wording which provides for monitoring, evaluating, and amending the plan as community needs change. The implementation strategies, outlined at the end of the chapters, set forth a plan for implementing Buena Vista's vision for the next 20 years. A priority designation was identified for each strategy.

Action Strategy Implementation Guide

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Policies specified in this comprehensive plan are the foundation for decision making. However, policies are not applied in isolation but weighed in relation to other relevant policies. They are considered in the context of the goal that they are intended to achieve. Finally, the implementation strategies noted in each chapter of the plan are not exhaustive. Other strategies may be used in the future.

Because comprehensive plans are intended to be long-range, they must be flexible enough to change or be revised as the City undergoes change over time. The plan does not provide specific regulations or restrictions. It does, however, provide the framework for implementing appropriate ordinances and policies. It is these that help bring the plan to reality.

VIEWPOINTS

The successful implementation of the goals and strategies will depend upon the fiscal climate in any given year and making regular reviews and reprioritization an essential component of the implementation phase. As long-term changes in land uses, regional trends or the economic climate occur, implementation of the City's vision will require re-assessment. The comprehensive plan is part of an ongoing planning process, and as such, the *Code of Virginia* requires that the plan be reviewed at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. This requirement assures that the plan reflects current conditions and values.

CHAPTER 1

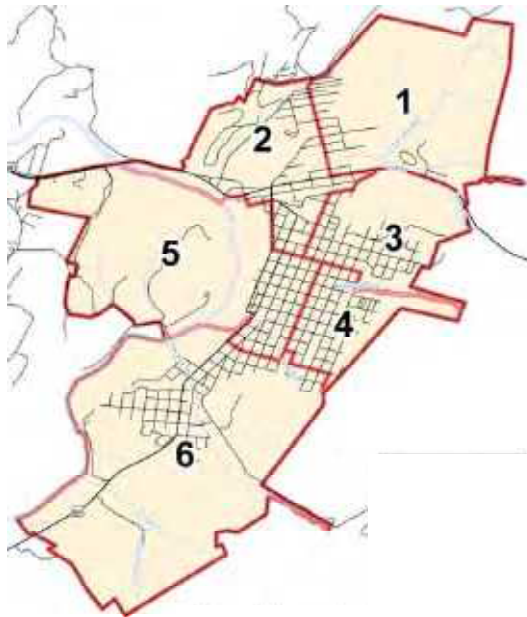
Population Characteristics

Population analysis and projections are fundamental to planning decisions. Past, current, and projected population information is important for understanding the changes that are taking place and providing the ability to act on those changes. Identifying demographic trends is necessary for determining the future demand on public facilities, community services, housing, employment, and land. Policy decisions are based on this information.

The source of the population data varies. Much of the data in this chapter comes from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Additional data sources for this chapter include the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Virginia Employment Commission, and various state agencies.

To better understand the population characteristics of Buena Vista, comparative data is offered for Virginia and the neighboring localities of Rockbridge County and the City of Lexington. Furthermore, the data for Buena Vista is shown at a couple of different geographic levels, census tract and block group. The city's boundary corresponds to the census tract boundary. The Census tract is divided into six block groups as shown below.

Map 1.1
Census Block Groups, 2010
Buena Vista



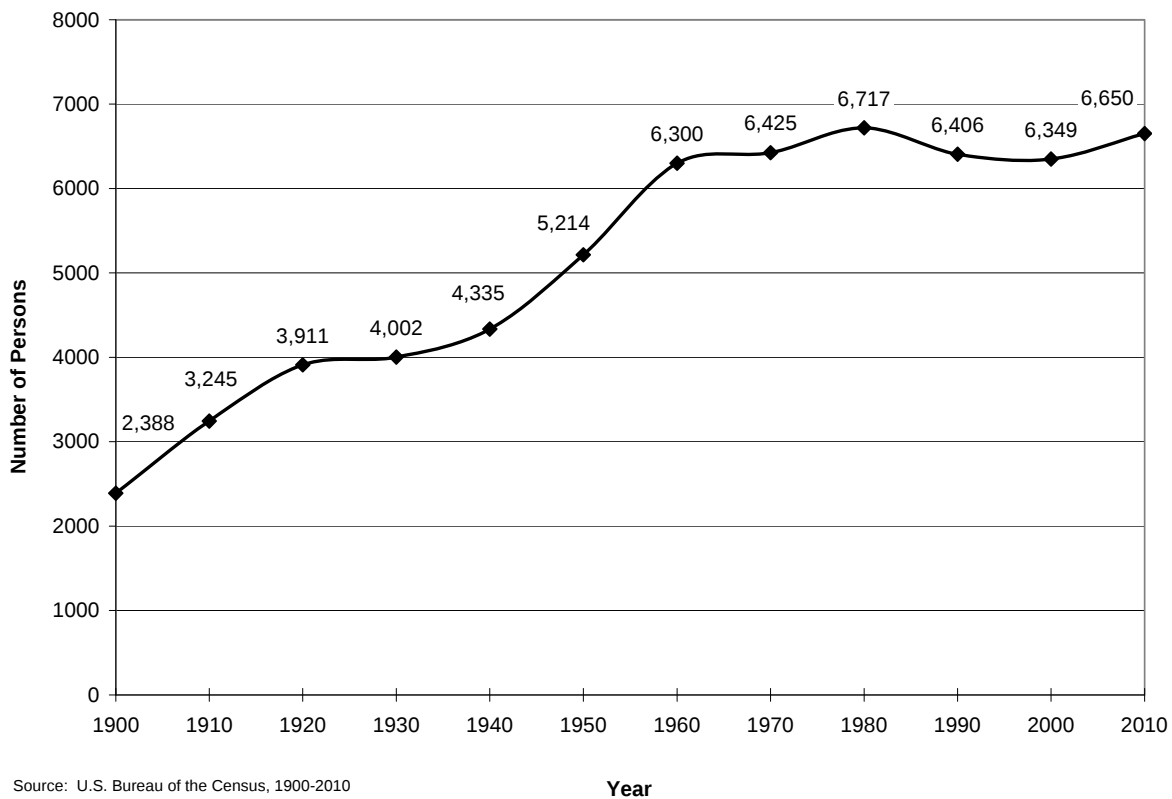
Population Characteristics

POPULATION TRENDS

Total Population

The City of Buena Vista grew between 1900 and 1980, increasing from 2,388 to its peak population of 6,717 people. The biggest jump in population occurred between 1950 and 1960. During this decade, the population increased by over a 1,000 people, a 20 percent increase.

Figure 1.1
Population 1900-2010
Buena Vista



Since 1960, the population of the City has remained fairly constant. Estimates during the 2000s indicate only small fluctuations in the number of residents. Between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census, the population increased by 4.7 percent (Figure 1.1). Over this same time, the population of Lexington increased by 2.5 percent or 175 people, and the population of Rockbridge County increased by 7.2 percent or 1,499 people.

Table 1.1
Population Estimates, 2000-2010
Buena Vista

Year	Population
2000 Census	6,349
2001	6,297
2002	6,274
2003	6,242
2004	6,474
2005	6,488
2006	6,597
2007	6,406
2008	6,649
2009	6,649
2010 Census	6,650

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Intercensal Estimates, February 2011

This slow growth pattern for Buena Vista is not anticipated to change. According to projections by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the population of Buena Vista is expected to grow only slightly over the next 20 years. The VEC projection is based on historical trends and does not reflect anticipated increased student enrollment at Southern Virginia University. Furthermore, the projections have not been updated since the release of 2010 Census data. The 2010 Census population exceeded the VEC 2010 projected population by about 200 people. Consequently, Buena Vista's population is expected to grow more than shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2
Population Change, 1990-2030
Buena Vista

Year	Buena Vista Population	Buena Vista Percent Change (%)	Virginia Percent Change (%)
1990 Census	6,406		
2000 Census	6,349	-0.89	14.40
2010 Projected	6,451	1.61	13.16
2020 Projected	6,569	1.83	11.32
2030 Projected	6,697	1.95	10.18

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, 2009. Please note that projections do not reflect 2010 Census data released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Population Characteristics

The population of the Buena Vista-Lexington-Rockbridge area is expected to increase modestly between 2010 and 2030 (Table 1.3). The projections released by Woods and Poole Economics reflect a greater population increase than the VEC projections. VEC projections anticipate a 10.1 percent increase in the population from 2000 to 2030 while Woods and Poole projections expect a 16.1 percent increase for the area. Both project most of the growth to be in Rockbridge County. In comparison to the area totals, the growth for the state between 2000 and 2030 is 38.8 percent or 48.8 percent as projected by VEC and Woods and Poole, respectively. As for Buena Vista, the 2010 Census population for the Lexington-Buena Vista-Rockbridge area, 35,999, exceeded the 2010 projection by either source.

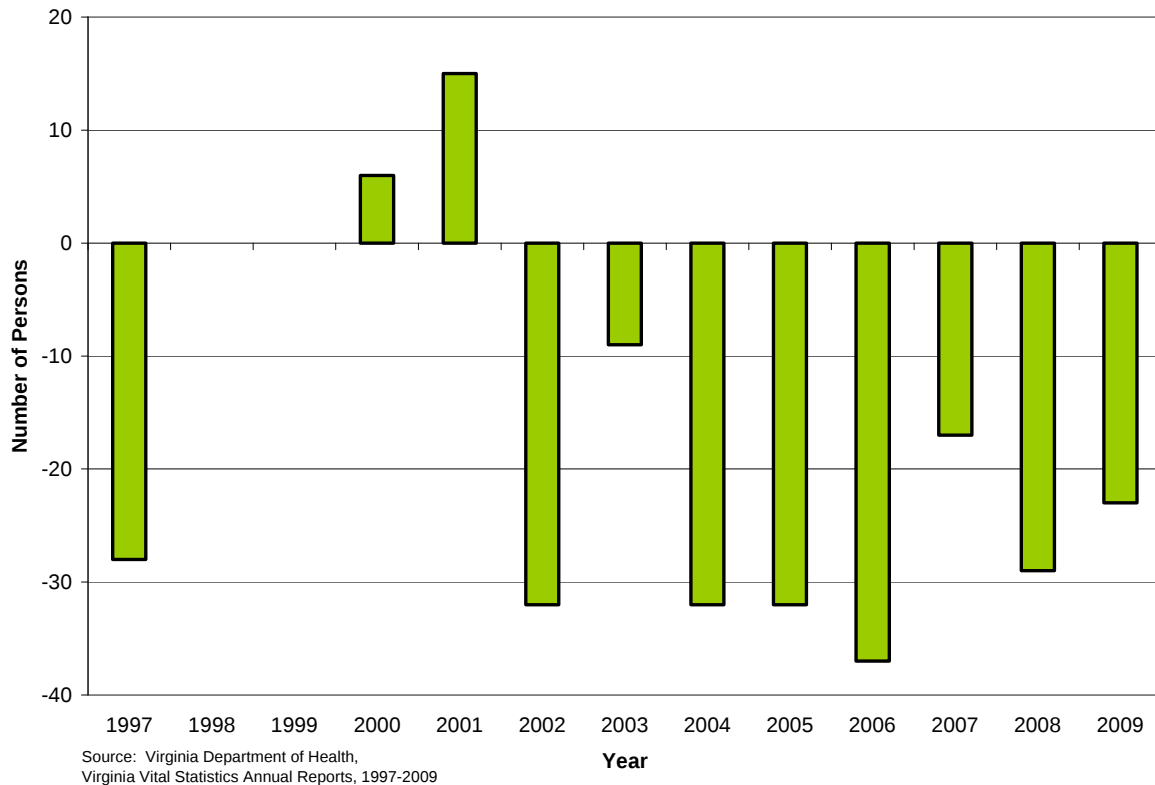
Table 1.3
Population Estimates, 2010-2030
Lexington-Buena Vista-Rockbridge County

Year	VEC Projection	Percent Change (%)	Woods & Poole Projection	Percent Change (%)
2000 Census	34,024		34,016	
2010 Projected	35,020	2.9	35,556	4.5
2020 Projected	36,154	3.2	37,495	5.5
2030 Projected	37,475	3.7	39,485	5.3

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, 2008 State Profile. Please note that projections do not reflect 2010 Census data released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Although the total population of the City has changed little over the last decade, people are migrating to the City. The total population numbers are influenced by the age of the population. As seen in Figure 1.2, there are more deaths of residents than births. Consequently, the modest population growth is from migration. The change in population between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census was 301 persons. The change due to natural increase (births – deaths) was -197. The net migration during this time was 498.

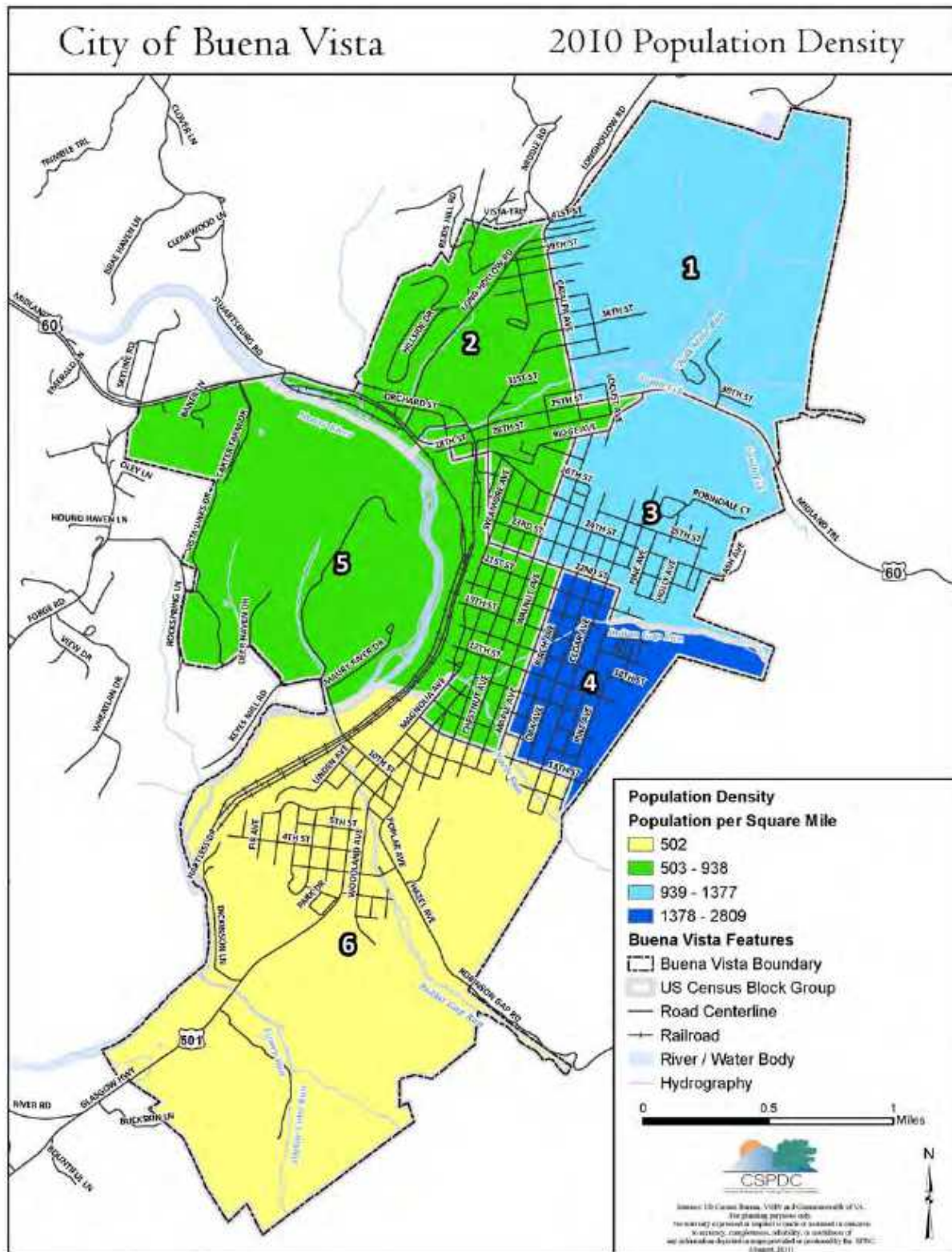
Figure 1.2
Natural Increase, 1997-2009
Buena Vista



Population Density

Population density is the average number of persons per square mile of land area. The number is derived by dividing the total number of residents by the number of square miles of land area in the specified geographic area. The population density for the City of Buena Vista is 979 persons per square mile. The most densely populated Census block group is Block Group 4 with 2,806 persons per square mile. (Map 1.2)

Map 1.2



Age

It is important to look at the age structure of the City. As people progress from one age group to another, their needs change and their role in the community changes. Median age is an initial indicator of changes in a community's age groups (Table 1.4). Buena Vista and Lexington were the only two localities in the Central Shenandoah Planning District that had a lower median age in 2010 than in 2000. From 2000 to 2010, the median age of Buena Vista's population decreased very slightly. The median age of Lexington continues to be low because of the presence of the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. Unlike the cities, however, Rockbridge County showed a marked increase in its median age.

Table 1.4
Median Age

	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	36.5	37.9	37.6
Lexington	23.6	23.3	22.8
Rockbridge County	36.7	40.4	46.5
Virginia	32.7	35.7	37.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census

Figure 1.3 shows the age structure of Buena Vista over time, from 1990-2030. Additionally, Map 1.3 shows the age distribution by Census block group for 2010.

Map 1.3

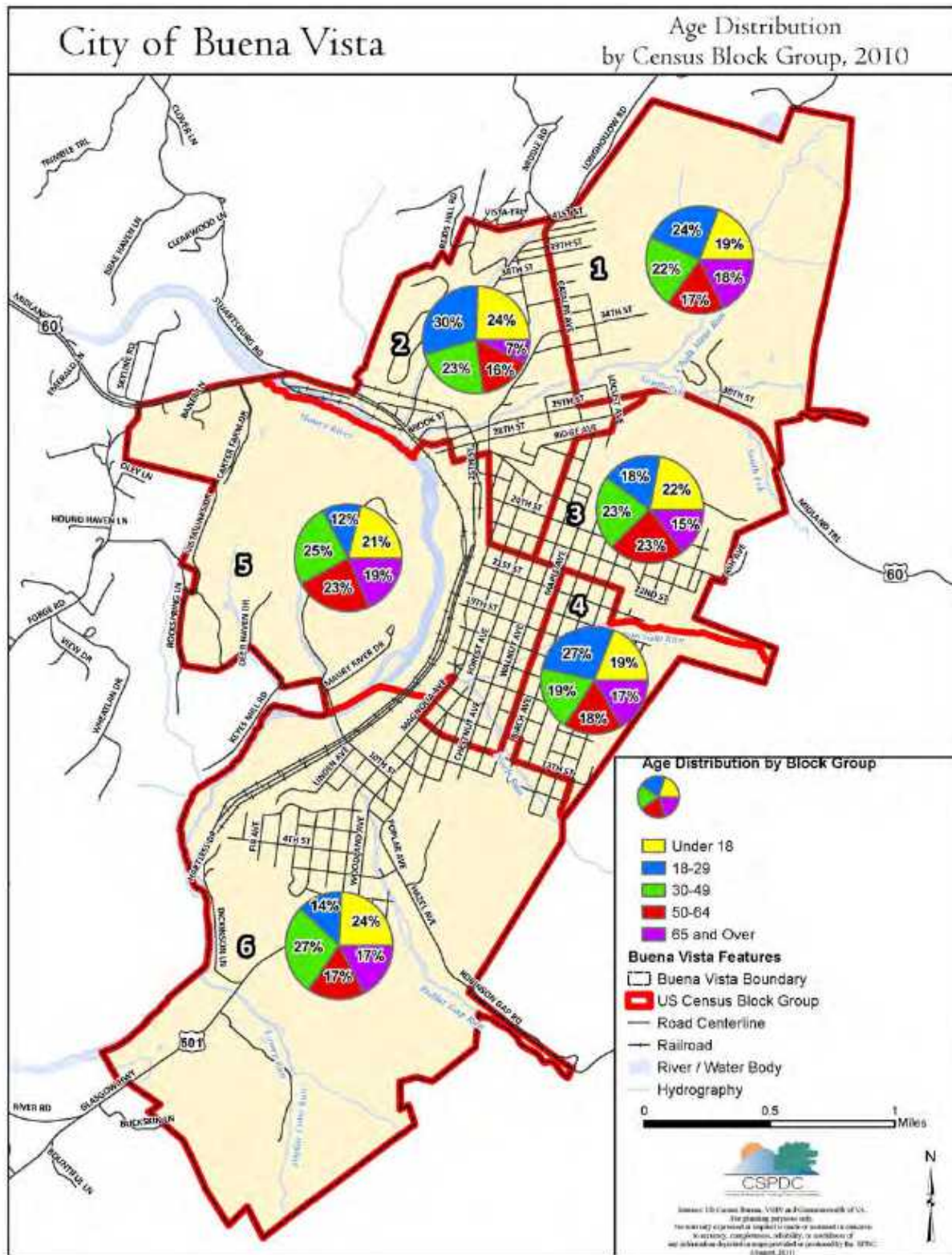
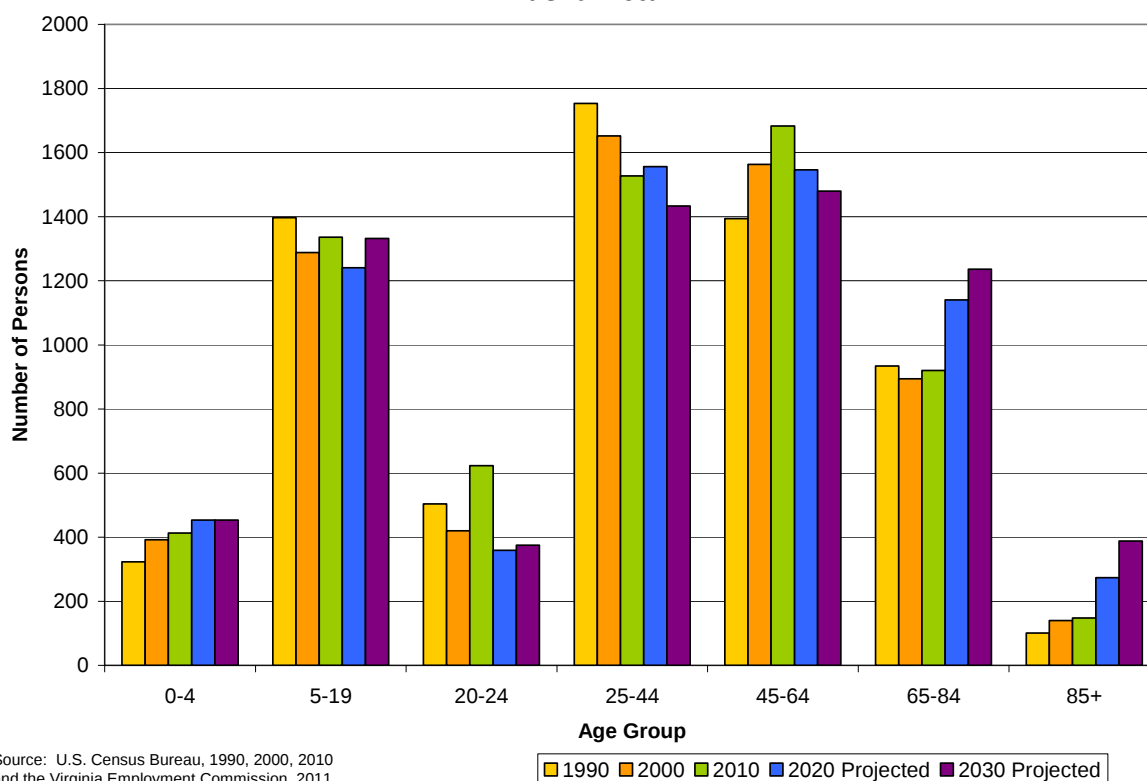


Figure 1.3
Population by Age Group, 1990-2030
Buena Vista



As seen in Figure 1.3, above, the number of people in the 0-4, 5-19, and 20-24 age groups increased between the decennial censuses. The growth in these three younger age groups is balanced with increases in the older age groups. The only age group with a decline in number of people was the 25-44, a particularly important age group as it relates to the workforce.

Buena Vista has the greatest percentage of younger persons in the area. Buena Vista, Lexington, and Rockbridge County all have a lower percentage of persons under 18 years of age than Virginia (Table 1.5). Understanding the trends within the under 18 population is helpful when planning for school facilities and programs as well as recreational facilities and activities. The distribution of the under 18 years of age population is shown by Census block group on Map 1.4.

Population Characteristics

Table 1.5
Percentage of Population under 18 Years

	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	21.7	22.5	21.4
Lexington	11.7	11.0	10.1
Rockbridge County	22.9	22.2	19.1
Virginia	24.3	24.6	23.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census

The 20-24 age group, which includes college-aged persons and younger-aged workers, shows a sharp increase from 2000 to 2010 (Figure 1.3). This reflects increased enrollment at Southern Virginia University (SVU) during the last decade. Because SVU anticipates this trend to continue, this age group likely will exceed current 2020 and 2030 projections.

Looking at the population structure shown in Figure 1.3, the 25-44 age group generally shows a continued decline in its size over the next 20 years. Additionally, the number of persons 45-64 years old is expected to decline between 2010 and 2030 even though this age group has increased in the past. This is noteworthy because the 25-64 age group is a significant segment of the workforce.

In 2010, the percentage of the total population 65 years and older was 16.1 percent (Table 1.6). As a share of its population, the 65 and older age group has changed very little over the last two decades. However, this is expected to change. This age group is projected to comprise nearly a quarter of Buena Vista's population, 24.2 percent, in 2030. The distribution of those 65 years and older may be seen on Map 1.5.

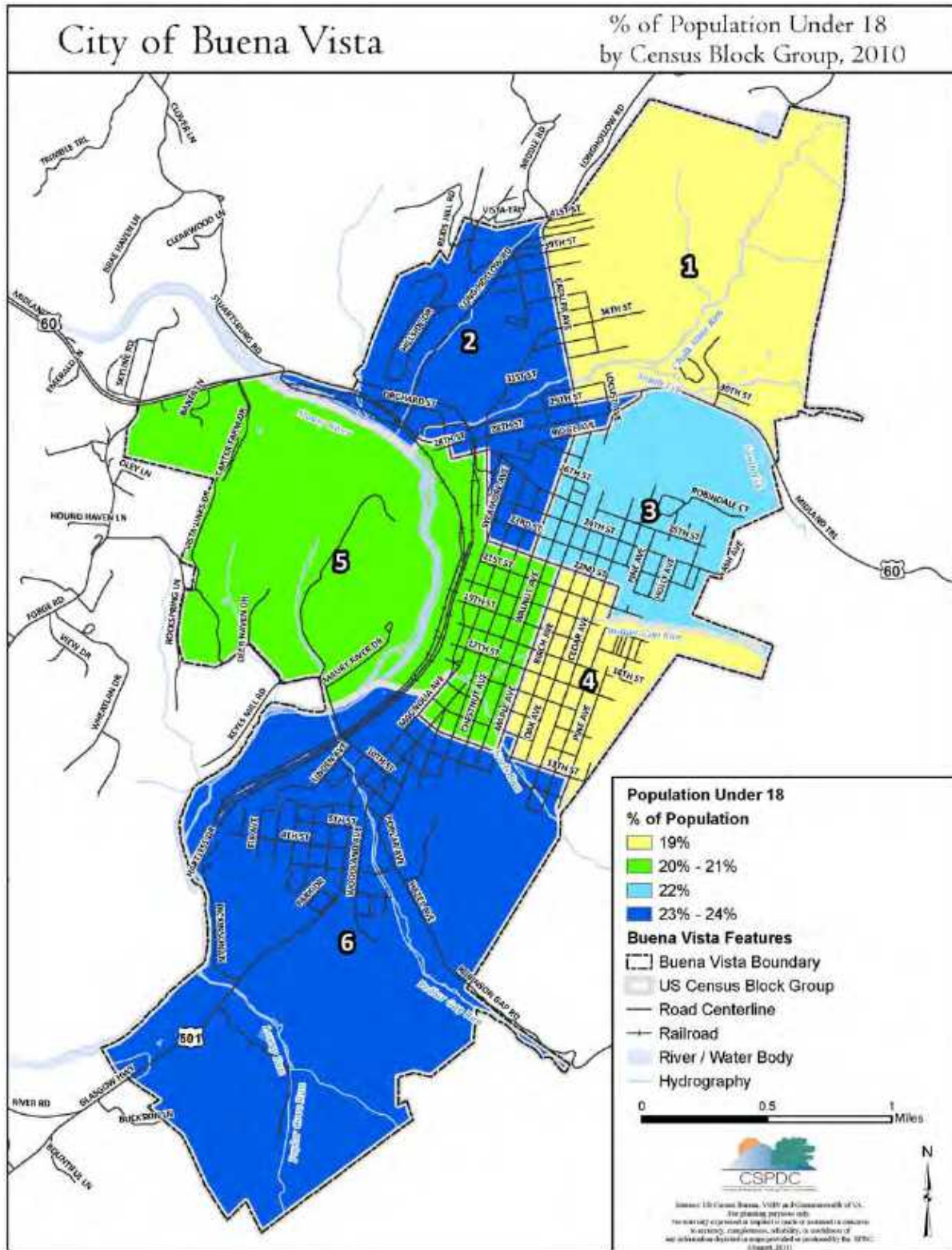
Table 1.6
Percentage of Population 65 Years and Over

	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	16.2	16.3	16.1
Lexington	14.9	16.4	15.3
Rockbridge County	13.9	15.7	20.7
Virginia	10.7	11.2	12.2

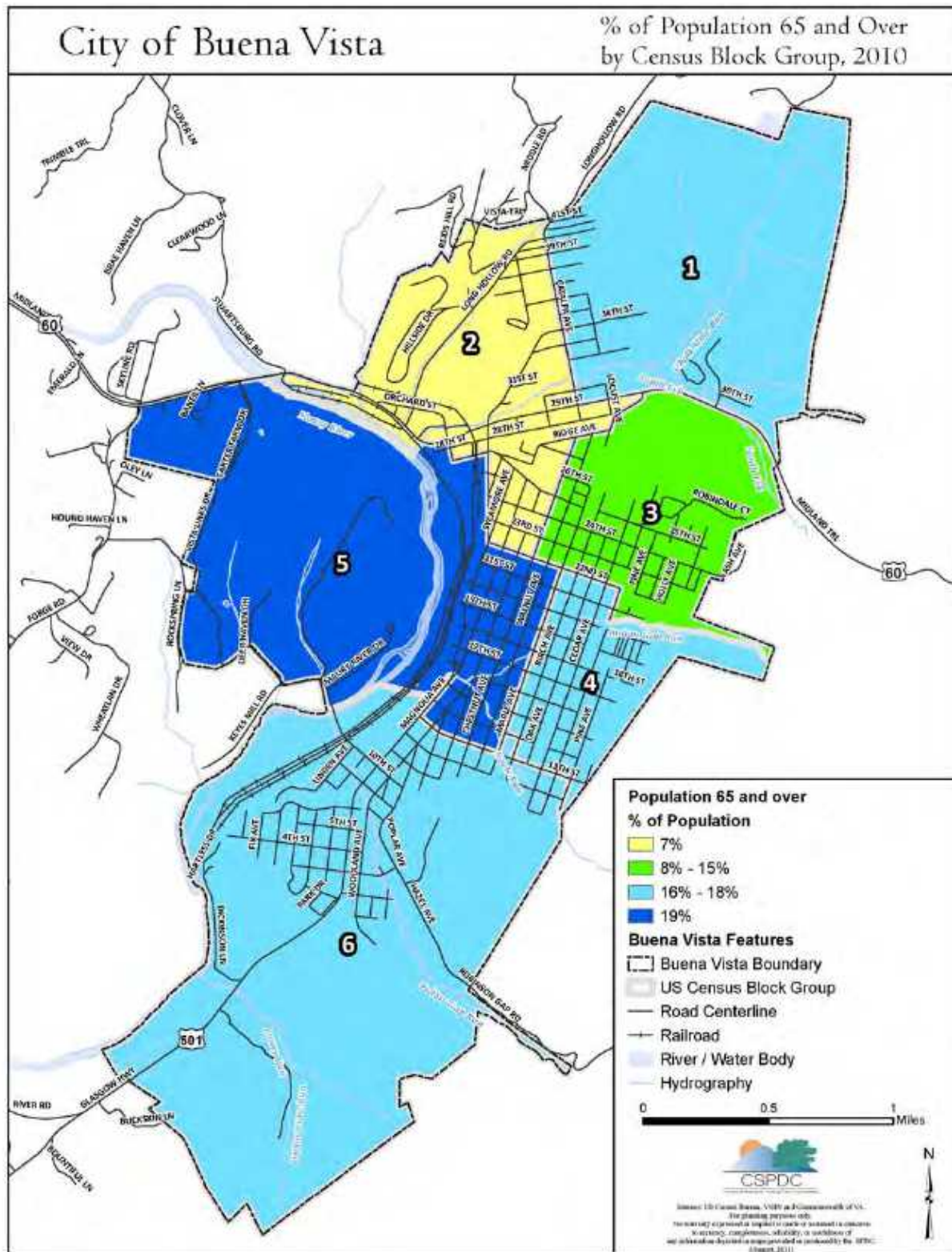
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census

Consideration of the aging trend, sometimes referred to as the "age wave," is important when planning for community services and workforce preparedness. Although the aging trend presents challenges, it may be seen as an opportunity. Examples include economic activities that address the needs and wants of an aging population, recreational and cultural amenities, workforce mentorship, and community volunteerism.

Map 1.4



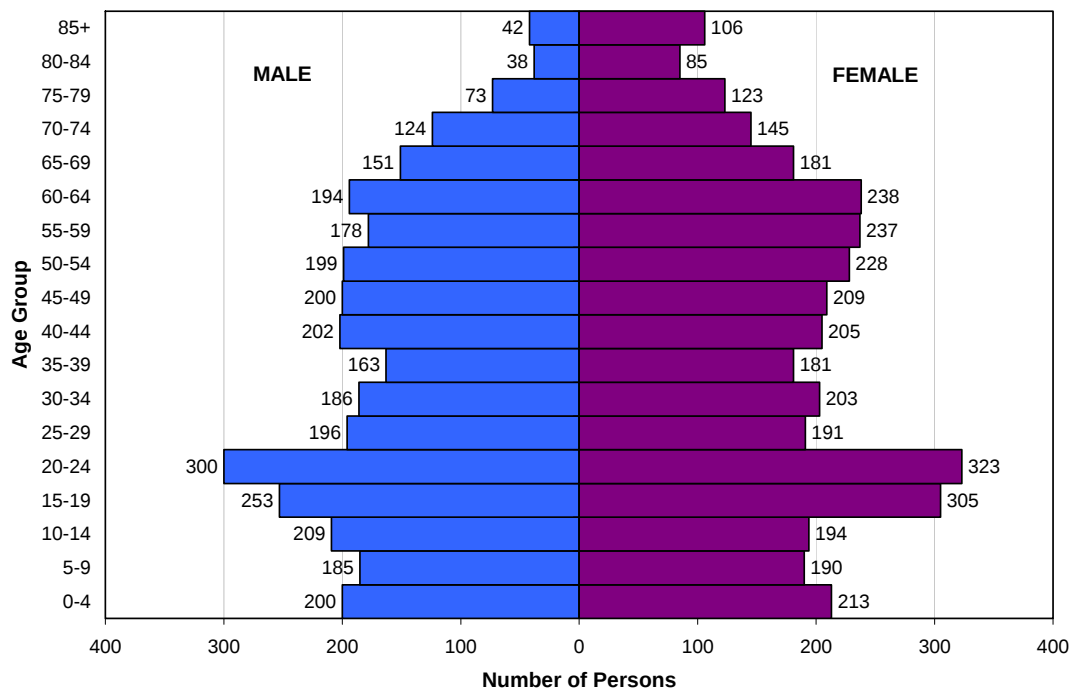
Map 1.5



Male/Female Distribution

The 2010 Census indicated that 46.5 percent of Buena Vista's population is male and 53.5 percent is female. The percentage of females in Buena Vista is higher than that of Virginia (50.9 percent). In Buena Vista, there are more females than males in every age group except for 25-29 years and 10-14 years of age (Figure 1.4). The difference between males and females in these groups is slight. The population pyramid also clearly shows the increase in the number of 15-24 year olds.

Figure 1.4
Population Distribution by Sex and Age, 2010
Buena Vista



Race and Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of Buena Vista's population is shown in Table 1.7. In 2010, 91 percent of the City's population was White and about 5 percent was Black or African American.

Population Characteristics

Table 1.7
Race and Ethnicity, 2010
Buena Vista

	2000 Census		2010 Census	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Total Population	6,349	100.0	6,650	100.0
Race				
White	5,940	93.6	6,050	91.0
Black or African American	305	4.8	347	5.2
American Indian and Alaska Native	19	0.3	73	1.1
Asian	27	0.4	29	0.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	0.02	12	0.2
Other and Multi-Race	57	0.9	111	1.7
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	64	1.0	103	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2010 Census

Notes: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding. Census data prior to Census 2000 was not used because it cannot be compared to later data. Census 2000 was the first census in which more than one race could be selected.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

This population analysis has identified the following trends:

- Buena Vista's population growth is expected to be slow but steady.
- Population growth is from net migration.
- The number of 15-24 year olds is increasing primarily due to growth at Southern Virginia University.
- The age group that is declining is the workforce age group.

Population Characteristics

Comprehensive plans are prepared using a framework of population, household, and economic data. Economic data is provided in Chapter 5, Economy, and additional household information may be found in Chapter 4, Housing. Understanding the dynamics of Buena Vista's population is essential to plan effectively and efficiently for the needs of the City during the next ten to twenty years. Knowing these trends will assist the City's leaders in making better decisions for its residents.

Because of the rapid growth of Southern Virginia University and the increasing 65 and older population, it will be important for the City to follow its population trends. Although these trends were considered in this comprehensive plan, the comprehensive plan will need to periodically be updated to reflect actual population changes and their accompanying implications. This review and update will keep the comprehensive plan relevant.

CHAPTER 2

Historic Resources

The purpose of the historic resources element in the comprehensive plan is to complement land use planning by providing guidance for the identification and protection of Buena Vista's historic resources. The plan recognizes that stewardship of cultural resources is a responsibility of the entire community. Historic resources give Buena Vista its unique character and distinguish it from other localities.

Historic resources include structures and sites, community landmarks, archaeological and cultural sites, and the historic environment in which they exist. They serve as visual reminders of Buena Vista's past, providing a link to its cultural heritage and a better understanding of the people and events which shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these resources makes it possible for them to continue to play an integral, vital role in the City and surrounding Rockbridge County.

Because historic resources are irreplaceable, they should be protected from deterioration and the intrusion of incompatible land uses. The reuse of facilities and utilities is often less expensive than demolition and new construction. The preservation and the reuse of historic structures also may attract tourism and promotes a quality of life that industry, new businesses, and residents find attractive in communities.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Housing. Historic buildings can be modified for affordable housing or mixed-use opportunities.

Economy. Rehabilitated historic buildings generate new tax revenues, increase employment and provide improved spaces for retail, offices, housing, lodging and entertainment.

Transportation. The design of road improvements and parking standards should consider the traditional, historic design of the City.

Land Use. Zoning ordinances should be compatible with and promote the protection of historic resources.

Historic Resources

BUENA VISTA'S STORY

The land that is now the City of Buena Vista has a history of development dating over 100 years before the beginnings of a formal city. The area's natural resources attracted settlers to the area. The area had abundant wildlife, tall timber, a free-flowing river, and mineral deposits. The bottom lands were shielded by mountains and the climate was moderate.

In 1745, Benjamin Borden received a nearly 100,000 acre land grant from Governor Gooch that included what would become Rockbridge County. Recognizing that the area was rich with potential, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and Germans from Pennsylvania began settling the area. In 1778, the Virginia House of Burgesses carved a new county, named Rockbridge, from the counties of Augusta and Botetourt. Rockbridge County was named for its most distinguishing feature, the Natural Bridge. Lexington became the county seat.

Iron furnaces dotted the area and were fed by the rich ore that was obtained from nearby mines and fueled by the surrounding timber. The Buena Vista Furnace property was the site of the first iron furnace in the area, built in 1778 by the McCluer family. Additionally, large farming operations with mills, both planing and grist, used the readily available water power of the area's rivers and streams. Log homes and churches were built.

By 1801, the James River Company had built twenty miles of sluices. This linked Rockbridge County to Richmond by way of the James River. As a result, pig iron and produced goods could be transported to eastern markets. Although suitable for hauling freight, the small flat-bottomed bateaux were not fit for passenger travel. The James River & Kanawha Company (JR&KC) built a canal on the James River and replaced the bateau with more stable freighters and packet (passenger) boats that were towed by teams of mules or horses. By 1851, the North River Navigation Company began construction of locks and dams along the North River (now called the Maury River) to connect Lexington to the JR&KC canal. Freight service began in 1852, but passenger service to Richmond did not begin until late in 1860. Boat landings sprang up at the locks necessary for the operation of the canal. Paxton, Laird, and Moomaw all built landings to serve both travelers and residents alike. John "Jockey" Robinson built a tavern on his 400-acre farm, Hart's Bottom, to entertain travelers who were making their way to Lynchburg. Benjamin Moomaw had inherited Green Forest from his father and tried to sell the 600+ acres as farmland. When he determined that the land's value would increase due to the canal construction, he retained the property. Remnants of the canal system are still in place today. Among them is the Moomaw Dam, adjacent to the former Bontex site.

Historic Resources

Following the Civil War years, efforts to rebuild began. Damage to the canal was repaired and goods began to flow eastward. Northern capitalists recognized the opportunity presented by investment in devalued properties. Additionally, railroads were now regarded as vital to future economic development. Competition to attract rail companies to invest in the area was fierce. The development of Big Lick into the City of Roanoke, due to the arrival of the Norfolk and Western railways, prompted local businessmen to seek the same development for the Rockbridge area.

Rail systems were intent on expanding to serve growing markets. In 1880, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad (SVR) converged with the Richmond & Allegheny (R&A) alongside the North River. A small station was opened at Green Forest, the land owned by Benjamin Moomaw. Green Forest was also near the confluence of Chalk Mine Run and the North River. Moomaw was successful in securing several industries for Green Forest. These included a tannery, canning factory, planing mill, and pulp mill. The village was in the northern part of today's City. Its boundaries were the area of present-day Beech Avenue, Factory Street, Brook Street, Canal Street, 29th Street, and Allegheny Avenue.

When the Shenandoah Valley Railroad went into receivership in 1887, it seemed that Moomaw's dream of a larger city would fail. When SVR's assets were acquired by the Norfolk and Western Railway, however, business leaders of Rockbridge were poised to capitalize on the opportunity. Moomaw enlisted Charles F. Jordan (son of Samuel Jordan) and Alexander T. Barclay, Lexington/Rockbridge County business leaders, to support his effort to develop a city. In January 1889, the three men founded the Buena Vista Company to promote the development of iron resources, to use the water power of the North River, and to create an industrial and manufacturing center. A prospectus was published extolling the area's assets. The land had long supported mining, and it was known that there were many mineral deposits in the area. Additionally, the merits of the dense forests, river, mild climate, fertile soil and refined society were touted.

The joint stock company was organized by mid-January 1889. As stock was sold, funds became available for the company to purchase lands for the development of a city. These purchases included Hart's Bottom from W.S. Gurnee of New York who had acquired the property shortly after the Civil War, Green Forest from Moomaw, and the Buena Vista Furnace property which had been acquired by the Jordan family in 1848. By February 1, 1889, all of the stock had been sold for a total of \$400,000.

Buena Vista was a planned city. Land was cleared and laid out in lots of either 25 or 50 feet in width based on location and the intended use of the property, business or residential. The lots were 125 feet deep. The streets were 75 feet wide and generally conformed to the cardinal points of the compass. The twenty six north-south avenues were given the names of trees. The east-west streets were numbered from 1st to 41st. The laid out area was approximately 900 acres. The business center was established next to the river along the railroad tracks, while the residential section was established toward the Blue Ridge and

Historic Resources

spread somewhat onto some of its lower foothills. Alleys allowed utilities to be delivered to the rear of structures, keeping the streets unobstructed. The new city featured gas and electricity as well as water and sewer services. An electric light company was among the city's first industries.

Building began at a phenomenal rate. The Buena Vista Hotel opened on July 1, 1889, on an elevated site overlooking the town. The primary purpose of the hotel was to house the financiers and speculators visiting the executives of the Buena Vista Company. One year later, the hotel was destroyed by fire. The construction of a new and grander hotel quickly began. The hotel is presently the main building on the campus of Southern Virginia University. In October of 1889, the Buena Vista Company announced that it would construct its office building at 2110 Magnolia Avenue. The building was completed in May 1890. Two blocks east of the Buena Vista Company's building, the Union Depot of the Shenandoah Valley and Richmond and Alleghany railroads was constructed on Sycamore Avenue. The construction of these two important buildings guaranteed that 21st Street and adjacent blocks would become the commercial heart of the city.

Recruiting industry was central to the continued development of the city. A.T. Barclay, president of the Buena Vista Company, offered free land to companies willing to locate in the city. He traveled throughout America and telegraphed reports of his success which were reported by the *Lexington Gazette* and the *Buena Vista Advocate*. At the first annual meeting of the company, a surplus of \$1,027,592.25 was reported. The dividends from the first year were not paid to the stockholders. They were used to fund the construction of water and electric facilities. Real estate sales moved briskly. At the beginning of the boom in 1890, lot values escalated 100 percent in two weeks.

Buena Vista was part of a greater land boom. During the 1800s, 'boom towns' sprang up in western Virginia. The 'boom' was the rapid economic development that resulted from the construction of rail lines into Southwest Virginia and West Virginia coal fields and other areas of natural resources. This boom came late to Rockbridge County, the end of the 1800s, but it sparked growth and Northern investment in the existing community of Lexington and in the new communities of Glasgow, Goshen, and Buena Vista.

Buena Vista soon became the center of the land boom in Rockbridge County, and it was during this time that Buena Vista assumed its role as an industrial city. Organized by the Buena Vista Company, the Buena Vista Iron Works Company started operation on December 12, 1890. Approximately 250 men were employed at the furnace and mines that produced about 100 tons of pig iron per day. The Alexander K. Rarig Company manufactured boilers, engines, and furnaces from the pig iron produced by the Buena Vista Furnace. The Virginia Basic Steel Company, which converted pig iron into steel, was also located within the corporate limits.

Historic Resources

There were other types of industries besides those connected to the mining and production of iron ore. Probably the most conspicuous was the Buena Vista Paper Mills which manufactured from eight to ten tons of books and news and wrapping paper per day. The Buena Vista Cassimere Mills produced cashmere and woolen cloths. The full capacity of this plant was 650 yards per day of 3 quarter goods. The Marr Egg Crate Company manufactured its owner's patented invention designed for the safe transport of eggs. The Wise Wagon Works, which was capable of producing 1,000 wagons per year, and the Wilbourne Saddle and Harness Factory, were also located in Buena Vista.

Even though the national economy had entered a recession in 1891, Buena Vista continued to grow. Lot sales did decline, but the population increased. In February 1892, the City numbered 5,240 residents, enough for the state legislature to grant a city charter. A second prospectus was published in 1892 that announced all of the advancements made during the first three years of the City's existence. It listed the following:

- 409 houses
- 44 stores
- 3 hotels
- 2 restaurants
- 30 licensed boarding houses
- 3 market houses
- 1 hardware store
- 2 drug stores
- 4 clothing stores
- 27 general merchandise stores
- 2 tin and stove stores
- 3 churches
- 3 banking facilities
- Grade school
- Female academy
- Opera house

The architecture of the City was determined primarily by the investors themselves. People from all over the country came to Buena Vista, and they built homes in styles that were most familiar to them. A variety of architectural styles were constructed including Italianate Revival, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, I-style farmhouse, and the Second Empire mansard roofed mansions. Examples of all of these may be found in Buena Vista today. It is unusual to find such a diverse collection of house styles that were built in such a short period of time. Within six years, more than 600 buildings were constructed. These ranged from the simplest worker's cottage to the most elaborate commercial structure.

