

# Lee County, Virginia Comprehensive Plan



## 2020 Update

Adopted October 20, 2020

# LEE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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## ABSTRACT

TITLE: Lee County Comprehensive Plan

AUTHOR: Lee County Planning Commission

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ABSTRACT: The Lee County Comprehensive Plan is a community guide for orderly growth and development. Statements of goals and objectives and future land use form the heart of the plan and are intended to aid public and private decision makers in promoting the most beneficial arrangement of land use and related public services. The plan was developed through an inventory and analysis of existing conditions leading to policy determinations that will best achieve the community development aspirations of the citizens of Lee County, Virginia.

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## Introduction

The Lee County Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a broad policy guide to decisions about future development and redevelopment within Lee County. The objective of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan is to provide a framework for and serve as a flexible guide to be used by local government, the private sector and individual citizens toward the attainment of acceptable levels of health, safety, convenience, prosperity and general welfare for all County residents.

The Lee County Comprehensive Plan discusses many elements that together form the character of Lee County. Among the elements analyzed are: Physical Characteristics; Natural Resources; Economy; Population; Land Use Suitability; Land Use; Housing; Public Water and Public Sewer Systems; Community Facilities; and Transportation. The plan is general in nature. Each element is analyzed both independently and in relation to the other elements in an effort to identify existing and future resources, problems and needs. Recommendations are made throughout the plan to better utilize the County's resources to meet the present and future needs through 2030.

The Lee County Comprehensive Plan can be viewed as an investment in the future. Conditions within the County are always changing, and planning for the future requires the use of the most current data available. The Lee County Comprehensive Plan should not be considered a one-time effort; it should be reviewed and revised if necessary every five years.

# HISTORY AND LAND USE SUITABILITY

## Historical Perspective

Dating back to 1792, 438 square miles of Russell County became the present day Lee County. This area was named so in honor of General Henry Lee often referred to as "Light Horse Harry Lee," a Revolutionary soldier and the Governor of Virginia during the time of the County's formation.

In 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker traveled through Lee County and Cumberland Gap. Before this exploration, Lee County was considered a hunting paradise by the Indians of the area. These Indians, Cherokees, Shawnees, and members of the six-nation federation, forbade settlement of any kind in their paradise. In 1768 a settlement, Martin Station was attempted in the present day Rose Hill but was unsuccessful. Later, Daniel Boone and his party made their way over the Wilderness Road through Lee County on their endeavor to settle Kentucky. In 1773, James Boone, Daniel's son, was attacked and killed by Indians in Lee County.

Between 1774 and 1775, several forts and stations sprang up in the Powell Valley area. Due to the lack of fortification and military protection, many of the settlers were forced to abandon these forts in order to move to safety during the Revolutionary War.

After the war, many settlements were made and Jonesville was established as the County seat. During the Civil War, Jonesville's Courthouse was burned and Cumberland Gap switched hands four times. Up until the end of the Civil War, Lee County depended mainly on its agricultural assets. During this time, many water-powered gristmills were built in the area. While agriculture still played an important role in Lee County's economy, the coal boom in the late nineteenth century became an important factor in the County's growth.

The discovery of coal led to the growth of the railroad, the railroads led to townships, and the townships to the present municipalities. These factors and many more were responsible for the formation and growth of Lee County.

## Physical Setting

Lee County is the southwestern-most County in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is bordered on the south by the State of Tennessee and on the northwest by Kentucky. Three incorporated towns are found within Lee County; Pennington Gap, St. Charles, and the County seat of Jonesville.

Most of Lee County's 438 square mile land resource base lies in the subdivision of the Appalachian Highlands, known as the Valley and Ridge province, the northern part of the County lies in the Cumberland Mountain section of the Appalachian Plateau. These two physiographic divisions have important differences and these differences have greatly affected development within Lee County.

The northern portion of Lee County (St. Charles area) lies within the Appalachian Plateau. Most of this area has very steep mountains with narrow V-shaped valleys, although portions of the area have hilly to rolling ridges that are more identifiable with the old plateau. The area is highly dissected by rapidly flowing streams that dominate the narrow valley floors. This northern portion of Lee County has some of the most severe physical constraints to development within the County.

The valley and ridge portion of the County has many steep, narrow linear ridges and intervening valleys. Most of the valleys are very narrow, while a few are relatively broad. The ridges and valleys are generally parallel and are oriented in a northeast-southwest direction. The valleys are drained by long streams, some of which have cut through ridges forming important historical routes of transportation. The physical constraints to development are also severe for much of this area, but by not being underlain with economically important mineral resources, developmental pressures have not been as great.

#### Physiographic, Geology, and Drainage

Most of Lee County is in the Valley and Ridge Province, which is a subdivision of the Appalachian Highlands, but the northern part lies in the Cumberland Mountain section of the Appalachian plateaus. The Valley and Ridge Province consists of parallel valleys separated by long, narrow, even-topped mountain ridges. The valley floors are trenched by streams. This is a province of folded mountain in which resistant strata form ridges as weaker ones are worn down to form low lands. The Cumberland Mountain section, a part of the long front of the Cumberland Plateau, is distinguished by its relief and altitude, which is higher than the Cumberland Mountain farther west. The parallel ridges in the County are generally straight and even-crested and have a northeast-southwest trend. Powell, Stone, and Cumberland mountains and Wallen Ridge are underlain by sandstone that has resisted weathering. In contrast, much of the intermountain area is underlain by shale and limestone, both of which are less resistant to weathering than sandstone. The purer limestone breaks down faster than either shale or sandstone and some of the lowest valley floors are doubtless the result of deterioration of limestone through solution.

Ridge on the southeast. It extends across the County in a southwest-northeast direction from the Virginia-Tennessee boundary to the Wise County line, most of it being northwest of the Powell River.

Narrow valleys are along the North Fork of the Powell River and along the eastern part of the County, the North Fork of the Clinch River and Wallens Creek in the eastern part, and Blackwater Creek in the southern

part. Cumberland and Stone Mountains rise abruptly above Powell Valley on the northwest and Wallen Ridge flank it on the southeast.

Elevations in the County range from about 1,200 to 3,650 feet above sea level, and the general slope is southwestward. Potato Hill, on Little Black Mountain, near the northeastern corner of the County, has an elevation of 3,650 feet and is the highest point in the County. The approximate elevations of the various towns and communities are Sticklelyville, 1,589 feet; Rose Hill, Jonesville, and Dryden, 1,500 feet; Pennington Gap, 1,400 feet; and Olinger and Blackwater, 1,300 feet.

Drainage is well established throughout the County. Only some of the low, nearly level, bottom lands are poorly drained. Nearly the entire County is drained by the Powell River and its tributaries. Exceptions are a small area in the northeastern part drained by Blackwater Creek and a small tract in the eastern part drained by the North Fork of the Clinch River. Both of these tributaries are a part of the Clinch River Basin. In limestone areas, the surface drainage finds outlets in sinkholes. The Powell River rises in Wise County and flows southwestward across the middle of Lee County into Tennessee. Its important tributaries are the North Fork of the Powell River and Wallen, Martin and Indian Creeks.

#### Climate and Weather

Lee County has mild winters and warm summers. The frost-free season normally lasts from early May to late September. Temperatures may be five to ten degrees lower in the mountains than in the valley portions of the County.

With total precipitation of between 45 and 50 inches annually, Lee County is part of one of the wettest regions of the United States. Due to the mountainous terrain, a wide variation in rainfall can occur within short distances. Precipitation is reasonably well distributed throughout the year but is noticeably less in late spring and early fall. Snowfall is generally not a significant part of total precipitation; there is rarely more than 6 inches of snow on the ground at one time. The total annual accumulation ranges from 10 to 12 inches. Flooding occurs in most streams on an average of almost once a year. These floods are usually minor in nature. For streams with drainage areas larger than 20 square miles, most flooding occurs from December through March with very few floods in the dry fall months. For very small drainage basins, locally intense thunderstorms cause floods throughout the year.

## LAND USE SUITABILITY

### Physical Considerations to Land Usage

There are a number of factors that limit the amount of developable land in Lee County. This chapter will attempt to address the primary constraints that include:

- (1) Steep slopes
- (2) Poor soil conditions
- (3) Flood prone areas
- (4) Mineral land under development
- (5) Land subject to subsidence from underground mining, and
- (6) National Forest lands and other public property not available for development.

### Slopes

Areas with slopes in excess of 20 percent are generally considered unsuitable for urban type development. This by itself presents the Lee County with severe development problems since 81.9 percent of the County's 278,910-acre land area has slopes in excess of 20 percent. Another 6.4 percent has slopes of between 10 and 20 percent, leaving 11.7 percent of the County with slopes of 10 percent or less. Approximately 8.1 percent of the 0-10 percent slope land area is classified "urban and built-up." A large portion of the remaining 0-10 percent slope land is flood prone; other 0-10 percent slope land suffers from poor access; other such land is situated great distances from public water and sewage facilities. The combination of these restrictive physical factors points to a critical lack of land suitable for future urban type development.

### Soil Conditions

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

each soil type in Lee County was made by a soil-scientist from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Each soil type as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Survey of Lee County, Virginia, was rated with respect to its engineering suitability for homesites; large building foundations; basements; lagoons; roads, streets, and parking lots; and septic drainfields. Each soil type was given a rating of either good, fair, poor or unsuited for each usage category. The Lee County Soil Survey can be viewed at the following web site: <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/Soils/pdf%20files/Surveys/lee/Lee.pdf>

The public sewage collection systems in Lee County have significantly improved in their ability to provide service outside of municipal corporate limits. The incorporated areas have very limited quantities of land suitable for development. Future residential development will need to occur in areas that are outside of corporate boundaries but served, when at all possible, by public sewer. The suitability of future residential areas not served by public sewer should definitely look at the areas compatibility for the construction and usage of septic tank drainfields. This is of great importance to the health of Lee County residents. Existing developed areas may be experiencing health hazards if not served by sewage collection systems.

The areas rated "good" and "fair" are the areas most suitable for development without the provision of public sewage collection services prior to initial development. Very little, if any, development should occur in the areas rated "unsuited" unless such services are provided prior to development. Dense development in areas rated "poor" and "unsuited" without public sewage collection and treatment facilities would have the potential of creating very severe health hazards.

### Flood Prone Areas

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

areas should be encouraged to acquire flood insurance.

The topographic and rainfall conditions that typify Lee County are conducive to high velocity flash floods that may inundate the entire valley floors of the narrow V-shaped mountain valleys. Such floods are destructive to both land and property.

#### Mineral Land Under Development

The northeastern portion of Lee County is a heavily developed area for coal mining. The extent of this mining, both surface and underground, is an important factor influencing surface development. Caution should be exercised when considering the use of surface mined land for urban type development purposes. Over 3,000 acres in Lee County have been surface mined. Although surface mined land in coal producing areas has been used for a number of urban type uses including residential development, mobile home parks, school sites, commercial development, and industrial sites, the development of these mined areas should be approached with caution. Subsurface conditions are often unstable and there have been many problems with subsidence and settling after these areas have been developed. Some of these mined areas can be used if the site is properly engineered and subsurface conditions are evaluated carefully.

#### Land Subject to Potential Subsidence

The majority of Lee County's surface and mineral acreage is owned by various private coal and resource development companies. Another significant land owner is the U. S Government, which controls acreage in the Jefferson National Forest and the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.

Land ownership can be divided into surface control, mineral control, or fee simple control. Approximately 30 percent of Lee County's total acreage is owned either in fee simple or surface control by the major coal and resource development companies or the National Forest Service.

The major mineral holders also own the mineral rights under a significant portion of Lee County's coal-bearing area. As noted previously, these areas are always subject to mining, either surface or deep. No development of any kind should be considered in this area without carefully reviewing the existing mining situation and/or the consequences of potential subsidence.

### National Forest Land and Other Public Properties

Approximately 10 percent of Lee County's surface acreage is owned by the U. S. Forest Service as part of the Jefferson National Forest and the National Park Service as part of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation owns approximately 200 acres of land at Wilderness Road State Park.

### Conclusions

It is especially important in an area such as Lee County, with severe physical constraints to development, to encourage population growth to locate in those areas most suitable for development. Such constraints as steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, sinkholes, poor soil percolation, and flooding and mining-related subsidence may cause development costs to be very high or prohibitive. Additional costs may fall on the taxpayer when, after the initial development is completed and as residential densities increase, problems arise which the public sector is called upon to solve. Costs to the developer, the home owner, and the taxpayer should be minimized by the recognition and development of areas which have the fewest physical constraints to urban type uses. Non-urban suited land should be used for recreational purposes or the improvement of the County's forest resource base. Efforts should be made to reserve the most fertile land for agricultural uses.

## POPULATION & HOUSING

### Total Population Trends And Projections

The population of Lee County has ranged from a low of 18,216 in 1890 to a high of 38,296 in 1940. Demand for rich coal reserves in the northeastern portion of Lee County was largely responsible for the steady population increase through 1940; mechanization and the boom or bust economy of coal following World War II caused loss of mining and supplementary employment levels and out-migration which resulted in a decreasing population level through 1970. The 1970 Lee County population level of 20,371 closely mirrored the 20,255 level that existed some 70 years ago. The 1980 census revealed Lee County's population to be 25,956 persons; 27.4 percent more than 1970. The 2000 Census reported a population of 23,589; a 3.7 percent decrease from 1990's figure of 24,496. The 2010 Census reported a population of 25,587; an 8.4 percent increase from 2000. The 2016 American Community Survey reported an estimated population of 24,179; a 5.6 percent decrease from 2010. Though future population projections show an increase in the population estimates for Lee County, these increases are very minimal. An increase in population as significant as that between 1970 and 1980 is not anticipated in the future of Lee County, nor is a decrease as significant as that between 1950 and 1960. It should be noted the population total includes the approximately 1,450 inmates at the US Penitentiary in Lee County.

The following table shows data for total population in Lee County from 1950 to 2010 and projected population for the years 2020 and 2030.

Total Population Trends and Projections  
Lee County

<u>Year</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Change</u>
1950	36,106	3,290
1960	25,824	10,282
1970	20,321	- 5,503
1980	25,956	+ 5,635
1990	24,496	- 1,460
2000	23,589	- 907
2010	25,587	+ 1,998
2020	24,775	+ 812
2030	25,657	882

*Source: Historical data through 2010 from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; projections from the Virginia Employment Commission*

Natural Increase and Migration

The following table shows information for natural increase and migration for Lee County and for the period 2010 to 2016.

Natural Increase and Migration  
Lee County  
2010-2016

	Lee County
2010 Population	25,587
Births 2010-2016	1479
Deaths 2010-2016	1847
Change 2010-2016	-1404
Natural Increase	-368
Net Migration	-1092

Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Population Density and Distribution

The below table presents the population densities of Lee County and its incorporated areas. While total square mile densities are quite low, urban and built-up densities are much higher, especially within and in close proximity to the County's coal-producing areas, i.e. St. Charles and Pennington Gap. This situation reflects the severe topographic constraints to development, which exist in much of Lee County.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND DENSITY  
LEE COUNTY AND INCORPORATED AREA -2010

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Sq. Miles</u>	<u>Density</u>
Lee County	25,587	100.0	437.41	58.8
Towns	2,943	11.5	4.72	1,207.8
Pennington Gap	1,781	7.0	1.64	1,098.6
Jonesville	1,034	4.0	1.26	819.8
St. Charles	128	0.5	0.18	723.7

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and LENOWISCO P.D.C.

### Age Characteristics

The age characteristics of a population can be used as a rough indicator of the level and type of services that are desired and needed in an area. Each of these age groups generally has certain needs and desires which are quite different from those of the other age groups.

#### POPULATION BY AGE GROUP 2000-2016

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>
0 to 4	1,374	1,319	1,184
5 to 14	3,063	4,270	2,675
15 to 24	2,820	2,897	2,587
25 to 34	2,975	3,299	3,239
35 to 44	3,503	3,664	3,392
45 to 54	3,522	3,808	3,493
55 to 64	2,691	3,545	3,706
65 to 74	1,923	2,456	2,814
75 to 84	1,286	1,233	1,367
85 & Over	432	415	459
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,589</b>	<b>25,587</b>	<b>24,911</b>

#### DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY SEX LEE COUNTY - 2000-2016

<b>Sex</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>
<b>Male</b>	11,444	13,352	13,083
<b>Female</b>	12,145	12,235	11,828

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2016 American Community Survey

Racial Composition of Population

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RACE -- LEE COUNTY

<b>Race</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>
<b>White</b>	23,221	24,092	23,286
<b>Black</b>	103	947	1,032
<b>Native American</b>	53	103	104
<b>Asian</b>	42	56	43
<b>Other</b>	170	147	253

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2016 American Community Survey*

## HOUSING

### Housing Types

The 2010 Census reported 11,718 housing units in Lee County, up approximately 700 from the 2000 Census. The 2010 Census reported 252 units for seasonal or occasional use and 1,586 vacant units. The dominant housing type continues to be the single-family home. The 2016 American Community Survey estimates 71.1 percent of housing units in Lee County are single-family homes. Multi-family housing comprises 6.7 percent of the total number of units. Mobile homes represent more than 21.5 percent of total housing units in Lee County.

### Housing Mix

In 2010, rental units comprised 27.2 percent of Lee County's housing. Owner occupied units comprised 72.8 percent of housing in Lee County and vacant units 13.5 percent. In 2016, an estimated median value for occupied housing units increased from \$77,600 in 2010 to an estimated \$78,600 in 2016. Median rent increased from \$443 per month in 2010 to an estimated \$507 in 2016.

#### HOUSING UNITS LEE COUNTY, VIRGINIA 2000-2016

<b>Category</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016 Estimate</b>
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	7,223	7,395	6,655
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	2,483	2,764	2,627
<b>Vacant</b>	1,380	1,586	2,436
<b>Total</b>	11,086	11,745	11,718

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Housing, 2000 and 2010; 2016 American Community Survey*

### Housing Conditions

The 2010 Census of Housing defined substandard housing as units that lacked complete plumbing facilities or were overcrowded. A unit is classified as lacking complete plumbing when there is no piped

water, flush toilet, or bathing facilities. Overcrowding exists when a unit contains 1.01 or more persons per room used for living purposes. The number of units that meet each condition is listed below using census data.

HOUSING UNITS  
2010-2016  
LEE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Category	2010	2016 Estimate
Lacking complete plumbing	191	149
1.01 or more persons per room	40	17
Lacking complete kitchen	119	84
No telephone	609	251
No vehicle available	1,192	798
Built before 1940	1,127	1,058
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,278</b>	<b>2,037</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Housing, 2010. 2016 American Community Survey Estimate 2016

In 2000, 15.0 percent of Lee County's housing stock had been constructed before 1939. That figure dropped to 10.0 percent by 2010, and is currently estimated at 10.4 percent. This drop can be attributed to the increase in total housing units in Lee County, making the older houses a smaller percentage, and to the replacement of many older homes by new homes. These older homes are a contributing factor to the large percentage of substandard housing in the county. Few of the homes built in that era had indoor plumbing and the complications and costs of installing pipes in an already completed structure prevented many residents from acquiring it.

Public Housing and Rehab

Over the years, the need for public housing has prompted the Lee County Redevelopment and Housing Authority to procure funds for elderly, disabled, and low-income housing projects. The Authority used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to develop 48 one-bedroom units on a six-acre site in Jonesville in 1985. The Farmer's Home Administration funded the 36 unit, privately operated Stonegate Apartments in Pennington Gap.