The Panic of 1893 signaled the end of the land boom as the nation headed into a depression. The boom ended after only three years, but in that time, Buena Vista had grown from a sparsely populated rural area to a city of over 5,000 people with 19 industries employing over 1,000 workers. Unlike many other boom towns, Buena Vista weathered the economic downturn relatively well. Prosperity returned to Buena Vista around 1900 and most new commercial development shifted to Magnolia Street.

Historic Resources

Buena Vista remained the industrial center of the Rockbridge area. A community profile from 1930 enumerated 1,352 employees at twenty industries. The top industries were the Buena Vista Textile Corporation (330 employees), the South River Lumber Company (250 employees), and the Columbian Paper Company (200 employees). In contrast, the City of Lexington had no large-scale industry during this period.

Source: Patricia Gibson

Key dates in Buena Vista's development are listed below.

Table 2.1
Key Dates in Buena Vista's History and Development

Date	Event
Founding	
1880	Two railroads constructed, forming a junction. Surrounding the junction is the resulting village of Green Forest, population of 100.
1882	Buena Vista's first industry opened, the Tannery.
1885	The first public school is built. It is a one room log building.
December 1888	B.C. Moomaw writes the historic Buena Vista Prospectus.
January 1889	The Buena Vista Company was formed and all shares were sold within 30 days.
1889	Buena Vista's major 'boom' results from the construction of the Norfolk and Western Railroad which provided direct access to the industrial cities to the north. Building begins at an amazing rate.
March 7, 1889	The town is named Buena Vista as opposed to Green Forest.
May 22, 1889	The drawing of lots begins.
January 24, 1890	Town gets its charter. The City's population is 400.
May 9, 1890	The City begins building a new brick school that will host 240 children. It is opened on October 12, 1890. The principal is Mr. McCluer.
February 15, 1892	The Commonwealth issues Buena Vista a charter as a City. The City's population is 5,240.
March 4, 1892	The "boom" time comes to an end.
September 1894	The Female Seminary opened under the name of 'Young Ladies College.' Classes were held in the Hotel Buena Vista which the school would buy in 1901 and then name Southern Seminary and Junior College.

Historic Resources

Date	Event
20th Century	
August 10, 1935	Construction begins on Camp Oronoco, a work camp designed to provide jobs during the Great Depression.
1941	Camp Oronoco dismantled.
December 5, 1950	Citizens vote to change charter to be run by a City Manager and a 5 person council. The existing council was composed of 12 men.
September 1, 1962	The number of City Council members increases from 5 to 7, 6 elected as general council and an elected Mayor
Fall 1963	Modine Manufacturing locates its heater manufacturing facilities in Buena Vista.
1969	Disastrous flood after Hurricane Camille.
1971	Glen Maury Park purchased by the City.
1985	Disastrous flood.
1993	Construction of Jim Olin Floodwall begins.
1999	Floodwall dedicated.
21st Century	
January 2001	Buena Vista designated as a Virginia Main Street Start Up Community.
Fall 2001	New Parry McCluer High School opens.
August 2004	Construction of Vista Links, the City's 18-hole golf course, is completed.
October 2009	Buena Vista Historic District designated in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Resources

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Reminders of the Buena Vista's history remain today, particularly in its street layout and a few key buildings. Five individual buildings in Buena Vista are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These include the Buena Vista Land Company, Paxton House, Second Buena Vista Hotel, W.N. Seay House, and the Buena Vista Colored School. In 2009, the City designated a historic district in its central business district.

The National Register of Historic Places is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of Interior. The National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Buena Vista's listings are shown on Map 2.1 and described below:

Building: Paxton House (Glen Maury)

Location: Glen Maury Park

Description: The brick, 2 ½ story I-structure was built between 1830 and 1835. It is embellished with provincially interpreted formal detailing to give it more of a sophisticated air than the usual farmhouse of the region.



The structure is on land acquired by General Elisha Franklin Paxton from the estate of William Paxton. General Paxton was later killed acting as Commander of the Stonewall Brigade during the battle of Chancellorsville. The property was acquired by the City of Buena Vista in 1971 and is part of Glen Maury Park.

Building: W.N. Seay House

Location: 245 West 26th Street

Description: The house is a relatively large 2-story, weatherboarded balloon-frame Victorian that features an assortment of decorative elements that were popular at the time it was built in 1889. The house is located within close proximity to the Southern Virginia University campus. The house once served the funerary and furniture needs of the City. A c. 1900 garage/utility building, also demonstrating historical integrity, sits northwest of the house.



Building: Buena Vista Land Company (Old Courthouse)

Location: Corner of Magnolia Avenue and Twenty First Street

Description: The modified Second Empire style building was constructed in 1890 as the office of the Buena Vista Land Company. It is a 2 ½ story, mansard roofed brick building executed in five course American bond and set on a brick foundation. In 1892, the office building was sold to the newly incorporated City of Buena Vista. Following the construction of a new municipal building in 1971, the building avoided being razed and currently houses the local public library. The Buena Vista Company building, once considered for demolition, remains a symbol of the economic and physical growth of the City.



Historic Resources

Building: Second Buena Vista Hotel
(Main Building, Southern Virginia University)

Location: Southern Virginia University campus

Description: After the original hotel was destroyed by fire in 1890, Pennsylvania architect, S.W. Foulks, was hired to design its replacement. The new hotel was constructed on the same site overlooking the Central Business District. It was in a Romanesque style characterized by great turrets, towers and dormers, multi-angled roof lines, and clustered chimneys. Wood was used in combination with brick and stone, and wide verandas punctuated the various levels. Classified as a 'boom hotel,' its primary purpose was to house the financiers and speculators visiting the executives of the Buena Vista Company.



Building: Buena Vista Colored School

Location: 30th Street and Aspen Avenue

Description: The school is a one story, brick structure with a hipped, standing-seam metal roof. The oldest part, to the west, dates from 1914 and is a four bay, two room section with a brick foundation. In 1926, a second section was added to the east which added one room. The building served as the only local school for African American children in grades 1 through 7 from 1914 to 1957. The two room school was closed in 1957 and the building was then used for community purposes until 1992.



The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District is the historic business center of the City of Buena Vista. The district is an example of the 'boom towns' that sprang up in western Virginia during the late nineteenth century. The historic district remained the City's principal commercial center through the 1950s. Beginning in the late 1940s new businesses began to locate on highways at the periphery of the City. The district covers approximately 11.5 acres and follows two of the City's main commercial arteries, Sycamore and Magnolia Avenues. The district's registration form includes 53 historic resources, 39 are contributing resources and 14 are noncontributing. A challenge of historic preservation and economic development is the number of vacant storefronts along Magnolia Street.

Map 2.1



Historic Resources

The listing of the Buena Vista Downtown Historic District in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places acknowledges the importance of the downtown to the history and architectural development of the City. The designation is also an economic development tool. The listing qualifies owners of certain historic properties to participate in the state and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs.

Although listing on the National Register does not protect properties from alteration, it serves as a good way to bring recognition and pride in a community's historic properties. National Register landmarks and districts also serve to pinpoint areas in a community where preservation and local protection may be implemented.

Benefits of preservation include the following:

- Historic resources are top tourist destinations. Revitalized buildings and historic districts attract new business and tourists, stimulating retail sales and increasing sales tax revenue.
- Historic rehabilitation creates new jobs during construction and later in new offices, shops, and restaurants.
- Tax incentives are available for rehabilitation.
- Less energy is required to rehabilitate old buildings than to demolish and replace them with new construction.

As a means to protect historic resources, the City has designated the Seminary Hill Design Overlay District. The zoning overlay district was established to protect and enhance the historic nature of the district and to establish standards to maintain the unique historical, architectural, cultural and archaeological resources in this portion of the city generally surrounding Southern Virginia University. Furthermore, the standards are intended to strengthen the city's economy by promoting and enhancing business and tourism.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District. The designation of the Buena Vista Downtown Historic District in 2009 qualifies owners of certain historic properties to participate in the state and federal rehabilitation tax credit programs.

Tourism Zones. The designated Tourism Zone as shown on Map 5.4 in Economy Chapter has some overlap with the Buena Vista Downtown Historic District. This permits the City to grant tax incentives and provide certain regulatory flexibility in a tourism zone.

Historic Resources STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Historic Resources The City of Buena Vista will be a community that supports the preservation and protection of historic resources. Historic resources are vital assets that support economic development, community revitalization, education, and civic pride and contribute to the character of the community.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Preserve older and historic structures, landscapes and features in order to provide a sense of identity. • Increase awareness of neighborhood and block landmarks that create community character and provide linkages to the past. • Increase awareness of the social and economic value of historic preservation.			
		Priority	Responsibility
5A	Encourage and promote festivals highlighting Buena Vista's heritage.	M	Economic Development, Parks & Rec, Celebrate Buena Vista
5B	Promote historic destinations that provide entertainment and educational opportunities.	M	Economic Development, Parks & Rec, Celebrate Buena Vista
5C	Increase awareness of the Kanawha Canal system by developing an interpretive multi-use trail along the Maury River.	L	Economic Development, Parks & Rec
5D	Increase accessibility to and interpretation of historic places.	L	Economic Development, Parks & Rec
5E	Continue to develop and maintain productive partnerships among various organizations to promote and accomplish historic preservation goals.	On Going	Economic Development
5F	Promote participation in state and federal rehabilitation tax credit program.	On Going	Economic Development
5G	Provide information to support repair, rehabilitation, restoration, and conservation of historic buildings.	On Going	Planning
5H	Support and encourage the productive reuse of unused and underutilized historic buildings in ways that are respectful of their character.	On Going	Planning
5I	Promote a greater inter-relatedness between historic preservation, community revitalization, and tourism development and promotion activities.	On Going	Economic Development, Planning

Historic Resources

		Priority	Responsibility
5J	Promote the installation of interpretive signage for historic properties by private owners, historical organizations, and the City of Buena Vista.	M	Planning, Historical Society
5K	Review existing zoning regulations so that preservation of historic structures is encouraged.	On Going	Planning
5L	Favor transportation routes and improvement that do not compromise the historic character of the community.	On Going	Planning

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 3

Natural Resources

Buena Vista is an urban area. The City recognizes, however, that its natural environment needs to be sensibly preserved and enhanced to promote recreational opportunities, to control rainwater, to protect property, and to improve water quality. Furthermore, Buena Vista's surroundings among the mountains and along the Maury River contribute to the overall quality of life of the City. Buena Vista's natural features pose special opportunities and challenges that require consideration in comprehensive planning.

The basic goal is to manage natural resources so that they continue to provide social, economic and environmental benefits to people over time while supporting other important natural functions. The elements of the environment form the foundation for the quality of life that residents often seek when choosing a place to live and work. A quality of life founded on clean and accessible waterways, scenic views, woodlands, and outdoor recreation is particularly important in today's mobile society where people and companies move more frequently than in the past.

The City's natural features are its 'green' infrastructure. Green infrastructure is the interconnected network of land and water that contributes to the health, economic well being and quality of life for communities and people. It requires investment and maintenance just like roads, sewers and utility systems. This chapter identifies environmentally sensitive areas, balances land use and economic development practices with environmental protection, and sets goals and policies for sensible management and protection of sensitive areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Economy. Natural resources and environmental quality can be key elements of an economic development program. Natural resources can support local manufacturing in addition to tourism and recreation.

Infrastructure and Utilities. Recycling and reuse programs decrease the waste stream to the landfill/transfer station.

Transportation. Transportation corridors can serve a recreational purpose. Additionally, corridors can be enhanced by preserving viewsheds and buffers.

Land Use. Natural resources affect how land can be used and how the use of land affects the natural resources. Land use, transportation and utility initiatives, policies and impacts need to be integrated with environmental policies.

Natural Resources**ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Natural landscapes are the result of the interplay of geology, climate, hydrology, slopes, soils, vegetation, and wildlife. Below is a summary of significant physical characteristics of the City of Buena Vista, its land and water features.

Climate

The City of Buena Vista has a generally moderate climate as reflected in the table below, Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Buena Vista Monthly Climate Summary
June 15, 1937 to July 31, 2010

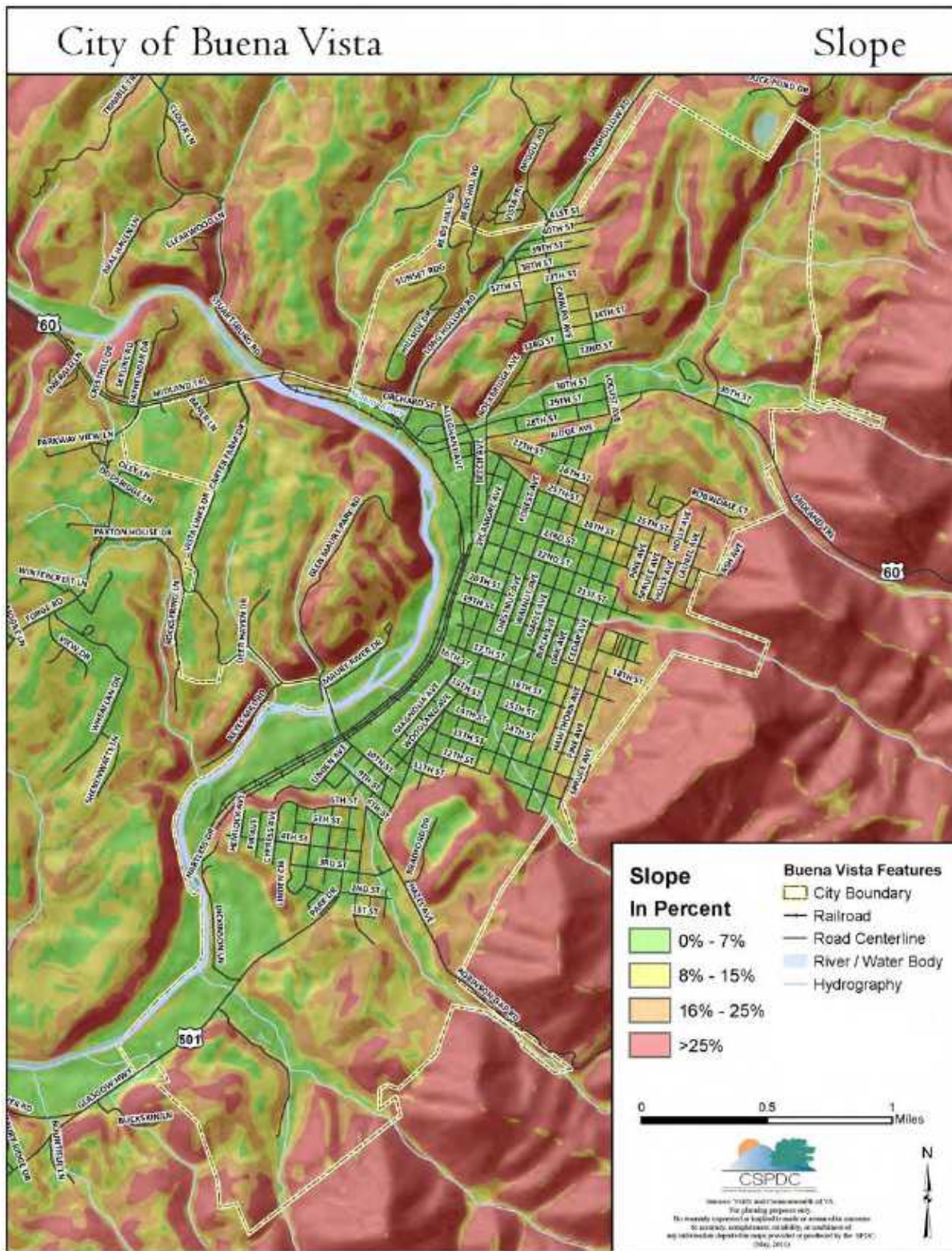
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max Temperature (F)	45.0	51.4	60.3	71.4	79.5	84.4	89.5	89.5	83.2	70.4	60.5	48.7	69.5
Average Min Temperature (F)	21.1	24.8	31.3	40.8	51.3	58.3	62.4	60.8	55.1	42.7	32.7	23.8	42.1
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	2.63	2.66	3.25	3.08	3.54	3.42	3.83	3.31	3.38	3.38	3.11	3.09	38.69
Average Total Snowfall (in.)	5.1	3.7	2.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	2.5	13.9
Average Snow Depth (in.)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center

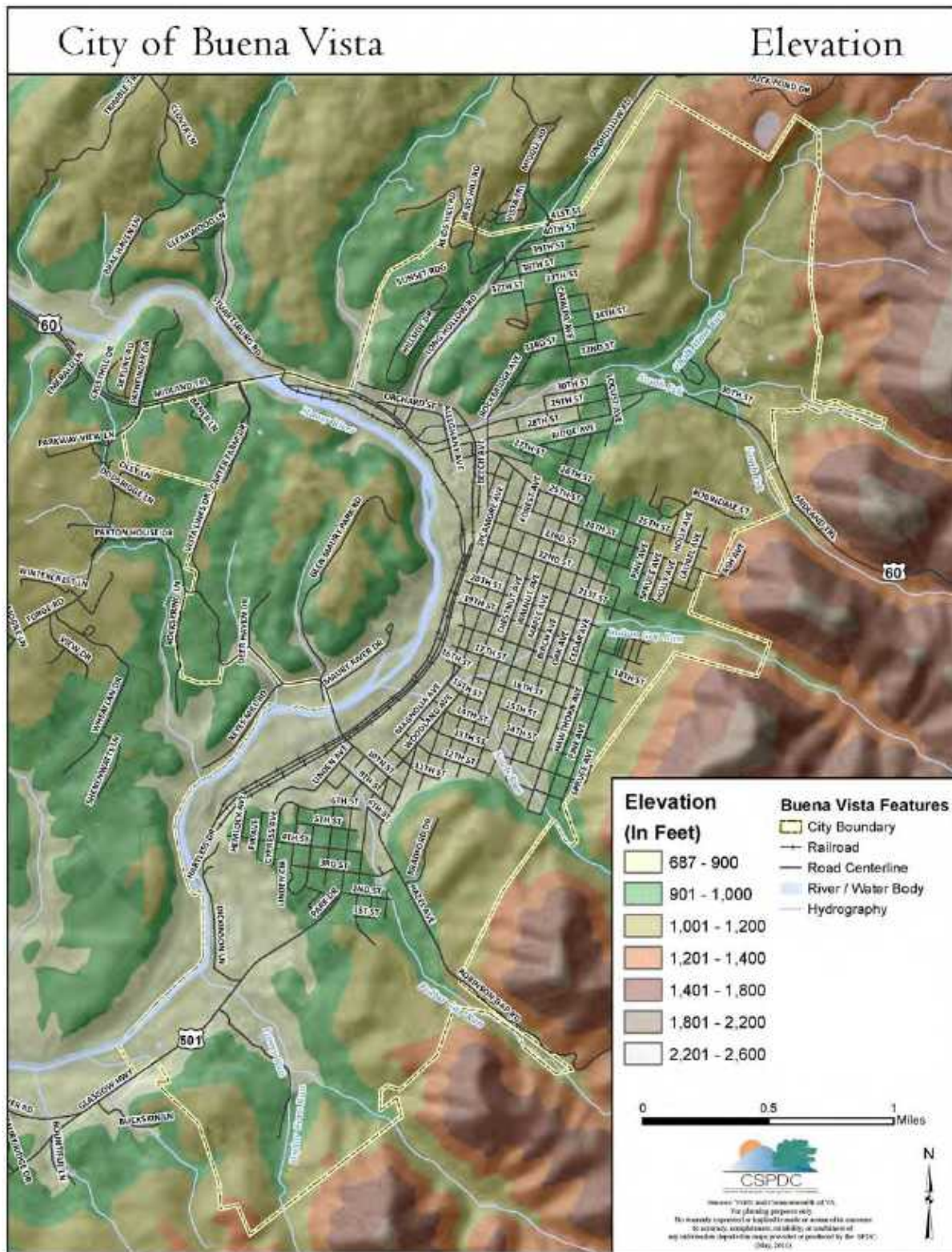
Slope

The topography of the City varies greatly. Steep slopes, a result of geology, hydrology and climate, create dramatic landscapes that define community character but also limit development. Slope in Buena Vista is shown on Map 3.1. Slope affects the use of land as described below:

Map 3.1



Map 3.2



Slope Categories and Development Limitations

0% to 7% - Flat to moderately sloping

- No slope limitation on development
- Some of these areas are subject to flooding and poor drainage

8% to 15% - Rolling land

- Few limitations for residential, commercial and industrial activities not requiring large amounts of level ground
- Development of larger tracts is more limited due to grading costs

16% to 25% - Hilly land

- Suitable for residential development if site planning takes topography into account
- Construction of water and sewer facilities can be quite costly and economically infeasible

Greater than 25%

- Usually considered unsuitable for intensive development
- Can be used for outdoor recreation and watershed protection

There are a number of issues associated with development on steep slopes, hillsides and ridgelines. These include health, safety, and environmental considerations as well as the aesthetic quality of hillsides and ridgelines. Protecting hillsides and steep slopes from development helps to preserve those unique environmental qualities that people value. Furthermore, development on steep slopes can have an adverse effect on water quality as a result of increased erosion and sedimentation.

A logical method for addressing the negative impacts of hillside development is to reduce the intensity of development as the grade of the slope increases. This type of regulation allows for some hillside development. Pairing slope/density regulations with grading regulations helps to ensure that those sites are developed as safely as possible. The City of Buena Vista Land Development Regulations currently does not define steep slopes nor does it regulate hillside development.

Most of the central area of the City is relatively flat, gently sloping down to the Maury River. The area around Southern Virginia University (SVU) has some moderate and steep slopes. The northern and southern ends of the City tend to be more hilly and varied than the rest of the City. North of the City, the land is mostly too steep to be practical for development. Areas south of the City are also very steep.

Natural Resources

On the east side of Buena Vista, the City meets the mountains and there is a band of relatively sparse development on moderately sloped areas. Just beyond the City's eastern corporate limits, the land rises dramatically into the Blue Ridge Mountains as shown in red on Map 3.1. West of Glen Maury Park there are steep slopes along the stream, but the land is generally rolling. The elevation map also provides a sense of Buena Vista's landscape (See Map 3.2).

Soils

Soils are a natural assortment of organic materials and mineral fragments. The composition of soils changes slowly over time from weathering of rock and activity of soil organisms. Consequently, soils differ in their color, mineral characteristics, fertility, texture, erodibility, and depth to bedrock and groundwater. Soils are classified into several groups called soil series.

There are three general soil associations in the Buena Vista area. These include the following:

1. Alluvial Soils – Along most of the streams in Rockbridge County are strips of floodplain and terrace soils which are comparatively wide in places. The most common soils in these areas are soils of the Allegheny Series, the Chagrin Series, the Pope Series, and the Wheeling Series. These soils represent the finer materials washed from the limestone and mountain areas and deposited by the streams at times of overflow. These soils are generally deep and well drained. The topsoils range from silt loams to sandy loams and the subsoils from sand loams to clays. Alluvial soils are generally among the least suitable soils for development and should be protected from encroachment.
2. Colluvial Soils – The soils along the foot slopes of the mountains are derived from colluvial outwash from the sandstone and shale mountains. The most common soils found in this area are of the Allen Series and the Jefferson Series. These soils are generally deep and well drained. Topsoils are fine sandy loams, silt loams or clay loams while the subsoil is generally a fine sandy clay.
3. Valley Carbonate Soils – These soils are derived from limestones and dolomites and make up the major portion of the Shenandoah Valley. The most common soils found in this area are of the Frederick Series, the Hagerstown Series, and the Decatur Series. These soils range from shallow to deep and are generally well to excessively drained. Topsoils are commonly silt loams and silty clay loams while subsoils are mostly clays and silty clay loams.

Most of Buena Vista lies on soils of Wheeling silt loam. This soil generally imposes few limitations for urban development except in areas of steep slopes. There are other soils in and around the City which do present some limitations for urban development. It should be noted that these areas may be developable with appropriate site engineering and construction practices, but it would be better to avoid development.

In the southern end of the City there is a large area of Decatur silt loam which has severe limitations for residential development on slopes greater than 15 percent and severe limitations for commercial development on slopes greater than 8 percent. There are also severe limitations for the construction of local roads and streets due to the low strength of the soil. However, the soil conditions are fairly inconsequential as the area is already developed residentially and is adequately served by existing roads.

On the southern and eastern faces of Mineral Ridge are bands of Porter very stony loam which has severe limitations for residential and commercial development and the construction of roads on slopes greater than 15 percent.

To the northwest of the City are areas of three soils which have severe limitations for urban development, largely due to flooding and low strength. These include Chagrin silt loam, Braddock loam and Allegheny fine sandy loam.

In areas west of Glen Maury Park there are large areas of soils in the Frederick and Hagerstown Series which have severe limitations for urban development on slopes greater than 15 percent and generally have severe restrictions on land sloping greater than 2 percent for the construction of local streets and roads.

Surface Water

Water is a valuable and vital resource. It is consumed by plants, animals, people and industry. Furthermore, it is enjoyed for recreation. Water features are divided into surface and groundwater resources.

The most visible components of the City's hydrology are the streams and creeks that drain the landscape. The City of Buena Vista is located on a bend of the Maury River about 11 miles above the confluence of the Maury and the James Rivers and at the foot of the steep western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Buena Vista is within the Upper James River watershed. A watershed includes the area of land that is drained by a river and its tributaries. Ridges or divides separate watersheds from each other. The Upper James River Basin has a dense stream network, relatively steep slopes, and highly erodible soils, which lead to a considerable amount of stream bank erosion.

Natural Resources

The Maury River is one of the primary forces within the community. Industrial and commercial sectors have followed a traditional urban pattern of locating near the river. Because of their proximity to the river and the floodplain, these sectors along with residential development have been severely impacted by flooding.

Five interior streams – Chalk Mine Run, Long Hollow Run, Pedlar Gap Run, Indian Gap Run, and Noel's Run traverse the City through predominately residential areas. Sudden rainfall on the mountains results in rapid runoff. The floodwaters quickly flow to the City where they slow down and then spread out over the City causing damage. The City has completed several projects to alleviate its flooding problems along the Maury River and the City's interior streams. These are discussed in Chapter 6, Infrastructure and Utilities.

Streams are fed by two natural sources, direct runoff and groundwater. Effluent from sewage treatment plants also contributes to stream flow. For example, water from the Buena Vista Wastewater Treatment plant is discharged to the Maury River after treatment. Each stream has received a water quality designation that relates to the different water uses. The designation indicates the stream's value in protecting and propagating aquatic life. Because each protected use has chemical and biological characteristics and other stream conditions that need to be maintained, the designations also indicate stream quality. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) develops and submits a Water Quality Assessment report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every even-numbered year. The Maury River is impaired through Buena Vista for fish consumption and swimming (recreation).

Watersheds can be difficult to manage since they are usually covered by a number of separate municipalities with different governments and land use policies. It is important for communities to recognize that flood levels and water quality can be very much affected by land use activities that occur else where in a watershed.

The City of Buena Vista is participating with eleven other communities in developing a regional water supply plan for the Upper James River watershed. Each locality is mandated through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to develop a local water supply plan. The purpose of the plan is threefold: (1) ensure that adequate and safe drinking water is available to citizens; (2) encourage, promote, and protect all other beneficial uses of water resources; and (3) encourage, promote, and develop incentives for alternative water sources. As its name indicates, this plan is focused on water supply and does not address water quality.

Floodplains

Floodplains are lands adjoining a stream or other body of water that have been or may be covered with water. Floodplains in Buena Vista have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The 100-year and 500-year floodplain is shown on Map 3.3. The 100-year flood designation applies to the area that has a 1 percent chance, on average, of flooding in any given year. The 100-year flood is also referred to as the base flood. It is the basis of the insurance and floodplain management requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. The 500-year designation is the area that has a 0.2 percent chance, on average, of flooding in any given year.

The first major flood for which accurate data is available occurred in March 1936. The Maury River crested at 22 feet. Flood stage is at 17 feet. Since 1969, the City has had eight flood occurrences. They are shown in Table 3.2, below.

Table 3.2
Categorical Floods
Maury River near Buena Vista, VA
Period of Record 1966-2008

Crest Date	Crest (ft)	Remarks
Minor Flood = 17.0 ft – 18.99 ft		
June 21, 1972	17.10	Remnants of Hurricane Agnes
April 22, 1992	18.99	Heavy downpours from thunderstorms
June 23, 1995	17.99	Two weather systems collided
January 19, 1996	18.27	Sudden melting of a record 30-inch snowfall combined with a 24-hour rainfall
September 7, 1996	18.90	Remnants of Hurricane Fran
Moderate Flood = 19.0 ft – 20.99 ft		
June 28, 1995	19.48	Two weather systems collided
Major Flood = 21.0 ft or greater		
August 20, 1969	31.23	Remnants of Hurricane Camille
November 5, 1985	26.30	Remnants of Hurricane Juan followed by a coastal low

Source: National Weather Service, Eastern Region Headquarters

Natural Resources

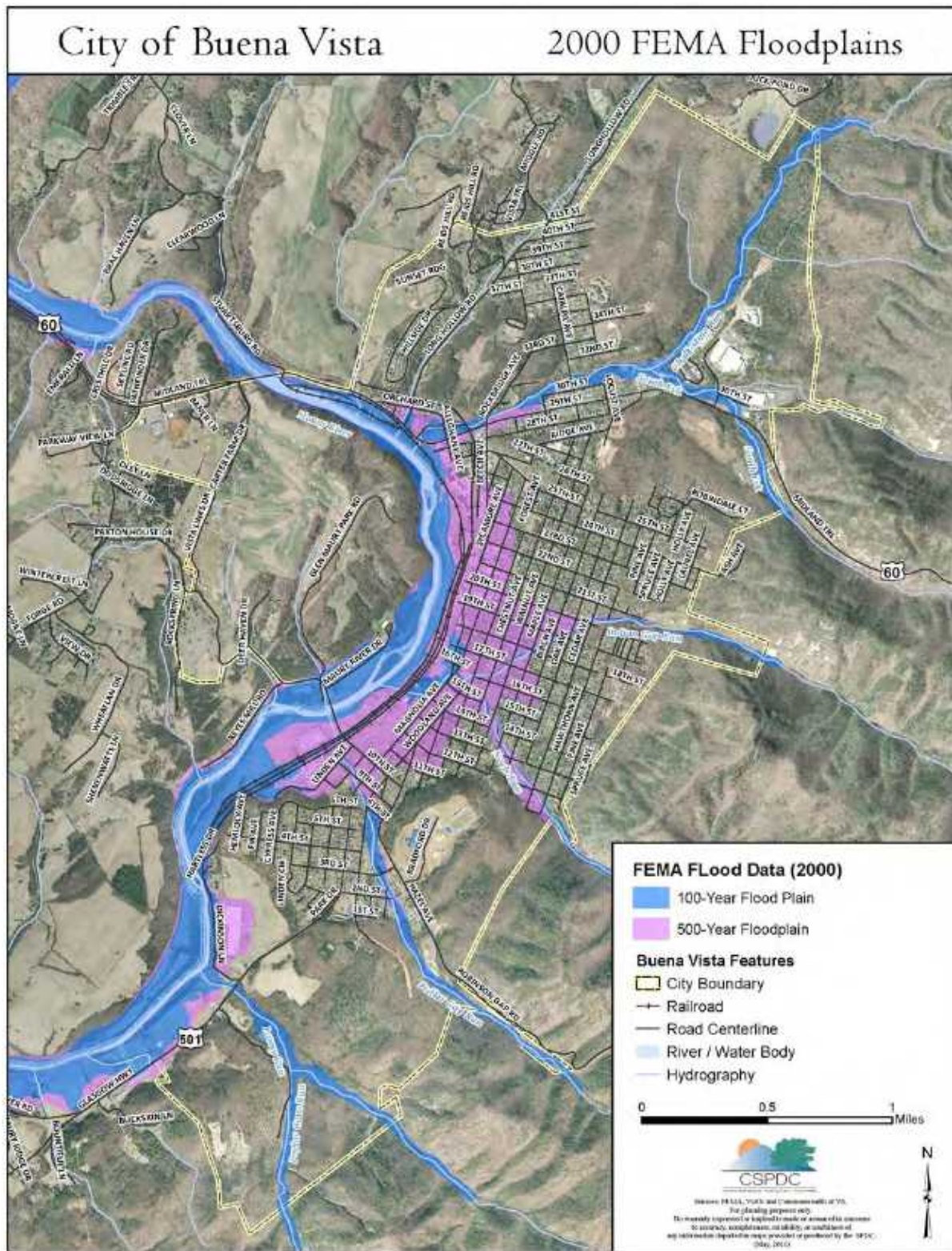
These floods have hurt the community of Buena Vista economically. After the flood of 1985, the City aggressively pursued assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Commonwealth of Virginia to reduce flooding, and consequently, damage to the City's businesses, homes, and infrastructure. No floods have been recorded since the completion of the James R. Olin Floodwall which was completed in 1997. This flood protection project was designed to provide protection equivalent to that needed during the greatest flood of record, Hurricane Camille in 1969.



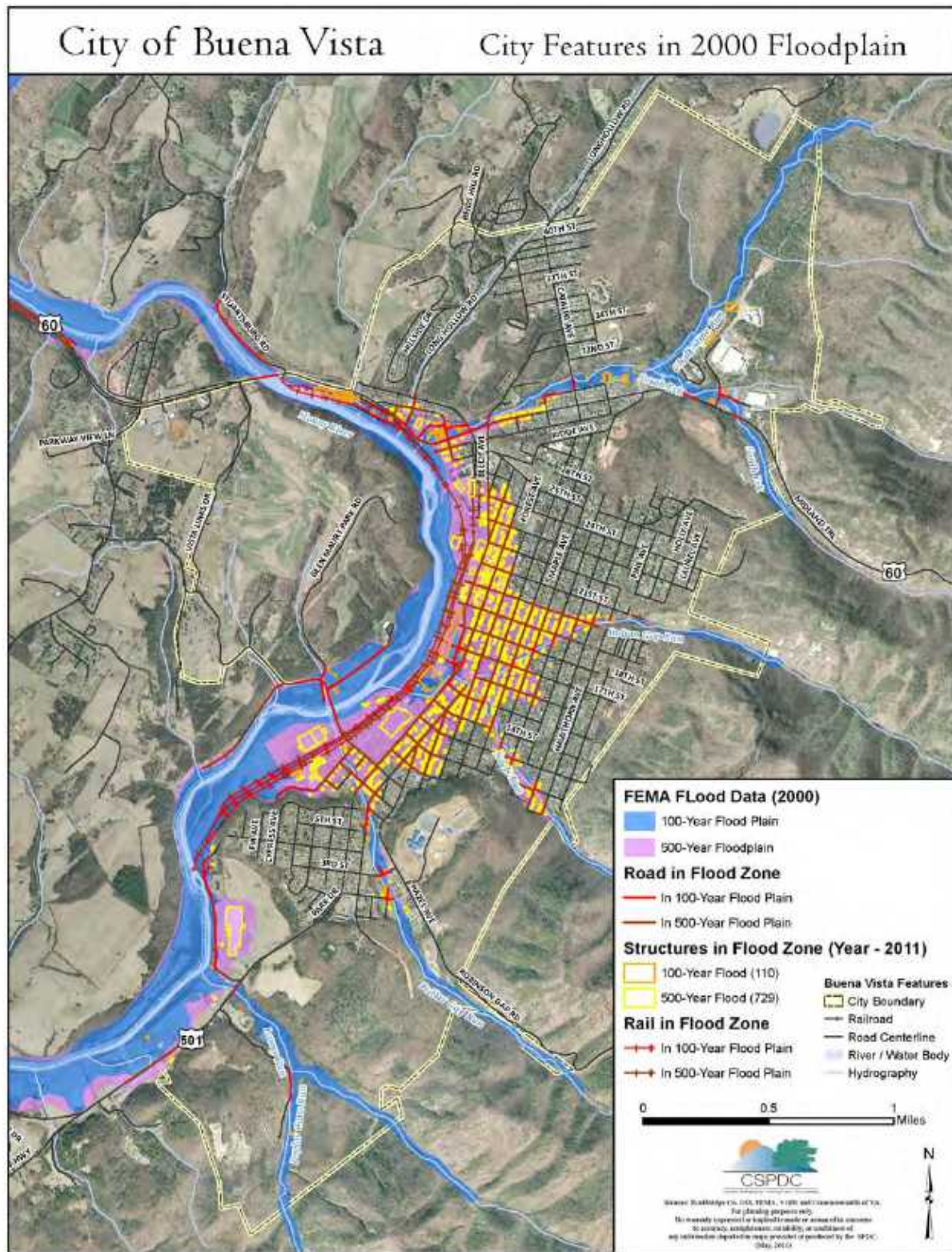
The floodplain, while covering a relatively small area of the City's total land area, contains a substantial portion of its railroad, industrial, public and commercial property (See Map 3.4). Intensive development, whether residential, commercial or industrial, is discouraged within the 100 year floodplain. Floodplains, however, offer few limitations to non-intensive uses such as forestry, recreation and open space. For example, River Walk and portions of Glen Maury Park are located in the 100-year floodplain.

Map 3.5 combines the information for steep slopes, wetlands, and the 100-year floodplain. These areas are best suited for outdoor recreation and environmental protection. Intensive development should be avoided.

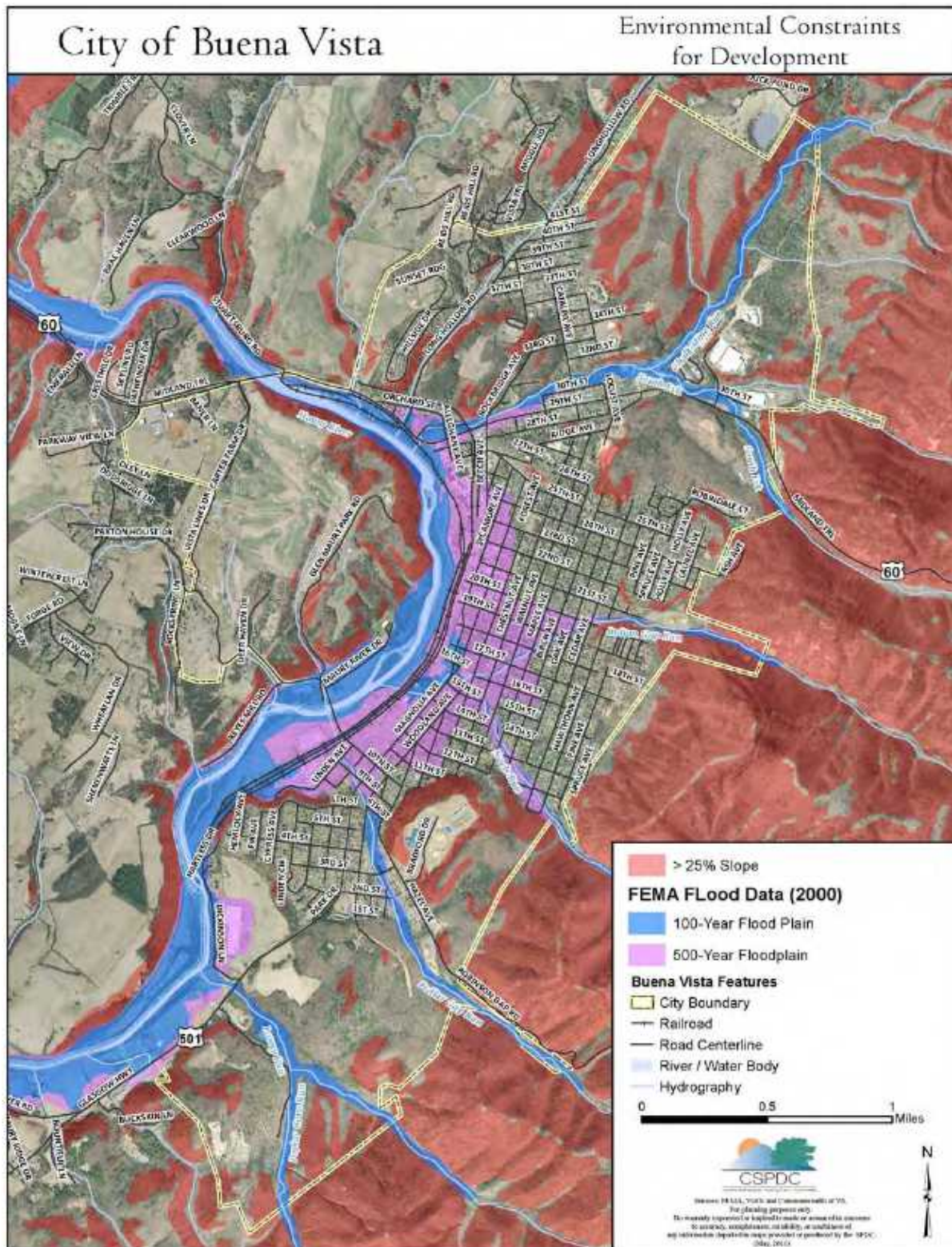
Map 3.3



Map 3.4



Map 3.5



Natural Resources

Groundwater

Groundwater behaves much like surface water, flowing like a stream, only much slower. Groundwater is tapped as a source of drinking water and for industrial purposes. Drinking water supplies for Buena Vista are drawn from local groundwater resources. Buena Vista's waterworks consist of five drilled wells and one spring (See Chapter 6, Infrastructure and Utilities). Replenishment of groundwater occurs slowly as precipitation and stream water seep through the soil.

Undeveloped, undisturbed land is essential to groundwater recharge. Vegetation slows runoff and retains precipitation where it falls, allowing it to soak into the soil rather than run off the surface. Impervious surfaces, such as roads, parking lots and buildings, prevent infiltration of precipitation and can reduce the amount of groundwater that replenishes streams during dry weather. Excessive impervious surface also creates flooding hazards because stormwater is concentrated. It can also cause dry wells and insufficient aquifer recharge.

Water supplies for the City of Buena Vista are drawn from local groundwater resources including five drilled wells and one spring. Communities need to be knowledgeable about their drinking water resources for a number of reasons:

- To minimize the potential risks to the health and vitality of the community;
- To avoid the potential costs associated with cleaning up contaminated groundwater and providing alternate supplies of water; and
- To avoid the negative economic impacts on a community that groundwater contamination could cause.

One method to minimize the potential of groundwater contamination is to protect a portion of the land area supplying water to the well as a wellhead protection area. After determining the area to be protected, a community will be able to focus pollution prevention efforts. A community can then create a management plan to control land use within the protection area to minimize the potential for groundwater contamination. Ideally, a wellhead protection area is the entire recharge area for the well. The recharge area is identified as the entire area of land that allows water and other fluids to flow into the subsurface and move toward the well. Wellhead protection is a progressive pollution prevention tool that has the potential to save each community many thousands of dollars and provide a quality drinking water supply for the future.

Large and small remnants of woodlands are scattered throughout Buena Vista as a result of development. Woodlands serve many purposes, both functional and aesthetic. Woodlands prevent soil erosion, particularly in areas of steep slopes and shallow soils. Woodlands provide habitat for wildlife and buffers along creeks. Wooded corridors prevent erosion and provide cover for wildlife movement, shelter and migration. These corridors also offer

recreational and educational opportunities for residents. Additionally, woodlands create a scenic quality that cannot be quantified but yet has an intrinsic value that enhances the character of the region.

Appropriate vegetation along surface water features improves water quality by filtering pollutants in stormwater runoff before they reach the waterbody. In woodlands, the understory and herbaceous cover help to stabilize the soil and significantly slow the rate of runoff, decreasing erosion and sedimentation, especially on steep slopes. Removal of the understory and herbaceous cover from steep slopes will lead to higher rates of runoff and can contribute to increased levels of downstream flooding.

Riparian zones surrounding rivers and streams help filter sediments and nutrients, and mitigate the effects of storms and flooding. Riparian buffers are also aesthetically pleasing and can lend themselves to recreation opportunities in the form of greenways and trails such as the Brush Blue Greenway. Priority should be given to limiting development along waterways, restoring and protecting riparian corridors, and enhancing public access to waterfronts.

Vegetation

Buena Vista is partially surrounded by the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests. The trees covering the surrounding mountains create a place of natural beauty. Added to these forested areas, trees within the City, collectively called the urban forest, are an asset to the community and provide many environmental benefits. Trees provide obvious aesthetic benefits, but they also improve air, protect water, save energy, and improve economic sustainability. Among its value, the urban forest functions to:

- Remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Reduce topsoil erosion and slow down water run-off.
- Reduce energy consumption by shading roads, buildings, and other structures.
- Absorb pollutants that then stay out of water bodies where they would otherwise harm fish and other aquatic species.
- Enhance traffic calming measures
- Increase property values by as much as 20 percent

Source: *Value, Benefits, and Costs of Urban Trees*, Virginia Cooperative Extension, May 1, 2009.

As Buena Vista grows, management of its trees will become more important for achieving sustainable development and maintaining and enhancing the quality of life and the environment.

Natural Resources

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

The preservation of open space is a wise investment. Open space can:

- Safeguard drinking water and clean the air
- Naturally store and filter rainwater and runoff
- Help clean the air and support a diversity of animal and plant life
- Control erosion when forested
- Clean the air of pollutants and absorb carbon dioxide
- Allow people to learn about and appreciate nature

Beyond its environmental benefits, open space can:

- Define the look and feel of a community
- Improve property values
- Provide places for recreation, rest and relaxation
- Promote socializing with neighbors
- Facilitate physical health and well-being

The City's environmental features, parks, and surrounding public lands define it. The Maury River and Glen Maury Park are integral to the City's identity; it is the lifeblood of the City. Buena Vista is bordered by the George Washington National Forest. Laurel Park sits beside the Indian Gap Run.

Integrating parks and open space into the comprehensive plan is critical to protecting natural systems and improving quality of life. Emphasis should be given to activities such as hiking and biking trails, water access and blueways, and community parks. Integrating these activities into community planning makes walkable, livable communities a reality. This is especially true where local parks and recreation departments work in concert with economic development, tourism and planning departments to create a community vision that connects open space, land conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. The City of Buena Vista open space and park resources are discussed in Chapter x, Community Facilities.

A greenway is a linear corridor of open space that is used or designated for recreational use and transportation. A greenway typically includes a trail or path and may accommodate a mix of non-vehicular modes of transportation such as walking, bicycle, equestrian, skiing and roller-blades. Greenways can accomplish many goals for a community including conservation and recreation, economic development, transportation, and education.

The Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan was completed in 2004. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for development of a greenway within the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington, and Rockbridge County. Currently walking trails exist and are used on a regular basis in each locality. In Buena Vista, this includes the Levee Walk that is along the levee at the Maury River. The Brushy Blue Greenway will interconnect the existing trails and

upgrade these trails to a multi-use greenway trail and the creation of new greenway connections. When completed the Brushy Blue Greenway corridor will be approximately 17 miles in length.

Implementation of the Brushy Blue Greenway will be good for both the watershed (erosion and flood control, bank stabilization) and wildlife (creating and safeguarding habitat and improved opportunities for observing wildlife). The greenway will also improve air quality by promoting alternative transportation to cars and by encouraging planting of trees. The Brushy Blue Greenway will serve as a living classroom for area schools, colleges and universities, and provide an example of community development.

As outlined in the Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan, it is desirable to maintain the maximum distance possible between environmental resources such as creeks and streams and the trail. This is so that proper biological buffers can be established and so people are not encouraged to walk in areas where they can cause damage.

In addition to environmental benefits of a greenway, greenways can accomplish other community goals. For the City of Buena Vista, a greenway would enhance City life by providing:

- A recreational outlet for hiking, walking, jogging, and biking.
- A safe “off the road” means for children and pedestrian to travel between neighborhoods, downtown areas, recreational areas and educational sites.
- Improved access to downtown businesses creating an enhanced tourist profile.
- Educational opportunities to learn about cultural and natural heritage.
- The opportunity to create a showcase multi jurisdictional greenway to improve residents’ quality of life.

BROWNFIELDS

Brownfield refers to real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands.