The Powell Valley Village Apartments provides affordable housing to individuals who meet income eligibility requirements. Powell Valley Village was completed in 1998 and was built in part with financing obtained through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Powell Valley Village consists of 36 units and is located in Jonesville.

The Jonesville Manor Apartments provide low income housing to the elderly, age 62 and over, and to the disabled or handicapped, age 18 and over. The Jonesville Manor was also built in part with financing obtained through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. The Jonesville Manor provides 40 units.

In 2002, the Town of Pennington Gap obtained a one million dollar grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for a downtown revitalization project. The purpose of this project was to reverse the economic and physical decline that has been synonymous with the Town over several decades. This project included the rehabilitation of 24 apartment structures that will be used to house 38 LMI households. The Authority reports that a portion of the CDBG funds has also been used for housing rehabilitation loans to low-income families. Housing rehabilitation projects have taken place in St. Charles (39 units), Ben Hur (18 units), and Pennington Gap (14 houses).

#### Future Housing Needs

It is important that Lee County maintain a diverse mix of housing in order to accommodate a wide range of consumer needs. The diversity of housing alternatives influences the demographic mix of people within the community. Many consumers such as single persons, young couples, and average wage earners, cannot or may not want to purchase single-family homes. If a community's predominant housing type is single-family, owner-occupied units, then a number of consumers will be left out of the local housing market. Lee County's mix of owner-occupied and renter occupied units appears adequate at this time.

The location of quality, affordable housing may be an important consideration in the future location decision of industries and commercial enterprises. Firms interested in relocating to Lee County in the future may have to relocate existing personnel or perhaps recruit employees from other areas. Local housing quality is a very important factor contributing to the corporate decision making process. Ensuring quality housing for employees is a very important factor in industry relocations because it has a direct impact on a company's ability to attract a capable work force.

The Western end of the County presents the greatest need for housing development. The presence of Lincoln Memorial University College of Veterinary Medicine Large and Small Animal Teaching Centers creates a need for housing alternatives to accommodate the growing number of Veterinary students and staff. Currently, the housing market in the Western end consists primarily of single family dwellings. A diverse housing market

could allow for a greater number of students to live in Lee County, rather than commuting from neighboring states. Occupancy of The Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park will also create a greater need for housing, as the location of industry within the Industrial Park will lead to several new jobs in the area. Development of the Western end is a priority.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Solid Waste Disposal

Lee County collects solid wastes through a network of 15 convenience centers located around the County at various locations. Once collected at the convenience centers, the waste is hauled to the County Solid Waste Transfer Station in Jonesville where it is reloaded into tractor trailers and trucked to the City of Bristol, Virginia landfill. This trucking and landfilling arrangement has been in place since 1994. The annual amount of solid waste collected in Lee County is fairly constant from year to year.

### Courthouse and Town Halls

The provision of necessary County governmental services depends not only on personnel, but also upon the facilities in which these services are housed. It is for this reason that the four governmental facilities of Lee County are examined below. The Lee County Courthouse is located in Jonesville and is the center of the County government's activities. In addition to the County Circuit and General District Court proceedings being conducted in the Courthouse, the following offices in the building provide services to the citizens of Lee County: County Administration; Building Inspection; Commissioner of the Revenue; Commonwealth's Attorney; E-911; Economic Development Authority; Treasurer; Sheriff; and Zoning, Planning and Tourism. With growth in most aspects of the administration of the court systems, the courthouse building is fully utilized. Parking for workers and visitors is available through on-street parking and parking lots at the Lee County Social Services and Health Department buildings located nearby. The Lee County Department of Social Services is located just west of the Courthouse in a modern 15,600 square foot office facility.

The Jonesville Town Hall is located in the Cumberland Bowl Park. The structure houses the Mayor's office, town administration office and the public works department. The town hall is not experiencing any problems at the present time, but plans are being made to improve and expand the existing building. The Pennington Gap Town Hall is located within the corporate limits of the Town. The Pennington Gap Municipal Building

was destroyed by a fire in 2015. The Town of Pennington purchased the vacant Patriot Center from the Industrial Development Authority in July 2016 to house the new Town Hall. The Town Hall is composed of the Mayor, Town Manager, Clerk, Treasurer and Superintendent's office. The structure also houses the Town Council Chambers and the Public Works Department.

Libraries provide an important recreational and educational service for the public. These facilities can be used at no charge and are enjoyed by all age groups. Lee County is served by the Pennington Gap branch of the Lonesome Pine Library System that is headquartered in Wise, Virginia. There is also a satellite facility located in Rose Hill to serve the Western portion of the County.

The Lee County Public Library has a large collection of hardback volumes in addition to a large selection of paperbacks, periodicals, pamphlets, records, cassettes, microfilm, electronic databases and videocassettes for public use. The library has a computer based catalogue system which allows patrons to access information about collections at other branches of the Lonesome Pine Library System. The system also acts as a computer aided check in and out and inventory system.

The Lee County Public Library has the second highest circulation in the Lonesome Pine Regional Library System; Books- By-Mail, the library's outreach program, circulates more materials to citizens in Lee County than any other county in the system. There exists a great need for increased funding for libraries in the county.

## ECONOMY

The following economic analysis for Lee County includes several important indices of the economy. Data sources include the U.S. Census of Population, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the University of Virginia Center for Public Service.

### Unemployment

The table below shows unemployment data for Lee County, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States for purposes of comparison.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 2000-2017

<b>Year</b>	<b>Lee County</b>	<b>Virginia</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>2000</b>	4.2%	2.3%	4.0%
<b>2005</b>	5.0%	3.5%	5.1%
<b>2010</b>	7.9%	6.9%	9.6%
<b>2011</b>	7.3%	6.3%	9.2%
<b>2015</b>	7.2%	4.5%	5.3%
<b>2017</b>	5.5%	3.8%	4.4%

*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

### General Economic Characteristics

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze certain economic factors associated with Lee County in an effort to identify current trends and provide a basis for future planning and decision-making. Only limited reference is made to the pre-

1980 period, relying primarily on post-1980 economic trends.

### Employment Characteristics

Emphasis is placed on the basic employment sector because it is the primary source of area growth."Basic employment" is defined as employment in industries that sell most of their goods and services outside of the

area. They depend on national or regional demand rather than local demand. By contrast, "supporting employment" is defined as employment in industries that find their primary market in the local area. Local government, retail trade, utilities, and banking services generally are supporting activities except when the area is a regional trading center.

#### OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LEE COUNTY 2018

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	40
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	28
Utilities	51
Construction	241
Manufacturing	106
Wholesale Trade	95
Retail Trade	711
Transportation and Warehousing	74
Information	22
Finance and Insurance	97
Real Estate and Rental/Leasing	8
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	39
Management of Companies	77
Administrative, Support and Waste Management	103
Educational Services	1,134
Health Care and Social Assistance	640
Accommodations and Food Service	295
Other Services (minus Public Admin)	115
Government Total	1,576
Total, All Industries	4,369

The above figures show that Lee County is moving toward a health care service economy and relying less on agriculture, manufacturing and mining jobs for support. Further increases in these employment classifications will lead to the economy of Lee County becoming more stable and less reliant out-of-county employment.

*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

## Commuting

Employment opportunities outside Lee County, particularly with the coal industry in adjacent Wise County, have declined in the past several years, although the magnitude of these declines is not exactly known. Regional employment centers such as Duffield in Scott County have also impacted commuting patterns recently. The tables below better describe the commuting patterns.

### COMMUTING PATTERNS - 2014

#### **Top 5 Places Residents are Commuting To**

Wise County, VA	1,635
Scott County, VA	536
Washington County, VA	524
Norton City, VA	400
Dickenson County, VA	311

It is expected that other counties will continue to attract Lee County residents for employment although at a decreased rate. New, or expanded, manufacturing plants would reduce the number of out-commuters. Residents that had been employed by the coal mining industry will also change their commuting patterns, staying in Lee County or driving to out-of-state employment positions.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau onTheMap Application and LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics, 2014*

### Per Capita Personal Income

Per capita personal income as calculated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (total personal income divided by the total population) of Lee County residents increased from \$13,625 in 2000 to \$16,513 in 2010 to an estimated \$17,820 in 2016.

#### LEE COUNTY PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME 2000-2016

<u>Location</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2016</u>
Lee County	\$13,625	\$16,513	\$17,820
LENOWISCO P.D.	\$15,972	\$17,708	\$19,887
Virginia	\$23,975	\$32,145	\$34,967
United States	\$21,587	\$27,334	\$29,829

*Source: US Census, 2016 American Community Survey Estimates*

#### MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR VIRGINIA AND LEE COUNTY 2000-2016

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2016</u>
Virginia	\$46,667	\$61,406	\$66,149
Lee County	\$28,525	\$41,204	\$31,577

*Source: US Census, 2016 American Community Survey Estimates*

### Labor Force Participation

In Lee County, 43.3 percent of the population aged 16 and over were in the labor force in 2016. This was well below the state level of 65.8 percent. Female participation in the labor force for ages 20 to 64 is 58.2 percent while the state figure is 74.6 percent. Part of the low labor force participation rate can be attributed to the relatively large number of elderly retired persons in the population. Fully 16.04 percent of the population in Lee County was aged 65 years and over, typically a "non-employed" age group in 2016, compared with 12.2 percent in the state. Recent population projections indicate this age group is expected to increase as a proportion of the total Lee County population and remain a larger part of the total population than will be the case for the state.

#### ESTIMATED LABOR POTENTIAL LEE COUNTY

2000 Annual Average	9,068
2016 Annual Average	8,591

*Source: US Census; 2016 Community Survey Estimates*

### Taxable Sales

There has been recent new retail growth in the central part of the County along the 58A Corridor. Lee County's problems are similar to other counties in Southwestern Virginia in that many local sales dollars are lost to neighboring market areas such as Wise County; Kingsport, Tennessee; Middlesboro, Kentucky; and Knoxville, Tennessee market areas. There is no accurate way to quantify the extent of these losses, although it is clear from watching traffic patterns that this has occurred over the past two decades and continues to occur.

There is great potential for growth along the 58A Corridor in Western Lee. The presence of the Lincoln Memorial University DeBusk Veterinary Teaching Center creates an opportunity for retail growth between the Teaching Center and Middlesboro.

If all Lee County residents could understand the importance of trading within the County, or even in neighboring Virginia Counties, a significant number of new jobs could be created in the supporting sector.

Increased retail sales would also generate additional tax support for the school system. The aforementioned retail trade areas outside of Lee County have grown significantly over the past two decades, primarily on the strength on importing sales dollars from outside areas such as Lee County. Developers are often amazed at the retail sales potential rural counties like Lee offer. In theory, if the right mix of retail establishments offering competitive prices and convenient operating hours were available in Lee County, the local economy would prosper considerably.

### Summary

With the transition from the mining and tobacco based economy there are many challenges to developing new viable alternatives to the standard industries that have been so common for many years. The local economy is characterized by too many moderate-income jobs, a large percentage of government employment in relation to other employment, a high percentage of transfer payments, and a relatively high rate of unemployment. However, the potential for improvement is high. Diversification and employment growth are needed if the area is to improve economically. Economic development efforts and infrastructure improvements will have a direct effect on the County's future. Whether or not these improvements will occur within the planning period is dependent on some factors beyond the local government's control, such as the overall national and global economy, and other factors. However, local economic development can occur with creative growth strategies.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Existing Transportation

Highway - U.S. Routes 58 and 58A run east-west through Pennington Gap and Jonesville and give access to points in Kentucky and Tennessee via U.S. 25E. U.S. Route 58 intersects at the Tennessee State Line with Interstate 26 and U.S. 11, both of which lead to Interstate 81. U.S. Alternate 58, included in Virginia's Arterial Highway System, connects Jonesville and Pennington Gap with U.S. 23. U.S. Route 421 connects Pennington Gap to the Kentucky state line. State primary and secondary roads make these main highways accessible to all parts of the country.

Trucking - Daily motor freight transportation is available from numerous carriers regularly doing business in the region.

Railroads - CSX Transportation enters the County at Hagan and runs in a northeasterly direction through Pennington Gap and on to Norton (Wise County) where it connects with Norfolk Southern. Norfolk Southern crosses the extreme northeastern corner of Lee County in route to Norton and the towns in Wise County and then extends southwestward into Lee County again, following the valley of the North Fork Powell River to St. Charles. These railroads primarily serve the coalfields of the region, but are available for general freight transportation.

### Future Transportation Facilities

#### Route 58 Corridor Program

In September, 1988 a corridor study for U.S. 58 was prepared for the Virginia House of Representatives Subcommittee established under House Joint Resolution 172. The corridor study spanned five highway construction districts, eighteen counties, and numerous cities and towns between Cumberland Gap in Lee County and Bowers Hill in the City of Chesapeake on the eastern shore. The total length of the corridor following existing U.S. 58 is 480 miles.

The Virginia General Assembly, through the enactment of House Bill 1836 in the 1989 session, created the U.S. Route 58 Corridor Development fund for the purpose of providing an adequate, modern, safe, and efficient highway system along the southern boundary of the Commonwealth. The resolution proposed the creation and enhancement of a safe, efficient highway system connecting communities, businesses, places of employment, and residents of the southwestern and southeastern portions of the Commonwealth; thereby enhancing the economic development potential, employment opportunities, mobility, and quality of life in the highway corridor.

The U.S. Route 58 Corridor Development Fund of the Transportation Trust Fund is to be supported from an annual deposit of \$40 million of the recordation tax collected by the State Treasurer.

In the special session of the General Assembly in 1989, legislation was enacted which authorized the issuance of \$ 600 million in Commonwealth of Virginia Transportation Revenue Bonds under the provisions of Article 10 Section 9D of the Code of Virginia for the development of the U.S. Route 58 Corridor.

VDOT has completed the widening of Highway 58 through Lee County with the exception of the bypasses around Jonesville and Pennington Gap. It is easy to develop a "wish list" of transportation improvements without regard to funding, cost justification, or actual need. However, the following transportation improvements are compiled from existing planning documents and thus can realistically be expected to be implemented during the planning horizon.

### Secondary Highways

There are 553.45 miles of secondary roads in Lee County. Of this total 325.00 are hard surface, 182.01 miles are all weather surface, 37.72 miles are light surface, and 8.7 miles are unsurfaced. There are 125.93 miles of unsurfaced roads serving 50 or more vehicles per day in the County. Allocations of state funds used for improvements to these roads are made through a cooperative effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Lee County Board of Supervisors. Needed improvements to specific secondary roads are too long to be included in this plan. Reference should be made to the current Virginia Department of Transportation Six Year Plan for information concerning future Secondary Road improvements.

### Public Transportation

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

### Lee County Airport

The aviation needs of Lee County are presently served by the Lee County Airport located five miles west of Jonesville just off of Highway 58. The 5,000 foot by 75 foot asphalt runway is oriented "7-25" and has 100 foot overruns on each end and a full parallel taxiway. The airport facilities include ten T-hanger units; eight tie-down spaces; a 5,000 square yard apron; a lighting system consisting of medium intensity runway lights, threshold and runway end identifier lights, a four light PAPI system, a rotating beacon and wind indicator equipment consisting of a windsock adjacent to the runway. The facility provides 100 low lead fuel through a

self serve fueling station. A modern terminal building completed in 2011 features an on-site AWOS (Automated Weather Observation System) which provides weather information by phone and radio frequency. Lee County Airport was opened in December 2002 replacing the previous Pennington Gap Airport

A master plan was prepared for the Lee County Airport in 1991 and used as the basis for an application for funding to the Federal Department of Aviation and the Virginia Department of Aviation. The new facility is located west of Jonesville and immediately adjacent to and south of U.S. Route 58. The new facility allows the takeoff and landing of small commercial commuter jet aircraft.

About 25 miles north of the county line is Lonesome Pine Airport in Wise County. This field is attended during daylight hours and has one hard surfaced runway 5,280 ft. long. It provides beacon and runway lights from sunset to sunrise. Fuel, repairs, charter service, and surface transportation are available.

Two airports in Kentucky are within easy reach of Lee County residents. At Harlan, Kentucky, 25 miles west of Pennington Gap, is an airfield with a paved runway of 2,700 ft. The other airfield is just outside the western corner of Lee County near Middlesboro, Kentucky.

Commercial air service is available at the Tri City Airport near Kingsport, Tennessee approximately 70 miles from Jonesville and also McGee-Tyson Airport in Knoxville, Tennessee. These airports offer passenger and air freight service with nationwide connections.

LENOWISCO Long Range Transportation Plan

In 2011, the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission completed a Long Range Rural Transportation Plan for the LENOWISCO Region. The Lee County portion of these plan's projects and recommendations are listed below.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at US 421 (Dot intersection) (District 3)</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Consider signalization based on a warrant analysis</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at VA Route 911 (Cardinal Road / DeRoyal Industrial Road) (District 1)</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Continue to monitor for safety improvements and consider installing flashing light and warning signs when employment returns to area.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Project Location:</u></b> Alternate 58 at VA Route 645 (Ben Hur) (District 3)</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Consider signalization based on warrant analysis.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at VA Route 909 (American Trail) (District 1)</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Consider installing flashing light and warning signs to caution drivers of intersection ahead.</p>

<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 421 at VA Route 621 (Right Poor Valley Road) (Districts 3 & 5)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Refresh pavement markings on Route 621. Consider controlling access management to define access to convenience store and Route 621.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 421 and Route 606 Intersection (District 5)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Consider signalization based on a warrant analysis
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at Sticklelyville School Entrance (District 4)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Remove vegetation at northern entrance to improve sight distances. Refresh all pavement markings to better flow traffic.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at VA Route 662 (Curt Russell Road) (District 2)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Implement access management to consolidate entrance to bank and church. Consider realigning Route 662 to intersect Chappell Drive at a feasible point south of the intersection. Route 662 traffic can be accommodated more safely at traffic signal.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 421 at VA Route 642 (Woodway) (District 3)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Install stop bar pavement markings on both approaches of Route 642. Install US 421 southbound left turn lane and northbound right turn lane to store vehicles turning off of US 421. Intersection does not meet the Warrant 3 criteria for a traffic signal.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at VA Route 640 (Shavers Ford Road) (District 3)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Install stop bar on Route 640. Consider installing US 58 turn lanes to provide storage given limited sight distances.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> US 58 at VA Route 783 (Cooney Hollow) (District 3)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Install stop bar on Route 783. Consider installing US 58 turn lanes to provide storage given the grade at the intersection.
<b><u>Project Location:</u></b> Jonesville (District 2)
<b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Construct Jonesville Bypass

## TOURISM, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

Lee County has two major recreational areas; Leeman Field and the Cumberland Bowl Park. There are also recreational opportunities provided in the Jefferson National Forest, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Cave Springs Recreation Area, Wilderness Road State Park, Dr. Andrew Still Park, and parks at Lee High School and Thomas Walker High School.

### Leeman Field

Leeman Field is located in Pennington Gap corporate limits and is owned by the Town of Pennington Gap. The Town is responsible for the funding and upkeep of Leeman Field. The park facilities include: three restroom facilities, three pavilions, three little league fields, two exhibit barns, two playground areas, one skateboard park, one outdoor stage, two horseshoe pits two basketball courts, one tennis court and one volleyball court. The Cumberland Horse Association has constructed a horse arena which provides a place for horseshows, rodeos and agricultural events.. The Greenway, a walking and biking trail, follows the Powell River from the River Bend Shopping Center to Leeman Field. The Town of Pennington is currently investigating the possibility of adding additional amenities along the Greenway.