The former Reeves Brothers site was a brownfield. In 1988 after a disastrous flood, the Reeves Brothers closed its facility in Buena Vista. During the 1990s, the contamination on the site was addressed. The building remained vacant over the next 20 years. Today the site is occupied by Auto Recyclers LLC. Additional vacant properties in the City need to be assessed for redevelopment opportunities.

Natural Resources

ZONING PROTECTIONS

Through the City of Buena Vista Land Development Regulations environmental resources are protected. These include the following districts:

Conservation District C-1

The C-1 District covers various open uses such as agriculture, National Forests and Parks, state owned forest and park lands and local government owned lands. The district was established for “the specific purpose of providing recreation and open space uses, conservation of water and other natural resources reducing soil erosion, protecting watersheds, and reducing hazards from flood and fire.” (601.01) Such uses as parks and playgrounds, public infrastructure, and agriculture are permitted.

Recreation District REC

This district is similar to the C-1 Conservation District. The intent of the district is identical to the C-1 District. However, the REC District permits cabins and cottages.

Flood Hazard District FH-1

In 1985, Buena Vista adopted a floodplain management ordinance. The purpose of the Flood Hazard District is “to prevent the loss of life and property, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and governmental services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief, and the impairment of the tax base.” (612.01) The FH-1 District is an overlay district that applies to all lands that are identified as being flood prone.

The ordinance requires new residential buildings to be elevated to or above the base flood elevation (BFE). Additional requirements prevent the obstruction of the floodway portion of the floodplain, the primary flow area.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Brushy Blue Greenway. The Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan was completed in 2004. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for development of a greenway within the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington, and Rockbridge County. Currently walking trails exist and are used on a regular basis in each locality. In Buena Vista, this includes the Levee Walk that is along the levee at the Maury River. The Brushy Blue Greenway will interconnect the existing trails and upgrade these trails to a multi-use greenway trail and the creation of new greenway connections. When completed the Brushy Blue Greenway corridor will be approximately 17 miles in length.

Gateway Landscaping Plan. The City of Buena Vista received a grant in June 2010 to complete a professional landscape and tree planting plan for the gateway area that connects the Blue Ridge Parkway to the City's central commercial district. The funding was awarded through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program administered through the Virginia Department of Forestry.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- The City of Buena Vista is defined by its environmental features – the Maury River, surrounding forest land, steep slopes.
- Its environmental features, particularly the Maury River, create economic opportunities for the City.
- The City needs to protect and invest in its green infrastructure.

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

Draft 2010 305(b)/303(d) Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, August 23, 2010.

Buena Vista Watershed: Final Plan-Environmental Impact Statement, City of Buena Vista, Rockbridge County, Virginia, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, January 1999.

Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Flood Mitigation Plan, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, 2002

Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan. LPDA Land Planning & Design Associates, Inc., July 30, 2004.

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan. Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, 2007.

Natural Resources

Natural Resources STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Natural Resources The City of Buena Vista will achieve a balanced and sustainable use of natural resources in the community to accommodate the economic and noneconomic needs of residents, industries and visitors.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Adopt regulations that protect sensitive areas including but not limited to steep slopes, floodplains, and stream corridors. • Educate the public on the importance of protecting environmentally sensitive areas. • Manage a system of water resources that functions as a healthy, integrated whole, and provides a long-term public benefit from enhanced environmental quality.			
		Priority	Responsibility
3A	Partner with organizations to provide educational programs that highlight the environment and use protected spaces as outdoor classrooms.	L	Public Works, Parks & Rec
3B	Review and update existing zoning and subdivision regulations as necessary to ensure the goals of environmental preservation are being achieved.	M	Planning
3C	Require the planting of indigenous tree species.	On Going	Planning
3D	Develop an urban forest management plan.	H	Public Works
3E	Review and update landscaping ordinances.	H	Planning
3F	Develop programs to educate citizens about the effects of stormwater runoff on water quality, wellhead protection area boundaries and related pollution prevention measures.	L	Planning, Public Works
3G	Prepare and adopt a wellhead protection management plan.	H	Planning, Public Works
3H	Sponsor joint cleanup and rehabilitation programs including the City, SVU, community organizations and residents.	On Going	Community Development
3I	Manage floodplains, rivers, groundwater, and other water resources for multiple uses including flood and erosion hazard reduction, fish and wildlife habitat, open space, recreation, and water supply.	M	Planning, Public Works, Parks & Rec
3J	Participate in regional, broad-based watershed studies to achieve effective and long-term flood protection and a healthy riverine environment.	M	Planning, Public Works
3K	Work with local organizations to protect natural habitat areas, particularly along riparian corridors.	On Going	Planning, Public Works
3L	Enhance public access to the riverfront.	H	Community Development, Parks & Rec

Natural Resources

		Priority	Responsibility
3M	Develop an inventory of brownfields.	On Going	Community Development
3N	Secure resources to assist with assessment, remediation and redevelopment of brownfields.	M	Community Development
3O	Incorporate green building technologies and construction practices.	On Going	Planning
3P	Implement the recommendations of the Upper James River Basin Water Supply Plan.	H	Planning, Public Works
3Q	Evaluate current wastewater treatment facility and develop a strategic plan to consistently meet discharge limits and compliance with water quality standards.	H	Public Works, Wastewater Treatment

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 4

Housing

Housing is a basic need. Furthermore, housing creates neighborhoods and community. The two, housing and neighborhoods, are intertwined. Good neighborhoods exist and thrive in the context of quality housing and the civic pride of residents.

This plan is intended to guide the City of Buena Vista in maintaining and enhancing its housing stock. Housing is primarily a private system that is influenced by factors beyond which local government plays a part. However, the City plays a role in housing and neighborhoods through the following:

- Education
- Traffic
- Public Safety
- Community Facilities/Recreation
- Taxation
- Zoning

The housing element of the Comprehensive Plan examines housing characteristics and trends. This will provide the background for evaluating implementation strategies necessary to achieve the City's housing goals. Much of the housing data comes from the 2010 Census and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS).

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Historic Resources: Historic buildings such as office buildings, stores, schools, warehouses or homes can be modified, where appropriate, for affordable housing and mixed use opportunities.

Natural Resources and Infrastructure & Utilities. Housing is not just an economic or social issue but an environmental one as well. While making housing more energy- and resource-efficient can increase up-front capital costs, these measures have been shown to dramatically lower lifetime operation and maintenance costs, making housing more affordable in the long run.

Economy. A community's housing policies can have significant impact on economic development efforts. Housing costs should be consistent with prevailing wages, and low levels of housing availability can diminish the ability of local businesses to retain or expand a productive work force.

Housing

Infrastructure & Utilities. The amount and location of housing directly affect the pressures on public infrastructure such as roads, water and wastewater systems and electric utilities.

HOUSING PROFILE

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan discusses housing structures and who lives in them. Related information is included concerning housing age, condition, value, and overall affordability. The housing unit, however, is the building block of a neighborhood. Most neighborhoods are difficult to define geographically, but people relate to an area they call their neighborhood. The City of Buena Vista's neighborhoods are identified broadly in Map 4.1.

The distribution of the City's population, housing units, and households is shown in Map 4.2. According to Census 2010, Buena Vista has 2,936 housing units. In 2000, the number of housing units was 2,716. This is an increase of 220 units or 8.1 percent. During this same time, the population grew by 301 persons or 4.7 percent.

Structural Characteristics

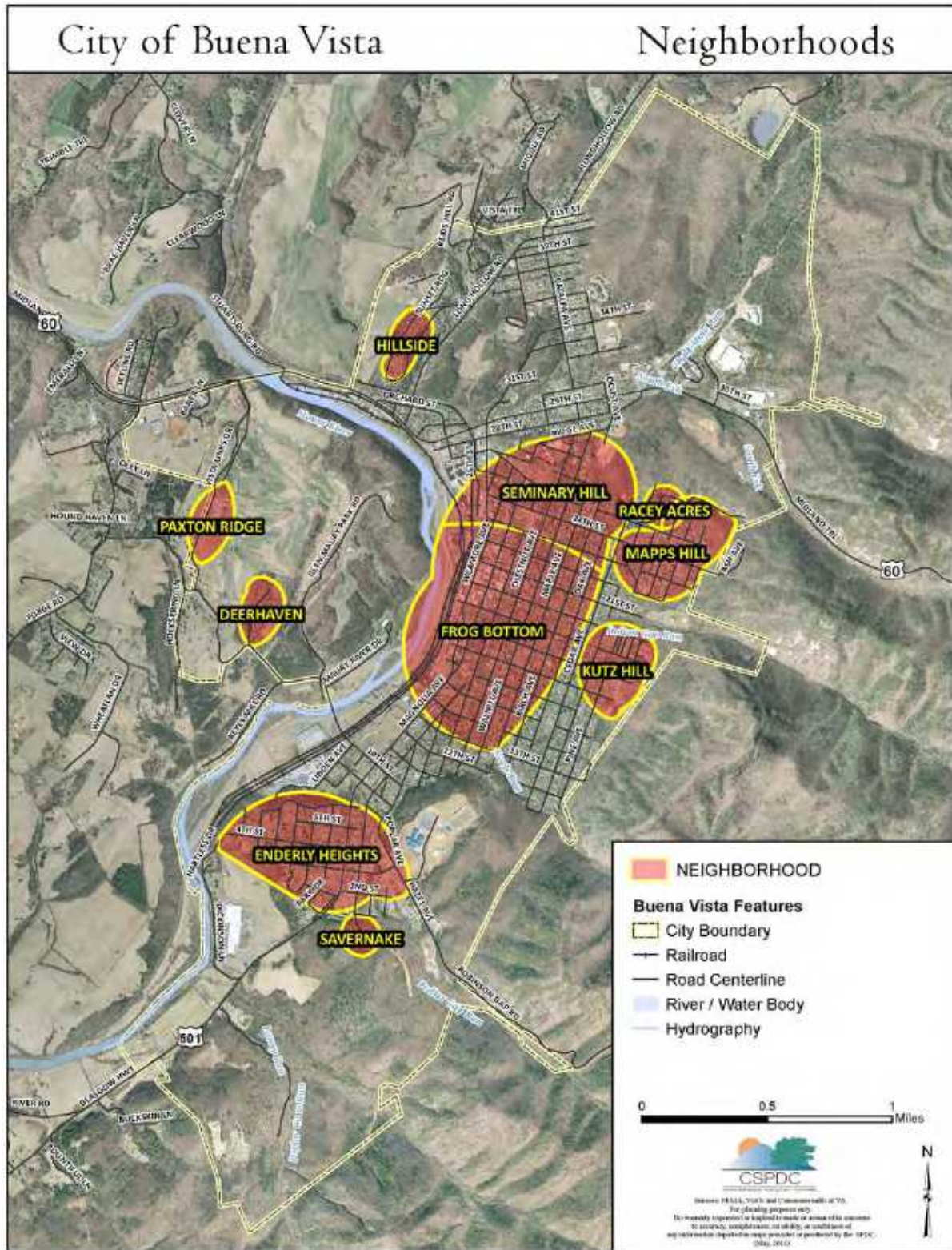
The housing stock of Buena Vista is overwhelmingly comprised of single-family detached housing units as shown in Table 4.1. Furthermore, it has a higher percentage of single-family detached units than its neighboring localities and Virginia.

Table 4.1
Units in Structure
Percent of Total Housing Units

	Buena Vista (%)	Lexington (%)	Rockbridge (%)	Virginia (%)
1-unit, detached	82.8	62.2	80.1	62.6
1-unit, attached	0.4	3.0	0.1	10.1
2 units	1.6	8.6	1.6	1.7
3 or 4 units	2.9	2.7	0.9	2.8
5-9 units	0.0	10.3	2.3	4.7
10-19 units	2.7	1.7	1.7	5.9
20+ units	4.0	9.4	0.5	6.2
Mobile home	5.6	2.2	12.9	5.8

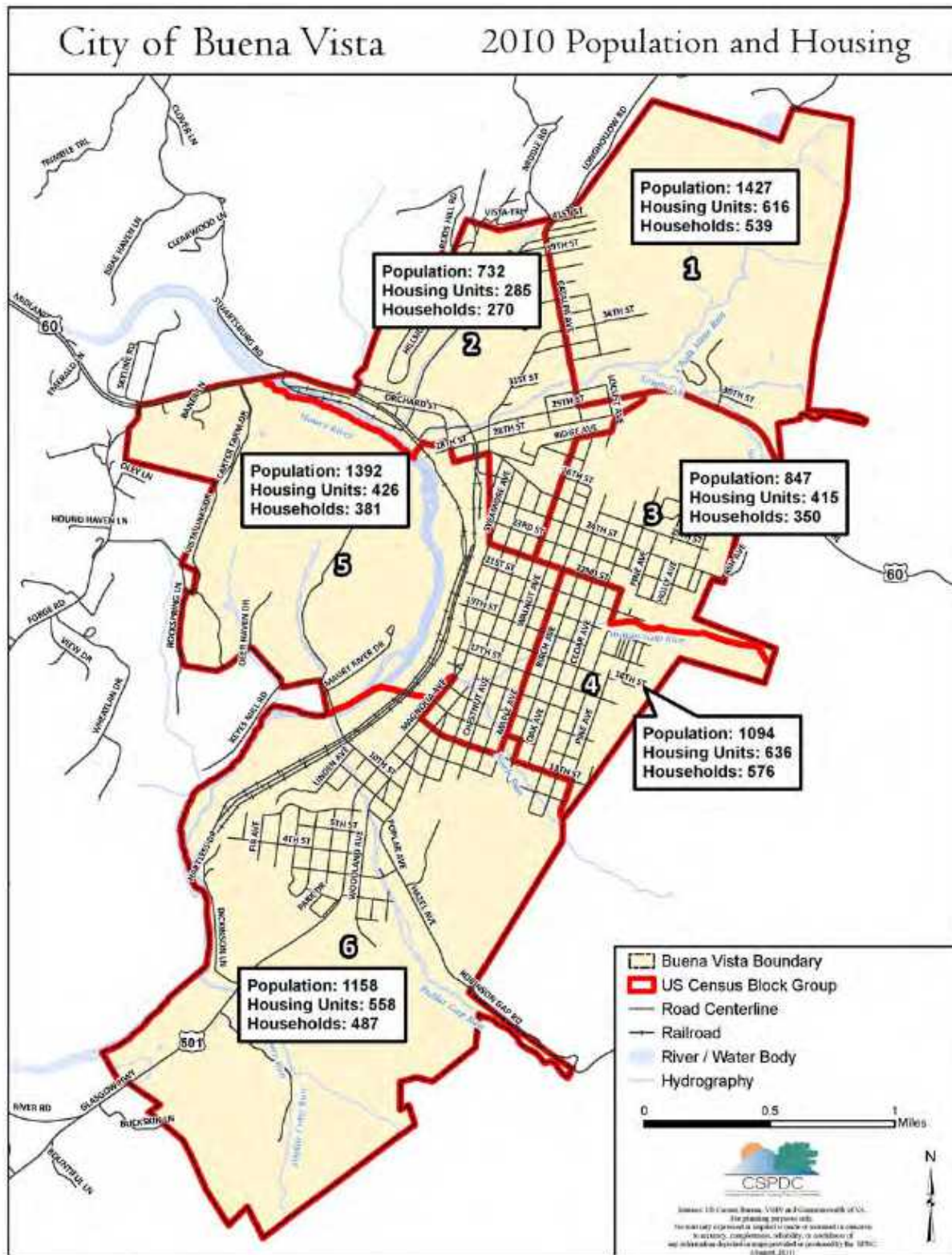
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Map 4.1



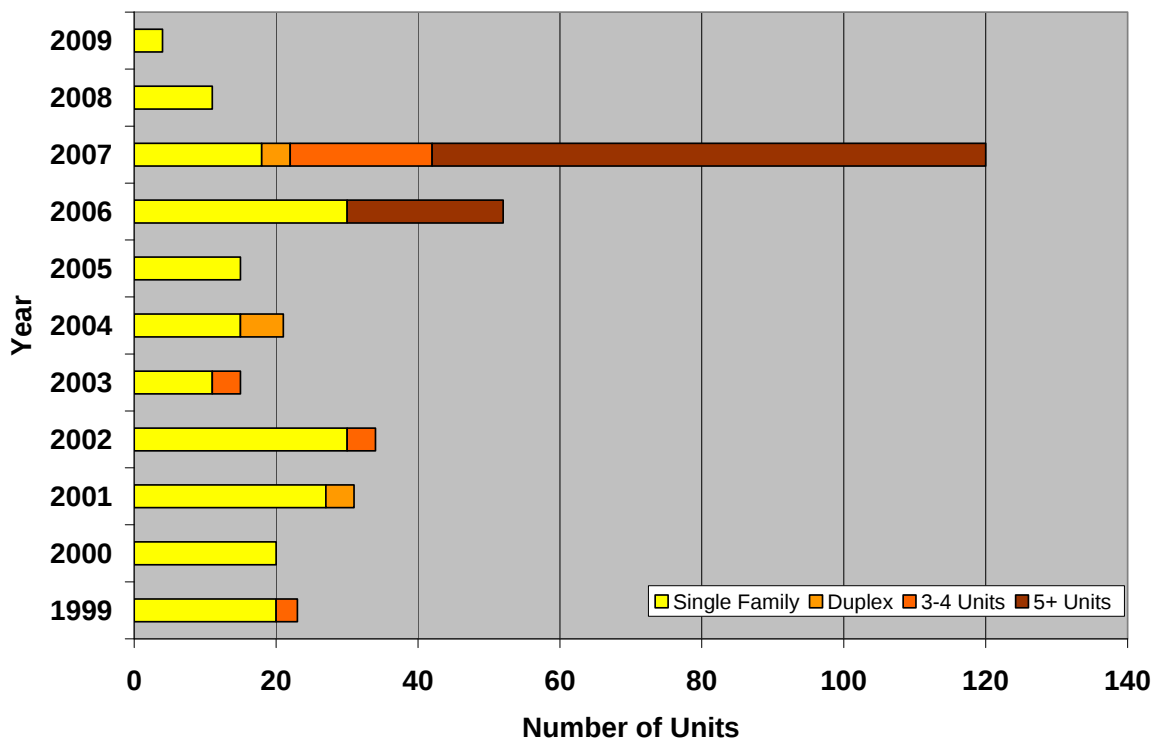
Housing

Map 4.2



Annual building permit data provides a picture of residential construction activity. Over the last decade, most residential construction continues to be single-family detached units. However, as shown in Figure 4.1, construction activity in 2006 and 2007 included multi-unit structures. For multi-unit structures, the data indicates the number of units permitted rather than the number of buildings. The data also reflects the decline in the housing market; there were only four residential building permits in 2009.

Figure 4.1
Annual Residential Building Permits by Structure
Buena Vista 1999-2009

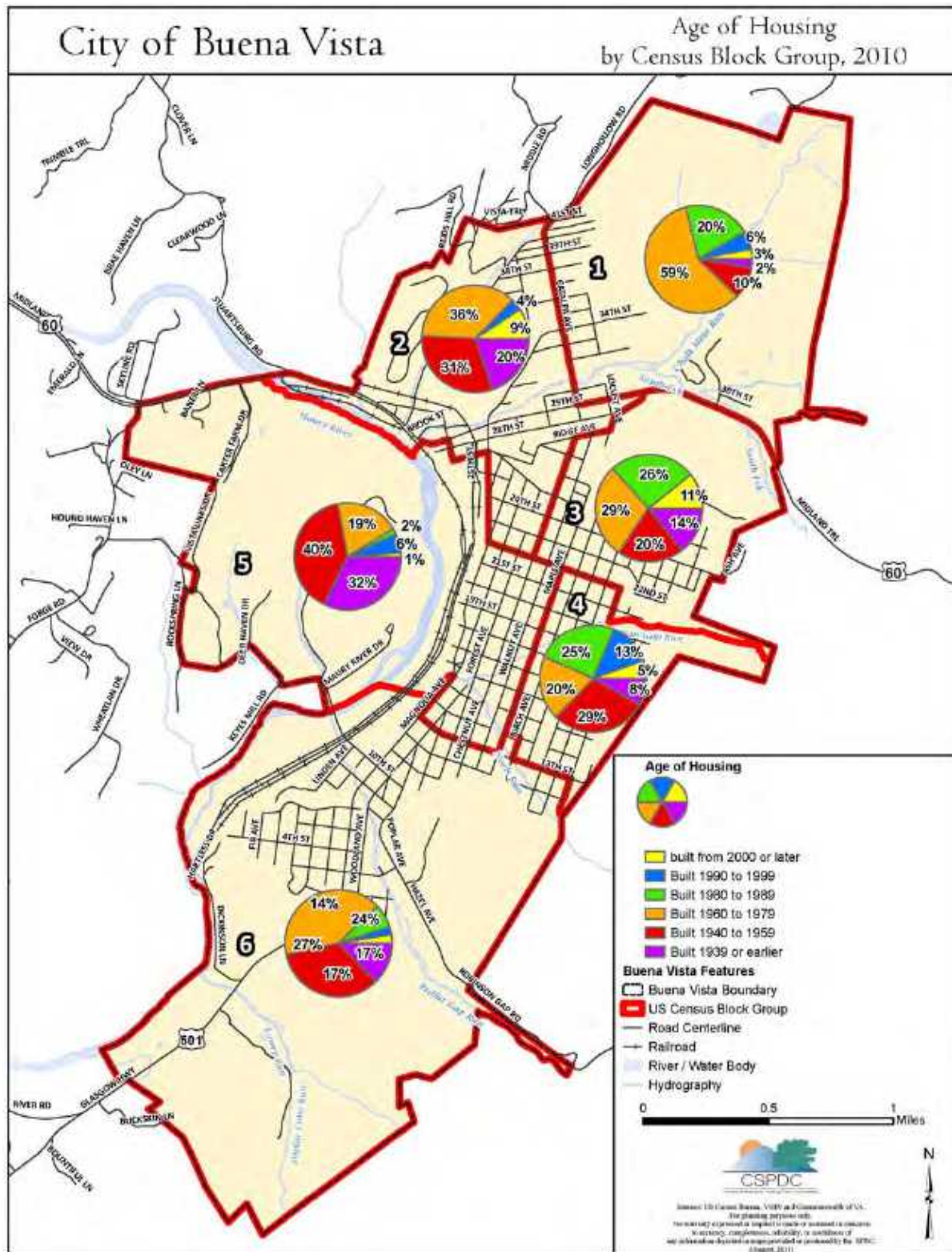


Source: Weldon Cooper Center

Note: Data excludes permits issued for mobile homes, garages and other out-buildings, additions and renovations, and commercial construction.

Buena Vista has an older housing stock. The median year built is 1964 (2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The oldest housing in the City, not surprisingly, is located in downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. Housing in Block Group 5 has a median year of 1948. The northern portion of the City, Block Group 1, has newer construction with a median year of 1975 (See Map 4.3).

Map 4.3



Approximately half of the housing units in Buena Vista were built from 1950 to 1979. About 15 percent were built during or before 1939. Once a home reaches thirty years in age, maintenance and major component replacement is more likely and desired features in modern housing may be missing. In Buena Vista, only about 1 in 5 homes is less than 30 years old. How the aging of housing is addressed contributes to either neighborhood vitality or decline. The physical condition of housing contributes to a neighborhood being an attractive place to live and it increases housing values. Furthermore, because a good share of Buena Vista's housing stock was built prior to 1940, there are opportunities for the preservation of historic structures.

Household Characteristics

A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. A household may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

The number of households in Buena Vista increased between 1990 and 2010 by 8.3 percent while the population grew by only 3.8 percent. Over this same time, the number of persons per household decreased although the number of persons per household increased very slightly between 2000 and 2010. Persons per household is calculated by dividing the number of persons in households by the number of households. Furthermore, there were changes in the type of households.

The U.S. Census Bureau distinguishes two types of householders, a family householder and a nonfamily householder. A family household is a householder living with one or more people related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. A nonfamily householder is a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only. As seen in Table 4.2, the number of nonfamily households increased between 1990 and 2010 from about one in four in 1990 to about one in three in 2010.

Housing

Table 4.2
Households, 1990-2010
Buena Vista

	1990	2000	2010	Number Change 1990-2010	Percent Change 1990-2010 (%)
Total Households	2,404	2,547	2,603	199	8.3
Family Households	1,779	1,749	1,726	-53	-3.0
Percent of Total	74.0	68.7	66.3	-7.7	--
Nonfamily Households	625	798	877	252	40.3
Percent of Total	26.0	31.3	33.7	7.7	--
Persons in Households	6,087	6,058	6,250	163	2.7
Persons per Household	2.53	2.38	2.40	-0.13	-5.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census

Occupancy Characteristics

All occupied housing units are classified as either owner occupied or renter occupied. Map 4.4 shows this by Census Block Group. The percentage of owner-occupied units jumped between 1970 and 1980 from 67.6 percent to 75.7 percent. Homeownership increased at the same time that many homes were being constructed in Buena Vista. The total number of housing units increased by over 400 units during the 1970s. Table 4.3 shows the steady decline in homeownership since 1970.

Table 4.3
Owner/Renter Occupied Housing Units
Buena Vista, 1980-2010

	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Total Housing Units	2,406	100.0	2,494	100.0	2,716	100.0	2,936	100.0
Occupied Units	2,268	94.3	2,404	96.4	2,547	93.8	2,603	88.7
Owner Occupied	1,717	75.7	1,736	72.2	1,800	70.7	1,720	66.1
Renter Occupied	551	24.3	668	27.8	747	29.3	883	33.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000

There was a sharp decline in the number of owner occupied units in Buena Vista between 2000 and 2010. Neighboring localities as well as Virginia also experienced a decline, but it was not as great as Buena Vista's (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4
Owner Occupied Housing Units (%)
1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	75.7	72.2	70.7	66.1
Lexington	56.3	54.9	54.9	52.1
Rockbridge	76.1	74.9	77.7	75.0
Virginia	65.6	66.3	68.1	67.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

Unoccupied housing units are considered vacant. According to Census 2010, 333 housing units were vacant and 2,603 were occupied. Map 4.5 shows the number and percentage of occupied and vacant housing by Census Block Group.

Vacancy status is determined by the terms under which the unit may be occupied, e.g., for rent, for sale, or for seasonal use only. The homeowner vacancy rate and rental vacancy rates are shown in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. There were significant increases between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census.

Table 4.5
Homeowner Vacancy Rates (%)
1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	1.4	0.9	1.4	4.1
Lexington	1.7	0.9	2.1	4.2
Rockbridge	1.5	1.2	1.7	2.7
Virginia	3.5	2.1	1.5	2.1

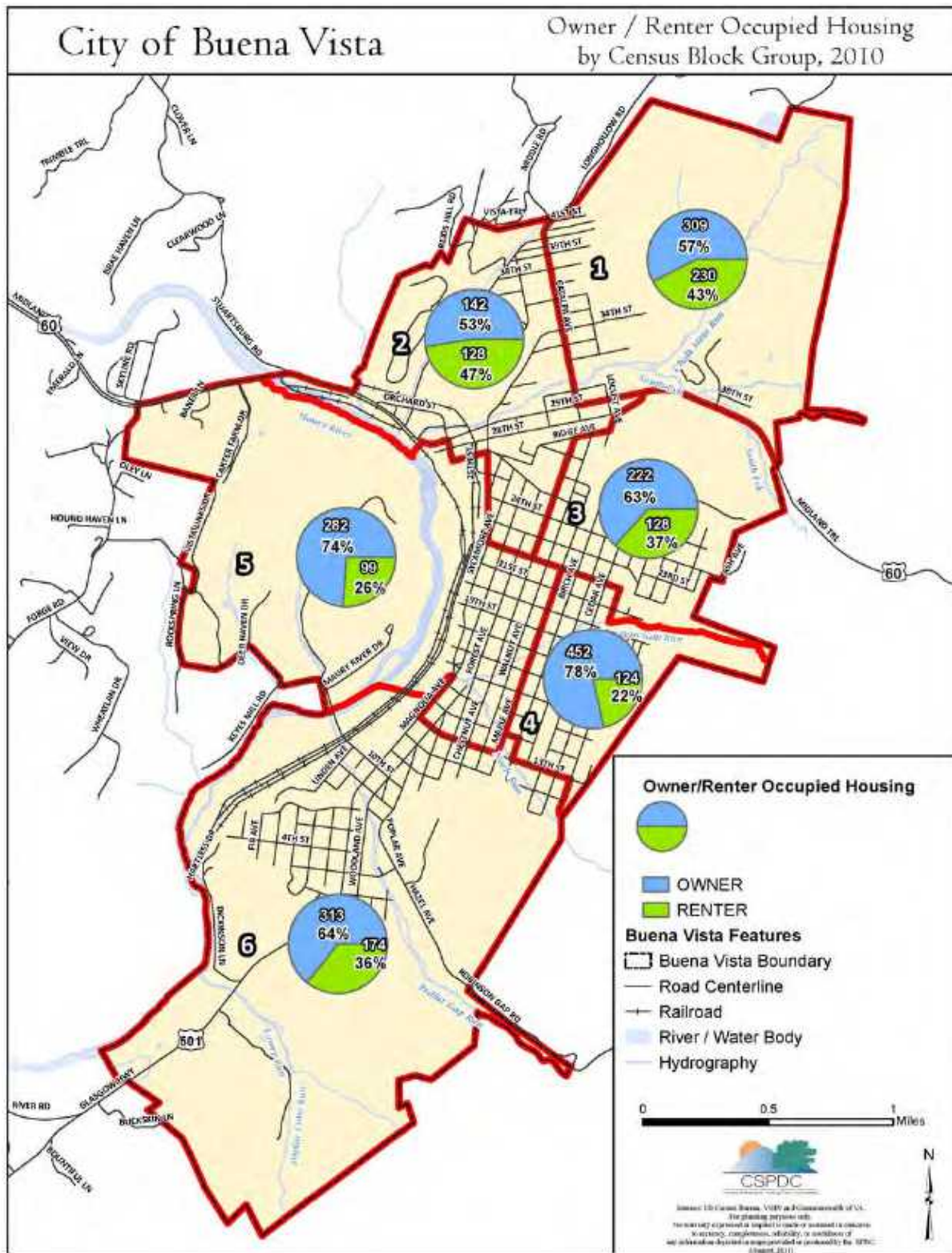
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

Table 4.6
Rental Vacancy Rates (%)
1980-2010

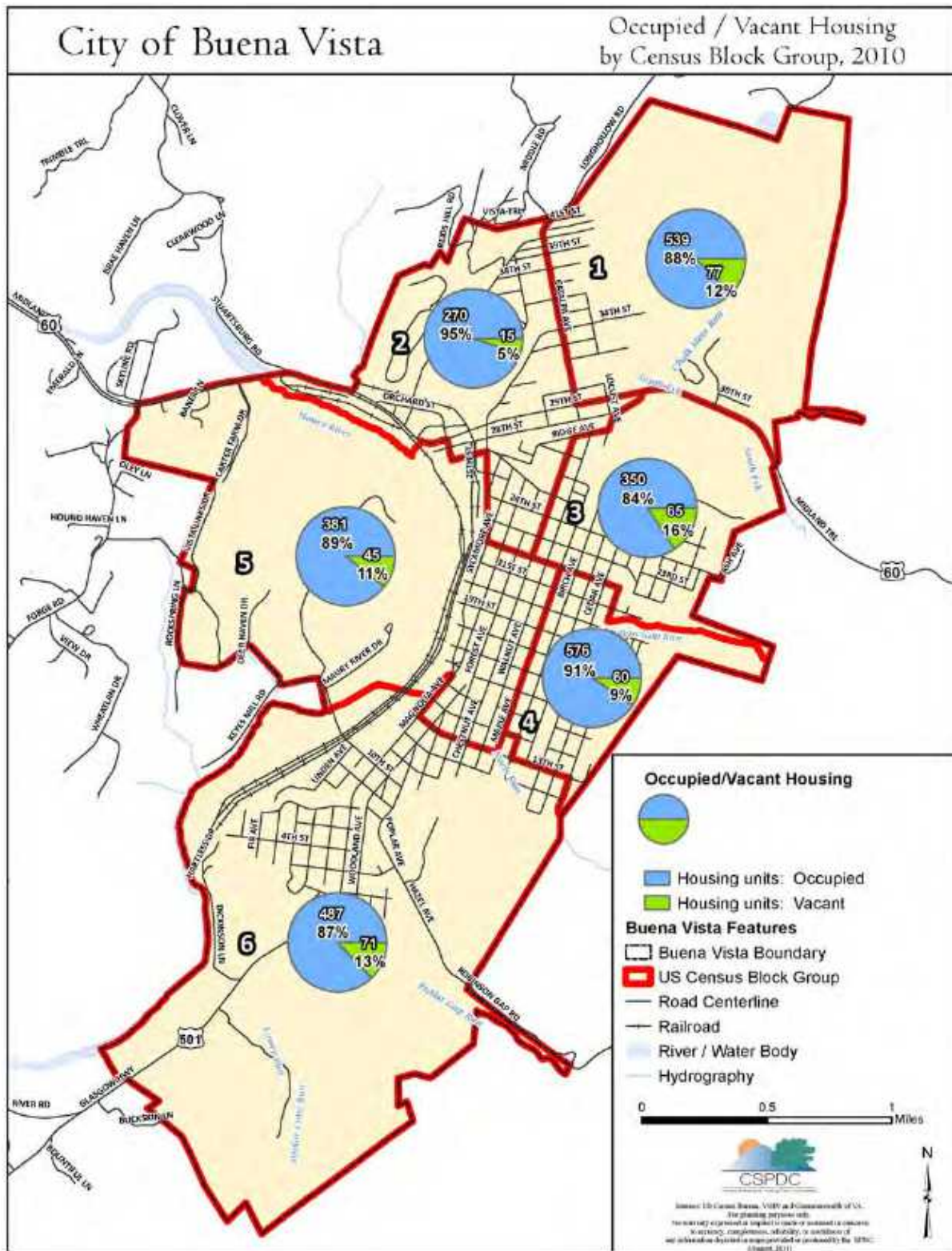
	1980	1990	2000	2010
Buena Vista	10.0	3.2	4.4	12.5
Lexington	9.0	3.5	3.6	10.5
Rockbridge	1.5	3.6	8.3	8.7
Virginia	3.5	8.1	5.2	7.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

Map 4.4



Map 4.5



Housing**Financial Characteristics**

Housing value is the estimate of how much a property would sell for if it were for sale. The median value of owner-occupied housing by Census Block is shown on Map 4.6. This includes only 1-family houses on less than 10 acres and without a business or medical office on the property. This does not include mobile homes.

The highest housing values in Buena Vista are located in Block Group 3 which includes Racy Acres and Mapps Hill. The area with the lowest housing values is Block Group 1 which includes part of the Seminary Hill neighborhood as well as undeveloped land. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median value of owner-occupied units in Buena Vista was \$126,000. For comparison, the median value in Rockbridge County and Lexington were \$179,100 and \$245,600, respectively.

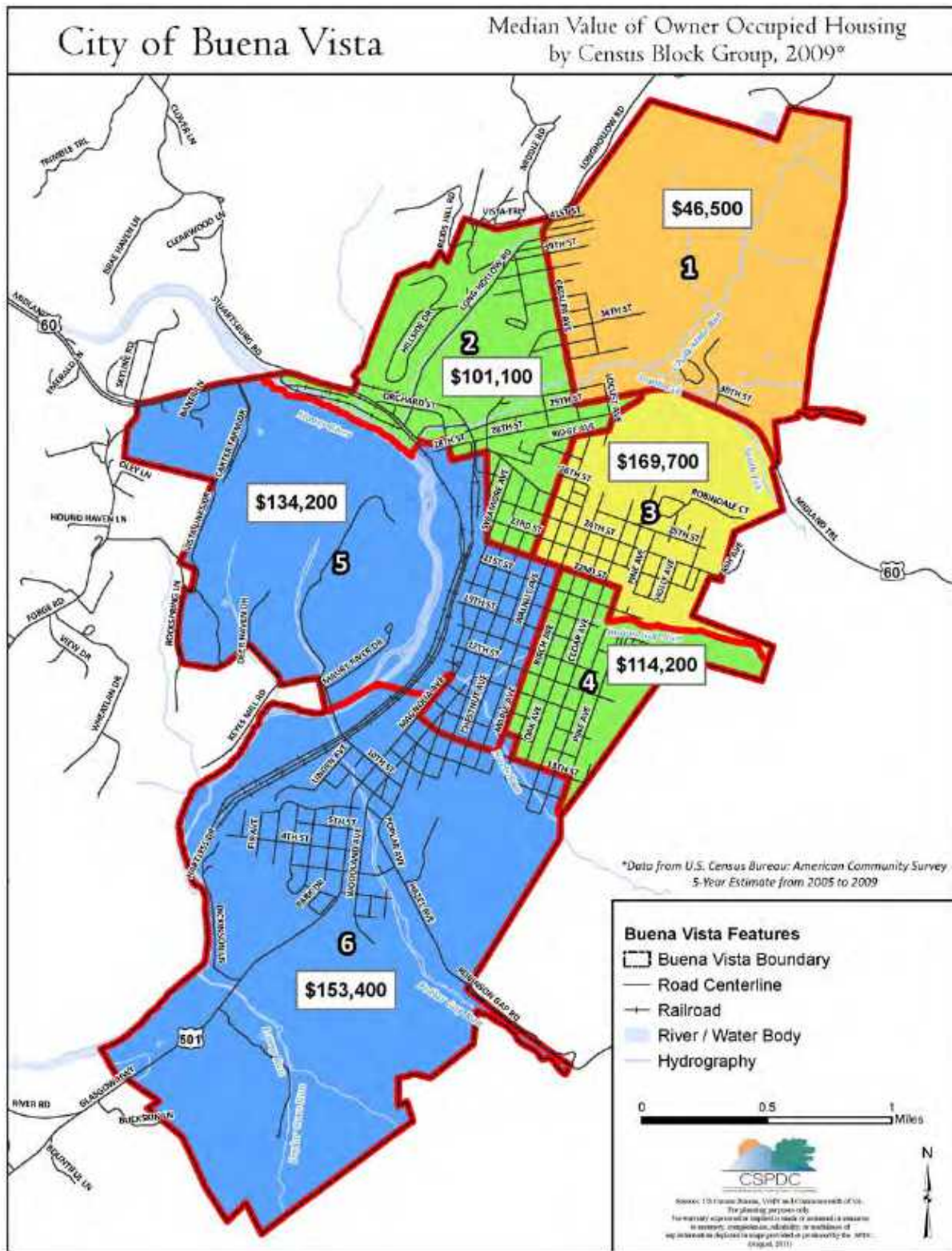
Table 4.7
Value, Owner-Occupied Units
Buena Vista

Value	Number	Percent (%)
Less than \$50,000	123	7.3
\$50,000 to \$99,999	435	25.8
\$100,000 to \$149,999	579	34.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	283	16.8
\$200,000 to \$299,999	188	11.1
\$300,000 to \$499,999	38	2.3
\$500,000 to \$999,999	42	2.5
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0

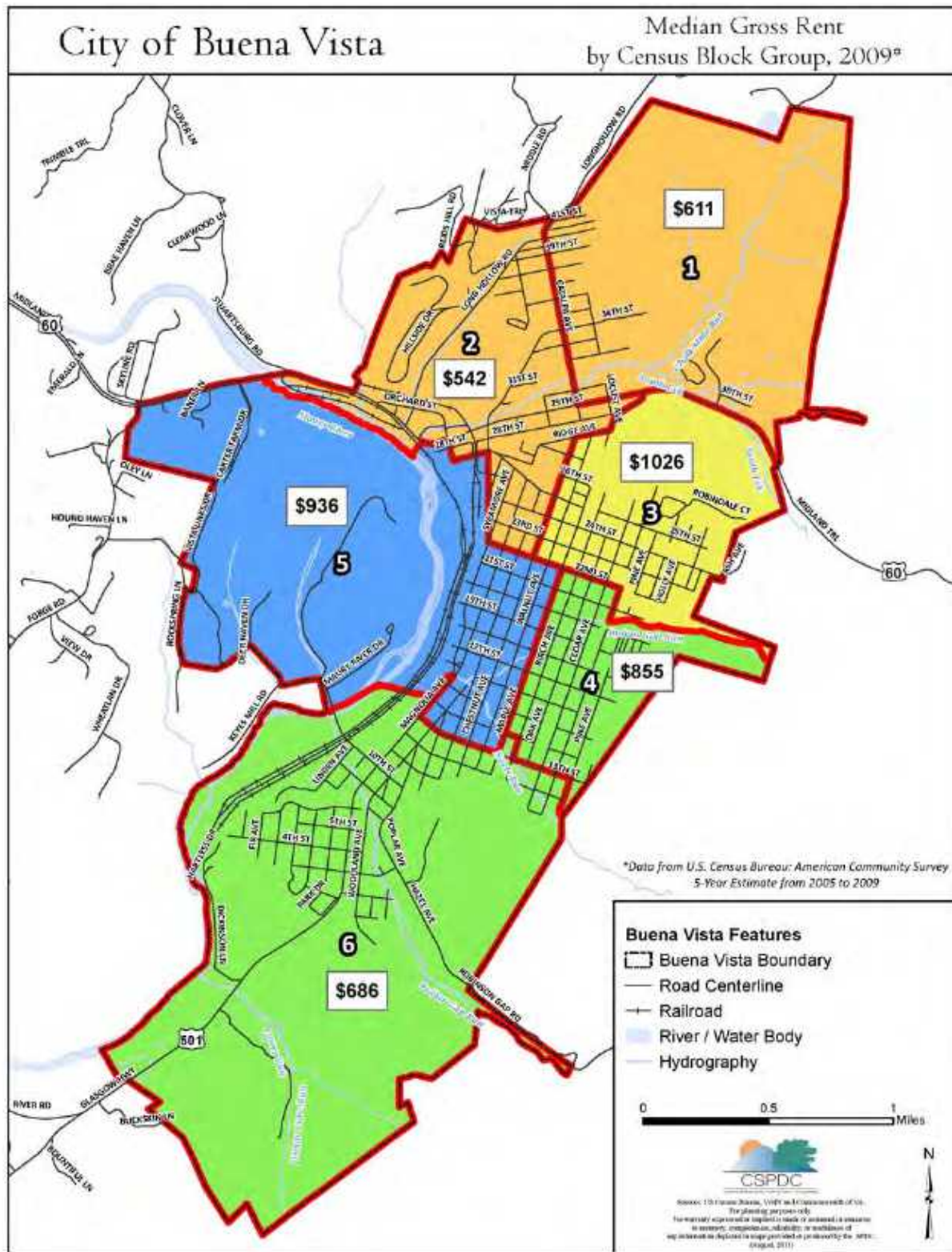
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

As mentioned above, nearly 34 percent of housing units in Buena Vista are renter occupied. For occupied units paying rent, the median gross rent is \$693. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.). Map 4.7 shows median gross rent by Census Block Group. Block Group 1 at the north end of the City has the lowest rents. This area also had the lowest housing values. Conversely, Block Group 3 of the City had the highest gross rents and housing values. Contract rent by Block Group is shown on Map 4.8.

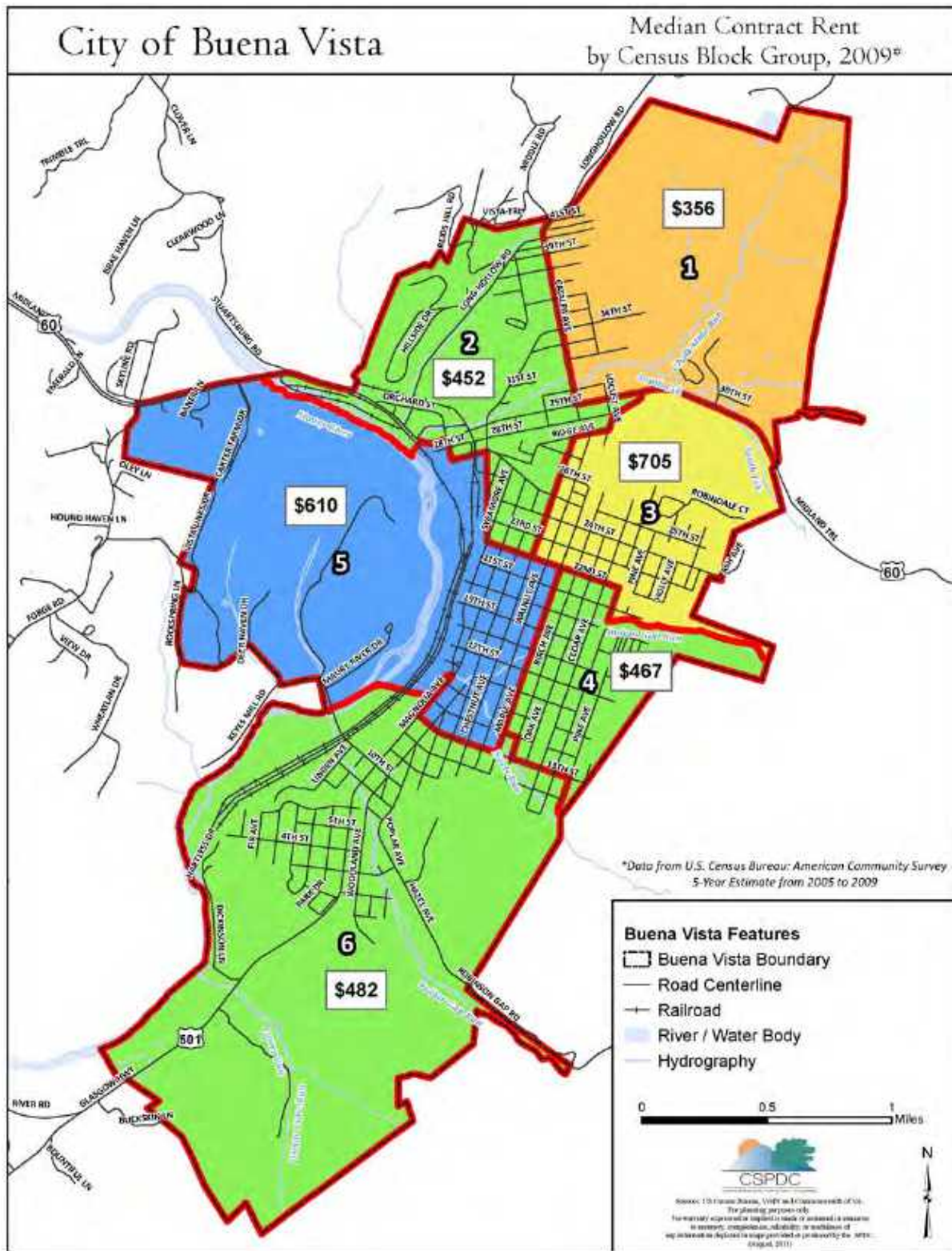
Map 4.6



Map 4.7



Map 4.8



Housing**Affordability**

Monthly owner costs are the sum of payments for mortgages, real estate taxes, insurance on the property, utilities and fuels. The 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimated that 50.4 percent of those living in owner-occupied housing units had a mortgage. Their median monthly costs were \$1,123. Those without a mortgage had median monthly owner costs of \$373. The median gross rent, as reported by the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, was \$693. Median monthly costs for owners and renters are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8
Median Monthly Costs

	Owner Costs with Mortgage		Gross Rent	
	2000 Census	2005-2009 ACS	2000 Census	2005-2009 ACS
Buena Vista	\$680	\$1,123	\$403	\$693
Lexington	982	1,391	434	686
Rockbridge	780	1,207	442	591
Virginia	1,144	1,668	650	931

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Besides housing values and rents, it is important to look at costs and the percentage of income that is devoted to housing costs. Housing expenditures that exceed 30 percent of household income have historically been viewed as an indicator of a housing affordability problem. If expenditures exceed 30 percent, the household is considered to be “cost burdened.” Tables 4.9 – 4.11 reflect the cost burden for both owners and renters.