Spearhead Trails opened its fourth multi-use ATV trail system in Lee County in 2015, with the trailhead at Leeman Field in Pennington Gap. The Stone Mountain system currently offers 32 miles of challenging intermediate to advanced level OHV trails with nine stunning overlook vistas never before offered to the public. Many of the overlooks have rest areas and picnic tables for outdoor dining.

Considered to be a “technical trail,” Stone Mountain is a “Blue and Black” rated system that will appeal to intermediate riders with families, but also offers challenges for the hard-core enthusiast. The system offers easy to moderate climbs with loops, allowing riders to branch off and test their skills on steep technical challenges.

### Cumberland Bowl Park

The twenty-three acre Cumberland Bowl Park is located near, and maintained by, the Town of Jonesville. The parks facilities include: four picnic pavilions, an amphitheatre, a playground, two little league baseball, a stage with dressing rooms, twenty-one picnic tables, basketball court, and Veterans Memorial Wall. It is used for sports events, recreation, beauty pageants, musical shows and contests. The local Woman's Club provided funding for needed playground equipment and for the construction of a walking trail in the park area. The Town of Jonesville recently added additional bathrooms at the Park.

### Wilderness Road State Park

In 1993, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation purchased the Karlan estate and approximately 200 surrounding acres from Nelson Harris. This began the transformation of Karlan into a Virginia

State Park. On Dec. 14, 1998, the park's name was changed to Wilderness Road State Park with the mission to provide rich cultural, historical, and natural resources. Also, the park sits astride the Wilderness Road, which was cut by Daniel Boone in 1775.

Nestled at the base of the majestic Cumberland Mountains, in the southwest corner of Virginia, Wilderness Road State Park offers visitors a unique natural and historical experience that will create wonderful memories for years to come. The park offers a beautiful picnic area with three shelters, a playground, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, a comfort station and is the proud home of Historic Martin's Station, the most authentically re-constructed colonial fort in America.

Historic Martin's Station, constructed in 2002, is the re-creation of Captain Joseph Martin's Fort originally built in 1775 near present day Rose Hill, Virginia. The original fortified station played a key role in the settlement of the American frontier and Westward expansion during the Revolutionary War. Throughout the interpretive season and you will see, smell, taste and touch history as it is brought to life at the small frontier outpost.

Wilderness Road State Park offers interpretive and educational programs throughout the year, highlighted by the annual Raid at Martin's Station in May and the Heritage Festival in October. The Raid gives visitors a glimpse into the 1775 Virginia Frontier and re-creates an actual Indian raid on Joseph Martin's outpost. The Heritage Festival celebrates the Appalachian and Frontier heritage of the thousands of men, women and children that helped shape this region.

The Wilderness Road Trail offers eight miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding while the self-guided one-mile Indian Ridge Trail brings visitors closer to nature with native wildflowers, birds and other wildlife. The stately 1877 Karlan Mansion is available for group functions with the state-of-the-art Visitor Center providing guest information, bicycle rentals, unique souvenirs and gifts along with the educational docu-drama, The Wilderness Road: Spirit of a Nation.

Wilderness Road State Park reported a total of 173,874 visitors throughout the calendar year of 2017. A study conducted by the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech determined that Wilderness Road State Park had a \$4.2 million dollar impact on the local economy.

Future development plans call for cabins, a campground and a trailhead that will connect the park to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park's Chadwell Gap Trail, with access to the Hensley Settlement.

## Historical Preservation

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources is responsible for the Commonwealth's efforts to identify and preserve cultural and historic resources. The Department also serves as the State Historic Preservation Office in the federal preservation system. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources maintains a statewide survey of historic buildings and structures, research archives, the Virginia Landmarks Register, the historical highway marker program, and the preservation easement program. The department offers technical assistance to localities and citizens interested in historic preservation through workshops, grant assistance, tax incentives, and the certified local government program. The Department has worked on many projects with local officials and residents of Lee County and is an excellent resource for future preservation efforts.

Another option for historic preservation is the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is established in federal law. Additions to the register are made by National Park Service pursuant to nomination by the Commonwealth. The National Register designation officially recognizes the cultural, architectural, and landscape features of a historically significant property, bringing it to the attention of the community, state and nation.

Lee County has a rich historical and cultural past to be proud of and one which should be preserved. Three sites in Lee County are listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Historical Register: the Cumberland Gap Historical District, the Ely Mound Archaeological Site, and the Jonesville Methodist Campground.

The Cumberland Gap Historical District occupies the extreme western tip of Lee County. For centuries Cumberland Gap was the only easily accessible route through the Allegheny Mountains and played an important role in the westward expansion of the nation. The district includes property within the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park which is owned and maintained by the National Park Service.

An important component of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park is the Hensley Flats area on the Kentucky side of Cumberland Mountain, immediately north of Caylor. This small area contains Hensley Settlement, which was developed by the Hensley family and occupied during the first half of the 20th century. The isolation of this site dictated that the family follow the mountain farming life style that was typical of the Appalachian region during the 19th century.

Visitors currently reach Hensley Settlement on foot or horseback from spur trails off the ridge trail, or by hiking in four miles from Caylor. With the completion of the U.S. 58 corridor through Lee County, Hensley Settlement, as well as White Rocks and Sand Cave (also in the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park) are ideal attractions. There is strong sentiment by all concerned to maintain the integrity of the park, primarily by preserving its

state as a wilderness, although visitors will obviously need to find suitable access to these attractions if they are to be fully appreciated.

The Cumberland Gap National Historic Park has entered into an agreement with the Ewing Civitan Group to operate a pavilion facility providing access to the Sand Cave attraction. If Virginia, and particularly Lee County, is to benefit from the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, access to the park's facilities and historic features must be improved from the Virginia side. It is also incumbent on the National Park Service to recognize the importance of the U.S. 58 corridor and its role in bringing more visitors to the area.

The Ely Mound Archaeological Site is located in the vicinity of Rose Hill. The mound dates back to the year 800 A.D. and is the only clearly identified substructure mound in Virginia. The mound is significant in the history of American archaeological studies, for Lucien Carr's excavations here in the 1870's led him to reject the then popular "lost race" hypothesis for Mound Builders in eastern North America.

The Jonesville Methodist Campground is located west of the Town of Jonesville. The 1827-28 structure was built on land established by the Methodist-Episcopal Church of Lee County as a religious campground in 1810. The building has a long gable roof supported on huge oak timbers and side panels that can be raised for ventilation. Camp meetings have been held at this site every year since 1810 except for the years 1863 and 1864 (War Between the States)

Several other structures and sites in Lee County have previously been identified as historic. Several of these sites might be significant enough to merit listing on the Virginia Landmarks Registry and the National Register of Historic Places. Some of these sites include:

1. Ball's Mill (also known as Cowan Mill) - West of Rose Hill on the south side of U.S. 58.
2. The Charles Horton House - On Route 612 near Wallens Creek, south of Jonesville.
3. Collier's Mill - East of Jonesville on Route 643 (Skaggs Hill).
4. The Dickenson-Milburn House - On the west end of Jonesville, across from the middle school on U.S. 58.
5. The Fannon House - On Route 612 near Wallens Creek.
6. Gibson's Mill - On Indian Creek West of Ewing on Route 692 (.25 miles from U.S. 58).
7. Robert Ely House - West of Ewing, about 100 yards north of U.S. 58.
8. McLin House - West of Rose Hill near the funeral home and about 60 yards from U.S. 58.
9. Mount Washington School - Near the community of Van on State Route 612.
10. Nimrod-Ely House - Near Pennington Gap between the Powell River and Dry Branch.
11. The Seminary Methodist Church - Located along U.S. 58 about 5 Miles southwest of Big Stone

- Gap (this structure is already listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register).
12. Wireman's Mill (also known as Nash's Mill) on Indian Creek west of Ewing near the Gibson Mill on Route 691, .5 miles from U.S. 58.
  13. Natural Bridge - Two miles southwest of Jonesville on Route 622.
  14. Great Stone Face – 1.0 miles from Pennington Gap on U.S. 421.
  15. Duff Mansion – Sticklelyville, Va

Efforts should be made to preserve these and other historical and cultural sites in Lee County for future generations to admire and enjoy.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lee County currently sits at an interesting position in the history of its economic development efforts. A summary of recent efforts and forthcoming goals is presented below.

### Transportation

Lee County's primary transportation routes are US Highways 58 and 421. US 58 runs east to west from the Scott County/Lee County line near the summit of Powell Mountain to the Tennessee border near the community of Gibson Station. Highway 421 runs southeast to northwest from its split with 58 through the mountains into Harlan County, Kentucky. US Highway 58-A connects the county to Big Stone Gap and Norton in Wise County. The closest interstates are I-26 and I-81 accessed in and around Kingsport, TN; I-75 accessed near Corbin, KY and I-40 accessed in Knoxville, TN. The new Lee County Airport is located in the Flatwoods community, approximately 10 minutes from the town of Jonesville and 15 minutes from Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park.

### Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park

Located along US 58 in the western end of the county near Rose Hill is Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park, Lee County's largest industrial park. The park has water, sewer, electric, high speed internet and natural gas services available. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) built a 60,000 square foot shell building in 2007 with a combination of Tobacco Commission grants and a loan from VCEDA (Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority). The shell building consists of a small finished conference room and office plus a large open warehouse- type space with gravel flooring. Paul's Fan Company.

### Hickory Flats

Hickory Flats Industrial Park is located in the southeast portion of the county adjacent to US Penitentiary Lee, a large federal prison facility. The IDA sold the 41,000 square foot industrial building on the property to Synergy Biofuels, LLC. early in 2019. Synergy Biofuels is a company which produces biofuel from renewable energy sources. The company intends on hiring up to 15 employees within the first calendar year and expanding

within the next three years.

### DeRoyal Building

The so-called DeRoyal Building is located in Dryden in the far eastern end of the county. England, Inc. began production in the building in July of 2018. England, Inc. operates as an independent division of La-Z-Boy Incorporated, and specializes in manufacturing quality upholstered furniture. The IDA obtained funds from the Lee County Economic Development Fund, VCEDA, and the Tobacco Commission for the renovation. England, Inc. currently employs over 1,400 in New Tazewell, Tennessee, and projects up to 79 new jobs in the Dryden Plant. The IDA is confident this project will be a lasting success for Lee County.

### Retail Recruitment

Part of the ongoing and future economic development strategy for the county will include retail recruitment. The town of Pennington Gap has several available commercial lots in the business district that would be ideal fits for national retail stores or fast-food-type restaurants. The IDA will be actively recruiting retailers (many of which currently have locations in Wise County, VA, Sullivan County, TN, and/or Bell County, KY). Recruitment of new retailers will enhance the quality of life in the county while providing new employment opportunities and keeping sales tax revenue within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, the western end of the town of Jonesville (both within the corporate limits as well as just outside the town) is also ideal locations for retailers and restaurants. In addition, once an industrial tenant is obtained for Constitutional Oaks, the surrounding areas will be in great need of restaurants, in particular, as well as retail and medical facilities. Future economic development activities will be focused thusly.

### Opportunity Zones

The Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 included provisions for a new revitalization tool, the Opportunity Zone and Opportunity Fund. Broadly speaking, the Zones and Funds will allow investors to receive tax benefits on currently unrealized capital gains by investing those gains in qualified census tracts (Opportunity Zones). Lee County currently has one opportunity zone, which encompasses the Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park.

## Education

Lee County has five elementary schools with grades K-4, three middle schools with grades 5-7, two high schools with grades 8-12 and one career/technical center which offers over sixty different courses to students from the entire County. There were 3,030 students enrolled for the 2016-2017 school year.

The Lee County Career and Technical School is located in the Ben Hur area between Pennington Gap and Jonesville. The school has 63 different courses to offer its 1,100 secondary students. These courses serve students ranging from grades nine through twelve.

The school system makes every effort to meet the needs of special student populations. The special education program offers classes for the educable mentally handicapped; the learning disabled; the emotionally disturbed; the trainable mentally handicapped; the speech and visually handicapped; the hearing impaired; and the pre-school handicapped, and offers a diversity of activities to challenge the gifted/talented student. The regular academic program provides a wide variety of programs and teaching strategies to meet the needs and learning styles of students.

- Priority 1: Provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students
- Priority 2: Advance policies that increase the number of candidates entering the teaching profession and encourage and support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and school leaders
- Priority 3: Ensure successful implementation of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and the accountability system for school quality as embodied in the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation.

### Categorical Goals for Lee County Public Schools

#### Instruction

1. Provide partnership strategies between students, parents, workforce agencies, and higher- education institutions to ensure workforce, career, and college readiness for all students
2. Provide ongoing professional development for teachers using best practice and current research to effectively implement curriculum
3. Provide high-quality and effective learning environments for all students

#### Administration

1. Continue to improve fiscal responsibility including pursuit of grants and accountability
2. Develop regionally-competitive pay and salary scales

3. Ensure and enhance efficient and effective staffing in all schools and departments
4. Develop and further School Board Policies in support of the Comprehensive Plan

#### Attendance and Health Services

1. Improve attendance rate each year
2. Improve access to counseling services while minimizing absences
3. Develop and further partnerships to serve students, staff, and parents
4. Utilize results from Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)
5. Explore the possibility of providing school clinics for students and staff through partnerships

#### Pupil Transportation

1. Develop and implement more efficient routing and shorter bus rides
2. Develop and pursue funding for a vehicle and bus replacement cycle

#### Operations and Maintenance

1. Pursue funding for a School Resource Officer (SRO) in all schools
2. Enhance each school's crisis plan in partnership with local and state law enforcement
3. Upgrade and expand school safety features and functionality to provide the safest environment possible
4. Explore practical safety solutions by using survey results and facility evaluations to examine the environment and school culture
5. Explore and implement efficiencies in all areas of operations and maintenance, including staffing

#### School Nutrition

1. Increase participation by offering various menu options utilizing input from food tasting events
2. Develop a six-week menu cycle
3. Develop a plan with agriculture classes to grow vegetables that may be used in cafeterias
4. Partner with Career and Technical Education programs, when appropriate, to support these goals

#### Facilities

1. Pursue outside funding including grants to fulfill facility needs including small projects, such as playgrounds and 21st century equipment
2. Create a prioritization for facility improvements based on need. If funds are inadequate and renovations are not made, then estimate when a school would have to be shut down
3. Encourage and create opportunities for students and parents to become involved with facility improvement
4. Re-examine the possibility of school consolidations and building new schools if costs are lower than renovations
5. Incorporate alternative energy sources in all schools and sites, when possible and practical
6. Provide equitable facilities throughout the Division

#### Technology

1. Utilize technology to provide enrichment opportunities for students

2. Develop community partnerships to improve student access to technology at home
3. Build a culture of positive digital citizenship and safe internet use
4. Use technology when appropriate to create efficiencies
5. Develop a balance of technology infused and traditional instructional strategies and train teachers

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Law Enforcement

Lee County Residents are served by four law enforcement agencies: (1) Lee County Sheriff's Department, (2) Jonesville Police Department (3) Pennington Gap Police Department, and (4) the Virginia State Police. All four agencies function as separate law enforcement bodies, however, in any situation which calls for interdepartmental assistance there is complete cooperation.

The Sheriff's Department and Jonesville Police Department are located in central Lee County within the corporate limits of Jonesville. The Pennington Gap Police Department is located in northwest Lee County in the Town of Pennington Gap. There are 45 full-time and 2 part-time law enforcement personnel serving Lee County. The Jonesville and Pennington Gap Police Departments have jurisdiction over the areas inside their corporate limits while the Sheriff's Department, has jurisdiction of the entire county. The Virginia State Police office in Wise, Virginia, administers 8 assigned troopers who work Lee County. The Lee County Sheriff's Department is located in Jonesville in the Lee County Courthouse. The department employs 35 full-time deputies in addition to the sheriff. The department staff consists of 9 full time and 2 part-time communications officers, 4 investigators, 2 courtroom officers 16 road officers, 3 school resource officers and 1 domestic violence officer, with all having arrest power. The department has 22 patrol cars, in addition to 7 four-wheel drive vehicles, and answers approximately 5,000 calls per month.

Lee County participates in the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority system and prisoners are housed at the Duffield Regional Jail. The Jonesville and Pennington Gap Police Departments also use the regional jail for the detention of prisoners. Parking is a problem for the Sheriff's Department. Currently there is only a small parking area and patrol cars often use public parking spaces around the courthouse area. The Jonesville Police Department consists of 3 patrolmen. The department only has 3 patrol cars for its use. More funding is needed in order for the department to perform its duties. There is a need for another patrol car and updated equipment. The Pennington Gap Police Department consists of 5 patrolmen and 1 school resource officer. The department only has 7 patrol cars for its use.

### Fire Departments

There are eleven volunteer fire departments in Lee County: Blackwater; Dryden; Jasper; Jonesville; Keokee;

Pennington Gap #1; Pennington Gap #2(Woodway); Pennington Gap #3 (St. Charles); Stickleyville; Thomas Walker #1 and Thomas Walker #2. All departments will respond outside their own town limits or communities when needed. The fire departments have a verbal mutual aid agreement to respond when called on by another department.

### Rescue Squads

There are six volunteer rescue squads: Lee County (Pennington Gap), Jonesville, Keokee, Thomas Walker, St. Charles, and Dryden.

### Health Facilities

Lee County health care facilities consist of an urgent care facility, four health care clinics, a respiratory clinic, three dentists, and a County health department.

The Lee County Regional Medical Center was closed suddenly by Wellmont Health System in 2013. In 2017, the Lee County Hospital Authority sold the Lee Regional Medical Center to Americore Health, LLC. Americore Health, LLC was unable to reopen the hospital, and the Lee County Hospital Authority severed ties with the group, obtaining title to the property in the process. The Hospital Authority then entered into an agreement with Ballad Health to reopen the facility providing emergency department and in-patient services. Ballad Health opened an urgent care center adjacent to the Medical Arts Building in October 2019 and expects to re-open the hospital in late 2020.

The Lee County Health Department was built in 1971 and is located on Hill Street in Jonesville. It is one of three health departments in the LENOWISCO Health District. The Health Department is staffed with Nurse Practitioners, Public Health Nurses, Environmental Health Specialists, Dentist, Nutritionists and support staff. They play a major role in protecting the health of all Lee Countians. This is accomplished in a variety of ways including preventative health measures, primary care services and health promotion and education.

Frontier Health Services operates as a private, non-profit, community health agency serving the residents of Western Sullivan County in Tennessee, and Scott, Lee, and Wise Counties and the City of Norton in Virginia. Services in Virginia are centered around three outpatient clinics: Scott County Mental Health Center in Gate City, Lee County Mental Health Center in Jonesville, and Wise County Mental Health Center in Norton. Funding is provided by the Planning District 1 Community Services Board (funded by Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties and the City of Norton, and the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation), patient fees, third party payers, and private contributions. The Lee County Mental Health Center offers outpatient therapy for adults, youth, and families; parenting groups, marriage counseling, a chemical dependency program, and outreach

programs for more remote areas of the county, St. Charles and Ewing, one day per week. The center is not experiencing any problems. Lee County has two homes for adults. The Chestnut Grove Adult Home is considered to be a home for adults who cannot function in an independent manner and do not need full-time medical care. It can accommodate ninety-eight people. Both of these stay filled to near capacity. Lee Health and Rehabilitation Center is located near the Hospital in Pennington Gap.