Table 4.9
Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income
Housing Units with a Mortgage
Buena Vista

Value	Number	Percent (%)
Less than 20.0 percent	369	43.4
20.0 to 24.9 percent	217	25.5
25.0 to 29.9 percent	50	5.9
30.0 to 34.9 percent	110	12.9
35.0 percent or more	104	12.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 4.10
Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income
Housing Units without a Mortgage
Buena Vista

Value	Number	Percent (%)
Less than 10.0 percent	319	38.1
10.0 to 14.9 percent	143	17.1
15.0 to 19.9 percent	98	11.7
20.0 to 24.9 percent	39	4.7
25.0 to 29.9 percent	30	3.6
30.0 to 34.9 percent	38	4.5
35.0 percent or more	171	20.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 4.11
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income
Occupied Units Paying Rent
Buena Vista

Value	Number	Percent (%)
Less than 15.0 percent	83	9.2
15.0 to 19.9 percent	236	26.1
20.0 to 24.9 percent	109	12.1
25.0 to 29.9 percent	26	2.9
30.0 to 34.9 percent	26	2.9
35.0 percent or more	424	46.9
Not computed	100	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Residence

About 1 in 7 householders moved into their unit prior to 1970. The greatest number of householders, however, moved into their unit during the second half of the 2000s. Of the 692 households that moved into their unit in 2005 or later, 472 were renter-occupied and 220 were owner-occupied. Of those that moved during the last year, most came from a different locality in Virginia (2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

Housing

Table 4.12
Year Householder Moved into Unit
Occupied Housing Units
Buena Vista

Value	Number	Percent (%)
Moved in 2005 or later	692	25.7
2000 to 2004	483	17.9
1990 to 1999	456	16.9
1980 to 1989	400	14.9
1970 to 1979	258	9.6
1969 or earlier	403	15.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

LAND USE IMPLICATIONS**Land Use Links**

It makes sense to consider the links between housing locations and daily activities such as jobs, recreation, shopping, and education. Connectivity between these should be promoted to improve transportation options for residents of all ages and incomes, provide recreation opportunities, and reduce pollution. Interconnecting residential areas to amenities and daily needs is particularly important for those that choose or are unable to drive such as older and disabled residents and Southern Virginia University (SVU) students.



Because the City of Buena Vista is based on a grid street network, roadway connectivity is high. However, sidewalks are not provided consistently and other obstacles such as traffic crossings may limit pedestrian and bicycle connections between housing and schools, shopping, and recreation.

Housing Growth Potential

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the number of housing units has increased by 220 units or 8.1 percent between 2000 and 2010. The population during this same time increased by 301 persons (4.7 percent) and 56 households (2.2 percent). Under healthy growth conditions, more homes are built than households are created to live in them.

The slow population growth pattern for Buena Vista is not anticipated to change. According to projections by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the population of Buena Vista is expected to grow only slightly over the next 20 years. However, the VEC projection does not reflect anticipated increased student enrollment and staffing needs at Southern Virginia University. The need for new housing in Buena Vista will be dependent on the University's growth or other activities that interrupt historical trends.

Three areas have been identified for residential growth. The first is the Hill Top District which has remaining lots for residential development. The other two areas include (1) the northern end of the City and (2) the southern end of the City. Each of these two areas consists of approximately 450 acres of undeveloped land. The northern area presently is not served by public sewer and water. Both areas are envisioned to be mixed-use development (See Future Land Use, Map 9.1). The challenge to developing these areas, even for residential use, is the topography. Because there are limited opportunities for new subdivision development in the City, appropriate infill and redevelopment are central housing and neighborhood strategies.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Ordinances. During the past three years, the Buena Vista City Council has attempted to address housing deterioration and blight through the introduction of a Code Enforcement ordinance and a Rental Property ordinance. Both establish standards equivalent to those in the International Property Maintenance Code published by the International Code Council. The adoption of these ordinances put into place language that permits a greater emphasis on providing a safe and sanitary living environment for all residents.

Green Forest Neighborhood. In June 2009, the City requested CDBG Planning Grant assistance from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for rehabilitation activities intended to assist low and moderate income households in the Green Forest Neighborhood. The Green Forest Neighborhood is primarily located along East Midland Trail (U.S. Route 60) and bordered by Brook Street to the east and Orchard Street to the south. The neighborhood includes approximately 41 homes. The neighborhood location is on the primary western entrance corridor to the City. In many ways, the neighborhood presents the first impression of Buena Vista.

The purpose of the CDBG Planning Grant was to identify housing and other infrastructure needs within the project area. Additionally, residents were to be surveyed to confirm needs and income status. The initial steps of a public meeting, housing assessment, infrastructure assessment, and neighborhood survey were completed as required. The project is currently on hold.

Housing

Hill Top-Glen Maury Park Master Plan. Completed in 2002, the Hill Top-Glen Maury Park Master Plan was a vision for Glen Maury Park, a mixed-used development, and a residential area of single-family homes. The zoning ordinance was amended in 2003 to add regulations for the Hill Top District. The regulations were intended to create a pedestrian-scaled neighborhood with a focus on building design elements.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

This housing analysis has identified the following trends:

- Buena Vista has an older housing stock.
- The number of housing units increased at a greater rate than the population and number of households.
- Over a quarter of housing units are occupied by householders that moved in during 2005 or later.
- The percentage of renters is increasing.
- Neighborhoods need improved walkability to community services.
- Infill and redevelopment are central to housing and neighborhood planning.

Housing STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Housing The City of Buena Vista's neighborhoods will be stable and diverse, providing a wide range of housing options, linking residents to a variety of land uses which meet the needs of the community.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Promote attractive neighborhoods. • Form strong relationships with neighborhoods. • Build on assets and stabilize existing neighborhoods. • Provide housing choice within neighborhoods. • Provide connectivity. • Promote mixed uses. • Establish systems capable of recognizing neighborhood decline and disinvestment.			
		Priority	Responsibility
5A	Organize community forums to address housing strategies and opportunities and education.	L	Community Development
5B	Involve community members to help develop neighborhood plans.	M	City-wide
5C	Market local neighborhood improvement success stories and communicate techniques.	On Going	Community Development
5D	Promote street tree plantings, community gardens, and similar public landscape features.	L	Planning, Parks & Rec, Public Works
5E	Provide a range of incentives to create high quality and affordable housing such as reasonable density increases, development fee waivers, time-limited property tax abatements, expedited development reviews, and other focused incentives.	H	Community Development, Planning
5F	Develop a neighborhood planning process.	H	Community Development
5G	Identify older and abandoned structures in need of preservation, stabilization, repair, or demolition.	H	Planning
5H	Continue to develop public and private partnerships in providing low and moderate-income housing.	H	Community Development
5I	Identify appropriate locations for compatible infill housing that would replace vacant or underutilized sites in existing neighborhoods.	H	Planning
5J	Develop a water policy and plan that ensures that adequate water quality, pressure, and quantity are provided.	H	Public Works
5K	Enforce property codes.	H	Planning

Housing

		Priority	Responsibility
5L	Streamline codes to allow maintenance and upgrades with a minimum of permits and regulations.	M	Planning
5M	Annually review and update the existing property maintenance code and enforcement policies and practice evaluate their impacts on neighborhood stabilization and needs.	On Going	Planning
5N	Explore the use of zoning overlay districts to strengthen the integrity of historic neighborhoods.	M	Planning
5O	Develop incentives to encourage investment in older homes, particularly historic homes.	H	Economic Development
5P	Facilitate the development of new downtown housing.	L	Economic Development, Planning
5Q	Favor housing projects that cut long-term costs by incorporating sustainable design elements.	L	Planning
5R	Support residential weatherization, maintenance, and rehabilitations programs.	H	Economic Development
5S	Encourage the location of sidewalks along roadways.	H	Planning
5T	Promote and comprehensively plan for walkways, bikeways, and open spaces that link to and between neighborhoods, schools, shopping and other amenities.	H	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec
5U	Plan with various stakeholder to coordinate the future locations of public facilities such as schools, libraries, and services.	M	Economic Development, Planning, City Council
5V	Provide representation on the Rockbridge Poverty Commission	M	Economic Development
5W	Communicate with SVU to anticipate student, staff and faculty housing needs.	On Going	Economic Development
5X	Review and update the mixed use component of the Hill Top-Glen Maury Park Master Plan.	H	Planning, Economic Development

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 5

Economy

Economic vitality is the measure of the economic health of the City – its people, its businesses, and its government. The purpose of the economic element of the Comprehensive Plan is to set goals and to establish policies which promote economic vitality for the future of the City of Buena Vista. This chapter provides policies that directly affect other elements of this plan.

Economic development is the process to improve the economic well-being of a community. It is a means of providing a balanced, healthy economy. For many local governments, economic development is a means of providing employment opportunities, expanding the local tax base, or expanding economic opportunity. Local economic development is a process that involves a number of activities. These activities include the formation of new institutions, the development of a new or better mix of industries, the nurturing of new and existing enterprises, and the improvement of the capacity of existing employers to produce better goods and services, identify new markets, and successfully transfer new technologies.

Local government can assume a key role in facilitating the actions necessary to develop a solid foundation for successful economic development efforts. Labor force training, provision of infrastructure, coordination of educational institutions, technical and financial assistance, public-private partnerships, and supportive land use policies and regulations are all areas in which local government will continue to play a critical role.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Natural Resources. Natural areas support recreation and tourism, provide economic diversity, and improve the quality of life for residents and the local labor force.

Housing. Economic development depends on housing and creates the need for it. Affordable, quality housing is necessary for maintaining a labor force for employers to access.

Infrastructure & Utilities. Transportation, drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and telecommunications, are vital to business success.

Land Use. Land use patterns affect business access to markets and customers.

Economy

ECONOMIC PROFILE

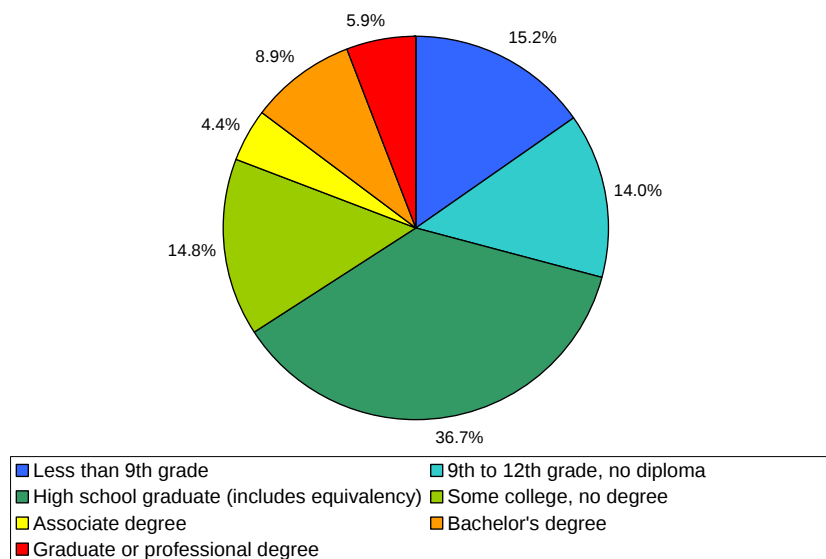
Reviewing the economic structure of an area is an essential component of any existing conditions study. Population trends, land development pressures, the availability of funding for community facilities, and the housing market are all heavily influenced by the structure and health of the economy. In fact, the standard and quality of living are largely determined by economic conditions. An economic profile is, therefore, an invaluable tool in forecasting and planning for the future. The economic profile is based on a variety of sources. Primary sources include the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, U.S. Census Bureau, and the Virginia Department of Taxation.

Educational Attainment

For most businesses, the cost of labor accounts for most of their operating costs. Businesses are concerned about the quality of the labor force and prefer locations where the local labor force is known for high productivity, low absenteeism, and loyalty. Businesses need employees with the knowledge, ability, and skill to perform the job.

Figure 5.1, below, shows the educational attainment of Buena Vista's residents. The educational attainment for approximately a third of the City's residents is a high school diploma or equivalency.

Figure 5.1
Educational Attainment
Population 25 Years and Over
Buena Vista



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 5.1 compares the educational attainment of Buena Vista's population with that of its neighboring localities and the state. For Virginia, nearly 60 percent of residents have an education that includes college and over 30 percent hold a bachelor's or graduate/professional degree. In sharp contrast, about 15 percent of Buena Vista's residents and 23 percent of Rockbridge County's residents hold such a degree. The City of Lexington exceeds the state's educational attainment percentages because of the influence of two higher education institutions, Washington & Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute. For Buena Vista, the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or a graduate or professional degree is increasing, but it still lags behind its neighbors and Virginia.

Table 5.1
Educational Attainment
Population 25 Years and Over

Educational Attainment	Buena Vista (%)	Lexington (%)	Rockbridge (%)	Virginia (%)
Less than 9 th grade	15.2	6.9	8.6	5.5
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	14.0	7.0	12.7	8.7
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	36.7	20.6	34.3	26.3
Some college, no degree	14.8	14.8	15.7	19.4
Associate degree	4.4	3.1	5.7	6.6
Bachelor's degree	8.9	22.4	15.1	19.8
Graduate or professional degree	5.9	25.1	7.9	13.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Access to ongoing training or continued education through community colleges, technical schools, or local colleges is an important benefit to a company and its labor force. The Buena Vista area is home to three universities, a community college, and workforce training programs. Specifically, these include Southern Virginia University, Washington & Lee University, Virginia Military Institute, and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College Regional Center. These education and training opportunities offer instruction and training courses that assist in creating a successful business environment.

*Economy***Employment**

Residents that completed the Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan Survey distributed in February 2009 indicated that jobs were a high priority. This section will highlight employment trends in Buena Vista. Table 5.2 shows the types of jobs in Buena Vista as well as wages generated.

Table 5.2
Employment and Wages by Sector
Buena Vista, 2nd Quarter 2009

Industry Sector	Average Number of Jobs	Average Weekly Wage (\$)	Quarterly Gross Wages (\$)
Total, All Industries	2,285	\$517	\$15,349,780
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	D	D	D
Mining	D	D	D
Utilities	D	D	D
Construction	20	433	112,555
Manufacturing	522	730	4,955,881
Wholesale Trade	9	1,104	129,170
Retail Trade	152	410	810,458
Transportation and Warehousing	D	D	D
Information	D	D	D
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	45	502	293,569
All Services	990	350	4,503,297
Professional and Technical Services	38	479	236,646
Administrative and Waste Services	106	316	432,020
Educational Services	D	D	D
Health Care and Social Assistance	461	326	D
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	D	D	D
Accommodation and Food Services	115	286	D
Other Services. Ex. Public Admin	41	328	D
Government (Local, State, and Federal)	434	607	3,424,256

D=Undisclosed data

Quarterly Gross Wages for Finance and Insurance and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter 2009

Historically, Buena Vista has been the manufacturing center of Rockbridge area. Even though the number of manufacturing jobs is declining in Buena Vista, the manufacturing sector continues as a significant employer in Buena Vista. Of the 2,286 jobs in Buena Vista in 2009, 22.8 percent were in manufacturing. In comparison, manufacturing jobs make up 25.3 percent of Rockbridge County's employment and 0.5 percent of Lexington's employment. Even though about a fifth of Buena Vista's jobs are in manufacturing, it generates about a third of the gross wages. This is because manufacturing wages are higher than many other industry sectors.

Today, many jobs are in the service sector, 43.4 percent. However, 29.3 percent of the City's gross wages are generated by these jobs. Oftentimes, service sector jobs require less skill, pay minimum wages, and offer little or no room for advancement. The growth in service sector jobs may not satisfy the City's need for new employment.

Table 5.3
Percentage of Jobs by Industry Sector
Buena Vista – 1990, 2000, and 2009 (2nd Quarter)

Industry Sector	% of All Jobs in Buena Vista 1990	% of All Jobs in Buena Vista 2000	% of All Jobs in Buena Vista 2009
Construction	1.3	0.9	0.9
Manufacturing	44.6	37.0	22.8
Wholesale Trade	D	0.2	0.4
Retail Trade	11.2	11.9	6.6
Finance and Insurance	1.5	0.9	2.0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.5	0.7	0.4
All Services	13.5	25.8	43.3
Professional and Technical Services	1.8	2.6	1.7
Administrative and Waste Services	---	11.2	4.6
Educational Services	D	D	D
Health Care and Social Assistance	5.9	6.7	20.2
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	---	---	D
Accommodation and Food Services	8.7	4.6	5.0
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	1.9	1.6	1.8
Government (Local, State, and Federal)	14.9	16.0	19.0

D=Undisclosed data

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter 2009

Economy

According to the Virginia Employment Commission, Buena Vista's largest employers are listed below in Table 5.4. In looking at the list, the presence of the manufacturing and service sectors in the City's economy is evident, specifically educational and healthcare services.

Table 5.4
10 Largest Employers
Buena Vista, 2nd Quarter 2009

Employer	Sector	Employee Range
Buena Vista City Public Schools	Educational Services	100-299
Southern Virginia University	Educational Services	100-299
Modine Manufacturing Company	Machinery Manufacturing	100-299
City of Buena Vista	Local Government	100-249
Everbrite LLC	Manufacturing	100-299
Ggnscc Buena Vista LLC	Nursing/Residential	50-99
Fudge Farm Investments LI	Warehousing/Storage	50-99
Fitzgerald Lumber and Logging	Wood Product Manufacturing	50-99
Shenandoah Hardwood Lumber Inc	Wood Product Manufacturing	20-49
Pro Careers	Social Assistance	20-49

Source: Virginia Employment Commission
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter 2009

Tables 5.5 and 5.6, below, offer a picture of the businesses and industries in Buena Vista by the number of people they employ. Table 5.5 indicates that the total number of establishment in Buena Vista has been fairly constant over the last twenty years. Most of the fluctuation has been in establishments with 10 to 19 employees or 50 to 99 employees. The fluctuation in the latter is also seen in the employment data of Table 5.6 with a drop from 716 employees in 2000 to 272 employees in 2009. Employment in businesses and industries having 20 to 49 employees is growing.

Table 5.5
Establishment by Size Class
Buena Vista, 2nd Quarter 2009

Employment Size of Establishment	Number of Establishments		
	1990	2000	2009
1 to 4	69	68	72
5 to 9	28	25	26
10 to 19	11	17	14
20 to 49	7	9	9
50 to 99	5	10	4
100 to 249	7	4	5
250 to 499	0	1	1
Total Establishments	127	134	131

Source: Virginia Employment Commission
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter

Table 5.6
Employment by Size of Establishment
Buena Vista, 2nd Quarter 2009

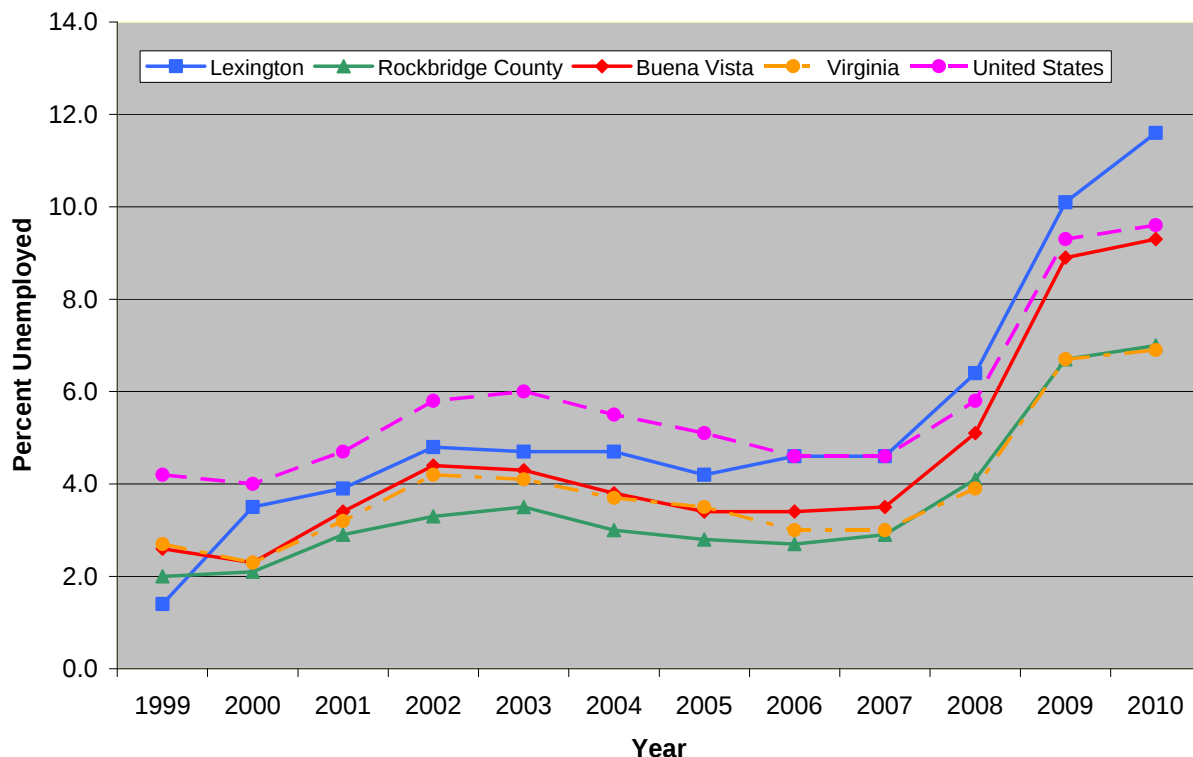
Employment Size of Establishment	Number Employed		
	1990	2000	2009
1 to 4	140	122	151
5 to 9	178	160	168
10 to 19	153	218	193
20 to 49	244	266	337
50 to 99	423	716	272
100 to 249	1054	754	844
250 to 499	0	357	320
Total Employment	2193	2583	2285

Source: Virginia Employment Commission
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter

Economy

From 1999 and 2005, the unemployment rate for Buena Vista mirrored that of Virginia. Rockbridge County tended to be slightly below and Lexington tended to be above the state's unemployment rate. All three localities were below the unemployment rate for the United States. As with national trends, unemployment jumped in 2008 and even more so at the beginning of 2010. Buena Vista remains below the national unemployment rate but the gap is minimal. Beginning in January 2010, Buena Vista's monthly unemployment rate was in double digits; it peaked at 10.7 percent in February 2010. In June 2011, the unemployment rate was 7.2 percent.

Figure 5.2
Unemployment Rate, 1999-2010



Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Commuting Patterns

The City of Buena Vista is an exporter of workers as seen in Table 5.7. A good number of residents, 640, live and work in City. However, this has declined substantially from 1,127 reported by the 2000 Census. After Buena Vista, workers are primarily commuting to and from Rockbridge County. Mohawk, located in Rockbridge County, employs over 600 people including many that live in Buena Vista. The places where residents are commuting to or where workers are commuting from are listed in Tables 5.8 and 5.9.

Table 5.7
Commuting Patterns
Buena Vista, 2009

	Count
People who live and work in Buena Vista	640
In-commuters	1,201
Out-commuters	2,056
Net in-commuters (in-commuters minus out-commuters)	-855

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2009

Table 5.8
Top 10 Places Residents are Commuting To, 2009

Area	Count	Share (%)
Buena Vista	640	23.7
Rockbridge County	592	22.0
City of Lexington	348	12.9
City of Roanoke	92	3.4
Augusta County	75	2.8
City of Lynchburg	52	1.9
Fairfax County	49	1.8
Roanoke County	47	1.7
City of Covington	43	1.6
City of Harrisonburg	43	1.6
All Other Locations	715	26.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2009

Economy

Table 5.9
Top 10 Places Workers are Commuting From, 2009

Area	Count	Share (%)
Buena Vista	640	34.8
Rockbridge County	470	25.5
City of Lexington	64	3.5
City of Lynchburg	42	2.3
Augusta County	36	2.0
Amherst County	34	1.8
Campbell County	34	1.8
City of Staunton	31	1.7
Roanoke County	30	1.6
Tazewell County	28	1.5
All Other Locations	432	23.5

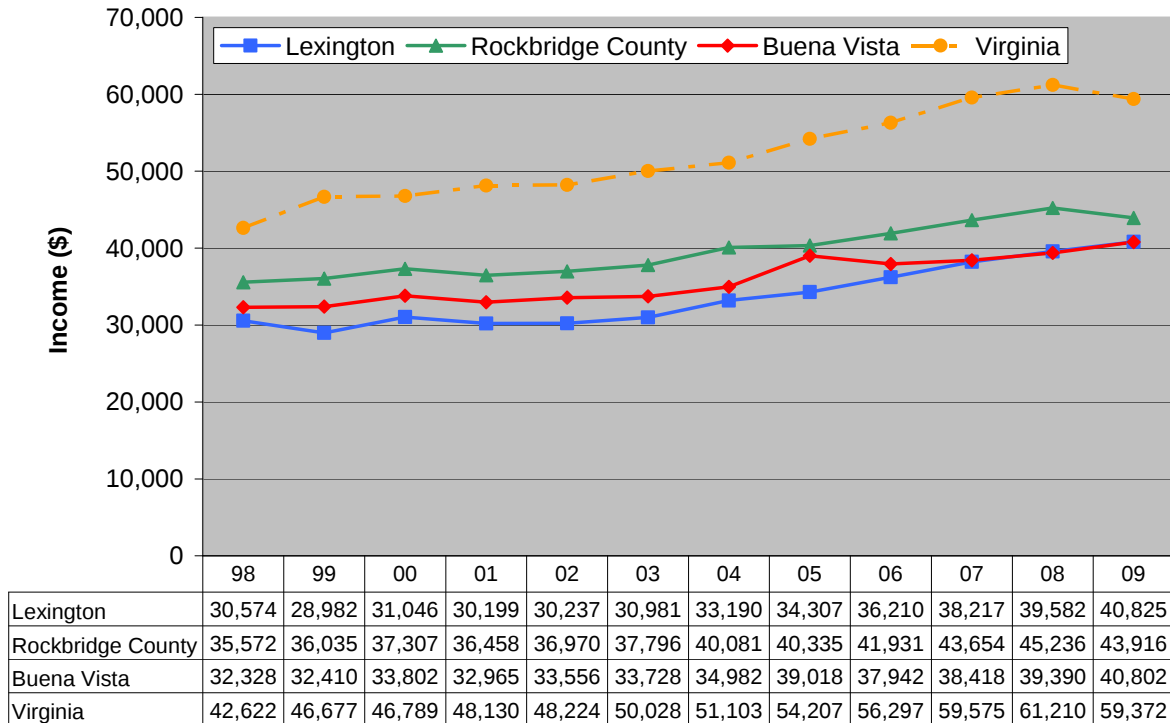
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2009

Income

As the types of jobs in Buena Vista have reshuffled from higher paying manufacturing jobs to service sector jobs, household income levels are affected. Figure 4.12 shows the median household income data for the Rockbridge area as well as Virginia. Median household income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half of households having incomes above the median, half having incomes below the median.

Among Buena Vista, Lexington and Rockbridge County, Buena Vista has the lowest median household income. Up until 2008, Buena Vista had a higher median household income than the City of Lexington. Buena Vista, Lexington, and Rockbridge County all have a lower median household income than Virginia. More significant is that the income disparity between the state and these localities is generally growing. In 2009, however, Virginia's median income declined from the previous year. Rockbridge County's median income also declined, but that of the two cities increased.

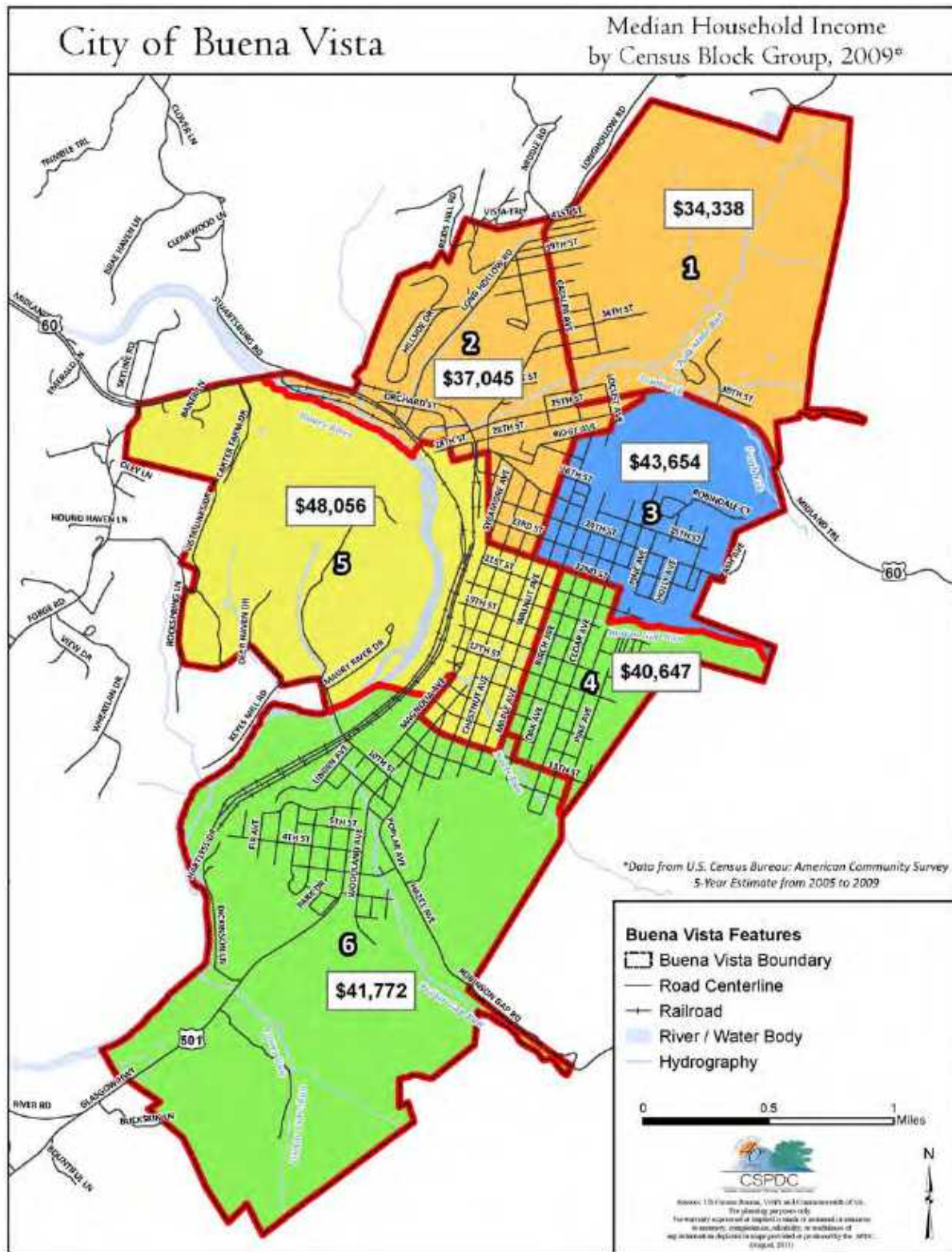
Figure 5.3
Median Household Income, 1998-2009



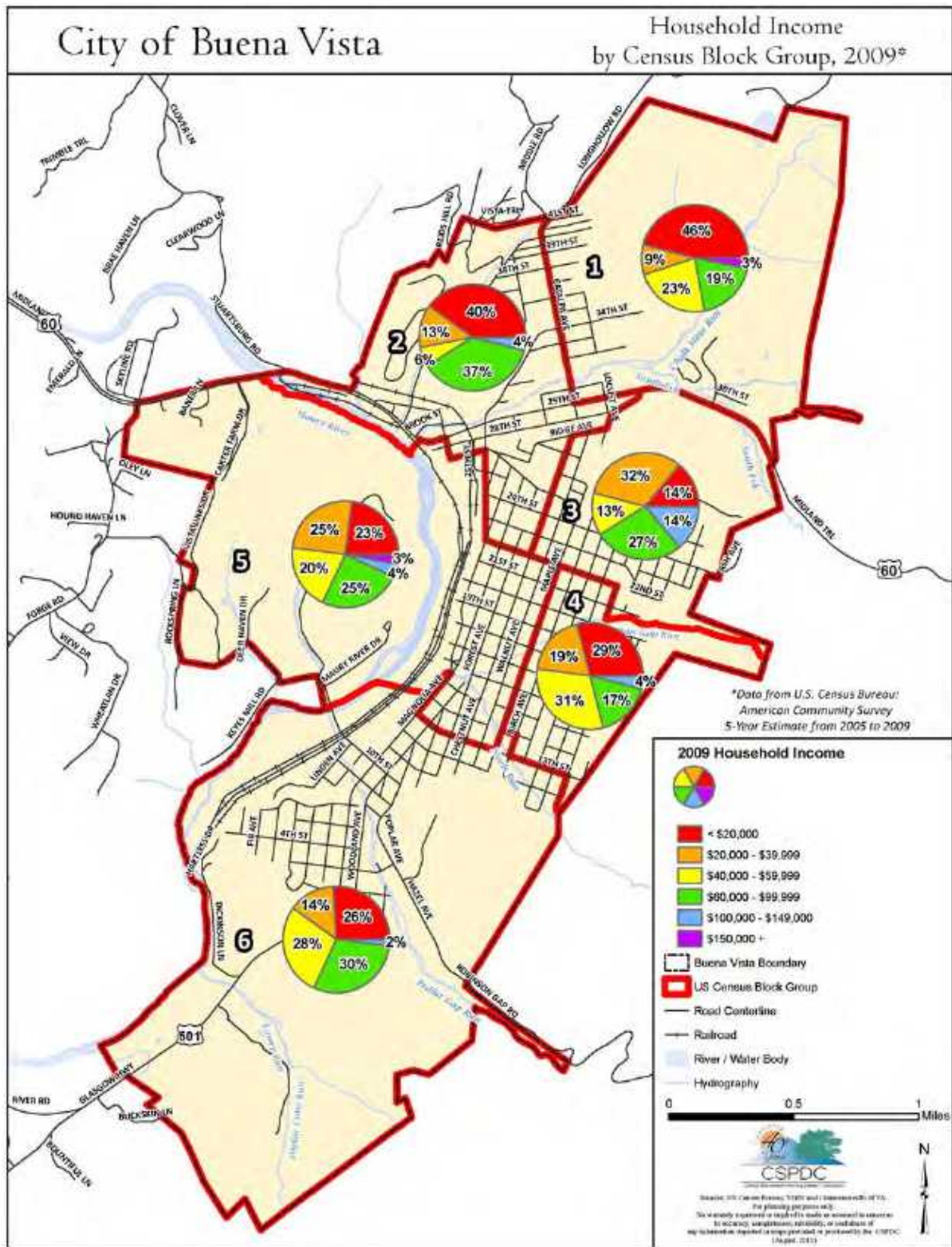
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates

Maps 5.1 and 5.2 take a closer look at median household income within the City of Buena Vista. Income is shown at the Census block group level. Block Groups 1 and 2 in the northern part of the City have the lowest median household incomes. Its neighboring block, Block 5, has the highest median household income. Map 5.2 shows household income distribution at the block group level.

Map 5.1



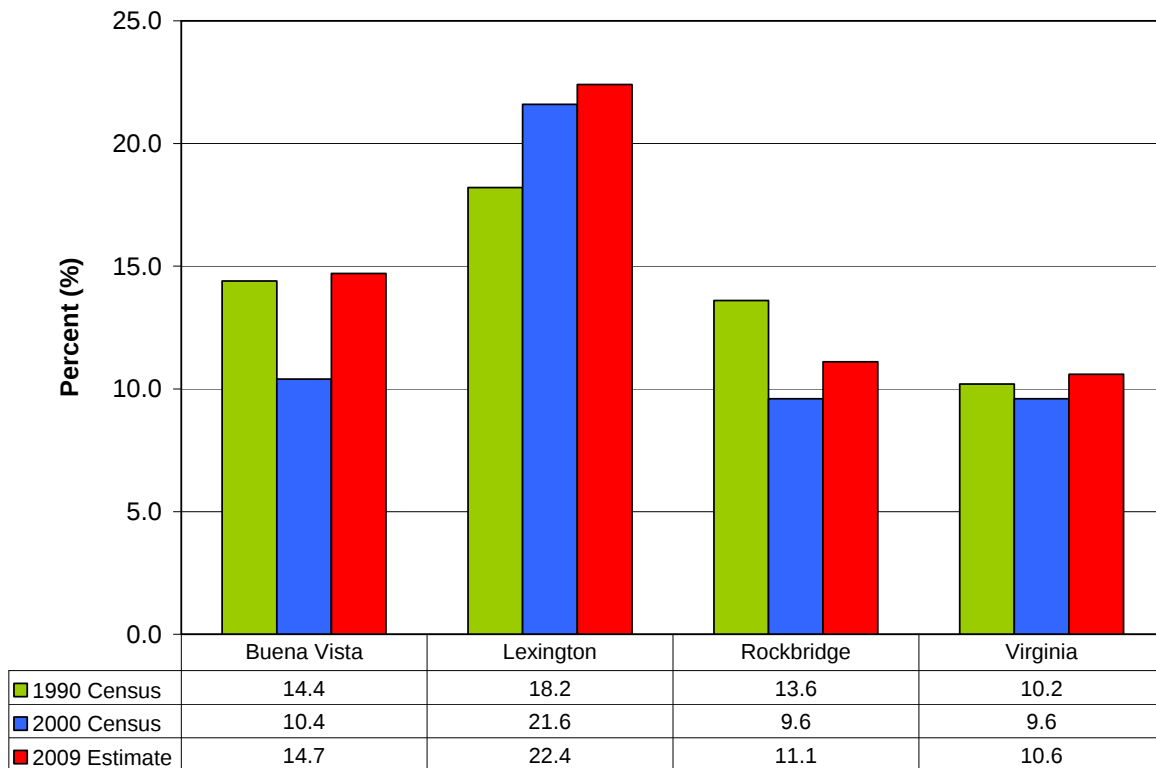
Map 5.2



Economy

Besides income, poverty levels offer an indication of the economic health of residents. Figure 5.4 shows the percent of people of all ages that are in poverty. The percentage of those living in poverty has increased between the 2000 Census and the 2009 estimated poverty level. In Buena Vista, it is similar to the percentage reported by the 1990 Census.

Figure 5.4
Poverty Level Status
Percent of All Ages in Poverty



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census and 2009 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Local economic development is a process that involves a number of activities. As a local government providing infrastructure and land use control, the City of Buena Vista is in a position to play a key role in promoting economic development. The City plays many roles in economic development. Among these roles are the following:

- Adopting a Comprehensive Plan that guides development of the City;
- Adopting supportive land use policies and regulations;
- Setting fees and charges for development;
- Providing and maintaining infrastructure including the transportation system, water system, and wastewater collection system;
- Facilitating economic activity;
- Providing technical and financial assistance;
- Promoting labor force training; and
- Coordinating educational institutions.

Economic development does not grow spontaneously, rather it happens as a result of careful planning. Furthermore, the demand for industrial, commercial, retail, and residential space usually does not grow at the same rate. In an expanding economy, typically jobs attract workers who then seek housing, and finally shop for goods. In older communities such as the City of Buena Vista, office and industrial buildings are generally built/redeveloped first, followed by housing units and finally retail businesses.

Business Attraction and Retention

Attracting new business and growing existing business are both desired economic activities. New business in a community means more jobs and a higher tax base. Generally, new businesses lead to increases in local wage levels and discretionary spending. On the other hand, focusing on business retention and expansion activities results in growth often times without the cost and risk of luring new industry. Buena Vista offers the following qualities to new and existing businesses:

- Location near Interstate 81 and Interstate 64;
- Business incentives;
- Access to ongoing training or continued education through community colleges, technical schools, and local colleges;
- Recreational resources;
- Quality schools; and
- Affordable housing

Economy

The City of Buena Vista has developed a number of initiatives to encourage business attraction, retention, and expansion. These include the following incentives and marketing tools:

Buena Vista Business Website. The City offers a website dedicated to business development. The website, buenavistabusiness.com, provides a wealth of information about Buena Vista as a place for business and living.

Technology Zones. In 2004, the City of Buena Vista created two distinct Technology Zones, a Downtown Zone and an Industrial Zone (see Map 5.3). The purpose of the Technology Zones is to attract new and assist current businesses within the City in growing technology related business by providing tax incentives. The Downtown Zone was established primarily for small business. The zone includes most of the traditional downtown as well as a portion of 29th Street. The Industrial Zone includes land within the City limits that is zoned industrial.

Tourism Zones. As established within the Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan, the City has defined two Tourism Zones as shown on Map 5.4. The purpose of the Tourism Zones is to attract travel and tourism related businesses by allowing the City to offer tax incentives and regulatory flexibility in the designated area.

Buena Vista Downtown Historic District. The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District was established in 2009 (See Chapter 2 Historic Resources, Map 2.1) The Downtown Historic District designation means that up to 45 percent of eligible renovation costs may be returned to the owner through a combination of federal and state tax credits.

Low Interest Loan Fund. The purpose of the Low Interest Loan Fund is to provide short term capital at an extremely low interest rate. The program includes improvement loans, working capital loans, and new business seed loans.

Buena Vista Rehabilitation Tax Exemption. A partial tax exemption is available for qualifying rehabilitated, renovated or replaced residential, commercial, or industrial structures.

Press Release Program. New and existing businesses in the City of Buena Vista are offered free press releases any time when they are needed. The Press Release Program provides businesses the opportunity to have a formal press release developed for submission to local media outlets.

Buena Vista Community Guide. The Community Guide, a City initiative, is intended to provide awareness and increased sales for businesses in the City. Every business has the opportunity to be included in the Buena Vista Community Guide which is mailed to every City resident. The most recent guide was printed in 2008. An updated guide is anticipated in 2012.

Business Webpage. The City provides the opportunity for businesses to promote themselves with a free business webpage on the City's economic development website, buenavistabusiness.com.

Visitor Guide & Calendar of Events. The brochure is distributed to visitors from outside the area to promote Buena Vista businesses and events.

Downtown Events. Community events attract residents and visitors downtown. This provides invaluable exposure for the City's businesses.

The City of Buena Vista is a manufacturing center. Manufacturing employment has declined but it remains a significant employer with some of the highest wages. Helping all businesses, specifically manufacturing, to expand their markets will be key to growing jobs in Buena Vista. Typically, expanding domestic and foreign markets leads to increased investment, additional job creation, and diversification of goods and services. Economic activities should also target small business that is able to grow over time. As listed above, the City has incentives in place to help new businesses locate and grow in Buena Vista.

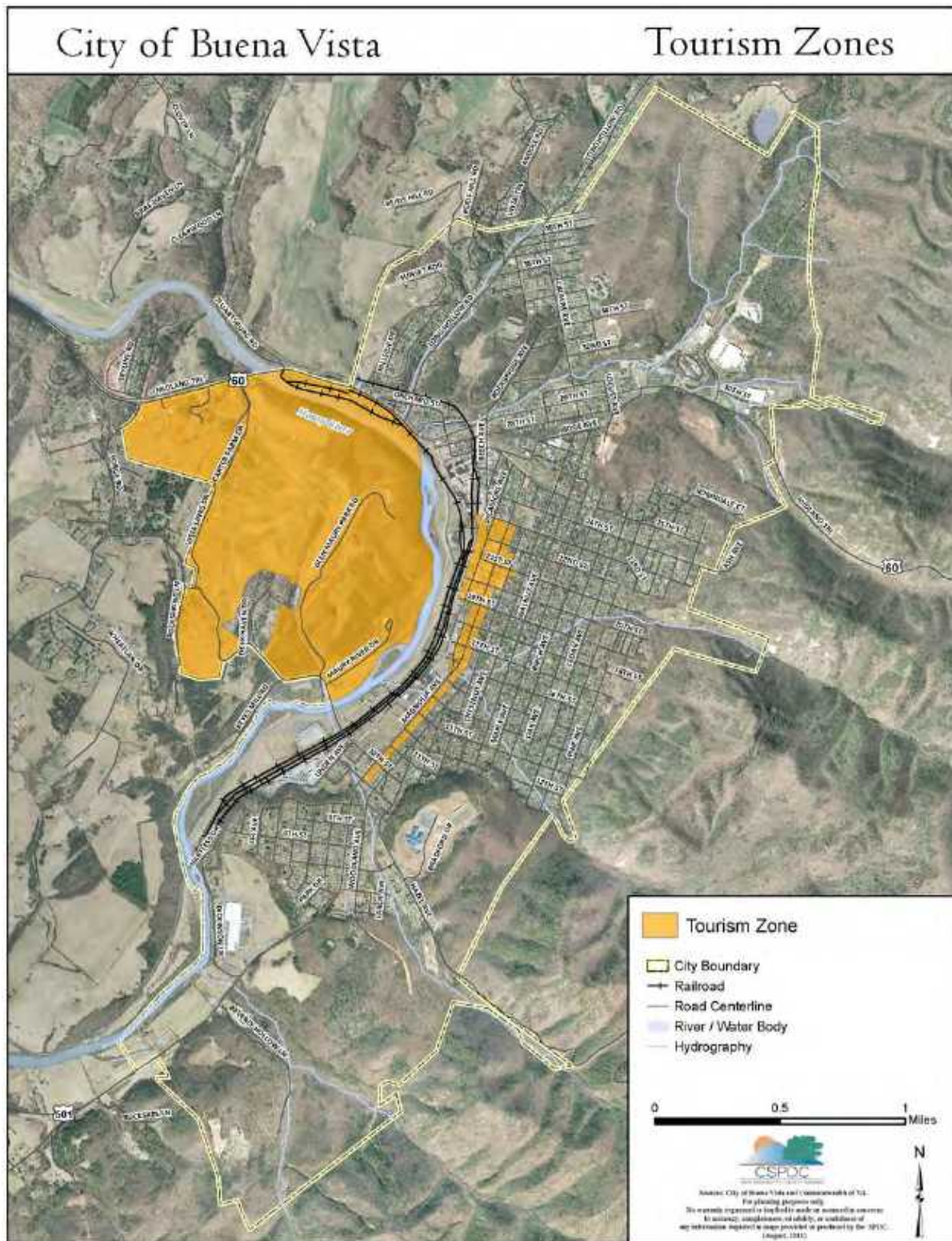
With either new businesses or existing ones, it is important to encourage locally owned and operated businesses to re-invest profits and wages in the local economy. When local businesses use local banks and other support services, it helps keep dollars cycling through the local economy. This holds true for residents too. Residents must be willing to shop for goods and services within the City limits.

As Buena Vista reinvents itself over the next 20 years, it needs to identify a brand for the City around which businesses and economies can flourish and competition can thrive. Included in the list of the City's strengths are its recreational and cultural qualities, the area's colleges and universities, and its population. All or any of these present opportunities for Buena Vista to build its identity.

Map 5.3



Map 5.4



Economy

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is a key component of boosting local tourism. The City can attract investment, revitalize its downtown, and boost tourism while protecting the environment and preserving parks and open space. Economic development and environmental protection are frequently seen as opposites. However, the two are interrelated and are important to a community.

Reasons why parks, recreation, and open space make economic sense:

- Parks and open space often increase the value of nearby properties, along with property tax revenue.
- Parks and open space attract businesses and trained employees in search of a high quality of life.
- Parks and open space attract tourists and boost recreational spending.
- Conserved open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air and prevent flooding – services provided much more expensively by other means.

Source: 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, Adapted from *The Trust for Public Land*, Spring 2006.

In public meetings and community surveys, Buena Vista's natural resources are repeatedly considered as a strength and an opportunity for the City. The City of Buena Vista has a "natural" identity. These resources include the following:

- Maury River
- Blue Ridge Mountains
- Jefferson and George Washington National Forests
- Glen Maury Park
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Chessie Trail
- Appalachian Trail

A national trend is for families to favor more frequent weekend trips throughout the year rather than an annual vacation of one to two weeks. This provides an opportunity for communities such as Buena Vista to promote its outdoor resources in addition to its music festivals, parades and celebrations. Furthermore, these special events establish the City as a more attractive site for outside investors. The City opens its doors for additional economic development activity by bringing investment prospects into its own backyard. It is up to the City, its residents and businesses to use these opportunities to showcase the City's assets to visiting prospects.