Stone Mountain Health Services offers community health care clinics throughout Southwest Virginia to provide patients with quality healthcare. Stone Mountain Health Services opened the Jonesville Family Health Center in 2015. The Health Center is a 26,000 square foot building consisting of a medical service area and business and administrative offices. The center offers medical and behavioral health services, as well as support services including medical labs, x-ray suites, and procedure rooms. Operating as a part of Stone Mountain Health Services, The St. Charles Community Health Council, which was founded in 1973, operates a base site in St. Charles, two offices in the medical arts building of the hospital in Pennington Gap and a breathing center and outreach office in Jonesville. The Western Lee County Health Clinic was founded in 1974 and operates a primary care clinic in Ewing. The Community Health Clinic offers services in general medical care, X-rays and lab work, health education, pharmaceutical services and preventative medical services.

## LAND USE

When compiling data for use in the original draft of this plan in 1977, the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission was heavily involved in the co-authorship of another valuable planning document, the Southwest Virginia 208 Water Quality Management Plan. This study, completed in 1978, dealt with sources of non-point water pollution in the seven County area of Planning Districts One and Two. In order to complete the study, remote sensing, or the use of satellite imagery to denote different land use types, was used extensively to compile data. Because the process of using remote sensing is extremely complex and expensive, it is not feasible to repeat this exercise for this comprehensive plan update.

However, since the land use designations dealt with broad patterns of land use, and the patterns have not changed significantly, the data can still be presented and have a high degree of accuracy. Using structural land use patterns from 1984, a new map has been prepared to portray structural land use patterns in more detail.

### Existing Land Use

The existing land use patterns within Lee County are the results of changing economic conditions, technology, and social attitudes, all of which have operated within restrictive topographic conditions. The many topographic elements, which control the pattern and distribution of land uses within the County, include:

- a. Flooding of streams and rivers that have restricted development. Those areas that have been developed and which are subject to inundation have been characterized by deteriorating building conditions.
- b. The rugged topography and excessive slopes have tended to restrict development to areas between ridges and adjacent to major roads serving the area. The topography has encouraged development in flood plains, which in turn has been subject to progressive deterioration.
- c. Highways and railroads have followed the paths of rivers and creeks between ridges and have restricted development opportunities to small areas along the roadways.
- d. Soil characteristics, such as poor permeability, depth to bedrock, subsoil instability, etc., have generally not been conducive to new development.
- e. Land suitable for development on plateaus, ridge tops, and hollows has been restricted in development because of inadequate access and lack of utilities.
- f. Incompatible land use mixtures have resulted from the lack of developable land and have contributed to physical deterioration of limited sections of the County.

Economic conditions, technology, and social attitudes are continually changing. As these changes take place, they are reflected in an area's land use pattern. An existing land use map provides a "picture" of the land use at a point in time.

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

The Existing and Future Land Use Map principally shows prevailing structural land use patterns outside of corporate areas. These patterns are classified by function such as residential, mixed-use, industrial, public or semi-public. This map does not differentiate the more generalized land uses such as agricultural, forest, and surface mined lands, instead classifying them together as open land.

Following is a more detailed explanation of each category:

Residential - Primarily concentrations of residential units of all types (conventional single family, manufactured homes and multi-family units) with a frontage density generally less than 500 feet. This category may also include some public and/or commercial uses in small concentrations.

Mixed Use - High density mixed-use development with no dominant land use types (includes residential units of all types, commercial, public, semi-public, and other).

Industrial - Heavy industrial (such as mines, preparation plants, loading points, shops and manufacturing facilities).

Public/Semi-Public - Major public or semi-public uses (such as schools, airports, recreation, health care, library, civic center, correctional units and other government facilities).

#### Existing Land Use: Urban and Built-up Land

Past declines in the economy have contributed greatly to the physical deterioration of many of the County's urban and built-up areas, the continuation of only marginally functional land uses, and the unavailability of certain public services. Any economic reversal has the potential of providing the County and its people with the opportunity and resources to improve living conditions and at the same time create an environment attractive to later economic diversification.

An estimated 2,445 acres of the County's total land area in 1975 was classified as urban and built-up land. This represented only 1.1 percent of the County's total area. Most of this urban and built-up area is associated with incorporated areas. Also apparent is the considerable amount of built-up type development which occurs just outside of these incorporated areas. This pattern traditionally held true because of the availability of public services from nearby towns.

The heavy population concentrations within some of the urban and built-up areas have resulted in development in areas with less than "good" suitability for construction of septic tank drainfields. Considering the potential for health problems in this type of development, attention should be given to public sewage facility expansion into areas with greatest development capability.

A comparison of the Existing Land Use Map and the Flood Prone area Map shows the extensive urban and built-up development which has occurred in areas of the County which are subject to flooding. The extension of public water and sewer services to areas with the greatest developmental capability would provide alternative construction sites, while simultaneously solving sanitation and flooding problems.

### Agricultural Land

Approximately 80,999 acres of the County were classified as agricultural land in 1982. This represented more than one-fourth (28.7%) of the County's total area. This agricultural classification includes cropland, pastureland, and orchards, but excludes woodland located on farms.

The majority of the County's agricultural land is located between Stone Mountain to the north and Powell Mountain to the south and stretches in a northeast-southwest direction between the Lee-Wise County line and Cumberland Gap. While this agricultural region has the greatest potential for future urban and built-up development, Lee County's Zoning Ordinance has provided an acceptable balance between remaining farm land and the demand for additional developable land.

### Surface Mined Disturbed Land

Although limited to the northern region of the County, surface mined land accounted for 3,101 total acres in 1982. The Division of Mines, Minerals and Energy reports that in 1995 there were 45 surface mine permits covering a total of 3,706 acres. Of these, 1,899 are disturbed, 899 are reclaimed and 3,327 are bonded. These surface mined areas composed the **third** largest form of land use along with urban and built-up areas in the County following forest land and agricultural land.

Surface mining has produced coal, created jobs, polluted streams, created high walls, and many acres of relatively flat land. Potential uses of these mined areas include everything from residential to commercial and agricultural to recreational. Actual future uses will depend upon economic considerations, i.e., development costs. Unfortunately, the development potential of reclaimed mined land is limited due to lack of available utilities.

## Forest Land

The single largest form of land use in Lee County is forest. More than two-thirds (**68.7%**) of the County's land area was classified as forest in 1982.

## Other Land Use

The attached current land use map shows the remaining land use within the County as quarries, water bodies, and the general category of undetermined barren land. These areas accounted for a relatively insignificant amount of land in comparison to the previously discussed forms.

## Future Land Use

The land use pattern that will exist in Lee County by the end of the planning period will be today's existing land use as modified by tomorrow's decisions and actions. Much will depend upon economic conditions, community and governmental leadership, and the realization of County citizens that their participation or nonparticipation will have an effect on their future living conditions.

The Future Land Use Map is not an attempt to create the ideal or "perfect" Lee County by the end of the planning period. This Comprehensive Plan is developed in an atmosphere of continual economic, political, social, etc., change. It attempts to improve some existing problems and avoid some potential future problems.

The appropriate development of land in Lee County, however, may be best achieved by the development and maintenance of appropriate subdivision and zoning ordinances and other regulatory provisions authorized by the Code of Virginia. In addition, because of the nature of the impact of such facilities, the development, location, and operation of community facilities, transportation facilities, public buildings, public utility facilities, and public service corporation facilities, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, shall not be constructed, established or authorized unless and until the general approximate location, character and extent of such facilities has been approved by the Planning Commission as being substantially in accord with this comprehensive plan in compliance with the procedure established pursuant to the Virginia Code Ann. § 15.2-2232.

## Forest Land

Forest land is expected to remain the single largest form of land use within the County through the end of the planning period. Additional land will be returned to forest use through the enforcement of surface mine reclamation practices. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of the County's timber stand, and multiple use management practices should be adopted. Such an approach would allow Lee County to more

successfully compete in the tourist and outdoor recreation industry.

### Surface Mined Land

By the end of the planning period, surface mining activities are expected to have greatly declined or ceased. Areas disturbed by such activities should be reclaimed in such a way as to optimize future uses of the land. Each mined out site should be analyzed for and reclaimed to its best use.

### Agricultural Land

The extent of existing agricultural land within the County can be expected to decline through the end of the planning period, yet, it will remain the second most extensive land use within the County. This decline will occur in response to the demand for additional land for urban development and the economies associated with small scale commercial farming. The most fertile land should be retained for agricultural usage as long as possible.

### Urban and Built-Up Land

Anticipated population growth and improved economic conditions within Lee County can be expected to generate additional urban and built-up land by the end of the planning period. The Existing and Future Land Use Map (Plate 6) is not intended to show the exact location of areas to be developed for future urban and built-up area uses. It is intended to reflect the rationale which should be adopted and refined in developing urban and built-up areas. The criteria used in delineating those areas shown as future urban and built-up areas include:

- (1) Areas subject to flooding should not be developed.
- (2) Areas most suited for septic tank drainfields should be developed before less suited areas.
- (3) Areas with the greatest suitability for service by public sewage facilities should be developed before less suited areas.
- (4) Areas with public water supply service should be developed prior to areas without such service.
- (5) Areas in close proximity to commercial services, i.e., towns, should be developed prior to remote areas.
- (6) Areas with road access should be developed before areas without such access.
- (7) Areas currently being developed should not be abandoned.
- (8) Areas which are prime agricultural land should not be developed if possible.
- (9) Incompatible land uses should be discouraged

## Potential Industrial Areas

Potential industrial sites within Lee County hinge on several developmental criteria such as: location outside flood prone areas, suitable slope, water and sewer service, and proximity to major transportation routes. The majority of such potential locations are located within or near urban and built-up areas. Potential industrial sites in Lee County are delineated on the Existing and Future Land Use Map.