Glen Maury Park along with The Vista Links is the jewel of Buena Vista. To the outside eye, the park and the golf course are one even though they are operated separately. They are a destination in the City that needs to be highlighted and improved. In May of 2002, a five day design charrette resulted in a vision for the development of the Hill Top - Glen Maury Park area. That vision included of an 18-hole golf course which was later developed as The Vista Links. The recommendations for the park attempted to address connections between the park and downtown, location of entertainment venues, use of field areas, and accessibility to the riverfront. A number of the park recommendations have not been implemented, but they continue to be key elements for improving Glen Maury Park as a destination.

Tourism and recreation based business is not simply an income generating business. It has other benefits as well including providing recreational activities for residents and enhancing the community's image as a great place to live. It not only improves the external image of the community but also the internal image. Local residents take pride in what their community has to offer. The park is certainly one of the benefits of living in the City. It is a positive contributor to the City's quality of life.

To sustain tourism, the City must have an adequate support network of motels, restaurants, shopping, and worthwhile attractions. Although tourism creates many job opportunities, most of these positions pay low wages. This is a criticism of the tourism industry. On the other hand, if tourism and recreational development attract significant numbers of seasonal and permanent residents, it could change the City for the better. Visitors and new residents could spark the demand for more goods and services resulting in a more diversified economy with higher paying jobs. Consequently, tourism and outdoor recreation as a means of fostering economic development needs to be balanced with other economic activities.

Recognizing that tourism is an important component of the City's economy, the City has defined two Tourism Zones as permitted by Code of Virginia. These Tourism Zones are shown on Map 5.4. The purpose of the Tourism Zones is to attract travel and tourism related business to the downtown area and the Glen Maury Park/Hill Top area. The designation as Tourism Zones reflects that these two areas are key opportunities for economic development within the City.

Economy

Town & Gown

The Buena Vista area is home to three universities, a community college, and workforce training programs. These include Southern Virginia University, Washington & Lee University, Virginia Military Institute, and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College Rockbridge Regional Center. These education and training opportunities offer instruction and training courses that ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~leading~~ ^{leading} in cr a successful business environment. Businesses



are concerned about the quality of the labor force, and they need employees with the knowledge, ability, and skill to perform the job. The close proximity to education and training opportunities in Buena Vista are an important benefit to both businesses and the labor force.

Located on the edge of Buena Vista's downtown, Southern Virginia University (SVU) has the greatest impact on the City's economy. As shown in Figure 4.3, Southern Virginia University (SVU) is one of the largest employers in the City of Buena Vista. It is also one of the fastest growing because of the overall expansion of the University. During the next five to ten years, SVU expects its enrollment to increase from its current 800 students to approximately 1,000.

About a tenth of workers in Buena Vista are employed by SVU. SVU employees include both non-student and student employees. The average weekly wage of a SVU employee is higher than the average weekly wage of all industries in Buena Vista. As mentioned in the Chapter 1, Population Characteristics, Buena Vista has a negative natural increase. However, the City's population is growing at a slow rate because of its positive net migration. Much of this migration is related to SVU's growth.

With an increase in the University's population, the demand for housing has increased. Approximately 75 percent of SVU employees live within Buena Vista's boundaries. This leads to increased property values and contributes to increased City revenues through property taxes. Additionally, some SVU students rent housing units off campus. Consequently, owners of rental properties have seen significant increases in rental income.

Southern Virginia University significantly increases visitor traffic and spending in the City. It is estimated that there are more than 1000 visitors to the SVU campus each year. These visitors include prospective students, families of students, competing athletic teams, speakers, conference attendees, alumni, and donors. Additionally, over 1800 high school aged individuals attend weekly summer camps on campus. This brings parents who spend time and money in the area as they drop-off and pick-up their child.

As with recreation, the university needs a support network of motels, restaurants, and shopping. Presently, many visitors and students tend to spend much of their discretionary income in Lexington or in Rockbridge County stores such as Walmart. Buena Vista has a small number of hotel choices, so visitors choose to stay elsewhere. It is believed that SVU employees, students, and visitors would support stores and services in Buena Vista if they were available. This need presents an opportunity for new businesses in the City.

SVU impacts Buena Vista's economy through its payroll, property taxes, and off-campus student housing rentals. It also provides unmeasured benefits including access to the university's library; music, theater, and other arts programs; athletic events; and community service through its outreach programs. These amenities contribute to the City's quality of life. SVU is an important partner in Buena Vista's future. Consequently, the City and the business community should engage with SVU as it creates economic development plans.

Historic Downtown

Downtown Buena Vista has lots of positive things working in its favor. These include the following:

- Historic buildings
- Wide streets
- Location on the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Views of the Blue Ridge Mountains
- Historic district designation
- Technology zone
- Tax abatement program

It also faces many challenges which include:

- Relatively high vacancy rate
- Relatively small proportion of retail businesses
- Stiff competition from businesses in other parts of the Rockbridge County and nearby counties
- Legacy of loss from the devastating floods of 1969 and 1985
- Negative public perceptions of the district to overcome

From Sales Gap Analysis for Buena Vista, Virginia.

Economy

Knowing these strengths and weaknesses of the downtown will help shape the economic development strategies and investments that will be most useful to downtown business and will help the City to grow. *The Sales Gap Analysis for Buena Vista, Virginia* recommends a general process for a downtown development plan as well as specific suggestions. The use of this report should be reviewed for guiding the reinvention of Buena Vista's historic downtown.

A frequent comment in the comprehensive plan survey and the community survey is the lack of shopping in Buena Vista. Currently, downtown has a few destination shops, but it is not generally considered a place to window shop. Downtown is not the economic driver of the City, but it has the potential to grow as other sectors of the economy strengthen. These include businesses that focus on students, faculty and visitors of Southern Virginia University; campers, music goers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts of Glen Maury Park; travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway; and an aging City population. Building up the existing farmers' market could encourage shopping and community gatherings downtown while supporting local agricultural activities.



A niche market could also be identified as a downtown development plan is formed. As this plan is implemented, the needs of visitors and residents may need to be balanced.

In addition to the downtown, growth towards Interstate 81 needs to be considered. The City has sewer and water infrastructure that could be extended into Rockbridge County. The City needs to partner with neighboring localities to plan growth. This could create revenue for Buena Vista, thereby reducing taxes and providing a funding source for revitalization efforts in the downtown.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Gems of Rockbridge Geocaching Trail. This is a high-tech game in which participants use online clues and GPS coordinates to locate hidden "caches", which are hidden containers ranging in size from a bottle cap to an ammunition box. The geocaching trail was implemented in Summer 2009 and includes locations in the City of Buena Vista.

Rockbridge Wayfinding Signage Program. The purpose of this regional program is to design, install, and maintain a system of customized directional signage to guide residents and visitors to primary and secondary attractions and destinations throughout the Rockbridge County area, Lexington, and Buena Vista. The first signage is expected to be installed in 2011.

Upper James Outdoor Recreation Plan. The Upper James Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee, comprised of about a dozen partners including the City of Buena Vista, is directing a planning initiative to strategically plan outdoor recreation throughout the Upper James Region. The plan will prioritize projects, promote natural resource recreation, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

Blue Ridge Parkway Gateway Study. In the spring of 2010, a study along U.S. Route 60/Midland Trail/E. 29th Street and U.S. 501 was completed. The purpose of the study was to strengthen the connection between the Blue Ridge Parkway and the City of Buena Vista. The study identified issues and opportunities including, but not limited to, land use, economic development, conservation, tourism, and signage. The study resulted in an illustrative conceptual plan indicating key recommendations for the study area as well as steps for plan implementation. In June 2010, the City was awarded a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry under its Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to complete a professional landscape and tree planting plan for the gateway corridor.

Appalachian Trail Community. In October 2011, the City of Buena Vista was designated an Appalachian Trail Community by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Designation and participation in the program is designed to act as a catalyst for enhancing economic development. Preserving and enhancing a charming, memorable community destination is intended to contribute to the long-term economic health of Appalachian Trail (A.T.) communities and make an A.T. hike even more desirable. Additionally the program strives to engage community citizens as trail visitors and stewards, aid localities and regions with conservation planning, and highlight the trail as a resource and asset.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

- Manufacturing continues as the largest industry sector for employment and gross wages.
- Growing industry sectors include government and services.
- Buena Vista is an exporter of workers.
- The City offers a number of incentives to attract and retain business.
- The City has the opportunity to strengthen and diversify its economy by building on its assets of outdoor recreation, Southern Virginia University, and historic buildings.

Economy

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

Sales Gap Analysis for Buena Vista, Virginia. The Community Land Use and Economics Group, LLC, 2009.

Hill Top-Glen Maury Park Master Plan. The Lawrence Group – Town Planners & Architects, 2003.

Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan. LPDA Land Planning & Design Associates, Inc., July 30, 2004.

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan. Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, 2007.

Blue Ridge Parkway/Skyline Drive Gateway Studies; Study 1: Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista. Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, June 2010.

Economy STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Economy The City of Buena Vista will be a community with a sustainable, diverse economy that can weather national economic fluctuations. The City of Buena Vista will be a regional employment center and a hub for regional economic development.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Provide and retain a high quality workforce. • Position the City in the new economy with a diverse, expanded economic base (size, type, and age). • Nurture existing businesses. • Promote a business climate that nurtures entrepreneurship. • Encourage development that creates local re-investment funds and provides jobs in the local community. • Ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business development and evolving technology. • Coordinate economic development with environmental and other land use and open space policies and measures to enhance the community's overall quality of life. • Strengthen relationships with local universities and colleges.			
		Priority	Responsibility
5.1A	Foster collaborative working relationships among economic development stakeholders at the community, state, and federal levels.	On Going	City staff
5.1B	Ensure an adequate water supply and distribution system to support economic growth.	H	Public Works
5.1C	Maintain a safe and efficient wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the long-term needs of community residents, industries, and visitors.	On Going, H	Wastewater Treatment
5.1D	Encourage the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure including public transit.	On Going	Public Works, Regional Cooperation
5.1E	Support technology and conservation techniques to minimize demands on resources such as water, energy, and other natural and developed resources.	On Going	Economic Development, Public Works
5.1F	Visit local firms to find out what their problems and needs are.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1G	Identify businesses considering expansion and provide technical or other assistance to facilitate expansion.	On Going	Economic Development

Economy

		Priority	Responsibility
5.1H	Ensure that local businesses are aware of and kept up to date on City, State, and federal programs, services, and activities that may be of use or assistance to local businesses.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1I	Support existing local businesses as the major contributors of job creation and afford them every opportunity to continue their success in the community.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1J	Encourage investments whose products and services can be marketed beyond the borders of the City of Buena Vista, both domestically and internationally.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1K	Encourage firms to contribute financially as a partner with the public sector in sharing the costs for civic and cultural needs of the community at large.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1L	Develop opportunities to collaborate and reach out to the business community.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1M	Partner with local colleges and universities, particularly SVU and DSLCC, and local business to create student opportunities for workplace experience and entrepreneurship.	On Going	Economic Development, SVU, DSLCC
5.1N	Develop GIS to create a central repository for economic, land use, and business data to support local business needs.	H	Economic Development, Planning, Public Works
5.1O	Simplify development procedures and processes to improve understanding, clarify intent, shorten time requirements, consolidate review methods and agents, and enhance the realization of quality development projects.	L	Economic Development, Planning
5.1P	Promote local citizen support of businesses located in Buena Vista through newsletters, directories, and local events.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1Q	Maintain an updated inventory of available business and industrial properties in the City.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1R	Promote a market brand and image for the Buena Vista business community.	H	Economic Development
5.1S	Organize and market a regular downtown farmers' market.	H	Economic Development, Celebrate Buena Vista
5.1T	Convene a summit of local representatives to identify opportunities for collaboration on responses to the business community's needs.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1U	Identify incubator space for small businesses in the City of Buena Vista.	H	Economic Development

		Priority	Responsibility
5.1V	Seek out opportunities for public and private partnerships to develop community assets that will benefit residents and businesses.	On Going	Economic Development
5.1W	Establish a competitiveness review of policies, taxes/fees, processes and other influences that impact City businesses.	On Going	Economic Development, Planning, Finance
5.1X	Recognize the natural environment as a major asset and manage environmental resources accordingly.	On Going	Public Works, Parks & Rec, Staff Leadership
5.1Y	Develop a detailed strategy for marketing and promoting Buena Vista as a recreation gateway.	H	Economic Development, Parks & Rec
5.1Z	Use the resources of Maury Park and the route to the Blue Ridge Parkway to build tourism and recreation development.	H	Economic Development, Parks & Rec
5.1AA	Publicize the City's parks and recreation amenities to the regional business community to help attract and retain workers.	H	Economic Development
5.1BB	Implement the recommendations of the Park Commission Business Plan.	H	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec
5.1CC	Implement the recommendations of the Blue Ridge Parkway Gateway Study for the City of Buena Vista.	M	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec, Public Works
5.1DD	Restore a pedestrian bridge across the Maury River to connect Glen Maury Park and the Downtown area.	M	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec, Public Works, VDOT
5.1EE	Coordinate regional partners to implement the recommendations of the Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan.	M	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec, Public Works
5.1FF	Provide a better community balance between housing, shopping and working.	L	Economic Development, Planning

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Economy

Economy STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 2: Redevelopment The City of Buena Vista will be a community that provides redevelopment programs and service that facilitate the redevelopment of designated areas and helps rebuild neighborhoods.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Provide regulations that provide flexibility and incentives for redevelopment. • Focus on development in redevelopable areas of the City. • Promote an atmosphere that is conducive to business expansion.			
		Priority	Responsibility
5.2A	Develop policies and incentives to stimulate redevelopment of older, vacant, or blighted non-residential uses. Incentives should include both economic (historic tax credits, technology zone, tourism zone) and policy (ordinance provisions, etc) opportunities.	On Going	Economic Development, Planning
5.2B	Develop an inventory related to the designated redevelopment of areas including vacancy rates, ownership, and duration of leases.	M	Economic Development
5.2C	Work with local businesses to identify retention and expansion road blocks.	On Going	Economic Development
5.2D	Consider the recommendations of the Sales Gap Analysis to produce a downtown development plan.	H	Economic Development

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 6

Infrastructure & Utilities

Infrastructure is the basic physical systems of a community's population. Infrastructure covers a broad array of topics including roads, utilities, water, sewers, power grids, telecommunications. These systems are considered essential for the production of goods and services. They are critical to meeting the community's development goals.

A community makes big investments to provide these basic services, and they require ongoing investment and maintenance. It is important to evaluate the capacity of the City's infrastructure and its ability to meet current and future development needs. Roads are discussed in a separate chapter, Chapter 7, Transportation.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

There are three forms of water infrastructure – drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater. These three are addressed locally. Drinking water supplies are drawn from local surface or ground water sources. Wastewater is treated and discharged locally without contaminating local waters. Stormwater is collected and managed to prevent flooding, erosion, and contamination of streams and rivers. Because Buena Vista is not experiencing rapid growth, the focus is on maintaining and improving existing facilities.

Relationship to Other Plan Elements

Natural Resources. Rivers and streams improve the quality of life for residents and provide a basis on which to build tourism. Water quality and habitat need to be maintained.

Housing. Varying housing types have differing demands. Planned and thoughtful choices, extension of systems and routine maintenance, let a community retain a diversity of housing options, minimize inefficient systems, and help keep housing affordable.

Economy. Many communities invest in water/sewer facilities to encourage economic growth by facilitating the expansion of existing businesses as well as attracting new ones. This can mean the creation of jobs and expansion of the tax base. Additionally, some commercial and industrial activity may have special wastewater treatment needs.

Land Use. The cost of sewer and water extensions and new systems can be very high. They open up more land to be developed. Consequently, these projects may significantly change the character of areas not currently served by existing systems. Additionally terrain and topography greatly influence land use.

*Infrastructure & Utilities***Drinking Water**

Water facilities are built primarily to provide clean, safe drinking water. Investment in water facilities also supports economic development. The water system collects, treats, stores and distributes potable water from the source of supply to the consumer. Buena Vista's public water system serves the residents of the City as well as a small portion of Rockbridge County (See Map 6.1). Buena Vista classifies its water customers as either residential (2480 accounts) or commercial (16 accounts) based upon meter size. All users are charged the same rates.

Water supplies are drawn from local groundwater resources. Buena Vista's waterworks consist of five drilled wells, one spring, seven finished water storage reservoirs, four booster pumping stations, and the distribution system serving the City. The system typically produces approximately 349 million gallons per year or 956,250 gallons per day. The City of Buena Vista's water system capacity is provided by the following sources:

Table 6.1
Drinking Water Sources
Buena Vista

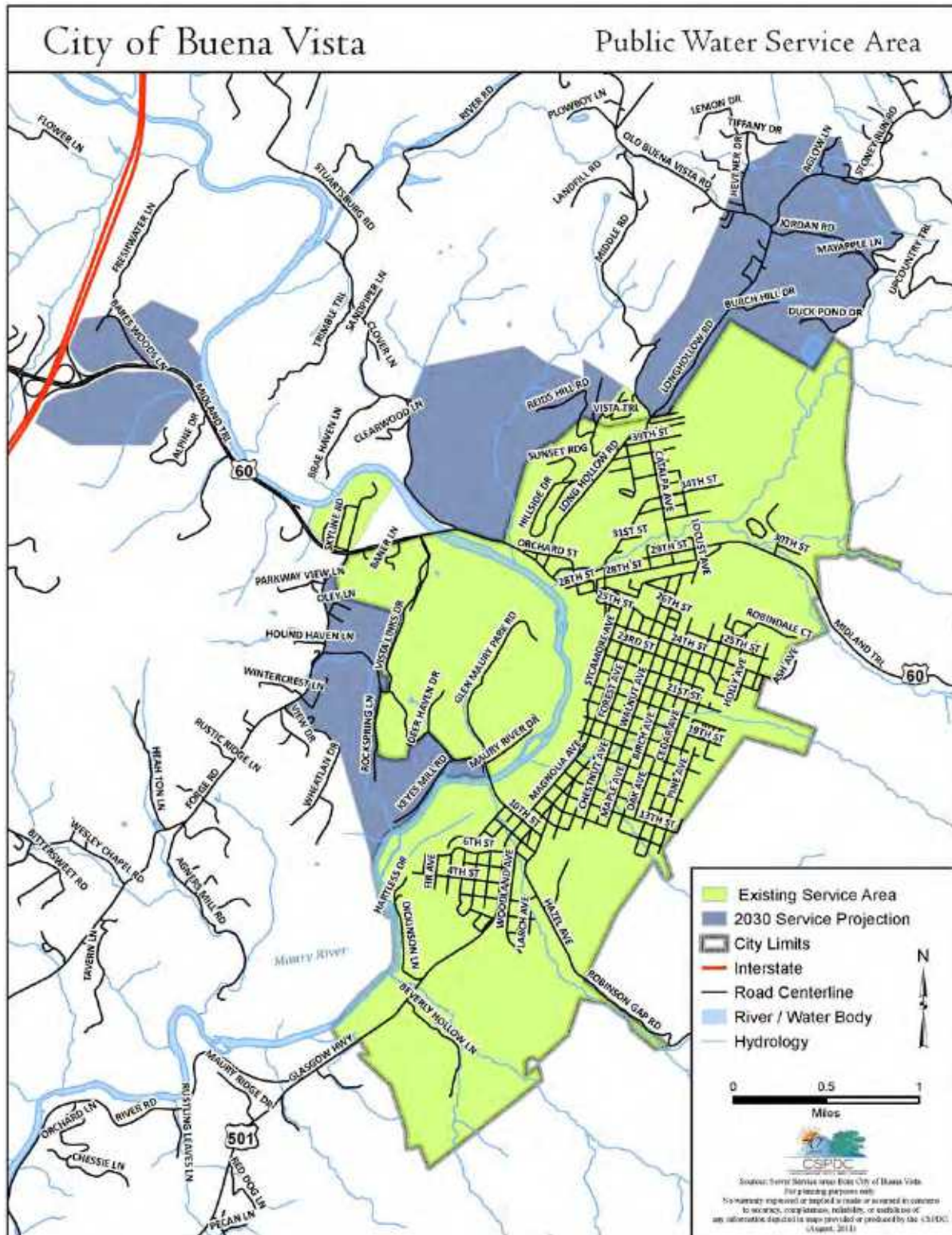
Source	Capacity (gallons per minute)
French Post Well	375
Laurel Park Well	130
Pedlar Gap Well (inoperable)	151
Dickinson Well (UDISW))	950
Park Avenue Well	450
Hall's Spring (UDISW)	233

Source: Draft PER, Dickinson Well Filtration Project

Pedlar Gap Well is currently inoperable due to damage incurred during a flood several years ago. The pump shaft is broken and cannot be retrieved. The City has no expectation of ever returning this source to service. Halls' Spring has been closed for approximately ten years after being determined to be under the direct influence of surface water (UDISW). More recently, Dickinson Well was taken offline due to the influence of surface water.

Following extensive bacteriological tenting during 2009, the City of Buena Vista's most productive water source, Dickinson Well, was determined to be under the influence of surface water by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). A Preliminary Engineering Report was commissioned by the City following the closure of Dickinson Well. It was determined that the optimal course of action is to install a membrane filtration system at Dickinson Well. Current water supply needs will be met by the installation of this system, and it also will enable the City to treat water from the nearby Hall Spring water source.

Map 6.1



Infrastructure & Utilities

At present, the City of Buena Vista's potential water production is limited to approximately 1.35 million gallons per day (mgd). When the Dickinson Well and Hall Spring facilities are returned to service through the proposed treatment improvements they would contribute an additional 1.70 mgd. The PER analyzes the present and future demands on the City's water supply and recommends that the City's total source capacity should be 2.85 mgd. The completion of this project will ensure a long-term water supply that will provide a platform for community growth and development. In June 2011, the City was awarded a grant for the Dickinson Well and Hall Spring project through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). By the end of the summer, the remainder of the financing was in place and work on the improvements to the well advanced.

The City has seven water tanks for storage. The total storage capacity is 2.1 million gallons which is approximately equal to two days' system demand. The capacity is considered adequate. The distribution system consists of 6-inch to 10-inch pipe sizes with most being 6-inch lines. Some 3-inch and 4-inch sizes are also incorporated into the system. Portions of the system have been looped to provide better pressure and service.

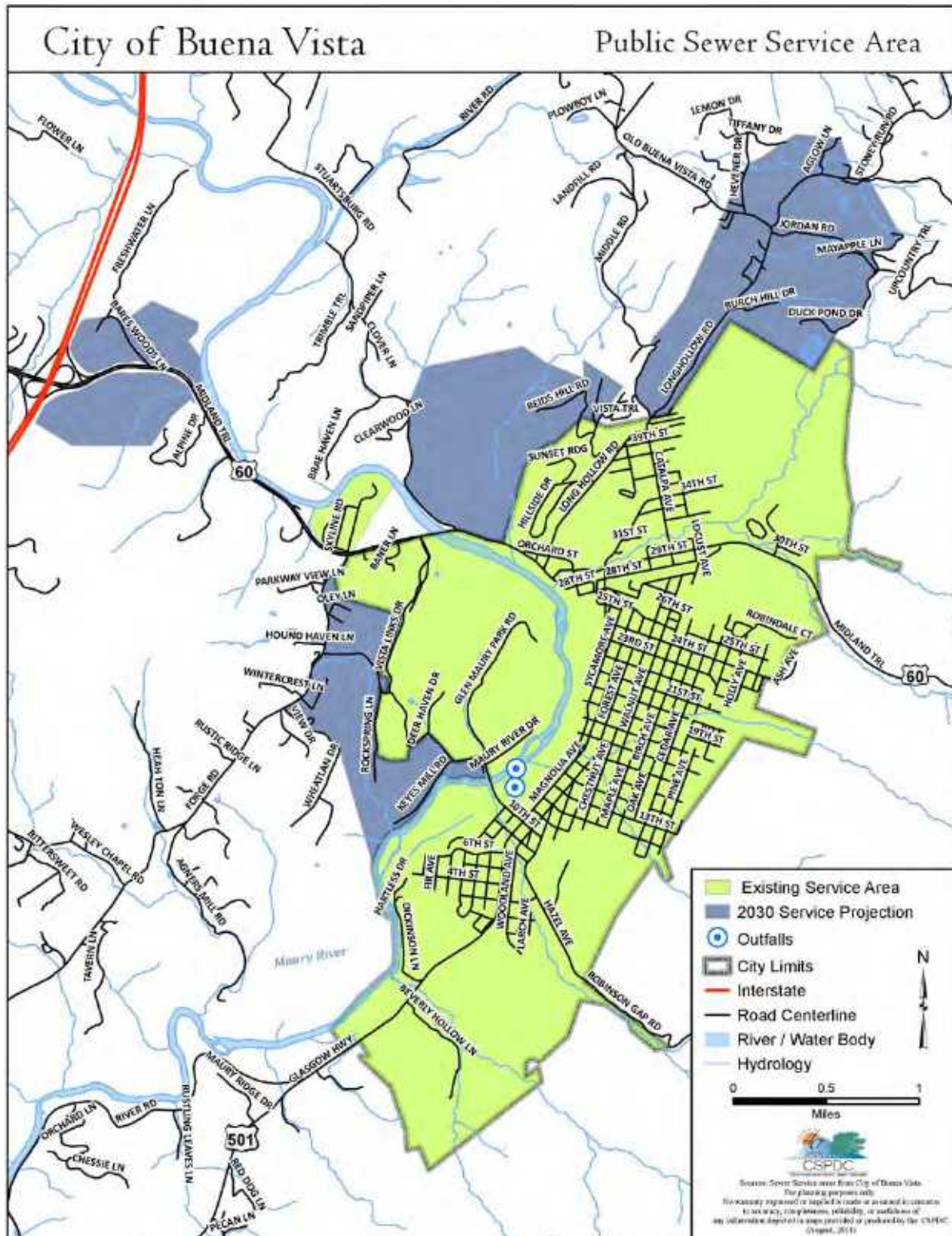
Wastewater

Water and wastewater facilities are the building blocks of a community's physical infrastructure. The latter is also known as the sewer system. Wastewater is liquid waste that is discharged by residences, commercial properties, industry, or agriculture. The purpose of a wastewater treatment facility is to treat and discharge wastewater locally without contaminating local waters.

The City of Buena Vista's wastewater treatment plant is a public wastewater treatment facility which serves the residents of the City. The City also receives waste from the County of Rockbridge. The service area is shown on Map 6.2. The wastewater treatment plant was last upgraded in 1985 and is a 2.25 million gallons/day facility. It primarily treats waste using rotating biological contactors. The average daily flow of the facility is 1.65 million gallons/day. After treatment, water is discharged to the Maury River.



Map 6.2



Infrastructure & Utilities

Stormwater

Stormwater is collected and managed to prevent flooding, erosion, contamination of streams, and destruction of aquatic habitat. Stormwater is rain and snow melt that runs off surfaces such as rooftops, paved streets, highways, and parking lots. As water runs off these surfaces, it can pick up pollution such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, soil, and trash. From here, the water might flow directly into a local stream or river. Or, it may go into a storm drain and continue through storm pipes until it is released into a local waterway. Stormwater management is a concern for two main reasons. They are (1) the volume and timing of runoff water, and (2) potential contaminants that the water is carrying.

Buena Vista's storm sewer consists of 12-inch to 60 inch storm drainage pipes. The majority of the system is 24-inch pipe. A large portion of the stormwater collected on the eastern portion of the City is directed to the Indian Gap Run which flows through the City. The drainage systems on Magnolia Avenue and Sycamore Avenue discharge directly to the Maury River.

Historically, Buena Vista has been prone to flooding both from the Maury River and interior streams. Economic losses include flood damage to streets, bridges, waterlines, gas lines, homes, businesses, and industries. The Maury River, a major tributary of the James River, runs along the City's western edge. Major floods of record occurred in 1936, 1969, 1972, 1985, 1992, and 1995. In 1972 a total of 420 acres within the city limits of Buena Vista were inundated with flood waters, resulting in major damage to industrial and commercial development. Then in 1985 as a result of Hurricane Juan, 500 full-time manufacturing jobs were lost when the highly industrialized section of the city that lines the Maury River was flooded. More than 100 percent business district retail jobs were also lost. The flood of 1995 and the two floods of 1996 caused \$2.7 million in combined damages.



Besides being next to a river, Buena Vista is located at the foot of the mountains. The area has been subjected to repetitive flooding from mountain storms. Five interior streams run through the City and include the following:

1. Chalk Mine Run
2. Long Hollow Run
3. Pedlar Gap Run
4. Indian Gap Run
5. Noel's Run

Sudden rainfall on the mountains results in rapid runoff. The floodwaters quickly flow to the City where they slow down and then spread out over the City. Flood damages from the interior streams include the following:

- Residences, industries and businesses
- Overland flow and ponding problems
- Bank scour into yards and near buildings
- Clogged channels, bridges, and culverts
- Threat to life and property throughout the City

The City has expended great effort to alleviate its flooding problems. A listing of projects is below:

James R. Olin Flood Protection Project. During the 1990s a flood wall was constructed along the Maury River, the James R. Olin Flood Protection Project. The project consists of two miles of earthen levee, 1000 feet of reinforced concrete floodwall, an interior drainage canal and channelization of the Maury River. The project also includes a number of closure gates and an enhanced flood warning system. The project is designed to provide protection equivalent to that needed during the greatest flood of record, Hurricane Camille in 1969. The project was completed in October 1997.

Channel Modifications and Interior Drainage Projects. In 1993, local sponsors requested the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) to address the flooding from the interior streams. NRCS was asked to determine the extent of the flooding problem in Buena Vista and the potential for reducing this problem. A plan was developed on the four ~~sub~~ ^{sub} ~~basins~~ ^{basins}. The overall effect of the planned actions were to increase the water-carrying capacity of the streams by increasing total channel sized, removing rocks and woody material by installing debris basins, enlarging culvert and bridge openings, and increasing channel grade. These procedures decrease flooding from overland flow and decrease the depth of ponded floodwaters.

The City received funding in 1992 and 1995 from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to reduce the flooding along the interior streams. Completed in two phases, the main feature of this project is a reinforced concrete lining designed to increase the carrying capacity of Indian Gap Run. The project also included the replacement or removal of damaged or inadequate culverts and the installation of several debris collectors. All of these activities augmented and maximized the benefits of the James R. Olin Flood Wall Project described above. This channel modification and interior drainage project was completed in 1999.



Infrastructure & Utilities

Residential Elevation and Acquisition Project. Despite the many construction activities designed to prevent flooding in Buena Vista, many residences are still at risk of flooding, particularly those located along the many interior streams that flow through the City. To address this flooding, the City applied for and received funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to elevate or buy out approximately 28 properties identified as flooding risks. Thirteen of these properties participated in the project; 10 properties were acquired and 3 properties were elevated. This project was completed in 2003.

Current Initiatives

Regional Water Supply Plan. The City of Buena Vista is participating with eleven other communities in developing a regional water supply plan for the Upper James River watershed. Each locality is mandated through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to develop a local water supply plan. According to the regulation (9 VAC 25-780), the purpose of the plan is threefold:

1. Ensure that adequate and safe drinking water is available to all citizens of the Commonwealth;
2. Encourage, promote, and protect all other beneficial uses of the Commonwealth's water resources; and
3. Encourage, promote, and develop incentives for alternative water sources.

This plan for the Upper James River watershed is expected to be completed and submitted to DEQ in Fall 2011. The plan, covering a thirty year timeframe, will be the basis for water supply decisions.

Water Model Study. Redundancy within the City's water system is of vital importance for present and future economic development and system sustainability. The current design of the system requires substantial demand from only a few of the City's wells and pumps resulting in higher maintenance and replacement costs. To fully assess this situation, the City of Buena Vista plans to undertake a water and sewer model study.

Dickinson Well Filtration System. The City will return Dickinson Well to service by constructing a membrane filtration plant adjacent to the existing facility. The membrane filtration plant will be sized to accommodate Hall Spring which served as a significant nearby source of water until approximately nine years ago.

Water Utilities Inventory and Mapping. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission is providing the City with GIS assistance in mapping a digital inventory of water utilities. The inventory includes the location of water tanks, water lines, hydrants, valves, and other water-related utilities. The project began in 2008 and is on-going.

Buena Vista Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project. State regulations require that the City complete a nutrient reduction project by 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter to meet new wasteload allocations for Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus in discharge.

The City of Buena Vista commissioned a Basis of Design Report that estimated a \$30 million cost for a wastewater treatment plant upgrade. These costs prevented the City from undertaking the project. Instead, the City of Buena Vista became a Class A Buyer as a member of Virginia's Nutrient Exchange Association. The City currently purchases pounds of Nitrogen and Phosphorus until adequate funding can be provided to upgrade the waste water treatment plant. The City continues to pursue funding for the upgrade.

Sewer Utilities Inventory and Mapping. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission is providing the City with GIS assistance in mapping a digital inventory of sewer utilities. Sewer utilities recorded and measured include manholes, pumps, sewer lines, inverts, invert depth, and flow direction. The project began in 2008 and is on-going.

SOLID WASTE

Relationship to Other Plan Elements

Natural Resources. Careful management of waste streams (water, air, and solid and hazardous waste) is essential to protecting natural environment and continuing to provide the services people expect.

Economic Development. Local governments must bear the cost of solid and hazardous waste disposal and treatment as well as document that appropriate procedures were followed. Reducing a waste stream or identifying how waste can be converted into a product with market value can make a business more prosperous or save the community money.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Regional Solid Waste Plan

Each locality is required to develop a comprehensive and integrated solid waste management plan (Solid Waste Planning Regulations, Amendment 1, 9 VAC 20-130-10 et seq.). The plan must address the following items:

1. Source reduction
2. Reuse
3. Recycling
4. Resource recovery (waste-to-energy)
5. Incineration
6. Landfilling

Buena Vista is a partner in a regional solid waste management plan with Rockbridge County and the City of Lexington. The Rockbridge-Lexington-Buena Vista Regional Solid Waste Management Plan was last revised in November 2008. The purpose of the solid waste management plan is to establish minimum solid waste management standards and planning requirements for the protection of public health, public safety, the environment, and natural resources locally and regionally throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The County of Rockbridge, City of Buena Vista, and City of Lexington presently have a legal agreement to jointly fund and use the Rockbridge County Landfill. The landfill is located on Rockbridge County owned property and is managed by Rockbridge County and supervised by the Rockbridge County Solid Waste Authority, with routine supervision by the Landfill Committee, and day to day supervision by the Rockbridge County Engineer. The Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors serves as the Rockbridge County Solid Waste Authority. The Landfill Committee consists of the following:

- Rockbridge County Engineer
- Rockbridge County Fiscal Director
- One member of the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors
- Lexington City Manager
- Buena Vista City Manager

The landfill is an unlined HB1205 landfill and is scheduled by DEQ to close no later than December 31, 2012. As a HB1205 landfill, it cannot be expanded laterally. Nevertheless, the active area is approximately 35 acres and at current waste acceptance rates will easily last until the scheduled closure date.

The location of the Rockbridge County Landfill is about two miles north of the northern city limit of Buena Vista, on Landfill Road, off of Middle Road (route 831). It is the only landfill currently operating within Rockbridge-Lexington-Buena Vista region. Only residential, business, and industrial, non-hazardous waste generated within the region is accepted at

the landfill; no hazardous waste and no out-of-region waste is accepted. There is, however, a residential hazardous waste collection once a year with a hope of increasing it to twice a year. All in-region generated hazardous waste is shipped out of State. Currently, no non-hazardous waste from residential, business, or industrial generators is shipped outside of the region.

All of Buena Vista's municipal solid waste enters the Rockbridge County Landfill. However, waste flow could change entirely after 2013, when the existing Rockbridge County Landfill closes. The three jurisdictions intend on using the Rockbridge County Landfill until the 2012 closure date. The three jurisdictions are obligated to close the landfill and provide post closure care for 30 years after the closure date.

The legal agreement between the three jurisdictions required them to begin meeting three years before the closure date to determine how each one intends to handle solid waste after December 31, 2012. Options included obtaining a new landfill permit or transporting waste to a landfill in another county. Current estimates show that unless the County and two Cities agree to accept out-of-region waste, it would be more economical to transfer waste to another county when the existing landfill closes in 2013. The City of Buena Vista has selected to transport its waste following the closure of the Rockbridge County Landfill. The City has entered into a contract to haul waste to a private transfer facility starting in late 2012.

Unlike landfill disposal, collection and transportation of solid waste is performed independently by each of the three jurisdictions. Buena Vista provides residential trash pick up once a week and business pick up twice a week. Bulky items and brush set in rear alleyways are picked up once a month. All waste is transported to the Rockbridge County Landfill.

During 2008, the City of Buena Vista began curbside recycling programs. In Buena Vista, recyclables are set out with the regular trash pickup in blue totes. The following are collected: newspapers, mixed paper, cardboard, plastics 1-7, steel and tin cans, aluminum, and glass bottles and jars. Hamilton Contracting collects the recyclables and takes them to Auto Recyclers, Inc. of Buena Vista where they are sorted and baled. Currently, Buena Vista's curbside program is for residential properties. Recycling for businesses continues at other recycling sites. The curbside program may expand to businesses in the future.

Other efforts also reduce the waste stream. Habitat for Humanity has started a business, ReStore, in Buena Vista collecting used windows, doors, and other building materials and reselling them to the public. Habitat uses the proceeds to build homes in the community for low-income families.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Relationship to Other Plan Elements

Economic Development. For many businesses, high-capacity, high-quality information and communications systems are an essential element of success. To recruit such businesses, the community needs to help provide access to these systems.

Information and Communication Systems

Communication and information technologies are changing rapidly. Access to these technologies is becoming an essential element of a community's economic competitiveness and its quality of life. Just as communities built roads in the early twentieth century, they must now provide digital road systems to remain competitive not only in business but also as a place that people want to live. It provides a competitive edge in economic development, community services, education, and workforce recruitment. More specifically, a network is necessary to accomplish the following:

- Attract new businesses because a high performance, affordable broadband infrastructure lowers the cost of doing business
- Increase effective and efficient delivery of government to services to citizens and businesses
- Support the data and communication needs of first responder public safety, fire and rescue needs
- Distribute a wide variety of community information and community media content to citizens and businesses
- Provide businesses unlimited bandwidth at affordable rates to successfully compete with any other business located anywhere in the global economy
- Provide residents access to unlimited bandwidth at affordable rates to manage personal affairs, obtain access to tele-health and tele-medicine services, and have the same level and quality of access to online goods and services as any other community
- Provide the ability for the workforce to work full time or part time from home using infrastructure that connects them to their office business systems
- Provide students and workers with the ability to study and train from home using infrastructure to attend classes, learn new skills, and reduce commuting time

Buena Vista and the Rockbridge region is underserved. Embarq offers DSL services in Buena Vista. Rockbridge Global Village is a regional provides DSL internet access in the Buena Vista area. EarthLink provides local exchange phone numbers in the area for dial up access.

Recognizing the importance of being connected, steps were taken to advance broadband infrastructure in the region. Supported by funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the three neighboring localities of Buena Vista, Lexington, and Rockbridge County hired a consulting firm in 2007 to study the feasibility for countywide broadband development. A telecommunications team was formed that same year with members from the public and private sectors. Work on Phase II, a fiber pilot design project connecting downtown Lexington with downtown Buena Vista, began in early 2009.

In May 2009, Washington and Lee University joined the telecommunications team. The project has grown from a pilot project to a full countywide fiber build-out between Lexington and Buena Vista. The build-out would continue to run fiber backbone out to all schools, libraries, fire department and rescue squad buildings, and other public buildings. The three jurisdictions and Washington and Lee University created the Rockbridge Area Network Authority (RANA) to operate the open access fiber network and to ensure that the fiber build-out reaches all government entities, businesses, and residences in Buena Vista, Lexington, and Rockbridge County.

Current Initiatives

Broadband Expansion. In the summer of 2010, Rockbridge County was awarded nearly \$7 million from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for Connecting the Dots: Rockbridge Broadband Initiative. The project is an open access, community-owned network anchored by a state-of-the-art collocation data center. It is a collaborative effort of Rockbridge County, the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington, and Washington and Lee University.

ENERGY

Relationship to Other Plan Elements

Community Facilities. Energy is an important consideration in the design and maintenance of any facility. Sustainable design features can cut long-term costs and enhance the livability of a building and the productivity of its occupants.

Economic Development. Energy is an input and a cost to every business whether it is used for electricity, space heating, or transportation. Reducing costs through more productive use of energy can add to a business's profitability. Use of renewable resources also keeps local dollars circulating in the local economy.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Housing and Other Buildings. The cost of energy over the life of a house or commercial building will likely exceed the original construction costs. The affordability of housing is affected by the energy costs of living in the home.

Infrastructure. Reducing reliance on mechanical systems can cut a community's energy use. Installation of certain renewable energy systems can pay off over time.

Transportation. Transportation is a substantial energy user. Reducing the number of unnecessary trips could reduce air pollution and costs to drivers.

Energy Use

Energy systems are crucial to a community's livelihood. Virtually everything people do requires energy in some form. The City has a clear stake in how energy is generated and delivered to its citizens and businesses. In Buena Vista, electricity is supplied and distributed by Dominion Virginia Power. Natural gas is supplied and distributed by Columbia Gas. As shown in Table 6.2, 9 out of 10 homes are either heated with gas or electricity with gas being the larger share.

Table 6.2
House Heating Fuel
Buena Vista

Fuel Type	Number	Percent (%)
Utility gas	1,710	63.5
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	21	0.8
Electricity	814	30.2
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	39	1.4
Wood	108	4.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Transportation accounts for a substantial amount of energy use. Three-quarters of all Buena Vista workers drive to work alone (See Table 6.3). However, the mean travel time to work for Buena Vista workers is 15 minutes. For Virginia and the United States, travel times are 27 minutes and 25 minutes, respectively.

Table 6.3
Commuting to Work
Buena Vista

Commuting to Work	Number	Percent (%)
Workers 16 years and over	2,969	100.0
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	2,233	75.2
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	378	12.7
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0	0.0
Walked	219	7.4
Other means	95	3.2
Worked at home	44	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

A commitment to energy efficiency can reduce the negative environmental impacts of energy production and save residents and businesses money on their energy bills and retain dollars to circulate longer in the local economy. According to an article in the American Planning Association's *Public Investment*, 80 to 90 percent of every dollar spent by most communities on nonrenewable energy will leave the community permanently.

For residential customers, energy conservation could include the use of the following:

- Energy audits and checkups with a trained energy consultant
- Rebates on energy-efficient appliances and lighting
- Low-flow showerheads that conserve water and the energy needed to heat the water.
- Weatherization assistance programs to improve the energy performance of the home.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Commercial and industrial customers could shift to energy-efficient lighting, heating, cooling, and water saving technologies. They could also adopt voluntary energy-efficiency standards. To encourage energy efficiency and conservation, the City could offer tax incentives for energy efficient development or redevelopment. These tax incentives could be available in established zones such as the historic district, technology zones, or tourism zones or as prescribed by the Buena Vista City Council.

The City could follow the same efforts as the above customers for its operations. Furthermore, the City could use renewables to generate electricity for local government use. Such projects could include the following:

- Build a small wind or other renewable project at a school or government building.
- Use solar technology in remote locations.
- Use methane from the sewage treatment plant to generate electricity.

Current Initiatives

Public Building Audit. The City is participating in a regional energy grant, *Shenandoah Valley Regional Energy Efficiency Strategy*. The grant includes 20 localities within the Central Shenandoah Planning District. The grant includes (1) energy audits of public buildings and facilities, (2) implementation of an energy project, (3) and education, training and outreach. The grant is funded through the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, and it is administered by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

- Because the City is not growing rapidly, the focus for sewer and water infrastructure will be maintaining, upgrading, and replacing the existing system.
- Flooding, particularly from interior streams, will continue to be a challenge.
- Access to communication technologies is essential for the region to maintain its competitiveness.
- Energy efficiency will play a greater role in residential, community facility, and business decisions.

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

Buena Vista Watershed: Final Plan-Environmental Impact Statement, City of Buena Vista, Rockbridge County, Virginia, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, January 1999.

Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Flood Mitigation Plan, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, 2002.

Preliminary Engineering Report for the Dickinson Well Filtration Project, Civil Consulting Group, P.C., April 2010.

Rockbridge-Lexington-Buena Vista Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, 2004, revised 2008.

Telecommunications Needs Assessment: Prepared for Rockbridge County, Lexington City, Buena Vista City, Design Nine, October 2008.

Preliminary Broadband Findings, Options, and Strategies, Design Nine, August 2008.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Drinking Water Maintain an efficient, adequate, and safe drinking water system that meets the long-term needs of community residents, industries, and visitors.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Facilities that keep pace with community needs. • Proactive in meeting future infrastructure needs. • Link water system upgrades and expansions with comprehensive plan goals and economic development strategies.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.1A	Complete a long range regional water supply plan and implement its recommendations.	H	City
6.1B	Complete water modeling study.	H	Public Works
6.1C	Map the water system with GIS.	M	Public Works
6.1D	Continue water system leak detection program.	On Going	Public Works
6.1E	Encourage water conservation, including the use of water-efficient appliances and low-flow showerheads and fixtures.	On Going	Public Works
6.1F	Stay familiar with commercial and industrial customer plans and needs, and the plans for public facilities of other local governments.	On Going	Public Works, Economic Development
6.1G	Adopt progressive water use or consumption fees to encourage conservation.	L	City Council
6.1H	Adopt fees, such as connection fees, at a rate designed to ensure that new developments cover the marginal cost of their connection.	M	City Council

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 2: Wastewater Maintain a safe and efficient wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the long-term needs of community residents, industries, and visitors.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Facilities that keep pace with community needs. • Proactive in meeting future infrastructure needs. • Approve wastewater system upgrades and expansions based on comprehensive plan goals.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.2A	Continue the sewer maintenance program to reduce inflow and infiltration within the system.	M	Wastewater Dept, Public Works
6.2B	Establish a multi-year capital improvement program and budget for wastewater treatment infrastructure.	H	City Council
6.2C	Map the sewer system with GIS.	M	Public Works
6.2D	Encourage water conservation, including the use of water-efficient appliances and low-flow showerheads and fixtures.	On Going	Public Works, Wastewater Dept
6.2E	Continue to seek funding for upgrades to the Buena Vista Wastewater Treatment plant.	H	Wastewater Dept
6.2F	Collect connection fees to cover the cost of new hook-ups.	H	City Council

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 3: Stormwater Manage storm water runoff to protect residents, property, and water resources.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Facilities that keep pace with community needs. • Proactive in addressing flooding challenges.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.3A	Limit encroachments in watercourses, floodplains, and wetlands.	On Going	Planning
6.3B	Use and protect natural storm water features and resources in the City's stormwater management program.	On Going	Public Works
6.3C	Develop programs to correct or mitigate existing development that is subject to periodic flooding or storm water damage.	M	Economic Development, Public Works
6.3D	Seek funding and continue program to elevate, relocate, floodproof or acquire flood-prone structures.	M	Economic Development
6.3E	Plan public spaces to use flood plains, water courses, natural water basins and wetlands for greenways and passive recreation uses, thereby protecting them.	M	Public Works, Planning, Parks & Rec
6.3F	Set and apply design standards for roads and public investments that assist in storm water management.	M	Planning, Public Works
6.3G	Implement the recommendations for Buena Vista included in the <i>Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Flood Mitigation Plan</i> .	H	City Departments

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 4: Solid Waste Maintain a solid waste program that protects public health, public safety, the environment, and natural resources.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Reduce the amount of residential, commercial, and industrial solid waste.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.4A	Increase household participation in the curbside recycling program.	H	Economic Development
6.4B	Establish an internal “Green” team to review waste reduction, monitor proper separation of the waste stream from recyclables, and encourage employee recycling.	On Going	City Manager’s Office
6.4C	Work with nearby communities to address solid waste issues and opportunities regionally.	On Going	City Manager’s Office
6.4D	Revise solid waste plan.	H	City Manager’s Office, Economic Development

Infrastructure & Utilities

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 5: Information and Communication Systems Provide access to technology so that the City has a competitive edge in economic development, community services, education, and workforce recruitment.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Ensure availability of state of the art technology. • Provide affordable and equal technology access to all.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.5A	Implement Connecting the Dots: Rockbridge Broadband Initiative.	H	Rockbridge Area Network Authority
6.5B	Continue partnerships among business, local governments, and schools to share technology costs, equipment, and training.	On Going	City Manager's Office, Economic Development
6.5C	Develop plan for last mile.	L	

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Infrastructure & Utilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 6: Energy Make the City of Buena Vista's energy system reliable, affordable, efficient, and diverse.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Make energy policy a key element of economic development, environmental protection, community design, and building design. • Help businesses and residents shift to energy-efficient technologies. • Adopt energy-saving and energy-generating policies to save the City money.			
		Priority	Responsibility
6.6A	Encourage individuals and businesses to conduct energy audits of private buildings.	On Going	Economic Development
6.6B	Promote participation in energy utility conservation improvement programs.	On Going	Economic Development
6.6C	Conduct energy audits of community facilities.	M	Public Works
6.6D	Evaluate opportunities to tap local energy resources, such methane from waste management facilities, wind, or solar for distributed energy generation.	L	Wastewater Dept
6.6E	Phase out old equipment with energy efficient motors, fixtures, and other items like LED traffic lights and Energy Star approved copiers, fax machines, computers and windows.	On Going	City Manager's Office
6.6F	Make building energy improvements.	On Going	City Departments
6.6G	Convert fleets to run on alternative fuels.	L	Police Dept
6.6H	Make energy efficiency and renewable energy key factors in the evaluation of any public expenditure or development proposal.	On Going	City Council, Finance Office
6.6I	Plant trees to keep buildings and streets cooler to improve air quality, lower air-conditioning loads and save money.	L	Public Works, Volunteer Organizations
6.6J	Invest in energy efficiency and energy-producing improvements to municipal buildings and facilities	L	City Council

Infrastructure & Utilities

		Priority	Responsibility
6.6K	Consider redesign of City streets and land use regulations to encourage walking and biking.	M	Planning, Economic Development; Public Works
6.6L	Consider tax incentives or rebates for energy efficient re/development or developments in already established zones (historic, technology, tourism) or as prescribed by City Council.	H	Economic Development, City Council

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 7

Transportation

The *Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan* provides guidance for the development and maintenance of the transportation system in Buena Vista that supports existing and projected travel demands to the year 2035. Transportation improvement recommendations were developed to meet current needs and the horizon year, 2035, needs. The transportation plan provides details on the study methodologies and recommendations, including:

- Identification of existing transportation needs,
- Forecasting of future travel demands,
- Identification of future travel demands, and
- Development of transportation improvement recommendations for the City's transportation system.

The *Buena Vista 2035 Transportation Plan* was developed as a cooperative effort between the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and the City of Buena Vista. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the transportation system in Buena Vista and to recommend a set of transportation improvements that will best satisfy existing and future transportation needs. The plan will identify multi-modal transportation needs based on capacity, safety, and functional requirements (including the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall transportation system).

Improved transportation systems are vital to continued local and statewide economic growth and development. Providing effective, safe and efficient movement of people and goods is a basic goal of all transportation programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This guiding principle, together with consideration of environmental issues and local mobility needs, was the basis for the development of this portion of the Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations of this chapter may be used in the statewide transportation planning process so that the magnitude of local needs can be better quantified.

Transportation

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Natural Resources. Transportation facilities can have a significant impact on the natural environment. Transportation facilities, whether highways, streets, transit lines or railroads, are intended to connect areas together. However, they can also create physical barriers and degrade the natural and built environments. Additionally, roadways and parking lots are frequently the main component of impervious surfaces which creates the need for stormwater facilities causing degradation of waterways and natural area.

Economy. The transportation system is an important consideration in the locational decisions of many businesses. Access to fast and reliable transportation is important.

Land Use. Transportation goals are tied to the intensity and type of land use in a community. Transportation facilities influence where people choose to live and businesses locate.

SUMMARY OF APPROACH AND ANALYSIS METHODS

The transportation plan is developed as part of a structured approach with five basic components:

1. Data collection
2. Forecasting of future traffic demands
3. Development of recommendations to satisfy existing and future transportation needs
4. Coordination with Buena Vista citizens and government
5. Environmental overview and Plan documentation

1. Data Collection

Data pertaining to all aspects of the Buena Vista transportation system was collected as part of this chapter. Data collection included traffic counts, roadway inventory and conditions, accident data, preliminary identification of environmental and socioeconomic constraints, and information obtained from a review of land use plans and previous transportation planning documents.

2. Forecasting of Future Traffic Demands

Based on historic trends and expected changes in population and employment in the City, traffic volumes were forecast for the study horizon year of 2035. Any expected changes in demand for other modes of transportation were developed as appropriate.

3. Development of Recommendations to Satisfy Existing and Future Transportation Needs
Based on an assessment of current and projected traffic operations and safety, recommendations for improvements to the Buena Vista transportation system were developed. Improvements to system connectivity, other modes of travel, and accommodation of tourist traffic and goods movement were developed based on interviews and needs identified as part of the data collection process.
4. Coordination with Buena Vista Citizens and Government Officials
Through a series of meetings with City officials, existing and future transportation needs were identified and reviewed, and recommendations for transportation improvements were developed.
5. Environmental Overview and Plan Documentation
Recommended improvements were subjected to an environmental overview to identify potential environmental and socioeconomic constraints that could affect the implementation of the recommendations.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATING CONDITIONS

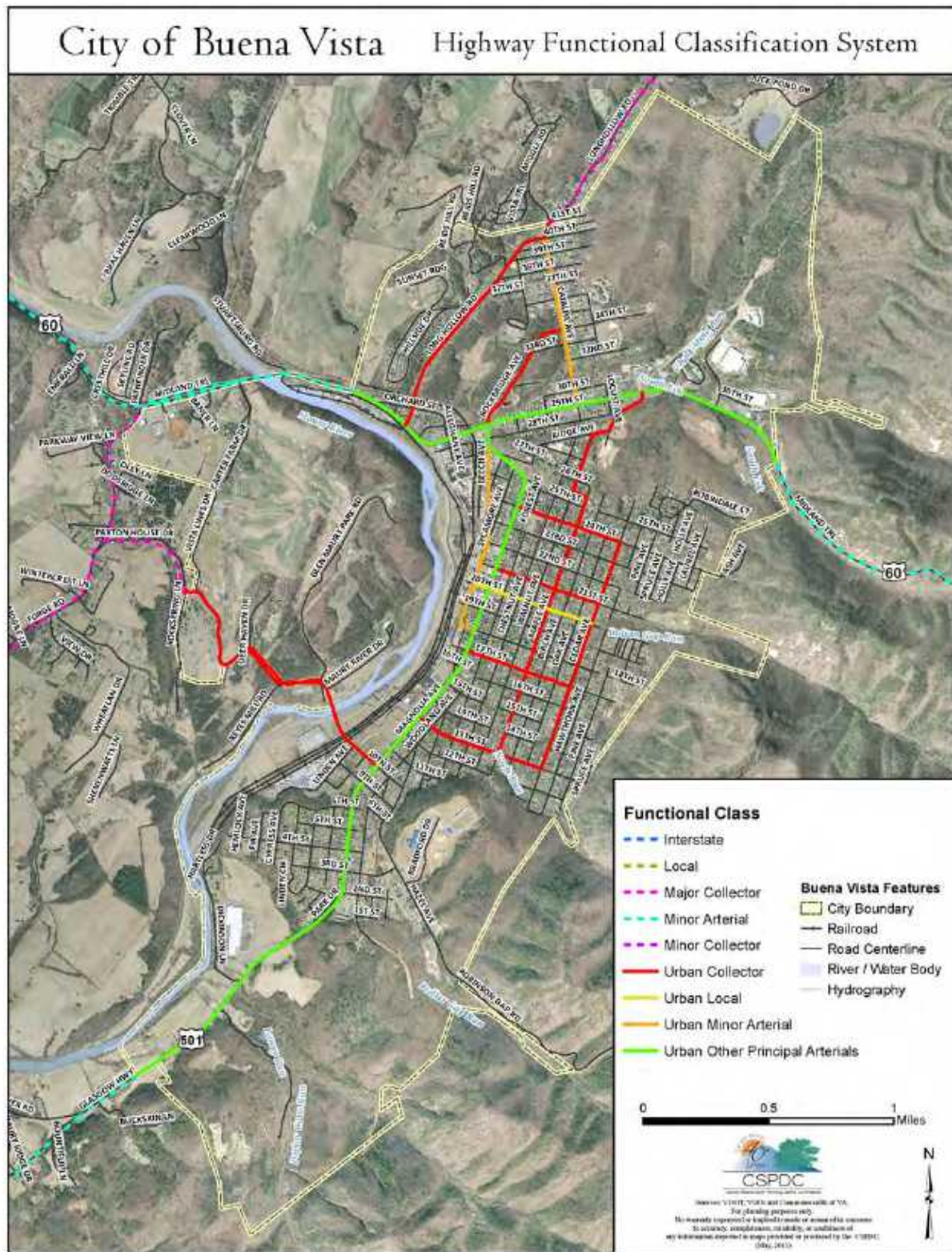
Based on the data collection and existing conditions inventory and assessment, an analysis of operating conditions was conducted for the following items:

- Existing traffic volumes and roadway operations
- Safety conditions
- Pedestrian mobility
- Transit service and facilities
- Current transportation plans and projects

Roadways

The primary focus of the comprehensive plan chapter is the functionally classified urban thoroughfare system, with analysis and recommendations limited to existing thoroughfare improvements and/or recommendations for new thoroughfares. The urban thoroughfare system is a subset of Buena Vista's overall road network that is designated by VDOT, the Federal Highway Administration, and the City of Buena Vista. The thoroughfare system includes roads that are functionally classified as arterials or collectors. Arterials serve as the major traffic-carrying facilities in the area. Collector roads carry a lesser volume of traffic and feed traffic to arterial roadways. Buena Vista's thoroughfare system and functional classifications are shown in Map 7.1.

Map 7.1



Roadway Network and Inventory

Buena Vista is located at the junction of U.S. Route 60 and U.S. Route 501 and is also located near two major interstates, Interstates 81 and 64. The northern terminus of Route 501 is in Buena Vista at its junction with Route 60. In the City, Route 501 is referred to as Magnolia Avenue, and Route 60 is referred to as both Lexington Avenue and 29th Street. Route 501A (Alternate) is known as Beech Avenue, Sycamore Avenue, and 18th Street, and is parallel to Route 501 one block to the west.

VDOT maintains an inventory of the Buena Vista thoroughfare system and is shown as Table 7.1. Each segment of the road is defined by major intersecting roadways or by significant changes in the geometry of the roadway segment (number of lanes, pavement width, etc.). The inventory contains information about the entire roadway segment.

The inventory contains the following characteristics:

- Pavement Width – the width of pavement from curb to curb measured in feet (total roadway pavement width)
- Number of Through Lanes – the number of lanes available for through traffic in both directions of permitted travel
- Access Control – the type of access control provided on the road (local streets have no access control, freeways and major divided highways usually have full and limited access control respectively).
- Type of Operation – the type of roadway operation (one or two-way travel)
- Median Type – the type of median the road contains (none, raised, depressed, flush, or center turn lane)
- Median Width – the width of the median, from edge to edge, measured in feet
- Left Shoulder Width – the width of the left shoulder of the road measured from the ditch line to the travel lane edge
- Right Shoulder Width – the width of the right shoulder of the road measured from the ditch line to the travel lane edge
- Curb and Gutters – the presence of curb and gutter along the roadway (none, both sides of the street, left side only, or right side only)
- Sidewalks – the presence of sidewalks along the roadway segment (either none, both sides of the street, left side only, or right side only)
- Number of Traffic Signals – the number of traffic signals located on the road, including the beginning and ending intersections of the road segment
- Posted Speed Limit – the speed limit posted along the road segment
- General Terrain – the terrain type of the area, whether level or rolling.
- Number of traffic signals and railroad crossings for this particular road segment.

Table 7.1
Roadway Geometric Inventory
Buena Vista

Route	Name	Segment From	Segment To	Segment Length	Operation Type	Thru Lanes	Pavement Width	Avg. Lane Width	Median Type	Right Shldr. Width	Left Shldr. Width	Gen. Terr.	Access Cntrl.	% No Pass	Num. Sig.	Num. RR	Posted Speed Limit
00060	Lexington Avenue	WCL Buena Vista	Alleghany Avenue	0.44	2W	4	48	12	N	0	0	L	N	0	0	0	35
00060	Lexington Avenue	Alleghany Avenue	Beech Avenue	0.17	2W	3	48	12	L	0	0	R	N	0	1	0	25
00060	29Th Street	Beech Avenue	Ridge Avenue	0.52	2W	2	44	15	N	0	0	R	N	100	1	0	35
00060	29Th Street	Ridge Avenue	ECL Buena Vista	0.79	2W	2	20	10	N	6	6	R	N	100	0	0	35
00501	Magnolia Avenue	SCL Buena Vista	2Nd Street	0.97	2W	2	20	10	N	6	6	R	N	100	0	0	45
00501	Magnolia Avenue	2Nd Street	15Th Street	1.09	2W	2	46	18	N	0	0	R	N	100	1	0	35
00501	Magnolia Avenue	15Th Street	20Th Street	0.43	2W	2	46	12	N	0	0	R	N	100	1	0	25
00501	Magnolia Avenue	20Th Street	25Th Street	0.38	2W	2	46	12	N	0	0	L	N	100	3	0	25
00501	Park Avenue	Magnolia Avenue	Beech Avenue	0.18	2W	2	40	18	N	0	0	L	N	100	1	0	25
00501	Beech Avenue	Park Avenue	29Th Street	0.12	2W	2	44	11	C	0	0	R	N	100	2	0	25
00501	18Th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Sycamore Street	0.07	2W	2	30	12	N	6	0	L	N	100	0	0	25
00501	Sycamore Avenue	18Th Street	20Th Street	0.17	2W	2	39	12	N	10	0	R	N	100	1	0	25
00501	Sycamore Avenue	20Th Street	22Nd Street	0.17	2W	2	42	12	N	0	0	L	N	100	2	0	25
00501	Beech Avenue	22Nd Street	Park Avenue	0.37	2W	2	44	15	N	0	0	R	N	100	1	0	25
00901	24Th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Chestnut Avenue	0.12	2W	2	38	12	N	0	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00901	24Th Street	Chestnut Avenue	Cedar Avenue	0.31	2W	2	27	11	N	6	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00902	13Th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Cedar Avenue	0.47	2W	2	23	10	N	6	4	R	N	100	0	0	25
00903	Maple Avenue	13Th Street	17Th Street	0.35	2W	2	21	10	N	6	6	L	N	100	0	0	25
00903	Maple Avenue	17Th Street	25Th Street	0.69	2W	2	29	11	N	0	0	L	N	100	0	0	25
00903	Maple Avenue	25Th Street	25 1/2 Street	0.04	2W	2	20	10	N	6	4	R	N	100	0	0	25
00903	25 1/2 Street	Maple Avenue	Walnut Avenue	0.05	2W	2	30	12	N	0	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00903	Walnut Avenue	25 1/2 Street	Ridge Road	0.25	2W	2	30	12	N	0	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00903	Ridge Road	Walnut Avenue	29Th Street	0.28	2W	2	20	10	N	3	3	R	N	100	0	0	25
00904	21St Street	Magnolia Avenue	Maple Avenue	0.25	2W	2	28	10	N	0	0	R	N	100	1	0	25
00904	21St Street	Maple Avenue	Cedar Avenue	0.18	2W	2	28	10	N	0	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00905	17Th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Forest Avenue	0.06	2W	2	30	12	N	0	0	L	N	100	0	0	25
00905	17Th Street	Forest Avenue	Oak Avenue	0.31	2W	2	20	10	N	6	6	R	N	100	0	0	25
00905	17Th Street	Oak Avenue	Cedar Avenue	0.06	2W	2	30	12	N	6	6	R	N	100	0	0	25
00906	Rockbridge Avenue	29Th Street	Catalpa Avenue	0.49	2W	2	24	12	N	6	6	R	N	100	1	0	35
00907	Catalpa Avenue	29Th Street	Rockbridge Avenue	0.31	2W	2	30	15	N	0	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00907	Catalpa Avenue	Rockbridge Avenue	Long Hollow Road	0.45	2W	2	26	13	N	6	0	R	N	100	0	0	25
00909	Long Hollow Road	Lexington Avenue	NCL Buena Vista	1.02	2W	2	20	10	N	3	4	R	N	100	0	0	25
00910	Cedar Avenue	13Th Street	24Th Street	0.96	2W	2	24	12	N	3	3	R	N	100	0	0	25
00911	10Th Street	WCL Buena Vista	Maury River Bridge	0.84	2W	2	20	10	N	3	3	R	N	100	0	0	25
00911	10Th Street	Maury River Bridge	C&O Railroad	0.24	2W	2	24	12	N	6	6	R	N	100	0	3	35
00911	10Th Street	C&O Railroad	Magnolia Avenue	0.2	2W	2	50	12	N	0	0	L	N	100	0	2	25
08888	20Th Street	Sycamore Avenue	Cedar Avenue	0.53	2W	2	20	10									

Roadway Structures and Railroad Crossings

There are 15 roadway bridge structures in the VDOT bridge inventory on the Buena Vista road system. None have a sufficiency rating of less than 50 (deficient). There are five railway crossings; these crossings are listed in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2
Railroad Crossings of Public Streets

Location of Crossing	Type of Crossing
10 th Street	At-grade
21 st Street	At-grade
26 th Street	Railway bridge
29 th Street	Railway bridge
Long Hollow Road	Railway bridge
Factory Street	At-grade

Existing Traffic Volumes and Roadway Operations

Traffic count data has been obtained for 19 roadway segments and 17 intersections from VDOT and was conducted in the winter, 2008. The count locations are listed in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3
Count Locations

Intersections – Turning Movement Counts – 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6 pm (weekday)
Sycamore Avenue and 21 st Street
Beech Avenue and 29 th Street
Beech Avenue and Factory Street
Catalpa Avenue and 29 th Street
Catalpa Avenue and 40 th Street
Catalpa Avenue and Rockbridge Avenue
Magnolia Avenue and 10 th Street
Magnolia Avenue and 17 th Street
Magnolia Avenue and 18 th Street
Magnolia Avenue and 20 th Street
Magnolia Avenue and 21 st Street
Magnolia Avenue and 22 nd Street
Magnolia Avenue and 23 rd Street
Magnolia Avenue and 24 th Street
Orchard Street and 29 th Street
Sycamore Avenue and 20 th Street
Alleghany Avenue and 29 th Street
Sycamore Avenue and 21 st Street

Transportation

Roadway Segments – Machine Counts – 48 continuous hours (weekday)
29 th Street, between Orchard Street and the West Corporate Limit
29 th Street, between Rockbridge Avenue and Aspen Avenue
Magnolia Avenue, between 9 th Street and 15 th Street
Magnolia Avenue, at the Pedlar Gap Run (stream) crossing
Magnolia Avenue, between 19 th Street and 20 th Street
Park Avenue, between Ivy Avenue to Beech Avenue
Beech Avenue, between Park Avenue and 29 th Street
Beech Avenue, between Park Avenue and 25 th Street
Rockbridge Avenue, north of 29 th Street
Rockbridge Avenue, north of 29 th Street
Catalpa Avenue, between 38 th Street and 36 th Street
Long Hollow Road, between 39 th Street and 38 th Street
17 th Street, between Magnolia Avenue and Forest Avenue
Maple Avenue, between 18 th Street and 20 th Street
Ridge Avenue, between Walnut Avenue and 29 th Street
21 st Street, between Walnut Avenue and Maple Avenue
13 th Street, between Walnut Avenue and Chestnut Avenue
10 th Street, west of Magnolia Avenue
Orchard Street, between Long Hollow Road and Lexington Avenue
Cedar Avenue, between 20th Street and 21st Street

Based on these traffic counts, an analysis was performed to quantify traffic congestion using standard traffic engineering level of service analysis. Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of traffic flow describing operational conditions. Six levels of service are defined by FHWA in the Highway Capacity Manual for use in evaluating roadway operating conditions. They are given letter designations from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and F the worst. A facility may operate at a range of levels of service depending on time of day, day or week or period of the year. A qualitative description of the different levels of service is provided below.

- **LOS A** – Drivers perceive little or no delay and easy progress along a corridor.
- **LOS B** – Drivers experience some delay but generally driving conditions are favorable.
- **LOS C** – Travel speeds are slightly lower than the posted speed with noticeable delay in intersection areas.
- **LOS D** – Travel speeds are well below the posted speed with few opportunities to pass and considerable intersection delay.
- **LOS E** – The facility is operating at capacity and there are virtually no useable gaps in the traffic.
- **LOS F** – More traffic desires to use a particular facility than it is designed to handle resulting

The approach used to determine deficient segments in Buena Vista was to analyze the volume of traffic on the roadway segments compared to the capacity of those segments, also known as the V/C ratio. For daily operating conditions, levels of service A, B, or C are acceptable. Levels of service D, E, or F represent deficient operations on those particular segments.

Existing average annual traffic volumes (2008) are shown in Map 7.2. The existing analysis shows that two roadway segments can be expected to operate at or below LOS D under daily conditions. Table 7.4 and Map 7.3 display the level of service analysis for the City of Buena Vista roadway segments. It should be noted that a level of service was not performed for all roadway segments in Buena Vista. A level of service analysis was performed for all roadway segments within the VDOT thoroughfare system for Buena Vista. Traffic count data was only available for these particular roadway segments.

Table 7.4
Existing (2008) Level of Service Analysis

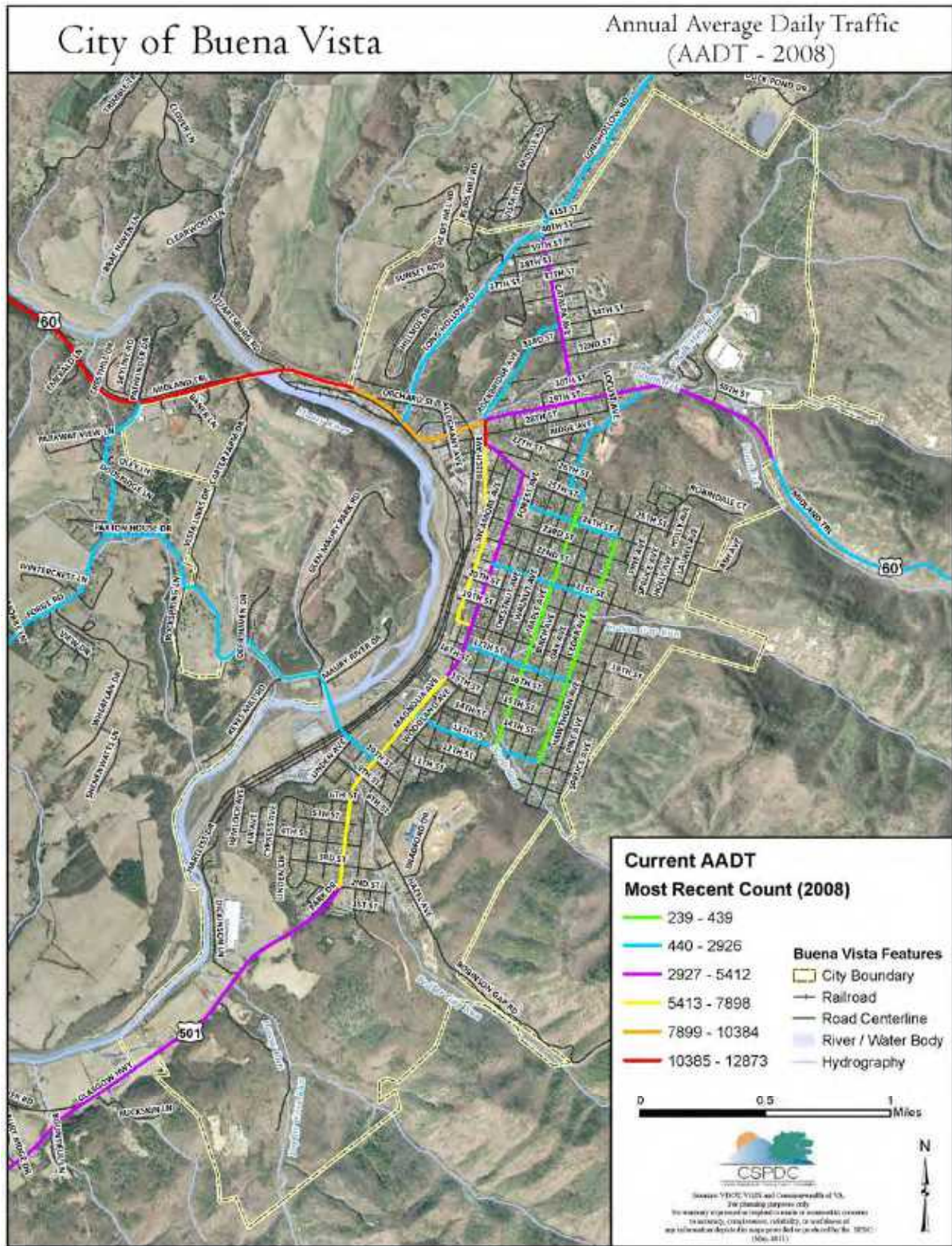
Roadway	From	To	Volume ⁽⁴⁾	V/C	LOS
Cedar Avenue	13 Street	24 th Street	370	0.02	A
Lexington Avenue	WCL Buena Vista	Alleghany Avenue	9949	0.13	A
Rockbridge Avenue	29 th Street	Catalpa Avenue	2097	0.08	A
17 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Forest Avenue	1521	0.05	A
Magnolia Avenue	15 th Street	20 th Street	3834	0.25	A
Ridge Road	Walnut Avenue	29 th Street	1093	0.06	A
Walnut Avenue	25 ½ Street	Ridge Road	752	0.04	A
25 ½ Street	Maple Avenue	Walnut Avenue	752	0.04	A
21 st Street	Maple Avenue	Cedar Avenue	685	0.04	A
21 st Street	Magnolia Avenue	Maple Avenue	685	0.05	A
Maple Avenue	25 th Street	25 ½ Street	752	0.04	A
24 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Chestnut Avenue	1062	0.06	B
13 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Cedar Avenue	1707	0.08	B
Maple Avenue	13 th Street	17 th Street	239	0.1	B
Sycamore Avenue	18 th Street	20 th Street	6979	0.36	B
17 th Street	Oak Avenue	Cedar Avenue	1521	0.07	B

Transportation

Roadway	From	To	Volume ⁽¹⁾	V/C	LOS
24 th Street	Chestnut Avenue	Cedar Avenue	1062	0.06	B
Magnolia Avenue	20 th Street	25 th Street	3834	0.28	B
Maple Avenue	17 th Street	25 Street	239	0.1	B
29 th Street	Ridge Avenue	ECL Buena Vista	4922	0.13	B
10 th Street	C&O Railroad	Magnolia Avenue	2809	0.12	B
Catalpa Avenue	Rockbridge Avenue	Long Hollow Road	3183	0.12	B
29 th Street	Beech Avenue	Ridge Avenue	4922	0.15	B
Long Hollow Road	Lexington Avenue	NCL Buena Vista	1324	0.09	B
17 th Street	Forest Avenue	Oak Avenue	1521	0.07	B
Sycamore Avenue	20 th Street	22 nd Street	6979	0.36	B
Park Avenue	Magnolia Avenue	Beech Avenue	4257	0.25	C
10 th Street	WCL Buena Vista	Maury River Bridge	2809	0.17	C
Beech Avenue	22 nd Street	Park Avenue	7511	0.45	C
Magnolia Avenue	SCL Buena Vista	22 nd Street	3947	0.21	C
Lexington Avenue	Alleghany Avenue	Beech Avenue	9949	0.24	C
18 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Sycamore Street	6444	0.19	C
Catalpa Avenue	29 th Street	Rockbridge Avenue	4484	0.19	C
10 th Street	Maury River Bridge	C&O Railroad	2809	0.17	C
Magnolia Avenue	2 nd Street	15 th Street	7,518	0.34	D
Beech Avenue	Park Avenue	29 th Street	12,135	0.61	D

(1) – Two-way volumes.

Map 7.2



Map 7.3

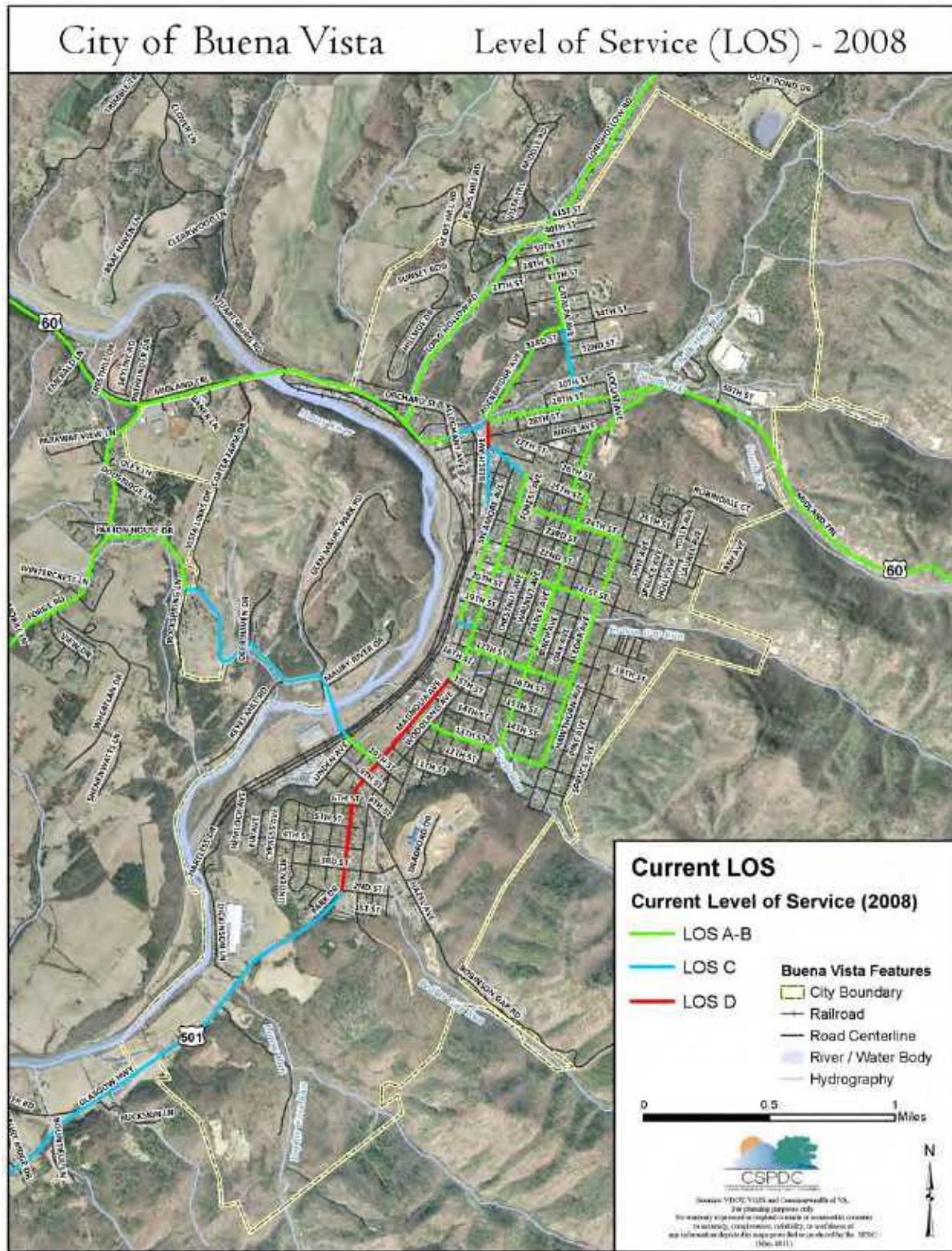


Table 7.5 shows the two deficient roadway segments operating at LOS D during daily operating conditions. All other roadway segments studied in Buena Vista are currently operating at an acceptable LOS, which is defined as LOS A, B or C.

Table 7.5
Existing (2008) Deficient Segments

Roadway	From	To	Volume ⁽¹⁾	V/C	LOS
Magnolia Avenue	2 nd Street	15 th Street	7,518	0.34	D
Beech Avenue	Park Avenue	29 th Street	12,135	0.61	D

(1) – Two-way volumes.

Table 7.6 below gives the intersection level of service for the unsignalized and signalized intersections within Buena Vista. It should be noted that Table 7.6 does not list every intersection in the City, only those intersections that are contained in the VDOT thoroughfare system for Buena Vista. Turning movement counts are only available for these particular intersections.

Table 7.6
Existing (2008) Intersection Level of Service Analysis

Road	Intersection	Location Type	LOS* AM/PM
29 th Street	@Alleghany Avenue	Unsignalized Int.	A / U
Catalpa Avenue	@Rockbridge Avenue	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Catalpa Avenue	@29 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Sycamore Avenue	@20 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Catalpa Avenue	@20 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@10 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@17 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@18 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / U
Magnolia Avenue	@23 rd Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@24 th Street/High School	Unsignalized Int.	A / A
Sycamore Avenue	@21 st Street	Signalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@20 th Street	Signalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@21 st Street	Signalized Int.	A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@22 nd Street	Signalized Int.	A / A

* LOS = Level of Service, A = Acceptable (LOS = A, B, or C); U = Unacceptable (LOS = D, E, or F)

Transportation

Roadway Safety

The planning-level analysis used for this chapter included identifying potential hazardous locations as well as potential safety concerns that could be mitigated by short; mid; or long-term transportation improvements. This planning-level analysis does not replace detailed traffic engineering safety studies that may be required in the future at particular locations.

The frequency of accidents at various locations within the City was assessed. Three locations were identified in the City as high accident locations having five or more accidents in at least one year of the study period (2004-2006). The three locations identified for safety deficiency are:

- U.S. 60 / U.S. 501
- U.S. 501 / 20th Street
- U.S. 501 south of downtown

Based on the crash analysis performed for the purposes of this study, accidents in Buena Vista were concentrated on U.S. Route 501. About half of all accidents in the City within the study period occurred on U.S. Route 501.

Parking and Rideshare

Parking is allowed on city streets except where indicated. Many businesses in the central business district rely on street parking for their customers. There are no ridesharing programs or park-and-ride lots specific for the City of Buena Vista. However, a regional rideshare was started in 2009 by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. The regional rideshare program services all of Rockbridge County and matches commuters to any other destination within the five county Planning District Commission boundary.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Buena Vista has no bicycle lanes on its streets or pathways designed for bicycle use. Typically, families with children ride bicycles in Glen Maury Park, because of its parking lot and open space. Three principal pathways in Buena Vista are used for walking and hiking, summarized as follows:

1. The Chessie Trail. This historic pathway connects Lexington and Buena Vista and is a rail-to-trails designated pedestrian trail. The trail follows the Maury River and is 7 to 8 miles long. The trail is surfaced with wood chips.

2. Glen Maury Park Trail. This is an undesignated quarter-mile trail in Glen Maury Park, which traverses a wooded area. The park is located in the city limits along the western bank of the Maury River.
3. Levee Trail. This trail is a gravel/macadam paved pathway, also undesignated, that runs along the top of a levee that was recently built along the Maury River in Buena Vista. This pathway runs the length of the levee and is approximately 2.5 miles long. The levee was completed in the late 1990s.

Transit, Social Service Transportation, and Taxi

1. Three Community Service agencies (Rockbridge Area Community Services, Rockbridge Area Occupational Center, and the Maury River Senior Center) provide some transportation for their own programs.
2. There is one taxi company and limousine service based in the City of Lexington that serves Buena Vista and the Rockbridge area.
3. There is no fixed-route service but application has been made to begin a service in 2010 linking Buena Vista, Lexington, and points in Rockbridge County.
4. Rockbridge Area Transportation System (RATS) is a demand-response, door-to-door, service available to the public. The mission is to provide safe, affordable transportation to residents of the Rockbridge area, especially those who are elderly, have special needs, or simply have no other transportation. A sliding scale is used to be sure that reduced fares are provided where most needed. RATS operates 14 vehicles (8 with wheelchair capability) during business hours five days per week. Evening and weekend service is available by arrangement. Transportation to regional medical centers in Roanoke, Fishersville, Charlottesville, etc., is part of the service.
5. The Maury Express is a deviated fixed route rural public transportation service operated by RADAR of Roanoke that began service in March, 2011. Two buses circulate hourly using a route connecting the residential areas along primary roadway corridors of Buena Vista and the City of Lexington with necessary community services, such as commercial services, healthcare needs, schools, and employment centers. The Maury Express service operates 8am to 6pm, weekdays and 10am to 2pm, Saturdays.

Transportation

Intercity Rail and Air Travel

Buena Vista is not served directly by passenger rail, but several stations are located nearby. Two of these stations are in Clifton Forge, about 35 miles to the west, and one in Staunton, about 35 miles to the north. Both stations are served by Amtrak's Cardinal line, which services points east and north to Charlottesville and Washington, D.C., and west into West Virginia. Rail service is also available from Lynchburg, about 35 miles to the southeast and Goshen, about 30 miles to the northwest. This station serves Amtrak's Crescent line, which runs between New York City and New Orleans.

There are no local or regional airports within a 35-mile radius of the city. The closest airport to Buena Vista is located in Lynchburg, about 35 miles to the southeast and is a commercial airport.

Goods Movement

Buena Vista has historically functioned as a manufacturing city that experiences significant truck traffic generated from industries in the City and in the general vicinity, as well as through trucks from outside the area. The City is located along a primary route on Interstate 81 and Interstate 64.

Truck movement through the City generally follows either Route 60 west of the City or Route 501 south of the City. Additionally, there are notable volumes of truck traffic on Route 60 east of the City traveling from Buena Vista to locations east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Most goods shipments to and from Buena Vista and the immediate area are by truck.

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROJECTS

Two transportation projects for the City are also included in the Virginia Transportation Six-Year Program (FY 2010-2015). The Six-Year Program is a listing and six-year funding allocation for projects across Virginia. In addition, being a member of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, planning efforts that encompass the City of Buena Vista are performed by this organization. The two projects are: 1) install a traffic signal at Magnolia Avenue and 10th Street and 2) installation of curb and gutter on sections of Route 60. Both projects are in various stages of preconstruction.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS 2035

In order to determine transportation needs for the City of Buena Vista, traffic projections were made to analyze the operations of the transportation system in 2035. Transportation needs through 2035 were identified based on this analysis. These projected needs as well as existing needs formed the basis for the recommendations in this section.

Forecast Methodology

Traffic volumes for 2035 were developed based on an analysis of historic traffic data for Buena Vista roadways. All available traffic data for the period from 1980 to 2008 was collected and summarized. A trend-line analysis was performed and growth rates for major roadways were developed. These growth rates were analyzed and checked against population and employment projections for the City.

Based on this analysis and to ensure that reasonable levels of traffic growth can be accommodated by the Buena Vista transportation system, all roadways in the City were anticipated to incur traffic growth between 2.0 percent and 3.0 percent per year. Growth rates on all roadways were not compounded: for example, a 2 percent non-compounded annual growth rate for 26 years yielded a total assumed growth of 52 percent.

Traffic trend analysis using historic counts for major roads in Buena Vista was used. Population trends and forecasts were used as an additional tool in determining an appropriate growth rate to use for Buena Vista roads.

For evaluation of future (2035) traffic conditions, traffic volumes were projected for the 20 year period. All projections of future traffic conditions are based on historic traffic volumes for the roadway network in Buena Vista. Growth factors were determined for the 33 separate road segments by performing a linear trend analysis using traffic data from 1990 to 2008. The results of this analysis were growth factors, one for each roadway section along the route. The 2008 traffic volumes were then multiplied by the respective growth factor to obtain the 2035 traffic projection for that segment of the roadway. Average yearly growth estimates on these segments range from a positive growth of approximately six percent per year to a drop of approximately three percent per year.

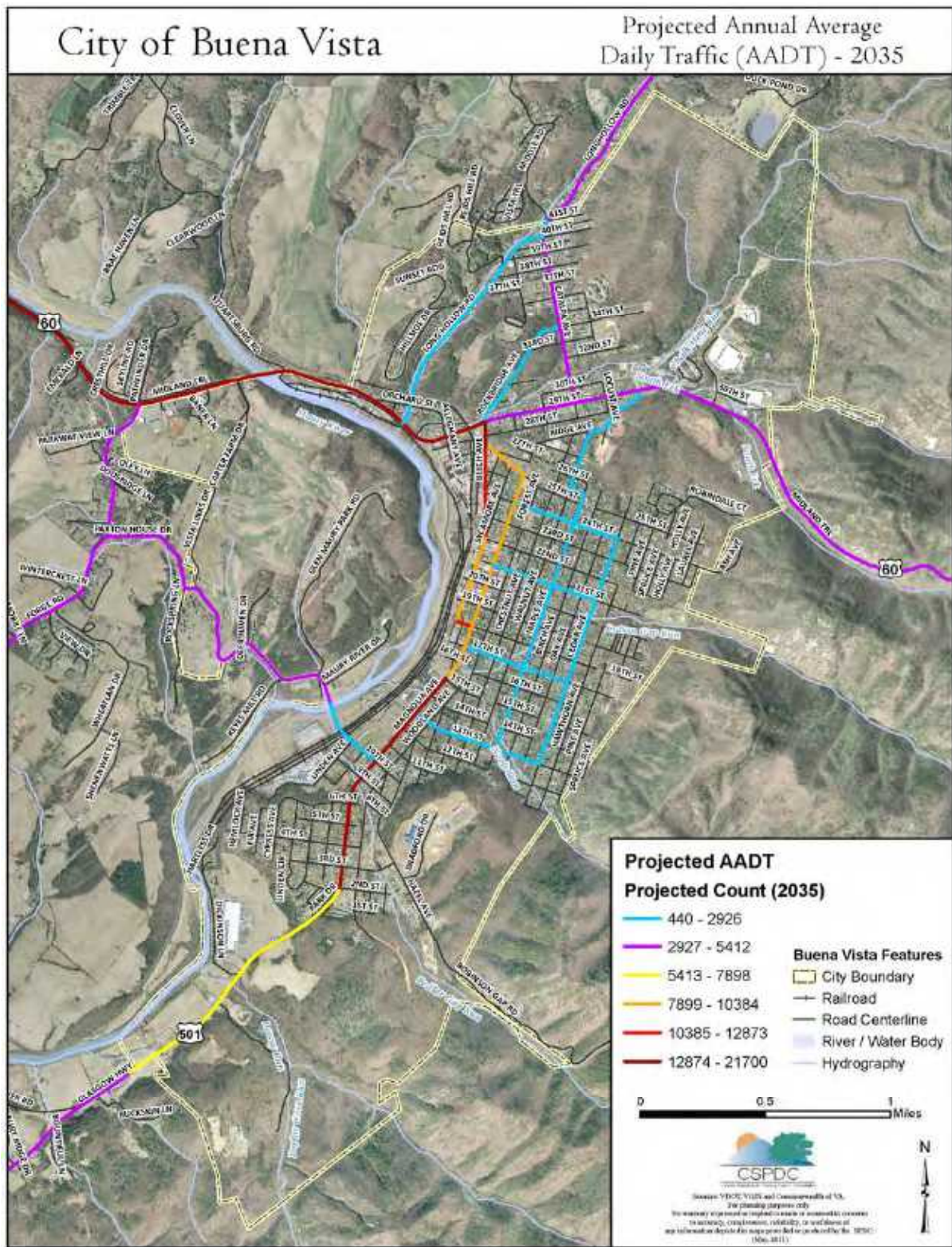
In order to evaluate the future (2035) roadway conditions, projected traffic volumes were used to calculate LOS on the roadway corridors in the study area. As with the existing traffic conditions evaluation, capacity analysis was used to determine the LOS in the study area. Based on this analysis, the average traffic growth on the 33 Buena Vista roadways was 2.23 percent per year. It is important to note that this is an average based on all of the analyzed roadways, with equal weight given to roadways regardless of size or volume of traffic carried.

Transportation

Year 2035 Volumes and Needs

Daily traffic volumes for 2035 are shown in Map 7.4. The forecasted traffic volumes show that three roadway segments are anticipated to operate at a deficient level of service in 2035. Table 7.7 and Map 7.5 display the 2035 level of service for the City of Buena Vista roadway segments. Similar to the existing level of service analysis, traffic volume calculations and LOS determinations were only done for those roadway segments within the VDOT thoroughfare system. The approach used in the capacity analyses for this study was to use the planning-level analysis techniques of the Highway Capacity Software (HCS), Version 5.3. If, by using this planning level analysis, the intersection was identified as operating at either near or over capacity conditions (defined as deficient) the analyst would run HCS “operations” analysis to identify and test improvement recommendations.

Map 7.4



Map 7.5

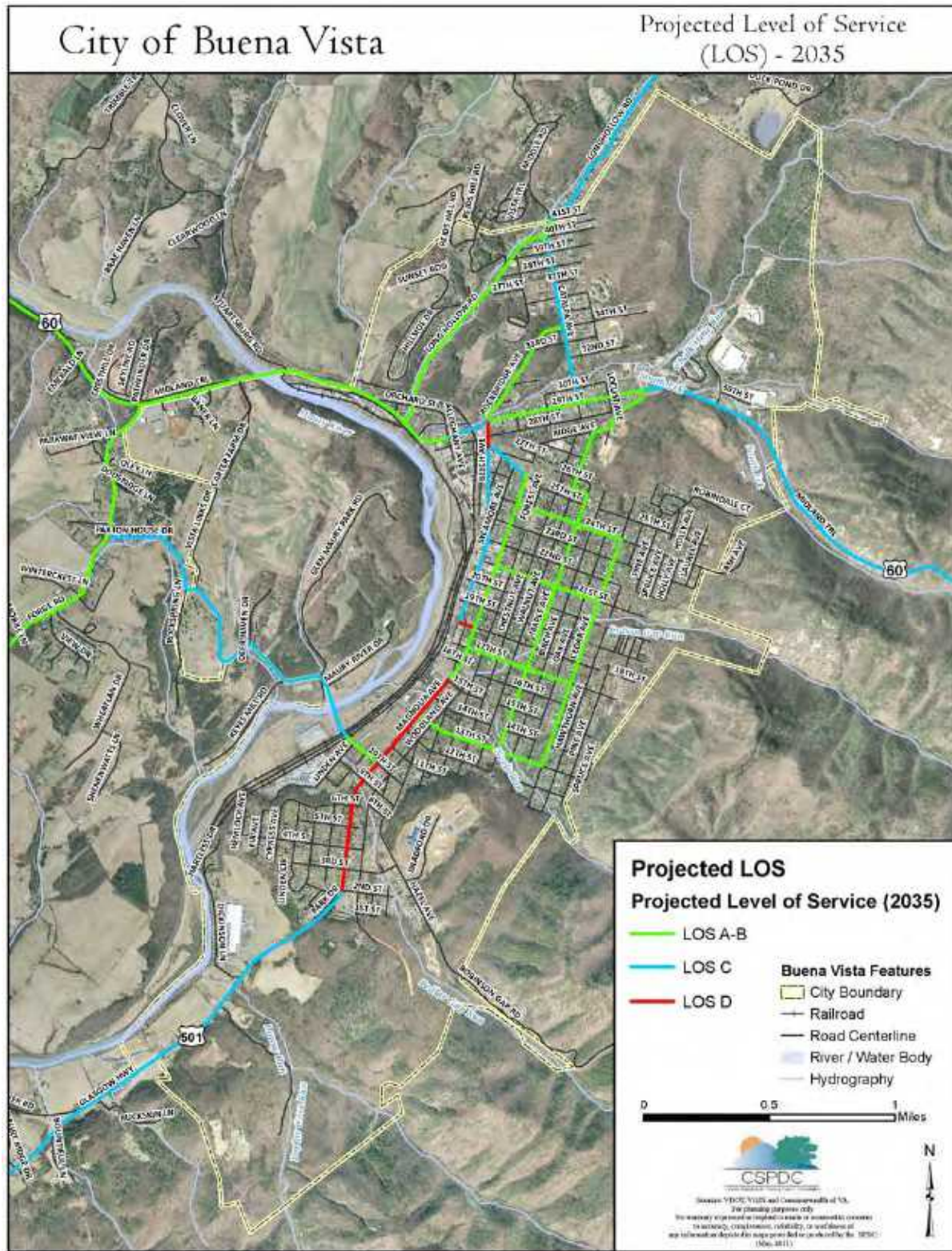


Table 7.7
Year 2035 Level of Service

Roadway	From	To	Volume ⁽¹⁾	V/C	LOS
Cedar Avenue	13 th Street	24 th Street	600	0.04	A
Maple Avenue	13 th Street	17 th Street	440	0.02	A
Lexington Avenue	WCL Buena Vista	Alleghany Avenue	15,000	0.2	A
Maple Avenue	17 th Street	25 th Street	440	0.02	A
Walnut Avenue	25 ½ Street	Ridge Road	900	0.04	A
25 ½ Street	Maple Avenue	Walnut Avenue	900	0.04	A
21 st Street	Maple Avenue	Cedar Avenue	1100	0.06	A
21 st Street	Magnolia Avenue	Maple Avenue	1100	0.07	A
Maple Avenue	25 th Street	25 ½ Street	900	0.04	A
24 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Chestnut Avenue	1800	0.1	B
13 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Cedar Avenue	2400	0.12	B
17 th Street	Oak Avenue	Cedar Avenue	2400	0.13	B
24 th Street	Chestnut Avenue	Cedar Avenue	1800	0.1	B
Rockbridge Avenue	29 th Street	Catalpa Avenue	2100	0.1	B
17 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Forest Avenue	2400	0.9	B
Magnolia Avenue	20 th Street	25 th Street	9000	0.68	B
Magnolia Avenue	15 th Street	20 th Street	9500	0.68	B
Ridge Road	Walnut Avenue	29 th Street	1400	0.08	B
10 th Street	C&O Railroad	Magnolia Avenue	2900	0.12	B
29 th Street	Beech Avenue	Ridge Avenue	5000	0.35	B
Long Hollow Road	Lexington Avenue	NCL Buena Vista	2700	0.15	B
17 th Street	Forest Avenue	Oak Avenue	2400	0.13	B
Sycamore Avenue	18 th Street	20 th Street	9,400	0.34	B
Park Avenue	Magnolia Avenue	Beech Avenue	8000	0.52	C
10 th Street	WCL Buena Vista	Maury River Bridge	3000	0.17	C
Beech Avenue	22 nd Street	Park Avenue	11,000	0.61	C
Magnolia Avenue	SCL Buena Vista	2 nd Street	5500	0.22	C
Lexington Avenue	Alleghany Avenue	Beech Avenue	15,000	0.37	C
29 th Street	Ridge Avenue	ECL Buena Vista	5,000	0.2	C
Catalpa Avenue	29 th Street	Rockbridge Avenue	5,300	0.23	C
Catalpa Avenue	Rockbridge Avenue	Long Hollow Road	4,200	0.17	C
10 th Street	Maury River Bridge	C&O Railroad	2,900	0.17	C
Sycamore Avenue	20 th Street	22 nd Street	10,200	0.55	C
18 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Sycamore Street	11,000	0.34	D
Magnolia Avenue	2 nd Street	15 th Street	15,000	0.56	D
Beech Avenue	Park Avenue	29 th Street	14,100	0.8	D

(1) – Two-way volumes.

Transportation

Table 7.8 shows the three deficient roadway segments operating at LOS D during daily operating conditions. All other roadway segments studied in Buena Vista are operating at an acceptable LOS, which is defined LOS A, B, or C.

Table 7.8
Year 2035 Deficient Segments

Roadway	From	To	Volume ⁽¹⁾	V/C	LOS
18 th Street	Magnolia Avenue	Sycamore Street	11,000	0.65	D
Magnolia Avenue	2 nd Street	15 th Street	15,000	0.56	D
Beech Avenue	Park Avenue	29 th Street	14,100	0.8	D

(1) – Two-way volumes.

Table 7.9 gives the intersection level of service for year 2035 for the unsignalized and signalized intersections within Buena Vista. Similarly to the existing conditions LOS summary table, only those intersections contained in the VDOT thoroughfare system for Buena Vista were analyzed.

Table 7.9
Year 2035 Intersection Level of Service Analysis

Road	Intersection	Location Type	LOS* AM/Mid/PM
29 th Street	@Alleghany Avenue	Unsignalized Int.	U / U / U
Catalpa Avenue	@Rockbridge Avenue	Unsignalized Int.	U / A / A
Catalpa Avenue	@29 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	U / U / U
Sycamore Avenue	@20 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A / A
Catalpa Avenue	@20 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	A / A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@10 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	U / U / U
Magnolia Avenue	@17 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	U / A / U
Magnolia Avenue	@18 th Street	Unsignalized Int.	U / A / U
Magnolia Avenue	@23 rd Street	Unsignalized Int.	U / U / U
Magnolia Avenue	@24 th Street/High School	Unsignalized Int.	U / U / U
Sycamore Avenue	@21 st Street	Signalized Int.	A / A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@20 th Street	Signalized Int.	A / A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@21 st Street	Signalized Int.	A / A / A
Magnolia Avenue	@22 nd Street	Signalized Int.	A / A / A

*LOS = Level of Service. A=Acceptable LOS (LOS = A, B, or C), U=Unacceptable LOS (LOS = D, E, or F)

The following intersections in Buena Vista are anticipated to be deficient for 2035, at the peak hours indicated:

- 29th Street and Allegheny Avenue (All Peaks)
- Catalpa Avenue and Rockbridge Avenue (AM Peak)
- Catalpa Avenue and 29th Street (All Peaks)
- Magnolia Avenue and 10th Street (All Peaks)
- Magnolia Avenue and 17th Street (AM and PM Peaks)
- Magnolia Avenue and 18th Street (AM and PM Peaks)
- Magnolia Avenue and 23rd Street (All Peaks)
- Magnolia Avenue and 24th Street/High School (All Peaks)

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis of the highway capacity, safety, geometry, and other local issues affecting the performance of the transportation system serving the City, recommendations were developed in conjunction with Buena Vista officials. For planning purposes, cost estimates were also developed for each of the recommendations using standard unit costs (generally, per-mile). The transportation plan recommendations are described below.

The recommendations have been developed based on existing and future transportation needs. These include flow and safety conditions, multimodal transportation deficiencies, parking and goods movement. A summary of both existing and future deficiencies is listed in Table 7.10.

Transportation

Table 7.10
Existing and Future Transportation Deficiencies

Deficiency Type	Description
Intersection – 2010	• Route 60 and Route 501, Safety • Sycamore Avenue and 20th Street, Safety • 29th Street and Allegheny Avenue, Operations • Magnolia Avenue and 10th Street, Operations • Catalpa Avenue and Rockbridge Avenue, Safety
Segment – 2010	None
Intersection – 2035	• 29th Street and Allegheny Avenue • Catalpa Avenue and 29th Street • Magnolia Avenue and 17th Street (AM and PM Peaks) • Magnolia Avenue and 18th Street (AM and PM Peaks)
Segment – 2035	Beech Avenue, between Park Avenue and 29 th Street

The transportation system recommendations for Buena Vista are divided into three phases (See Map 7.6). Phase One recommendations relate to the most important needs of the City and, based on relatively low costs and impacts and ease of implementation. Phase Two improvements are midterm improvements intended to correct existing deficiencies but, based on projected costs and/or potential impacts, would require a greater number of years to plan and fund. Phase Three improvements are long-term projects that are intended to correct deficiencies to the year 2035.

Phase One: Base Year (2010) Recommendations

Three projects were identified as short-term, immediate improvements and are described below.

Route 60 (29th Street) at Alleghany Avenue. This intersection has a deficient level of service rating for existing conditions. The recommendation is to install a signal at this intersection to improve intersection capacity.

Route 60 at Route 501 (Beech Avenue). This intersection has the highest accident rate of any other in the City. The recommendation is to reconfigure signal phasing to allow eastbound and westbound left turns as protected only (turns only on a green arrow). This is intended to improve safety by eliminating a vehicle turning conflict.

Sycamore Avenue at 20th Street. This intersection is one targeted for an increase in safety measures. This recommendation is to convert this intersection to all-way stop control and add advance warning signs on Sycamore Avenue to enhance safety.

Phase Two: Interim Year (2020) Recommendations

Five projects were identified as an interim year improvement.

Rockbridge Avenue at Catalpa Avenue. Convert to intersection to all-way stop control and advance warning signs at the intersection to improve safety, particularly speeding. This intersection is anticipated to have a deficient level of service rating by 2020.

Route 501 (Magnolia Avenue) and Second Street. The recommendation is to install left turn lanes and crosswalks at this location to provide a safer pedestrian environment near Enderly Heights Elementary School.

Woodland Avenue and Second Street. The recommendation is to install crosswalks at this location to provide a safer pedestrian environment near Enderly Heights Elementary School.

Factory Street Railroad Crossing. The recommendation is to install railroad crossing gates for increased security at this at-grade crossing. This project was completed in October 2011.

Ridge/Maple Avenue from Route 60 (29th Street) to Walnut Avenue. The recommendation is to install sidewalks on Ridge Avenue and crosswalks at the intersection of Ridge Avenue and 29th Street to provide greater pedestrian connectivity to Southern Virginia University and the residential area north of Route 60.

Phase Three: Future Year (2035) Recommendations

The Phase Three recommendations are intended to support the economic and business needs of the community while enhancing both the appeal and traffic operations of Buena Vista's Main Street areas. Three projects are in this phase.

Alleghany Avenue/Factory Street from Route 60 (E. Midland Trail) to Beech Avenue. The recommendation is to reconstruct these roadways to current VDOT standards and to realign Factory Street with Park Avenue.

21th Street Pedestrian Bridge across the Maury River. The recommendation is to install a pedestrian bridge over the Maury River and the railroad tracks between the Maury River and Sycamore Avenue. This pedestrian bridge is intended to connect to trails within Glen Maury Park.

Transportation

10th Street from Magnolia to the entrance of Glen Maury Park. The recommendation is to install sidewalks on 10th Street to provide greater pedestrian connectivity to Glen Maury Park.

Further Study/Implementation Recommendations

For consideration in future transportation planning efforts, there are two recommended studies and two points of consideration for implementation of future transportation accommodations. The two study efforts are to:

Complete a Sidewalk Connectivity Study. The purpose of this study is to identify where “gaps” exists in the sidewalk network and to prepare a prioritized list of locations where new sidewalk construction would improve the pedestrian facilities within Buena Vista.

Parking Study for Downtown Buena Vista. The purpose of this study is to determine how to provide an adequate amount of parking to support the land uses in the downtown area and any future downtown economic development efforts.

Additionally, future transportation implementation policies should include, where appropriate, design standards for on-street parking to ensure adequate sight distance, particularly at intersections. As well, all newly constructed curb ramps should be within ADA compliance standards.

Transportation STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Transportation Network The City of Buena Vista will maintain a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Protect existing public investments in the transportation network. • Integrate transportation and land use planning. • Consider public roadways to be public spaces which serve multiple public purposes in addition to carrying motor vehicles. • Design a transportation network that accesses all modes of transportation easily and safely.			
		Priority	Responsibility
7.1A	Coordinate land use commitments with transportation capacity.	On Going	Planning, Planning Commission
7.1B	Define and protect potential future road corridors for long term needs.	M	Planning, City Council
7.1C	Adopt standards for rezonings that include road and bridge capacities as criteria for approval.	On Going	Planning, City Council
7.1D	Require traffic impact studies for major development proposals that identify initial and long-term transportation impacts associated with the proposed development.	H	Community Development
7.1E	Encourage proposed employment centers to locate in close proximity to existing or planned major roads.	On Going	Planning, Planning Commission
7.1F	Control access to arterial roadways by directing the number and location of entrances.	On Going	Planning, Planning Commission
7.1G	Require building setbacks that reflect the right-of-way to ensure that the right-of-way is reserved for future transportation improvements.	On Going	Planning
7.1H	Continue to identify and address transportation mode/user conflicts with the transportation system.	On Going	Planning, Public Works
7.1I	Determine appropriate level of signage to enhance transportation safety conditions.	On Going	Public Works
7.1J	Increase safety awareness of users and providers of transportation systems.	On Going	Public Works
7.1K	Encourage the use of rail by industry, and deference to new industries, to use rail instead of solely trucks.	On Going	Planning, Economic Development

Transportation

		Priority	Responsibility
7.1L	Encourage the coordination of adjacent land uses to best facilitate the maximum use of the railroads.	On Going	Planning, Economic Development
7.1M	Use traffic calming measures at appropriate locations.	M, On Going	Planning, Public Works
7.1N	Design local streets to give priority to both vehicles and pedestrians.	On Going	Planning, Public Works
7.1O	Promote improvements to the transportation network that are compatible with the aesthetic, historic, and physical characteristics of the City.	On Going	Community Development, Public Works
7.1P	Minimize transportation impacts to the City's historic, cultural, and environmental resources.	On Going	Community Development, Public Works
7.1Q	Develop a set of design criteria including landscaping, setbacks and buffers for the City's roadway that improve mobility and safety.	M	Planning, Public Works
7.1R	Formulate and adopt Context Sensitive Design criteria in transportation planning and project development.	M	Planning, Public Works
7.1S	Promote and establish attractive gateway/entrance corridors.	M	Community Development, Public Works, Community Organizations
7.1T	Coordinate planning and development with governmental transportation agencies at all levels and environmental land use plans and regulations.	On Going	Community Development

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Transportation STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 2: Transportation Options The City of Buena Vista will provide a variety of transportation options for residents, employers, workers, and visitors. The City of Buena Vista will improve connectivity and mobility to enhance its existing grid network of interconnected streets, sidewalks and trails.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Integrate transportation and land use planning. • Support diverse transportation opportunities. • Enhance the grid network of interconnected streets, sidewalks, and trails. • Connect neighborhoods and destination points such as schools, job centers, retail centers, community facilities, and recreational activities. • Expand the connectivity of the City's transportation network across all modes for both people and freight.			
		Priority	Responsibility
7.2A	Require new developments to design and construct transportation improvements to connect with existing and planned street grids and collector and transit systems.	On Going	Planning, Planning Commission, City Council
7.2B	Encourage that mixed use developments provide adequate internal circulation systems to minimize the length and number of vehicular trips and to optimize traffic flow.	On Going	Planning, Planning Commission
7.2C	Amend existing zoning ordinance to strengthen requirements for pedestrian and vehicular connections between and within proposed developments.	H	Planning, Planning Commission, City Council
7.2D	Develop an existing sidewalks map for the City.	H	Planning, Public Works
7.2E	Develop a program and seek funding to complete missing sidewalk connections throughout the City.	L	Planning, Public Works
7.2F	Develop a master bike and pedestrian plan to identify connections between neighborhoods, commercial developments and local destinations that can be safely implemented by both on-road bicycle lanes and off-road bicycle and pedestrian trails.	L	Planning, Parks & Rec
7.2G	Require pedestrian access and circulation in development areas.	H	Planning, Planning Commission, City Council

Transportation

		Priority	Responsibility
7.2H	Encourage the use of bicycles in the design of new roads and developments.	On Going	Community Development, Public Works
7.2I	Develop individual bicycle and pedestrian trails within the City that have been identified as priorities for tourism and recreation.	L	Parks & Rec, Community Development, Community Groups
7.2J	Support the implementation of the Brushy Blue Greenways Plan.	On Going	Parks & Rec, Community Development, City Council, Community Groups
7.2K	Restore a pedestrian bridge across the Maury River to connect Glen Maury Park and the downtown area.	M	Economic Development, Planning, Parks & Rec, Public Works, VDOT
7.2L	Improve pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and crosswalks in the downtown area.	M	Community Development, Public Works
7.M	Implement the downtown corridor recommendations of the Blue Ridge Parkway Gateway Study for the City of Buena Vista.	M	Community Development, Public Works
7.2N	Invest in transit improvements that meet the needs of transit-dependent populations such as the elderly, low-income, and youth.	L	Community Development
7.2O	Emphasize commercial rail as an increasingly important means of goods movement.	On Going	Community Development

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Transportation STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 3: Regional Transportation The City of Buena Vista will be a community that works with local, state and federal officials to provide enhanced mobility through transportation projects with regional benefits.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Protect existing public investments in the transportation network. • Develop a comprehensive funding strategy for maintenance and new capacity improvements. • Design a transportation network that accesses all modes of transportation easily and safely. • Provide alternatives to automobile travel. • Design a flexible and responsive transportation system. • Support and improve the economic vitality of the region by providing access to economic opportunities, such as industrial access or recreational travel and tourism.			
		Priority	Responsibility
7.3A	Annually pursue state and federal funding programs to achieve the City's capital improvements program goals.	H	Community Development, Public Works
7.3B	Encourage regional transportation planning, investment, and projects that support new and/or expanding economic development opportunities.	On Going	Economic Development, Public Works
7.3C	Encourage projects within all modes of transportation that improve the regional competitiveness.	On Going	Community Development
7.3D	Coordinate transportation planning between the City and neighboring jurisdictions to improve mobility.	On Going	Community Development, City Council
7.3E	Share planning and costs with other jurisdictions when City road improvements have mutual benefits.	On Going	City Council
7.3F	Solicit private financial participation in projects.	On Going	Community Development, City Council
7.3G	Work with neighboring localities to extend bus service where practical.	M	Community Development
7.3H	Encourage initiatives for public transportation and transit alternatives initiated by private sector or community groups, including public/private partnerships.	On Going	Community Development

Transportation

		Priority	Responsibility
7.3I	Engage localities in the region to garner unified support for regionally significant roadway capacity projects.	On Going	City Council

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 8

Community Facilities

A community provides a variety of services to its residents, visitors, and businesses. These services include fire and police protection, justice, park and recreational programs, schools, colleges, libraries, emergency services and health care. These services are carried out in the Municipal Building, courthouse, community center, schools and other public buildings. The City also provides services such as roads, water, and sewer. The latter three are discussed in Chapter 6, Infrastructure & Utilities.

Community services require significant expenditures of public funds and have a tremendous impact on residents' quality of life. Services such as recreation, public safety (including police, fire and emergency services), street maintenance, snow plowing, libraries, waste collection and other general government services represent a significant portion of the budget. Schools are by far the largest category of spending.

This chapter inventories Buena Vista's community facilities and identifies any future needs and/or deficiencies. Map 8.1 indicates the location of community facilities within the City's boundaries.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

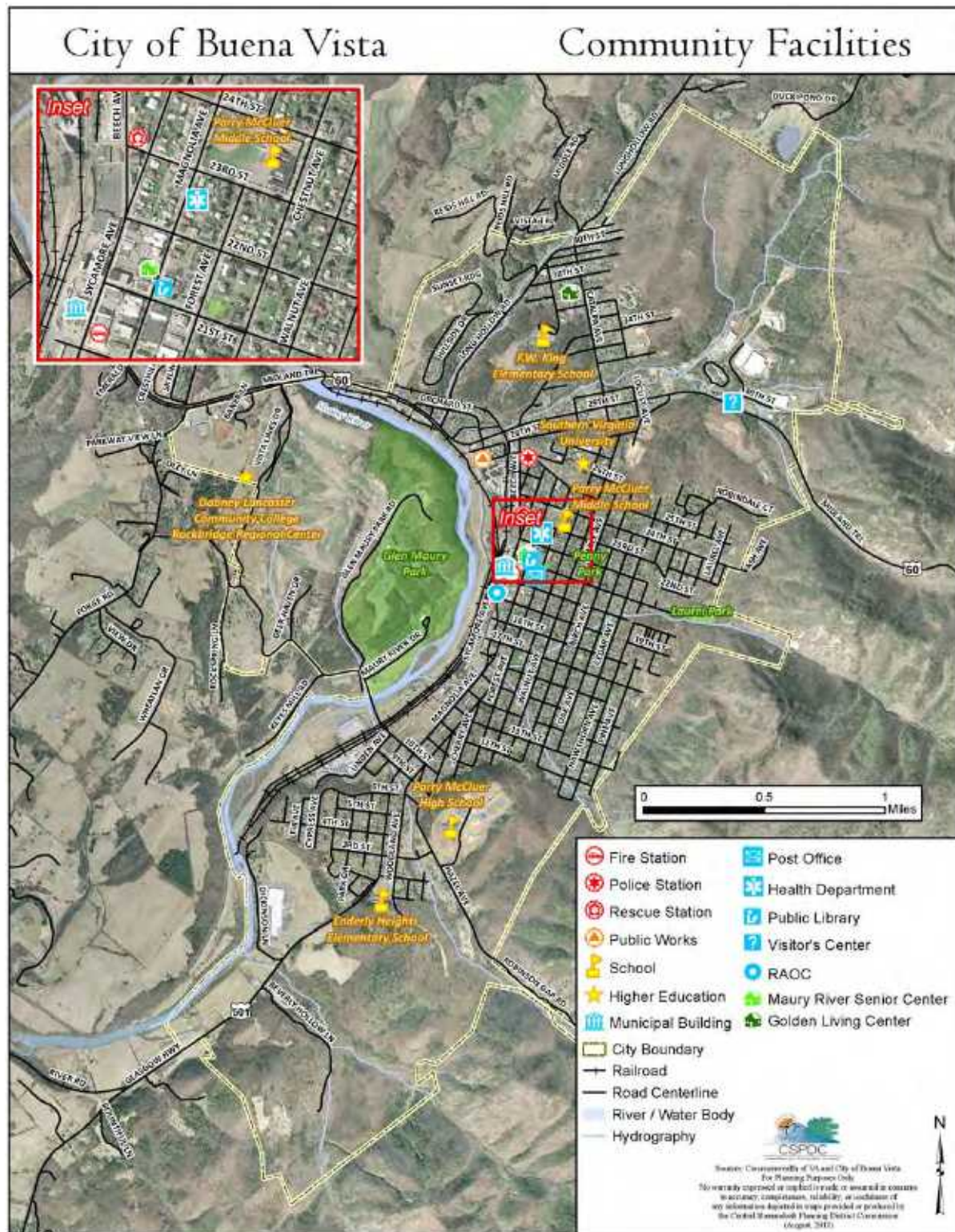
Population Characteristics. Demographic trends are a critical component in service planning. Health care and housing are a growing concern as the median age of residents creeps upward. Nevertheless, as the population of Buena Vista ages, the City is also concerned with keeping and attracting youth and families. Community services respond to the changing needs of people. Recreational and educational services will vary greatly depending on the makeup of the population.

Economy. By providing links between public services and amenities, people are better connected and a sense of community is built. This benefits residents, but these connections also meet business needs and interests.

Transportation. The kind and location of services provided by the City can have a dramatic effect on transportation needs and goals. The location and type of services provided by the community influences the mobility and accessibility of people, particularly elderly and people with disabilities. Transportation access to basic services is a growing concern as communities spread out in less dense patterns and have increasing numbers of people with disabilities.

Community Facilities

Map 8.1



Land Use. The relationship between land use decisions and public services is a close one. The location of facilities, the efficiency with which emergency services can be provided, and the ease of collecting waste are directly linked to land use patterns, policies and regulation. Land use plays a key role in determining where a facility is located. A community facility, in turn, can affect the character of a neighborhood, downtown, or area. The same is true for how a service is provided.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Municipal Building



The City of Buena Vista Municipal Building is located at 2039 Sycamore Avenue. The building houses most of the administrative offices for City operations as well as the General District, Juvenile, Domestic Relations, and Circuit Courts.

Public Works

The Buena Vista Public Works Department keeps everything in the City moving. Among its numerous tasks, the Public Works Department is responsible for the City's water system, cemetery, traffic signals, refuse collection, and leaf collection. The Public Works Department is located at Factory and Alleghany Streets.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The purpose of a wastewater treatment facility is to treat and discharge wastewater locally without contaminating local waters. The City of Buena Vista's wastewater treatment plant is a public wastewater treatment facility which serves the residents of the City. The wastewater treatment plant was last upgraded in 1985 and is a 2.25 million gallons/day facility. Refer to Chapter 6, Infrastructure & Utilities, for additional information.

Community Facilities

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Protection

The fire department, Company 10, protects the City of Buena Vista and a portion of Rockbridge County. Fire protection in the City of Buena Vista is provided by over 70 volunteer firefighters. In 2004, the fire department moved into its facility at 2010 Sycamore Avenue. The station also has a community room that is used for meetings, rentals, and other community activities.

The fire department responds to approximately 400 fire calls each year and also provides assistance to the local Rescue Squad with drivers and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The fire department has seven vehicles. The company received its Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport license in September 2010. Four units run as first response to all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls in its first due area. This adds about 1,100 calls per year. The fire department also serves the community by distributing smoke alarms and providing educational programs.

Rescue Squad

Emergency services are provided by the Buena Vista Rescue Squad, home of Rescue 2. Rescue 2 is manned by approximately 30 volunteers; all services are provided by volunteers. They respond to over 1,200 calls for service each year. The rescue squad has seven units which provide Basic Life Support (BLS) and ALS services to the City of Buena Vista and Rockbridge County. The rescue squad operates eight vehicles. In addition to emergency services, volunteers of the rescue squad staff community and school events, provide CPR training, and present educational programs to school students.

Law Enforcement

The Buena Vista Police Department responds to service calls, enforces traffic and criminal laws, investigates crimes, and provides a variety of safety programs. The police department has a staff of 16 including 14 officers, one animal control officer, and one administrative assistant. The police department is headquartered at 306 Park Avenue. Compared to other cities in Virginia, Buena Vista has a low incidence of crime. The incident rate per 100,000 people was 3341.98 in 2009.

The Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington and Rockbridge County operate the Rockbridge Regional Jail which serves all three localities. The jail is located in Rockbridge County just north of Lexington.

The duties of the Buena Vista Sherriff Department are serving civil processes, providing courtroom security, and transporting inmates. Currently, the Sheriff's office has 2 full-time and 5 part-time employees. They are located at the Buena Vista Municipal Building on Sycamore Street. The Sheriff is a State Constitutional Officer that is elected every four years. The City is also served by three magistrates.

Although the police department and the sheriff department have separate and specific duties, they work together to provide law enforcement within the City of Buena Vista. Furthermore, both are active in the City's schools and community outreach.

MEDICAL, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The largest medial facility in the Buena Vista area is Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital (CSJH). The hospital is located six miles away in Lexington. Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital is an independent, non-profit organization established to meet the primary health care needs of the public. CSJH is a 25-bed critical access facility. It has over 280 employees and admits over 1,500 acute patients each year. The hospital provides a full range of inpatient and outpatient services, specializing in imaging surgical and therapy services.

The Golden LivingCenter – Shenandoah Valley is a private nursing facility located at 3737 Catalpa Avenue in the City of Buena Vista. The 93-bed facility provides long-term skilled nursing as well as short-term rehabilitative care.

The Buena Vista Health Department located within the City at 2270 Magnolia Avenue offers a number of services including medical and dental services, nutrition services and health education. Services may be free or charged on a flat fee or sliding fee basis.

The mission of Rockbridge Area Community Services (RACS) is to help prevent and treat mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse and to promote integration of those experiencing these conditions into the community. RACS provides programs to those in the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington and the Counties of Rockbridge and Bath. RACS has two facilities located in Buena Vista. The Eagle's Nest Clubhouse provides a day activity program for adults with mental illness. Magnolia Center provides a day activity program for adults with developmental disabilities.

The Rockbridge Area Occupational Center provides center-based employment to working age people with disabilities. There are presently 45 employees that work and receive training at the Center. The Center is located on Sycamore Avenue.

*Community Facilities***EDUCATION AND TRAINING****Schools**

The City of Buena Vista has four public schools – two elementary, one middle school, and a high school. Student enrollment for each school is shown in Table 8.1. The number of students at the middle school and high school has fluctuated little over the past five years. Enrollment at the elementary schools is on the decline, particularly at F.W. King Elementary School.

Table 8.1
Student Membership by School
2006-2010

School	Number of Students				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Enderly Heights Elementary	280	264	267	263	255
F.W. King Elementary	212	200	197	181	180
Parry McCluer Middle School	362	349	346	358	365
Parry McCluer High School	335	341	341	340	335

Note: Student membership is as of September 30 of each year.

Source: Virginia Department of Education

Although enrollment levels do not reflect a need for new schools, the middle school is in need of renovation. The high school is a newer facility that was completed in 2001. Enderly Heights and Kling Elementary Schools were constructed in 1963 and 1976, respectively. The middle school is the oldest of the schools. It is a 1950s-era building with some sections dating to 1923.

The City has great opportunity to collaborate with institutions of higher education. Southern Virginia University (SVU) and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC) Rockbridge Regional Center are located in the City of Buena Vista. The DSLCC Rockbridge Regional Center opened in 2008. Approximately 500 students take classes at this facility. The number of students attending SVU is shown in Table 8.2. SVU plans to increase its enrollment to 1,000 students within the next five to ten years.

Table 8.2
SVU Fall Headcount Enrollment
2006-2011

School						
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Southern Virginia University	749	698	682	643	752	800

Source: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

SVU, located in the heart of Buena Vista, is critical to the City's economy and both institutions are important to workforce development and business support. SVU's facilities also provide access to the university's library; music, theater and other arts programs as well as athletic events. The University also anticipates having a performing arts building. These facilities serve the community and improve quality of life in Buena Vista.

Library

The Buena Vista Public Library, named the A.B. Modine Memorial Library, is located in the "Old Courthouse" building at 2110 Magnolia Avenue. The Buena Vista facility is a branch of the Rockbridge Regional Library. In addition to Buena Vista, the Rockbridge Regional Library serves Bath and Rockbridge Counties and the City of Lexington. The central office is located in the City of Lexington with additional branches in Warm Springs, Glasgow, and Goshen. The Rockbridge Regional Library has over 180,000 books and audio and video materials with an annual circulation exceeding 275,000 items.



Besides the public library system, residents of Buena Vista are able to use the private library of Southern Virginia University (SVU). The libraries on the campuses of Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute, both located in Lexington, are also open to the public.

The building occupied by the Buena Vista Public Library is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a symbol of Buena Vista's growth as a City. The building is also located at a key intersection in the City's downtown, thus it brings important pedestrian activity to the downtown area. Because of these benefits, improvements to the library's physical space and programs are essential to greater quality of life and economic development goals.

Community Facilities

Employment Assistance

The Career Café is located at 2141 Sycamore Avenue. The employment center is operated through a contract with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Staff of the Career Café provides services and tools to assist job seekers in clarifying their goals, exploring career options, and obtaining employment. More specifically this includes creating resumes and cover letters, learning interviewing and networking skills, accessing labor market information, locating training opportunities, learning and advancing computer skills, preparing for the GED test, and locating child care or transportation services. Services at the Career Café are free to eligible applicants that qualify under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult or Dislocated Worker Programs contract because of their income and/or employment status.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Senior Center

The Maury River Senior Center provides social, recreational, educational, health and advocacy activities for Rockbridge area residents age 60 or older. The center hosts speakers addressing a variety of subjects and provides free counseling on Medicare. In addition to activities, lunch is provided daily. Transportation services to and from the center are provided upon request. Services are not income based. In addition to its services to older residents, the facility is used by local civic organizations. The senior center moved to its current location on Magnolia Avenue in 2005.

Visitors Center

The Buena Vista Visitor Center is located along 29th Street (Route 60) in the City. It is approximately four miles from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Maps and brochures of the area, with a particular focus on outdoor recreational activities, are available. Furthermore, the visitor center has restrooms, picnic tables, and a gift shop. The visitor center is operated by the Lexington and the Rockbridge Area Tourism Development.

RECREATION

The City of Buena Vista offers a number of recreational activities throughout the year. On its east, the City borders the Jefferson and George Washington National Forest. The Maury River bisects the City. One side of the river is the central business district; the other side is home to Glen Maury Park, the City's largest park. Additionally, Buena Vista has Laurel Park Youth Sports Complex and Penny Park as well as a number of playgrounds (see Map 8.2).



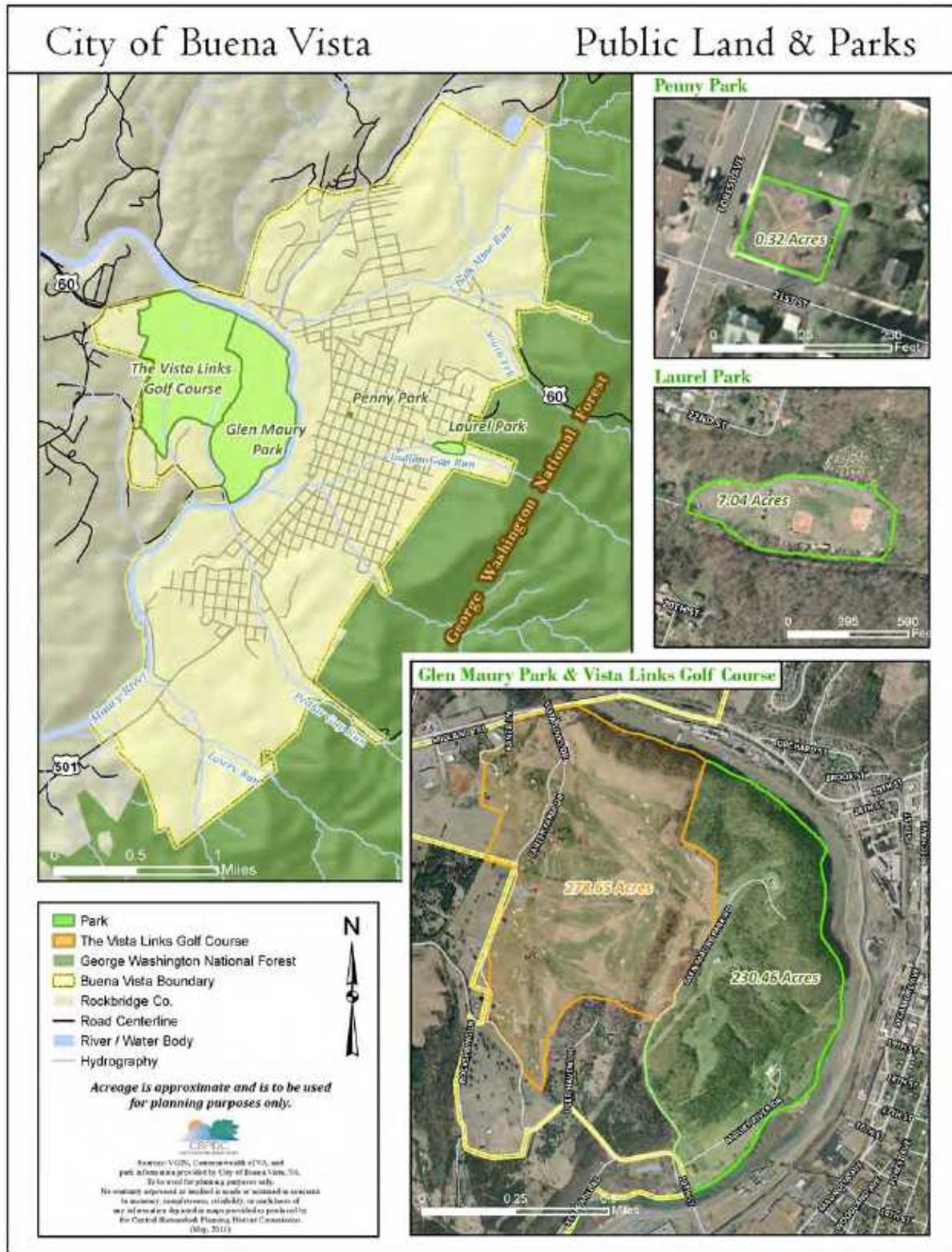
Glen Maury Park

Glen Maury Park is a 315-acre camping/recreational park owned and operated by the City of Buena Vista. By its size, Glen Maury Park would be considered a regional park. A regional park typically serves an area of a 25-mile radius or approximately 45 minutes driving time. The terrain of the park is varied, and it has over a mile of frontage along the Maury River. The Paxton House, a historical landmark, is located in the park. Special events are held at the park throughout the year such as the Maury River Fiddlers' Convention, Nothin' Fancy Bluegrass Festival, Beach Music Festival and Car Show, Labor Day Parade and Friday's in the Park summer concert series.

The facilities at Glen Maury Park include the following:

- 52 site campground that includes water and electricity hookups, dumping station, tables, toilets, showers, and ground camping for up to 250 units
- Boat landing
- River fishing
- Outdoor roller skating rink
- Walking trails
- Ball fields
- Olympic size swimming pool ~~dmgwa~~ pool
- 9 covered shelters
- 180 picnic tables
- Double Decker Pavilion, seats 1,500 and can accommodate 2,500 people
- Outdoor roller skating rink
- Tennis courts
- 5 playgrounds

Map 8.2



The Vista Links

The Vista Links is an 18-hole, Par-72 championship golf course located at Glen Maury Park. The public course opened in August 2004 as part of a 600 acre master planned park system. The course, designed by Rick Jacobson, has 5-sets of tees, a deluxe driving range, and a pro-shop. The facility offers clinics, tournaments, outings, and youth programs. The First Tee of the Maury River Basin, a youth initiative of the World Golf Federation, is offered at The Vista Links. The golf course is currently managed by the Buena Vista City Council, City Manager, and a Citizens Golf Advisory Committee.



Neighborhood Parks

Even though the City is home to a regional-sized park, Glen Maury Park should complement other parks in the City rather than substituting for neighborhood parks. The purpose of neighborhood parks is to provide limited types of recreation for the entire family within easy walking distance. In Buena Vista, these parks include the following:

Laurel Park Youth Sports Complex. The sports complex includes two lighted ball fields, concession stands and bleachers.

Penny Park. This pocket park is located at the corner of 21st Street and Forest Avenue. It provides a neighborhood playground.

12th, 16th and 34th Street Playgrounds. These are small playgrounds located throughout Buena Vista.

Camden Field. Camden Field was the former athletic field and track for the high school. Today, the facility is used by athletic programs and for other special events under a lease agreement with Modine.

Parry McCluer High School. Besides use by the high school athletic program, the field and track is available for use by residents for exercise and recreation. Additionally, Southern Virginia University plays its home football games at Parry McCluer High School's Robert E. "Bobby" Williams Field.

Community Facilities

Greenways

Greenways are open space corridors that can be managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation. Greenways are created primarily through local or regional initiatives and reflect community needs. The Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan was completed in 2004. The plan provides a framework for development of a greenway within the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington and Rockbridge County.

The Brushy Blue Greenway will interconnect existing trails and upgrade these trails to a multi-use greenway trail as well as creating new greenway connections. When completed the Brushy Blue Greenway corridor will be approximately 17 miles in length. In Buena Vista, the Levee Walk along the Maury River is an existing link in the Brushy Blue Greenway.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Upper James Outdoor Recreation Plan. The Upper James Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee, comprised of about a dozen partners including the City of Buena Vista, is directing a planning initiative to strategically plan outdoor recreation throughout the Upper James Region. The plan will prioritize projects, promote natural resource recreation, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

Park Commission. At the end of 2010, the City of Buena Vista created a Park Commission to address the operation and vision of Glen Maury Park. During 2011, the Park Commission developed a business plan for the park.

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

- The availability and accessibility of community facilities has a tremendous impact of quality of life.
- As both the City's older adult population and college-aged population grow, recreational, educational and medical services will change.
- Volunteers and community involvement are critical to the provision of many community services.
- The City provides a variety of essential community services that are carried out within a number of public facilities. The Capital Improvement Plan should include necessary improvements and maintenance of these facilities as well as equipment to accomplish required tasks.

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

Crime in Virginia, 2009, Virginia Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Department of State Police, 2010.

Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan. Land Planning & Design Associates, Inc., July 30, 2004.

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan. Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, 2007.

Community Facilities

Community Facilities STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal 1: Community Facilities The City of Buena Vista will meet the facility needs and maintain a high quality service to the community.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: - Invest in its public facilities and services that bring people and functions of the community together to make the community a more desirable place to live. - Provide a comprehensive system of interconnected pedestrian sidewalks, trails, and bike paths that link people and neighborhoods to important community facilities. - Respond to changing demographics and community needs.			
		Priority	Responsibility
8A	Plan the location of public facilities so that they do not stress the capacity of roads or other infrastructure.	On Going	Planning, Public Works
8B	Locate public facilities within walking distance of a set percentage of their users.	On Going	Planning
8C	Adopt guidelines for the sustainable design of community facilities including schools.	M	Planning, Community Development
8D	Consider the public services needed to support residential, commercial and industrial developments before they are approved.	On Going	Planning Commission, City Council
8E	Recognize and provide for multiple purposes and functions of all City facilities.	On Going	City Manager's Office
8F	Improve the energy efficiency of public facilities.	H	Public Works
8G	Develop a comprehensive recreation, open space, and greenways plan.	M	Parks & Rec
8H	Perform a detailed analysis of recreation programming to ensure opportunities for all ages and abilities.	H	Parks & Rec
8I	Support the implementation of the Brushy Blue Greenways Plan.	On Going	Parks & Rec, Community Development, City Council, Community Groups
8J	Refine the <i>Hill Top-Glen Maury Park Master Plan</i> .	H	Parks & Rec
8K	Seek funding for recreation and greenway facilities.	On Going	Parks & Rec, Community Development

Community Facilities

		Priority	Responsibility
8L	Upgrade Parry McCluer Middle School.	M	School District, Public Works
8M	Address ADA accessibility at facilities.	H	Public Works
8N	Develop a maintenance and improvement schedule for the library.	H	Public Works
8O	Support increased programming at the library.	On Going	City Council
8P	Use FEMA lots for recreation and greeways.	M	Parks & Rec

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

CHAPTER 9

Land Use

Land use generally refers to the manner in which parcels of land, or the structures on them, are used. Land use planning focuses on making good choices about how growth occurs in the community over a period of time. Land use is the umbrella under which most comprehensive plan issues fall, whether the issue is housing, transportation, natural resources, economic development, or recreation and open space.

Managing land use is a means to achieve the visions and goals of the community. This includes managing the type, quantity, and quality of development and/or redevelopment that occurs. The type is generally expressed in broad land use categories like residential or commercial. The quantity of development considers how much development is appropriate for the community. This is primarily expressed in the future land use map along with the location of development. Quality seeks to make a public statement of the standard of development that is expected in the community including open space, landscaping, and building requirements.

Over the years, it has become commonplace for many places to isolate land uses from each other, separating residential from other different types of land uses. It has also become common to plan for the automobile by separating land uses with connections only available by car. This is less true in the City of Buena Vista where the predominant block pattern provides connectivity and uses are mixed where appropriate. Separations are more likely the result of physical barriers such as the river or steep slopes.

The land use plan's recommendations are sometimes referred to as "the colors on the map" because the various categories of uses appear as different colors on the land use map. The land use plan establishes the overall character, extent and location of various land uses and serves as a guide to communicate the policy of City Council to citizens, the business community, developers, and other involved in the development of the City of Buena Vista. Additionally, the land use plan serves as a guide to the City Council in its decisions concerning future development. This would include reviewing proposed zoning changes, comprehensive plan amendments, and sometimes, conditional use permits. The future land use map is not the same as zoning.

Land Use

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Nearly every issue addressed in a comprehensive plan includes land-related goals, policies, and strategies. The land use element of the comprehensive plan brings them together.

Natural Resources. The quality of the environment is directly affected by land uses and patterns.

Housing. Housing should be connected to jobs, schools, parks and services and should meet the needs of people and families.

Economy. Some parts of the City's economy may need to be clustered and separated from residential areas. Other parts may be neighborhood or central attractions. The land use element can help accommodate conflicting land uses and reduce them.

Transportation. Transportation, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities connect people and businesses to the community. Transportation resources need to be located in a way that makes key connections between land uses while preserving and protecting the City's amenities.

Community Facilities. The location of a community's facilities should be determined by the services to be provided, the location of clients, and accessibility to those locations.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

As part of the Future Land Use Plan, definitions are provided to express the future expectations for development in the City. The Future Land Use Map (Map 9.1) is a graphic illustration of the community's vision for the future. It defines, in a general sense, the desired development pattern for the City. This is not a zoning map. Rather it provides an overall plan for land use and sets a benchmark for future zoning changes.

Residential

Residential Low Density (3.48 du/ac): Residences are composed of single-family dwellings on lot sizes of approximately 0.3 acres.

Residential Medium Density (4.65-11.15 du/ac): Residential pattern that characterizes most neighborhoods in Buena Vista. Residences are composed of single-family and two-to four dwelling homes.

High Density (4.65-12.9 du/ac): Provides a range of development densities. Residences are composed of single-family, two-family, and multifamily dwellings.

Commercial/Industrial

Mixed Use. A complementary mix of two or more land uses provided within a pedestrian oriented environment. Uses are integrated in both a horizontal (side-by-side) and/or vertical (one use located above another) basis. Mixed use centers can include a broad variety of housing types, civic and educational facilities, offices, and commercial establishments. Mixed-use development can occur at a variety of scales from a large master planned community to a retail shop in a building with office above:

Downtown Center. The traditional downtown with a mix of uses that are pedestrian oriented and offer transit opportunities.

Corridor Commercial. Targeted areas along arterials or major collectors that are intended to provide for a mix of small- to medium-sized retail, office, institutional and residential uses. Convenience goods and services are provided such as ice cream and sandwiches, banking, laundry, video rentals as well as general commercial goods and services such as motels and printing services that serve the larger community and travelers.

Mixed Use Planned Development. Applicable areas are located primarily in the Hill Top District, the undeveloped property at the southern portion of the City, and the undeveloped property at the northern portion of the City. The areas are intended for a mixture of land uses, housing types, and densities within a comprehensive site design concept. The area could possibly include single-family residential with attached commercial and multifamily with neighborhood-oriented retail commercial or intermixed office commercial.

Land Use

Light Industrial. Areas where the principal use of land is for light manufacturing and assembly facilities, processing, storage, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution. Operations are conducted so that noise, odor, dust and glare are completely confined within an enclosed building and negative impacts to the environment or surrounding area are not created.

Heavy Industrial. Intense and lower-intensity sites that provide a full range of medium to heavy industrial uses and activities such as manufacturing, warehousing, industrial processing, resource and energy production and general service and distribution that can generate substantial impacts on the surrounding area.

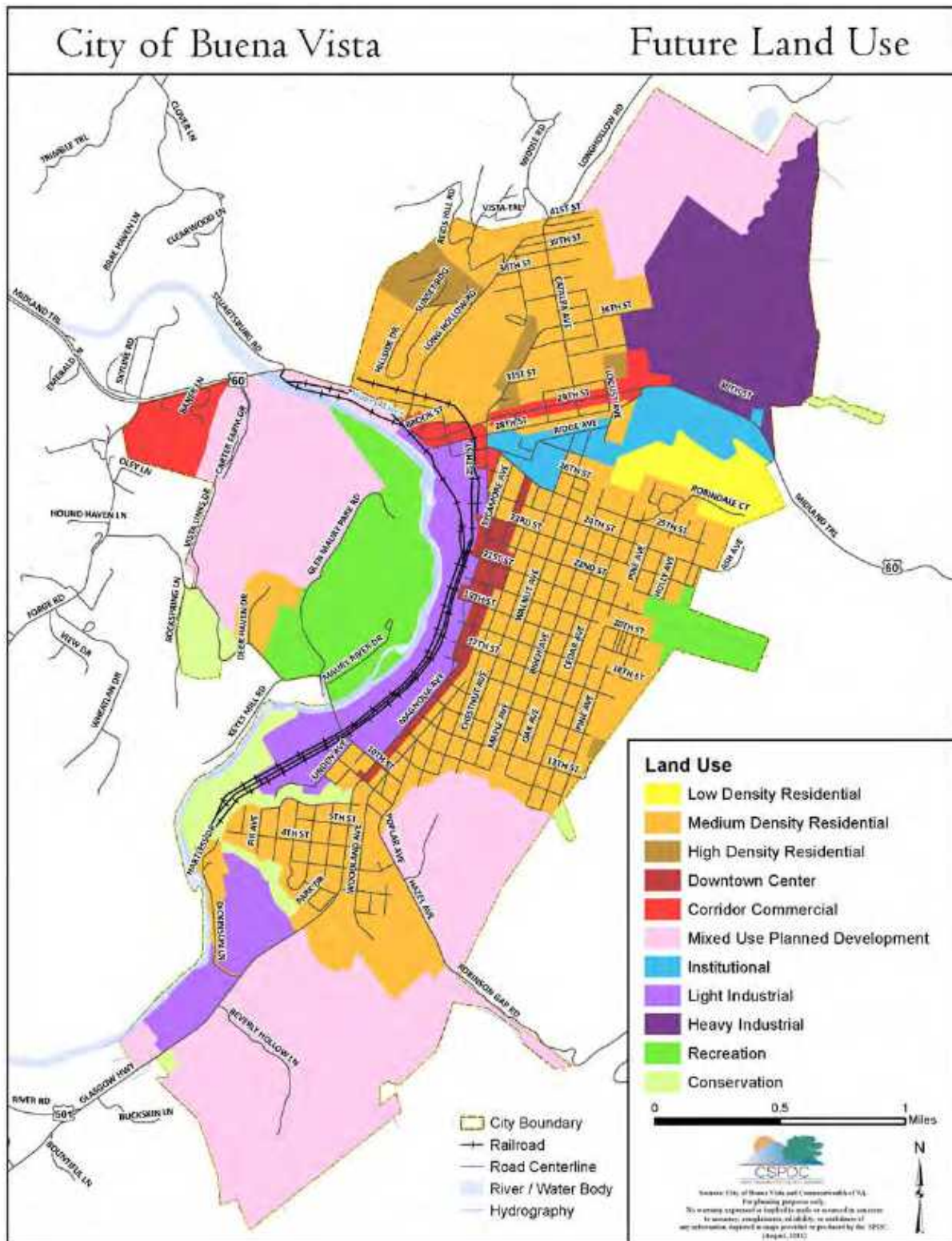
Public/Semi Public

Institutional. Civic uses include public buildings and institutions owned and operated by governmental or other public agencies, not including parks and open space. This classification includes public schools, public cemeteries, government offices and other governmental activities. Private institutions include land and facilities occupied by private uses and organizations such as profit or non-profit facilities providing continuous patient care, religions centers/activities, private schools, private cemeteries, private educational facilities and other similar uses.

Recreation. Lands primarily used for public active recreation activities improved with playfields/grounds or exercise equipment, golf courses, or other similar areas.

Conservation. Lands that support such activities as unorganized public recreational activities, trails, picnic areas, public fishing or preservation of unaltered land in its natural state for environmental or aesthetic purposes.

Map 9.1



Land Use

LAND USE POLICIES

This section recommends general guidelines for development and redevelopment of the City by land use classification.

Residential. Residential uses should follow the policies below:

- Infill development that complements existing neighborhoods should be encouraged.
- Redevelopment for conversion of residential uses to other uses should only be considered only for large tracts, such as entire blocks, rather than permitted on a piecemeal basis.
- When conversion of single-family houses to multifamily is permitted, appropriate off-street parking should be required. Converting front yard areas to parking lots is not in the best interests of the area.
- The traditional grid street pattern should be retained, along with the alley system that serves as secondary access to many properties.
- Require sidewalks for streets in new developments.
- Install trees along major residential streets.
- Prevent the encroachment of commercial uses into the predominantly residential areas.

Mixed Use

Downtown Center. New development or redevelopment should enhance the positive qualities of downtown. Redevelopment of the downtown should follow the policies below:

- A healthy land-use mix should be retained, including a variety of retail, office, financial, professional, and institutional uses.
- Retail and restaurant uses should be encouraged in the downtown but not to the exclusion of existing office, professional, financial, and institutional uses.
- Residential uses add to the vitality and customer base of downtown and should be encouraged where they do not compete for retail space.
- As uses change or expand, the city should ensure that smooth traffic flow will be maintained and that convenient parking is available.
- The downtown should be pedestrian-oriented.
- Suburban-type uses such as big-box retail stores should not be permitted.
- Drive-through uses should be permitted only when accessory to a primary use and only behind a principal structure.
- Prevent establishment of parking lots that will create gaps in the continuity of downtown buildings. Locate off-street parking behind structures rather than in front of or beside them.
- Retain the urban character by locating buildings close to the street.

Corridor Commercial. Targeted areas along arterials or major collectors that are intended to provide for a mix of small- to medium-sized retail, office, institutional and residential uses.

- Roads should be pedestrian-friendly.
- The impact of signage should be minimized. Signs should not become visual clutter and detract from the area's appearance.
- Shared access between sites for vehicles and pedestrians should be encouraged and driveways should be minimized.
- Sites should be designed to move vehicles, both motorized and non-motorized, and pedestrians efficiently.
- The Corridor Commercial areas serve as the gateway or front door to the City. Therefore, buildings should be unique and well-designed.
- A special gateway streetscape treatment should be installed along Route 60. Consideration should be given to a landscape design, light fixtures, and banners to set the area apart as a high-profile corridor.

Mixed Use Planned Development.

- Provide for a mixture of land uses, housing types, commercial uses, and densities within a comprehensive site design concept.
- Allow and encourage more unique, flexible, creative, and imaginative arrangements and mixes of land uses in site planning and development than are permitted through conventional land use requirements.
- Encourage a broader mix of residential housing types, including detached and attached dwellings, than would not normally be constructed in conventional subdivisions.
- Provide for the more efficient use of land through clustering and other flexible, innovative development arrangements that will result in smaller networks of utilities and streets and thereby lower development and housing costs.
- Provide and maintain a network system of sidewalks, pathways, trails, and crosswalks to strengthen the pedestrian oriented environment and to link together neighborhoods, lots, and uses of the development.
- Preserve the natural amenities of the land such as streams, stream banks, woods, steep slopes, and scenic areas through the maintenance of conservation areas and open spaces within developments.
- The development should be designed to fit the existing contours and landform of the site and to minimize the amount of earthwork. Existing vegetation should be retained to the maximum extent possible.
- The design of structures is reasonably compatible with structures and uses in the area of the proposed project, including but not limited to exterior materials, height and building style.

Land Use

Industrial. Industrial uses such as manufacturing, assembling, research and development provide tax revenues and jobs for the City of Buena Vista. Industrial land uses should follow the principles below:

- These uses will be continued and expanded upon in a planned manner so as to minimize the impact on the public infrastructure.
- Industrial uses will be located along major highway corridors or in industrial or business parks.
- Wherever possible, these uses will be located away from residential uses.
- When potential conflicts between land uses occur, buffering and landscaping will be provided to minimize the impacts.
- New industrial growth should be located in areas to best preserve the natural environment.

Institutional. Institutional uses need to be integrated into the fabric of the community. Intensity of development will be dependent upon use and location. Institutional uses should follow the principles below:

- Accessibility should be along a major street system.
- They should be conveniently located for the population to be served.
- They should have adequate off-street parking designed in a manner that is suitable to the areas in which they are located.
- They should be located so that they do not stress the capacity of roads or other infrastructure.
- They should be of a scale and design that is suitable to the neighborhood or area in which they are located.
- Accessibility for pedestrians is required.

Recreation. The parks and recreation system and natural environment are an attraction for visitors, which contribute to local tourism and economic development. The parks and recreation system is usually the land guardian for community open space and the responsible party for identification, purchasing, protection and maintenance of the community's natural beauty. The role of parks and recreation in supporting the future land use goals of the City is critical. Recreation uses should follow these principles:

- Parks should be retained.
- They should preserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment.
- Recreation areas should enhance the enjoyment and quality of residents and visitors.
- Recreational areas should be accessible.
- Public recreation should be highly coordinated among public institutions and private entities to avoid duplication and encourage cooperation.
- Facilities should be well-planned and coordinated to ensure adequate adaptability to future needs and requirements.
- The design of spaces and facilities should encourage an efficient utilization of land and consider the needs, desires, and opinions of the intended users.
- The availability of financial resources should be an ongoing consideration through all phases of planning, acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of spaces and facilities.
- Existing plans should be routinely considered and integrated into the decision-making of private landowners, civic organizations, the business community, recreational interests and other area agencies to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated system of public areas and preserved natural resources.

Land Use

Conservation. Open space serves many purposes, such as green space, animal habitats, plant growth zones, production lands, and recreation experiences. Additionally, open space may be a part of the natural beauty of the community that supports quality of life experiences. Open space should be viewed as land that is worthy of protection, preservation or appropriate use and not just unused land. Uses on conservation lands should be guided by the following principles:

- Preserve areas of particular scenic beauty, cultural value, and historic significance.
- Protect and restore ecological functions.
- Protect wildlife diversity and habitat.
- Protect fishing areas, viewsheds, public access and ecotourism potential.
- Mitigate natural hazards, such as flooding, and protection of water supplies.
- Maintain and enhance natural resources such as streams, rivers, and floodplains as open space elements.
- Recognize the Maury River as one of the City's most significant environmental resources and provide for its protection through protective buffers and setbacks.
- Provides areas for outdoor recreation.

Transitional Areas

As the City grows and changes, some lands become better suited for uses other than those originally developed on the site. Over the long term, it is likely that these properties will be redeveloped for other purposes. An example includes commercial uses in areas that were predominantly industrial.

Map 9.2 identifies several older areas of the City that are in need of special attention. These are identified as revitalization areas because of substandard infrastructure, obsolete or inappropriate uses of land, vacant and dilapidated structures, or other similar conditions. The Future Land Use element represents the starting block upon which a revitalization strategy for these areas should be built. The areas identified for revitalization on Map 9.2 are described below.

Green Forest Neighborhood

The Green Forest Neighborhood is located along East Midland Trail (U.S. Route 60) and bordered by Brook Street to the east and Orchard Street to the south. The neighborhood includes approximately 41 homes. The neighborhood location is on the primary western entrance corridor to the City. In many ways, the neighborhood presents the first impression of Buena Vista.

In June 2009, the City requested CDBG Planning Grant assistance from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for rehabilitation activities intended to assist low and moderate income households in the Green Forest Neighborhood. The purpose of the CDBG Planning Grant was to identify housing and other infrastructure needs within the project area. Additionally, residents were to be surveyed to confirm needs and income status. The initial steps of a public meeting, housing assessment, infrastructure assessment, and neighborhood survey were completed as required by the grant. However, the project did not advance to the next step of a rehabilitation plan. A strategy for this area needs to be addressed.

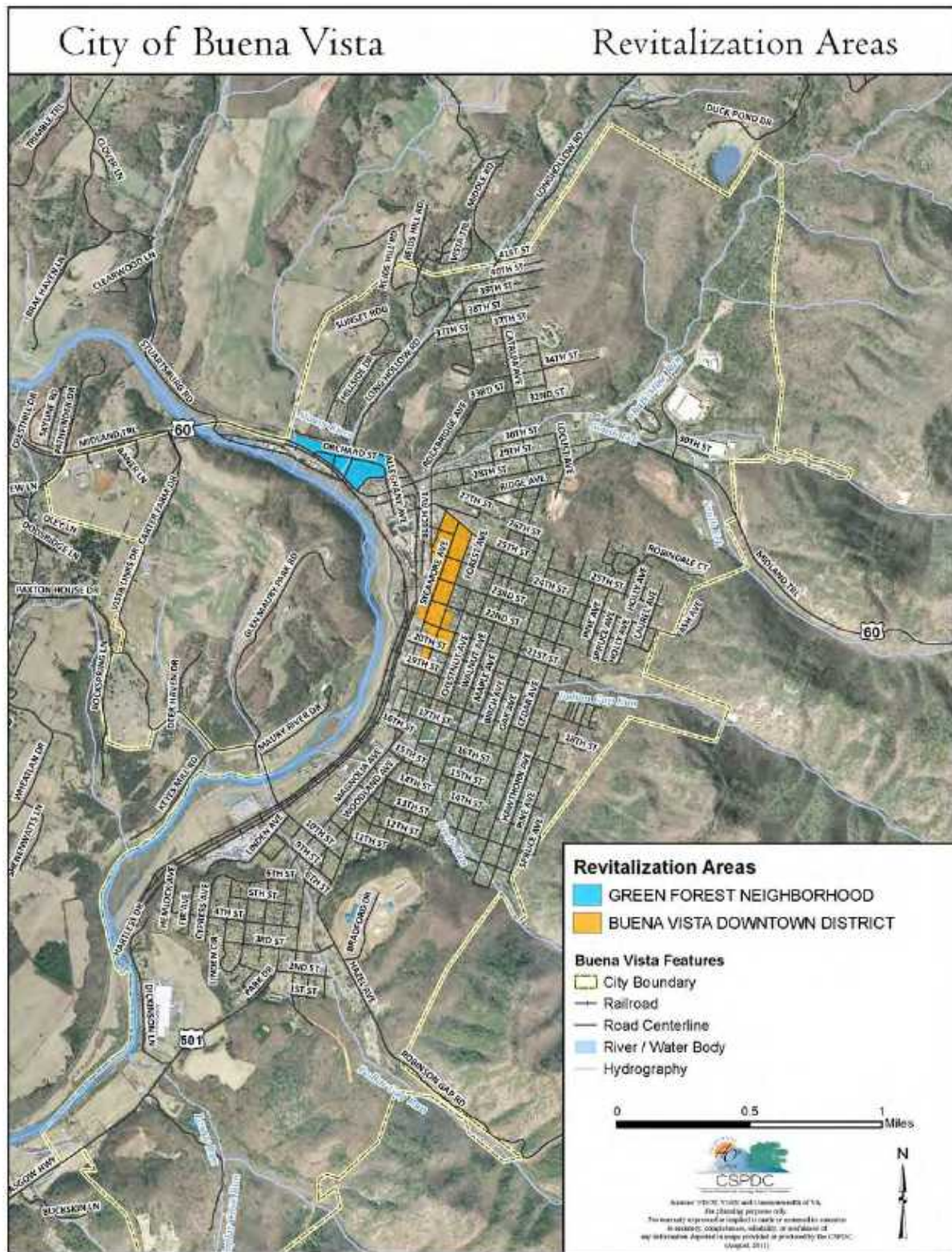
Buena Vista Downtown District

This area shares its boundaries with the Buena Vista Downtown Historic District. The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District is the historic business center of the City of Buena Vista. The district covers approximately 11.5 acres and follows two of the City's main commercial arteries, Sycamore and Magnolia Avenues. As the business center, the area is a mix of retail, office, institutional, and residential uses. A particular challenge of this area is the number of vacant storefronts along Magnolia Street. A revitalization strategy for this area would address building structures, appropriate uses, and streetscape improvements.

Revitalization plans should be completed for each area. The purpose of a revitalization plan or strategy is to identify the specific deficiencies and assets of a designated area, evaluate the existing and potential uses, and identify specific measures for stopping decline, facilitating new development, and enhancing the quality of life for residents of the area. As revitalization plans are formed, they should be guided by the following principles:

- Revitalization should take place on large parcels or a block of adjacent lots, not on a scattering of small individual lots.
- The City should make reasonable accommodation for the expansion of existing uses that may no longer be the ideal uses in their current locations.
- The City should require proper maintenance of buildings and grounds in transitional areas.
- As areas change from one use category to another, the City should ensure that proper buffering is provided to reduce adverse effects on existing uses.

Map 9.2



Hill Top – Glen Maury Park

In addition to the two transitional areas discussed above, the development of the Hill Top - Glen Maury Park area is significant to the City's future. In May of 2002, planners and designers worked with the residents of the City of Buena Vista to develop a master plan for the 600 acre Hill Top - Glen Maury Park study area, located on the west side of the Maury River (See Map 9.3). The area is generally bound to the northeast, east, and southeast by the Maury River, to the west by Glen Maury Park Road and State Road 608, and to the north by Highway 60. It included the following parcels:

- 345 acre Glen Maury Park (owned by City)
- 100 acre Fitzgerald Tract (owned by City)
- 100 acre Carter Farm
- 26 acre First Pentecostal Holiness Church
- 27 acres in balance of study area

The resultant plan was a vision for the expansion of the 345 acre Glen Maury Park, an 18 hole public golf course, and a mixed use development. The latter included a YMCA/community center, townhomes, live-work units, single-family homes, and public spaces. Additionally, the vision recommended changing the arrangement of the lower park to make it more efficient. It was expected that the full realization of this vision would take many years and would be completed by both public and private partners.

The Vista Links was completed in August 2004. The 180-acre golf course was designed not only to maximize the beautiful views provided by its location but also to permit development opportunities. The clubhouse was located on the top of the hill with a panoramic view of the mountains and was intended to serve as the focal point for surrounding residential and mixed use development.

The national economic downturn that began in 2008 disrupted the plans for Hill Top. However, the area remains important to the future growth of the City. It is anticipated that the area will be developed with a comprehensive design concept although not identical to that envisioned in 2002. Presently, the YMCA does not have plans to locate a facility at Hill Top, but there are plans to improve the golf course's clubhouse. The City needs to reassess in detail the vision for this district and revise its ordinance and marketing plan for the district accordingly. Because of the neighboring park and golf course, this is an opportunity to create an exceptional development in the City and the region.

Map 9.3



Development of Regional Significance

There are several uses of land that may be essential or desirable to the community for which locations cannot be determined in advance. Often these are uses that cannot be anticipated by the community, but may be proposed from time to time. These might include such uses as solid waste disposal facilities, large industrial facilities, education facilities, or entertainment venues. The following principle applies to these uses:

- Establish a process for evaluating proposals for these land uses.
- The process should include a means of determining the information necessary for decision-making on the particular project.
- It also should include a means for acquiring analyses of the impacts of the project on the community, including but not limited to traffic studies, environmental impact assessments, and economic studies.

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Land use planning does not have to be limited to the designation of uses for individual parcels. It can also incorporate other important development guidelines that have major ties to land use. Topics such as walkability, historic preservation, and transportation can be included as integral elements of a land use plan. These common growth management topics in combination with a future land use map create a very effective land use plan that a community can use as a guide for the future development of zoning, subdivision control, and other land development regulations.

Community Identity

Sense of place is the common feeling or attitude people share about a place they identify with and relate to. It naturally brings people tighter as a community. Sense of place is created from the characteristics of a location that make it readily recognizable as being unique and different from its surroundings. An area's sense of place can be enhanced by good planning and excellent design. But above all, sense of place and identity is bound up in the enduring presence of the City's historic environment and physical qualities. For Buena Vista, these qualities include the following:

- 1) The Maury River
- 2) Glen Maury Park
- 3) Surrounding mountains
- 4) City's collection of historic buildings
- 5) City's block development pattern

Land Use

These five attributes make Buena Vista a memorable place. These unique physical qualities, natural setting, parks and buildings, can be used to strategically enhance each and to improve relationships between them.

Landmarks are sites, buildings, structures, or natural features that have visual, historic, or cultural significance. These features are important to its identity and to that of the various neighborhoods in which they are located.

- Ensure that the City's small town characteristics and block system are reinforced in new development and redevelopment.
- Find ways to strengthen the image and character of Buena Vista's distinct areas.
- Continue to develop a riverfront that is accessible, developed and appreciated as a major amenity of the community and region.
- Landmark should be preserved, unless it is clearly in the public interest to do otherwise.
- If the uses for which landmark buildings were designed are discontinued or become obsolete, the City or owner should seek appropriate new uses for these buildings.

Gateways

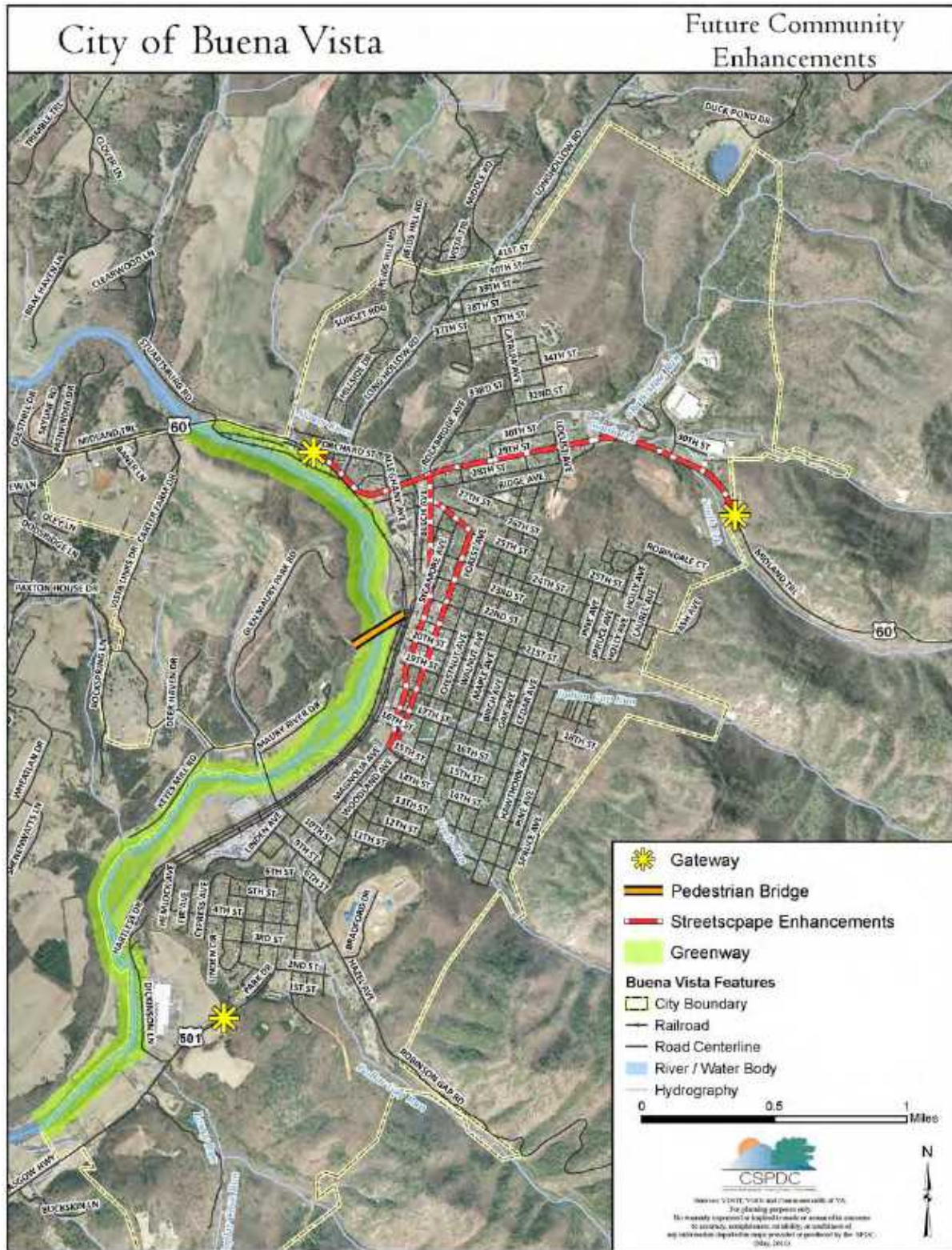
A gateway is the first impression of a community. For Buena Vista, the gateways mark the transition from the countryside into an urban center. It is the feeling that one has arrived at a destination, a place. Three gateways have been identified for Buena Vista. These include the following as shown on Map 9.4, Community Enhancements:

- Western Gateway from Interstate 81: Route 60 at Orchard Street
- Eastern Gateway from the Blue Ridge Parkway: Route 60 at the eastern City boundary
- Southern Gateway: Route 501 at Park Drive

Additionally, gateways can perform an important function. Places have inherent arrival points. When these points also exist physically on the ground, the place becomes more memorable. Furthermore, with appropriate signage, gateways can provide information to tourists by directing them to areas of interest and by providing clues to the historical, cultural, recreational and economic foundation of the City.

A good first impression of a community is invaluable. The entrance into a community can either express the community's pride and sense of place or it can give a community a poor public image. A community's image is fundamental to its economic well being. Consequently, planning at and along the entrance corridors to the City are critically important.

Map 9.4



Land Use

In the spring of 2010, the eastern gateway was studied. The purpose of study was to strengthen the connection between the Blue Ridge Parkway and the City of Buena Vista. Two important commercial corridors in the City of Buena Vista served as the focus of this study. U.S. Route 60/Midland Trail/E. 29th Street and the U.S. 501 corridor from U.S. Route 60 to the downtown core of Buena Vista were studied because of their overall impact to the economic development of Buena Vista and the experience of those visiting the region along these gateway corridors. The study's recommendations were guided by the following goals for the revitalization of these two corridors:

- Create a sense of arrival in Buena Vista
- Unify landscaping treatments
- Address land use variations
- Direct traffic to downtown businesses
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Provide a vision and implementation guidelines

The City recognizes that its gateways are important. In addition to the Blue Ridge Gateway Study, the City also participated in a visioning process for the 501 South corridor in Spring 2006. The visioning process was intended to improve the appearance of the corridor and to consider future development patterns along Route 501 South. Finally, an effort to address the western gateway from Interstate 81 was initiated in 2009 through a planning grant for the Green Forest Housing Rehabilitation project. This project, however, did not lead to a gateway implementation plan.

Greenways

A greenway along the Maury River is shown on the Future Land Use map. The greenway is important in connecting open space, protecting natural systems, creating outdoor recreation opportunities which all result in improving quality of life. Implementation of a greenway is good for the watershed in controlling erosion and providing bank stabilization. It also creates and safeguards habitats and improves opportunities for observing wildlife. Furthermore, a greenway provides trail opportunities to be used by residents, workers, and tourists.

In Buena Vista, the Levee Walk along the Maury River is used on a regular basis by residents and visitors. It is one of the existing walking trails that is a part of the framework of the Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan which will link the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington and the County of Rockbridge. The Brushy Blue Greenway will interconnect existing trails and upgrade these trails to a multi-use greenway trail as well as create new greenway connections. When completed the Brushy Blue Greenway corridor will be approximately 17 miles in length.

Streetscape Enhancements

Streetscape enhancements along major road corridors improve aesthetics, increase pedestrian accessibility, and enhance the City's identity. Key corridors for streetscape enhancements are shown on Map 9.4. Because the entry corridors have a variety of uses, landscaping along the road is a way to unify this mix. Also as discussed above with the Blue Ridge Gateway concept, streetscape enhancements are encouraged to reinforce a sense of place and to direct travelers to the City's downtown and Glen Maury Park.

Glen Maury Park is convenient to the residents of Buena Vista by vehicle but not by walking or bicycling. The only bridge over the Maury River from Buena Vista is located at 10th Street. Consequently, the park is convenient to only the southernmost residents of the City. To reach the park from the center of town, one must travel one mile south on Magnolia Avenue and 0.3 miles west on 10th Street to the park entrance. The total distance from downtown to the swimming pool located on the upper hills of Glen Maury Park is 2.3 miles, a distance few adults or children are willing to travel on foot or bicycle.

The City has recognized for many years that its greatest asset, Glen Maury Park, is not well connected to its neighborhoods or downtown. A long term goal of the City is to construct a bicycle and pedestrian-only bridge across the Maury River from the 21st Street area to an old bridge abutment in Glen Maury Park, greatly reducing the travel distance (See Map 9.4). This would increase residents' accessibility to use the park, and it would better connect the activity of the park with downtown businesses. The cost of the bridge is the greatest obstacle to its construction.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Zoning Amendments. In 2011, a revised sign ordinance was drafted.

Identification of Nonconforming Lots. The Planning Department is currently reviewing records to identify lots that do not conform to current zoning regulations.

Blue Ridge Parkway Gateway Study. In the spring of 2010, a study along U.S. Route 60/Midland Trail/E. 29th Street and U.S. 501 was completed. The purpose of the study was to strengthen the connection between the Blue Ridge Parkway and the City of Buena Vista. The study identified issues and opportunities including, but not limited to, land use, economic development, conservation, tourism, and signage. The study resulted in an illustrative conceptual plan indicating key recommendations for the study area as well as steps for plan implementation. In June 2010, the City was awarded a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry under its Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to complete a professional landscape and tree planting plan for the gateway corridor.

Land Use

Brushy Blue Greenway. The Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan was completed in 2004. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for development of a greenway within the Cities of Buena Vista and Lexington, and Rockbridge County.

Park Commission. At the end of 2010, the City of Buena Vista created a Park Commission to address the operation and vision of Glen Maury Park. A business plan for the park was developed during 2011.

Historic District Designation. The Buena Vista Downtown Historic District was designated in the National Register of Historic Places in October 2009. (See Chapter 2 Historic Resources, Map 2.1)

Seminary Hill Design Overlay District. The zoning overlay district was established to protect and enhance the historic nature of the district and to establish standards to maintain the unique historical, architectural, cultural and archaeological resources in this portion of the city generally surrounding Southern Virginia University.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE LAND USE

- Following adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the City should initiate a comprehensive review and update of its land use regulations.
- Land use planning should expand beyond zoning of individual parcels to incorporate development guidelines tied to land use. Among these are creating a sense of place, walkability, greenway planning, and transportation enhancements.

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

510 South Corridor Study, 2006.

Blue Ridge Parkway/Skyline Drive Gateway Studies, Study 1: Rockbridge County and the City of Buena Vista, June 2010.

Brushy Blue Greenway Master Plan. LPDA Land Planning & Design Associates, Inc., July 30, 2004.

The Central Shenandoah Valley Greenway Plan: An Inventory and Natural Resource Assessment of the Central Shenandoah Region, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, July 2004.

Land Use STRATEGIES FOR ACTION			
Goal: Land Use The City of Buena Vista will be a community with a mix of land uses that maintains a diverse tax base and supports a high quality of life.			
To achieve this goal, the following critical success factors must be accomplished: • Integrate key land use elements. • Implement land use policies that provide a balanced tax base. • Use remaining land resources efficiently. • Improve attractiveness to existing and prospective businesses and residents. • Maintain a balance of development and environmental protection. • Approach making major land use decisions with caution, avoiding those that might have serious, irreversible consequences. • Ensure that any proposal to develop land or extend public services respects the goals and follows the policies of each plan element. • Preserve, develop, and enhance a unique sense of place. • Preserve and enhance the quality of the City's physical environment.			
		Priority	Responsibility
9A	Systematically adopt land use policies that implement the elements of the <i>Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan</i> .	H	Planning, Planning Commission, City Council
9B	Follow the general guidelines for development and redevelopment as set forth in the <i>Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan</i> .	On Going	Community Development, Planning Commission, City Council
9C	Use the City newsletter, website, and other communication tools to regularly distribute information regarding important land use issues in the City.	On Going	Community Development, Planning
9D	Work with adjacent municipalities to ensure abutting land uses are compatible and consider the regional impact of developments.	On Going	Community Development, City Council
9E	Establish transition zones between commercial and low density residential uses.	H	Planning
9F	Encourage corridor trail and park development that links natural and community-centered areas of the river.	On Going	Parks & Rec, Community Development

Land Use

		Priority	Responsibility
9G	Enhance the downtown as a center of activity and support its connections to surrounding neighborhoods and Glen Maury Park.	H	Community Development, Celebrate Buena Vista
9H	Prepare a revitalization plan for the Green Forest neighborhood.	M	Community Development
9I	Prepare a revitalization plan for the Buena Vista Downtown Historic District area.	H	Community Development
9J	Prepare guidelines for streetscape enhancements.	H	Planning, Public Works
9K	Implement the recommendations of the Blue Ridge Parkway Gateway study.	M	Community Development, Public Works
9L	Develop a gateway plan for the City's southern entrance along Route 501.	L	Community Development, Public Works
9M	Seek funding resources to implement gateway, streetscape, and greenway improvements.	On Going	Community Development
9N	Reassess the vision for the development of the Hill Top district.	High	Planning, Economic Development
9O	Partner with businesses, community organizations, and SVU to implement the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan.	On Going	City Government, Private Sector, Community Organizations, Residents
9P	Develop GIS to create a central repository for land use data including parcel, zoning, and infrastructure data.	H	Community Development, Public Works

High (H) = Years 1-5

Medium (M) = Years 5-7

Low (L) = Years 7-10

On Going = Strategies with zero to minimal costs associated with implementation. These strategies may be completed at any time throughout the life of the plan.

Appendix

Comprehensive Plan Survey
Comprehensive Plan Survey Results
Community Meeting Responses

BUENA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

Share Your Opinion! Join us in creating a new vision for the City of Buena Vista. Help shape the direction of Buena Vista's Comprehensive Plan and the future of our community. Please complete this survey and return it to the Municipal Building or mail to the following address by March 31, 2009:

City of Buena Vista 2039 Sycamore Avenue Buena Vista, VA 24416

Please circle the most appropriate answer(s). All responses are confidential.

Tell us your opinions about the City of Buena Vista

1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of life in Buena Vista? *(Circle 1)*
 - a. Excellent c. Good e. Poor
 - b. Very good d. Fair f. Very Poor
2. What are the two (2) biggest challenges facing Buena Vista's neighborhoods? *(Circle 2)*
 - a. Quality of housing
 - b. Variety of housing for all ages and incomes
 - c. Neighborhood appearance
 - d. Access to parks, recreation and open space
 - e. Infrastructure condition (sidewalks, streets, alleys, lighting, etc.)
 - f. Other (please print): _____
3. What should be the major focus of our economic development efforts? *(Circle 2)*
 - a. Revitalize downtown/existing shopping centers
 - b. Attract/develop new business and industry
 - c. Attract/develop high paying jobs
 - d. Market the City's assets
 - e. Promote tourism
 - f. Other (please print): _____
4. What is most important to Buena Vista's future? *(Circle 3)*
 - a. Improve community appearance
 - b. Provide/enhance recreational opportunities
 - c. Improve traffic flow
 - d. Promote alternatives to automobile transportation (bicycling, walking, public transit)
 - e. Retain or bring back youth to live here
 - f. Grow in population
 - g. Preserve its history
 - h. Protect the natural environment
 - i. Increase local job opportunities
 - j. Manage the location of new development
 - k. Provide quality telecommunication and internet services
 - l. Provide a variety of housing opportunities
 - m. Other (please print): _____

Continued on back



- 2.

a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3
e. 4
f. 5
g. 6
h. 6+



*Visit the City's website
www.buenavistavirginia.org or call the Planning
Department (540) 261-8607 for more
information on the Comprehensive Plan.*

BUENA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

Return Date: March 31, 2009

1. Overall how would you rate the quality of life in Buena Vista? (Circle 1)

Response	Number	Percent
c. Good	42	41.6%
b. Very Good	17	16.8%
d. Fair	14	13.9%
e. Poor	12	11.9%
a. Excellent	10	9.9%
f. Very Poor	6	5.9%
TOTAL	101	100.0%

2. What are the two (2) biggest challenges facing Buena Vista's neighborhoods? (Circle 2)

Response	Number	Percent
e. Infrastructure condition (sidewalks, streets, alleys, lighting, etc.)	59	32.4%
c. Neighborhood appearance	46	25.3%
b. Variety of housing for all ages	23	12.6%
a. Quality of housing	18	9.9%
d. Access to parks, recreation and open space	11	6.0%
f. Other Attracting jobs	6	3.3%
f. Other Attracting young families	2	1.1%
f. Other No stores	2	1.1%
f. Other Glen Maury Park	2	1.1%
f. Other Economic base	2	1.1%
f. Other Its identity	1	0.5%
f. Other Apathy of many residents	1	0.5%
f. Other Roaming pets	1	0.5%
f. Other Crime	1	0.5%
f. Other Debt	1	0.5%
f. Other Water pressure	1	0.5%
f. Other Dictatorship	1	0.5%
f. Other Lack of everything	1	0.5%
f. Other Curb and gutter	1	0.5%
f. Other Business incentives	1	0.5%
f. Other Taxes too high	1	0.5%
TOTAL	182	99.5%

Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

3. What should be the major focus of our economic development efforts? (Circle 2)

Response	Number	Percent
b. Attract/develop new business and industry	89	43.8%
a. Revitalize downtown/existing shopping centers	49	24.1%
c. Attract/develop high paying jobs	40	19.7%
d. Market the city's assets	15	7.4%
e. Promote tourism	3	1.5%
f. Other Support each other	2	1.0%
f. Other Local grocery story	2	1.0%
f. Other Shop here	1	0.5%
f. Other Clean up city	1	0.5%
f. Other Better storm water control	1	0.5%
TOTAL	203	100.0%

4. What is most important to Buena Vista's future? (Circle 3)

Response	Number	Percent
i. Increase the local job opportunities	82	29.0%
a. Improve community appearance	27	9.5%
e. Retain or bring back youth to live here	26	9.2%
j. Manage the location of new development	21	7.4%
f. Grow in population	18	6.4%
b. Provide/enhance recreational opportunities	16	5.7%
g. Preserve its history	14	4.9%
h. Protect the natural environment	14	4.9%
l. Provide a variety of housing opportunities	11	3.9%
d. Promote alternatives to auto transportation	10	3.5%
k. Provide quality telecommunication and internet services	7	2.5%
m. Other New business	5	1.8%
c. Improve traffic flow	4	1.4%
m. Other Industry	4	1.4%
m. Other Commerce downtown	3	1.1%
m. Other Give small business a break	2	0.7%
m. Other Don't overtax business so they stay	2	0.7%
m. Other Entertainment	2	0.7%
m. Other Need stores	2	0.7%
m. Other Cut taxes	2	0.7%
m. Other New middle school	2	0.7%
m. Other Diversify	2	0.7%
m. Other The park	1	0.4%
m. Other Paying current and future loans	1	0.4%
m. Other Restaurants	1	0.4%
m. Other Keep the people we have	1	0.4%
m. Other Reduce debt	1	0.4%
m. Other More educated leaders	1	0.4%
m. Other SVU	1	0.4%
TOTAL	283	100.3%

5. What do you like most about Buena Vista? (List two things)

Response	Number	Percent
Small town atmosphere	32	17.3%
Small town friendliness	31	16.8%
Beautiful views	19	10.3%
Safety	13	7.0%
Educational opportunities	9	4.9%
Quietness	7	3.8%
Glen Maury Park	7	3.8%
Location	6	3.2%
Wide streets	4	2.2%
Lack of crime	4	2.2%
Nothing	4	2.2%
Historical	4	2.2%
School system	4	2.2%
Not overcrowded	3	1.6%
Stop in/Burger King	3	1.6%
City infrastructure	3	1.6%
Laid back	2	1.1%
Charm	2	1.1%
Good services (fire, police, trash, etc.)	2	1.1%
Kenney's	2	1.1%
It's small	2	1.1%
Its events	2	1.1%
Courteous, helpful city officials	2	1.1%
Free to worship	1	0.5%
Pretty women	1	0.5%
The new truck route	1	0.5%
Parking	1	0.5%
Police Department	1	0.5%
Library	1	0.5%
My home	1	0.5%
Golf course	1	0.5%
Clean	1	0.5%
City maintenance of infrastructure	1	0.5%
Has basics	1	0.5%
Easy access	1	0.5%
SVU	1	0.5%
New city council which is open to the citizen	1	0.5%
Pool	1	0.5%
Youth sports program	1	0.5%
University and cultural arts	1	0.5%
Flood wall for walking	1	0.5%
TOTAL	185	99.6%

Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

6. What do you like least about Buena Vista? (List two things)

Response	Number	Percent
Taxes too high/overtaxed	33	16.5%
No place to shop	21	10.5%
No grocery store	13	6.5%
Not enough jobs	10	5.0%
Junk in the yards	6	3.0%
Negativity of people	6	3.0%
The City Council	6	3.0%
City debt	5	2.5%
Police	5	2.5%
Better budget responsibility	4	2.0%
Very poor management of city finances and public works	4	2.0%
Entrance to city	4	2.0%
Bontex smell	4	2.0%
Lack of excitement for youth and adults	3	1.5%
Run down buildings	3	1.5%
Empty buildings	3	1.5%
Lack of understanding about people	3	1.5%
Churches should pay taxes	3	1.5%
The Mayor	3	1.5%
Dining needs	3	1.5%
Too much of the same	2	1.0%
Gossip	2	1.0%
Maintenance of city owned property	2	1.0%
Lack of sidewalks	2	1.0%
Lack of services	2	1.0%
Vista Links	2	1.0%
City sheriffs	2	1.0%
Vision	2	1.0%
Lack of pride	2	1.0%
More attractions	2	1.0%
Yards not kept neat	2	1.0%
Handling of park	2	1.0%
Poor school system	2	1.0%
Useless city workers and officials	2	1.0%
Citizens live in the past	2	1.0%
Water and sewer	2	1.0%
Parking and you can't see traffic coming	1	0.5%
Merchandise displayed on sidewalks	1	0.5%
Fear of strangers	1	0.5%
Have to buy everything at Walmart	1	0.5%
Speeding	1	0.5%
Choice of trash pickup	1	0.5%
Lack of industrial employment	1	0.5%
Lack of city interest	1	0.5%
Excessive government	1	0.5%
Excessive government employees	1	0.5%
Phone service	1	0.5%
Cost of housing	1	0.5%
No optometrist	1	0.5%

Response	Number	Percent
Rental property upkeep	1	0.5%
Ordinance officer	1	0.5%
High water bills	1	0.5%
Nosy neighbors	1	0.5%
Better animal control	1	0.5%
Loud noises	1	0.5%
Low paying jobs	1	0.5%
Too restrictive for business and industry development	1	0.5%
Dictatorship	1	0.5%
Mean dogs	1	0.5%
Cooperation with area entities	1	0.5%
Seminary Hill (now)	1	0.5%
Ruralness	1	0.5%
TOTAL	200	100.0%

7. What area of the City do you live and/or own property? (Circle all that apply)

Response	Number	Percent
b. 14th Street - 26th Street	42	43.3%
a. 1st Street-13th Street	31	32.0%
c. 27th - 41st Street	18	18.6%
d. Other or outlying areas	6	6.2%
TOTAL	97	100.1%

8. How long have you lived in Buena Vista?

Response	Number	Percent
e. Over 20 years	58	59.8%
b. 1-5 years	18	18.6%
d. 11-20 years	12	12.4%
c. 6-10 years	7	7.2%
a. Less than a year	1	1.0%
f. Not a resident, but I own a business, land or other property in Buena Vista	1	1.0%
TOTAL	97	100.0%

9. What is your age?

Response	Number	Percent
c. 45-64	48	50.5%
d. 65+	39	41.1%
b. 25-44	7	7.4%
a. 18-24	1	1.1%
TOTAL	95	100.1%

Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

10. Including yourself, how many persons live in your home?

Response	Number	Percent
c. 2	43	44.3%
b. 1	32	33.0%
d. 3	10	10.3%
e. 4	6	6.2%
f. 5	3	3.1%
h. 6+	2	2.1%
g. 6	1	1.0%
TOTAL	97	100.0%

Additional Comments

Response	Number	Percent
Taxes too high	11	6.6%
The hope for business growth	8	4.8%
Development of our downtown	7	4.2%
Better management of city money	6	3.6%
Police Department too restrictive/too big	6	3.6%
Upgrade Glen Maury Park	6	3.6%
Overall cleanup of business areas	5	3.0%
Overall cleanup of residential areas	5	3.0%
Jobs	5	3.0%
Listen to citizens	5	3.0%
Grocery store	5	3.0%
Opportunities for our current residents	4	2.4%
Affordable housing	4	2.4%
Events at Glen Maury Park good	3	1.8%
Buena Vista moving in the right direction	3	1.8%
Identify its identity	3	1.8%
Shopping center	3	1.8%
Money wasted on golf course	3	1.8%
Cut down on police cars	3	1.8%
New direction	3	1.8%
School facility improvement	3	1.8%
Glen Maury Park an asset	2	1.2%
Concern over current debt	2	1.2%
Industry for tax base	2	1.2%
Education maintained	2	1.2%
Bring back softball tournaments at Glen Maury Park	2	1.2%
Variety store of bedding, clothing, household items	2	1.2%
Promote cooperation with county	2	1.2%
Consolidate with county regarding schools and	2	1.2%
Family restaurant	2	1.2%
Cut salaries to school superintendent	2	1.2%
More opportunities recreational-wise for our children	2	1.2%
Attract industry	2	1.2%
Public works needs organization	2	1.2%
Bring our youth back home	1	0.6%
Vista Links is good	1	0.6%

Response	Number	Percent
Revitalization of our downtown buildings	1	0.6%
Treat everyone the same	1	0.6%
Young people promoting our city	1	0.6%
Telecommunications plan is a must	1	0.6%
Men's store	1	0.6%
Wonderful place to live and raise family	1	0.6%
Close to interstate	1	0.6%
Water park at Glen Maury Park	1	0.6%
Mini-golf course	1	0.6%
Road repair Glen Maury Park	1	0.6%
Spruce up courthouse	1	0.6%
Don't care	1	0.6%
Will be moving out	1	0.6%
Dollar store	1	0.6%
Accepting citizens who are not born here	1	0.6%
Past decisions now hurting city with no tax base	1	0.6%
Unqualified persons hired because of family	1	0.6%
Don't cut spending to schools	1	0.6%
Cut salaries to Clerk of Courts	1	0.6%
Don't cut salaries of teachers \$30,000 or less	1	0.6%
Houses appraised too high the next year	1	0.6%
Eliminate Sheriff's Department	1	0.6%
Open some topless bars	1	0.6%
Bontex odors	1	0.6%
No social life in PM or weekends for adults	1	0.6%
City inspector of yards not needed when you have to	1	0.6%
Too many school administrators	1	0.6%
Illegal aliens	1	0.6%
Education for trades	1	0.6%
More businesses	1	0.6%
The university has taken over	1	0.6%
City entrances	1	0.6%
Keep city pool maintained and opened	1	0.6%
General overhaul of ordinances - regulations too restrictive; can't understand and hard to interpret	1	0.6%
The deer	1	0.6%
Sidewalks	1	0.6%
Medical clinic	1	0.6%
Sell golf course	1	0.6%
TOTAL	167	100.2%

Note: Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan
Community Meeting
Parry McCluer High School
Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Those in attendance divided into six small groups. The groups were given ten minutes to answer each of three questions. Each small group reported their responses to the whole. The following was recorded:

✓ Indicates the same response by another small group.

1. Over the next 10 years, what stays the same in Buena Vista?

Low population density
Historic buildings
City status ✓
Closeness of people ✓
SVU stays ✓
Small shops here
Recreational facilities ✓
Small town atmosphere ✓
Schools remain independent
Safety of citizens ✓
Sense of industrial community
Cost of living; affordable housing
Entertainment at the park
Labor Day parade
Mountain Day
Debt service
Churches
Improvements through code enforcement
Business friendly attitude of government – government works well with businesses
Revitalization of downtown
Accessible city officials
Good economic development coordinator

2. Over the next 10 years, what changes in Buena Vista?

Keep young people in city ✓✓
More places to shop/business district ✓✓✓✓
More jobs ✓✓✓
More industry/fill industrial park/especially high-tech industry ✓✓✓
New middle school
Upgrade present structures
More doctors/medical facilities ✓
More interest by citizens in local government
Expansion of tax base ✓
Improved aesthetics at entryways to city ✓

Development of senior citizen residences ✓
Regional transportation
More educated workforce
Taxes will continue to increase
Infrastructure should be upgraded and expanded
Passenger rail
Continued improvement of downtown ✓✓
Improve Buena Vista's image internally and externally
Downtown businesses need assistance to survive against large strip malls/superstores
Improve availability of buildable lots
New technology – use to advertise/promote Buena Vista
Embrace technology through infrastructure, i.e. fiber optics
Promote volunteerism
Restaurants downtown
Don't acquire more debt
Promote or sell golf course

3. What is distinctive about Buena Vista?

Close-knit community ✓✓
Economically diverse community – not dependent on industry
Natural beauty with mountains and rivers ✓✓✓
Distinctive history
Park – largest municipal park in state; underutilized ✓✓✓
Smaller shops
Churches
Low crime rate ✓
Maury River Senior Center
Labor Day parade
Some people refuse change
Perception of high taxes versus high taxes
Old grouches sign
Boom town hotel
Old courthouse and the water fountain
Community pride in time of need
Affordable housing
University/new high school/park – amazing for city this size
Quiet neighborhoods
Well designed city (wide streets and sidewalks) ✓
Maury River and potential for recreation
SVU
Good schools
Volunteers, i.e. fire and rescue
Golf course
Flood wall