## Zoning Categories

### Sec. 4-1. A-1 Agricultural District

(a.) Intent of district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the A-1 Agricultural District is to preserve and maintain the predominately rural character of the County by encouraging agricultural, forestry, open space, recreational and conservation activities. The district is designed to protect and conserve the natural resources of the County by encouraging a balance between low intensity development and preservation of agricultural and forest land. It is also the intent of the district to provide opportunities for residential use on large lots within a rural environment, to avoid incompatible mixtures of different types of land uses, and to enable a variety of non-commercial support uses which require large land areas and are conducive to maintaining the rural environment. These uses are subject to the review and approval process to ensure compatibility. The district is intended to be applied to the bulk of the County, and especially to areas where public sewer and water services are not available and are not likely to be provided in the near future.

### Sec. 4-2 R-1 Single Family Residential District

(a.) Intent of the district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the R-1 Single-Family Residential District is to provide for areas of medium density single-family residential development. The district is intended for application where public sewer and water systems may or may not be available, and provides for varying lot sizes depending on availability of such services. The district is designed to preserve the character of existing medium density residential areas, to encourage new residential development in accordance with modern subdivision standards, to protect single-family residential areas from encroachment by potentially incompatible commercial land uses and higher density residential development, and to avoid undue burden on public services. The district is also intended to accommodate certain non-residential uses which are necessary to provide for the educational, recreational, cultural and public service needs of residential areas.

### Sec. 4-3 R-M Single-Family/ Manufactured Home Residential District

(a.) Intent of district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the R-M Single-Family/Manufactured Home Residential District is to provide for areas of medium density single-family

residential development. The District is intended for application where public sewer and water systems may or may not be available, and provides for varying lot sizes depending on availability of such services. The district is designed to preserve the character of existing medium density residential areas, to encourage new residential development in accordance with modern subdivision standards, to protect single-family residential areas from encroachment by potentially incompatible commercial land uses and higher density residential development, and to avoid undue burden on public services. The district is also intended to accommodate certain non-residential uses which are necessary to provide for the educational, recreational, and cultural and public service needs of residential areas. The district is similar to the R-1 Single Family Residential District but intended for areas with a mixture of both site built and manufactured homes.

#### Sec. 4-3 R-2 General Residential District

(a.) Intent of district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the R-2 General Residential District is to provide areas for relatively high density residential development with a variety of housing types to promote affordable housing within a suitable residential environment. The district is intended primarily for application in areas where public sewer and water systems are available, but provides for certain lower density development in areas not so served. The district is also designed to accommodate specific non-residential uses which are necessary to provide for the educational, recreational, cultural and public service needs of residential communities. It is the intent of the district to avoid a mix of potentially incompatible land uses by prohibiting uses of a commercial nature. The lot size, open space, yard and other requirements of the district are designed to avoid overcrowding of land, to promote compatible relationships among the various permitted housing types, and to avoid undue burden on public services.

#### Sec. 4-4 V-C Village Commercial District

(a.) Intent of District. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the Village Commercial District is to promote the future development around existing communities or areas of mixed land use and to enable compatible in-fill development or encourage compact development that provides rural residents with convenient access to community services and shopping and creates a sense of community identity. The district is intended to be a relatively small, well-defined area with a low to moderate density mixture of residential, low intensity commercial and community service uses such as churches and recreational facilities. It is intended to encourage development of attractive and functional communities through minimal and flexible regulations. The district is also intended to promote the County's goal of encouraging compact development at convenient locations and discourage strip development. To ensure compatibility with residences, the district requires that most non-residential uses be subject to special use permit or to plan of development approval by the Planning Commission.

#### Sec. 4-5 B-1 Limited Business District

(a.) Intent of district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the B-1 Limited Business District is to accommodate and encourage low-intensity retail, personal service and office uses which are compatible with adjacent and nearby rural areas and residential uses, and which provide for the convenience and day-to-day needs of residents of nearby neighborhoods and do not generate large volumes of traffic or heavy trucks. The district is intended to encourage small concentrations of business uses, to provide a transition between residential areas and heavier business uses and to be applied to relatively small geographical areas where convenience type businesses exist and where adjacent vacant properties may be appropriate for further limited business development.

#### Sec. 4-6 B-2 General Business District

(a.) Intent of the district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the B-2 General Business District is to accommodate a wide range of retail, wholesale, service and office uses which cater to the traveling public or serve all or large portions of the County. The district is intended to be applied along principal highways and to areas having direct access thereto in order to provide safe and efficient access for commercial and private vehicles while avoiding traffic on minor roads or through residential areas. The district is designed to afford flexibility in permitted uses and in the utilization of individual sites in order to promote business opportunities, economic development and provision of services for the community and surrounding area. The district contains yards, screening and other provisions intended to encourage compatible development and to ease the transition between business areas and adjacent rural and residential areas.

#### Sec. 4-7 M-1 Limited Industrial

(a.) Intent of the district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the M-1 Limited Industrial District is to provide appropriate locations for light industrial and manufacturing uses and for related service and support uses. It is intended that uses in the district involve minimal hazards and do not create significant amounts of smoke, noise, odor, dust or other nuisance, and provide employment opportunities and economic development potential. The district is intended to be located along or near primary highways to facilitate access and avoid industrial traffic impacts on minor roads and residential areas. The regulations in the district are designed to promote compatibility with neighboring uses and to avoid adverse impacts on existing and future industrial development so as to maximize industrial development opportunities in the County.

#### Sec. 4-8 M-2 General Industrial District

(a.) Intent of the district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the M-2 General Industrial District is to provide locations for general industrial and manufacturing uses which may result in greater amounts of smoke, noise, odor or dust than typically associated with uses permitted in the M-1 District.

The M-2 District is intended to accommodate those uses which, although not generally appropriate in other districts or in close proximity to residential, business or other industrial areas, provide desirable employment opportunities, enhance economic development potential, enlarge the tax base and provide needed services or products. The yard, screening, special use permit and other requirements of the district are designed to promote compatibility of development and to provide protection for other uses and for the community as a whole.

#### Sec. 4-9 RO Resource Overlay District

(a.) Intent of the district. Pursuant to the purposes of this Ordinance, the intent of the RO Resource Overlay District is to encourage the appropriate use of mineral resources in the County and to promote compatibility of mining and drilling activities with other land uses and with the land use objectives of the County. The district is intended to recognize the importance of mineral resources and of mining and drilling to the economy and well-being of the County by enabling greater flexibility in the land use regulations applicable to such activities than afforded through a more traditional zoning approach.

It is intended that the RO District be superimposed over the normal zoning district classifications so as to encompass the predominant areas of the County where coal, oil or natural gas resources exist, and where application of other zoning classifications permitting such activities would be inappropriate due to existing or anticipated land uses in such areas. In recognition of the comprehensive State regulations and approval processes which apply to the coal mining and oil and gas drilling industries, the RO District is designed to exercise the minimum degree of regulation necessary to enable coordination with applicable State review and permitting processes and to promote compatibility of mining, drilling and related activities with other land uses.

#### Section Sec. 4-10 FP Flood Plain Districts

(a.) Intent of the district. The intent of the FP Flood Plain District is to accomplish the purposes of the Lee County Flood Damage Reduction Ordinance as set forth in such Ordinance as adopted by the Lee County Board of Supervisors on January 18, 2011, and as thereafter amended.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Before formulating a plan for Lee County; goals, objectives and policies must be developed from among selected concerns identified in the background material. These goals, objectives and policies provide a framework for the comprehensive plan. Goals, objectives and policies have been developed for land use, transportation, housing, physical environment, community facilities, population, tourism and recreation, economy, housing, public safety and education.

A goal is a general statement of something, which the community wishes to achieve; it is an end towards which actions are aimed. An objective is a statement of a way in which a goal is to be reached; it refers to some specific idea, which is reasonably attainable. A policy is a statement prescribing a definite course of action or method of doing something; it is based on an assessment of existing conditions and future expectations.

### POPULATION

Goal: To encourage a population level and balance commensurate with housing, employment, economic opportunities, transportation systems and community services/facilities in conjunction with an awareness of natural resource limitations.

Objective: To promote both a population increase and a balanced population structure in Lee County.

Policies:

1. Encourage the construction of both water and sanitary sewer lines and expansions of such existing systems.
2. Encourage new housing construction in compliance with building codes and development regulations in those areas most amenable to development.
3. Maintain acceptable, safe traffic volumes, and road conditions.

## HOUSING

**Goal: Insure a suitable residential environment and adequate housing for all Lee County families.**

Objective: To encourage the use of Federal and State assistance for new residential construction and rehabilitation of substandard units.

Policies:

1. Encourage the use of Section 8 subsidy programs of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Loan programs of the Farmers Home Administration and Veterans Administration
2. Improve water and sewer systems using state/federal loan/grant funds where economically feasible for both the provider and end user.
3. Seek the assistance of the Lee County Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Appalachian Community Action, and the Appalachian Service Project to identify substandard units and encourage those agencies to seek federal or any other available funding to bring these units into compliance with at least the minimum Section 8 housing livability standards.
4. Initiate cleanup, fix-up campaigns calling upon the resources of the numerous civic and church groups in the County.
5. Encourage the installation and use of solar energy systems in residential and commercial areas.
6. Focus on housing in Western end of the County in conjunction with the growth of Lincoln Memorial University's DVTC.

Objective: To encourage development of additional housing opportunities for the handicapped.

Policy:

1. Encourage development of a supervised housing complex by seeking out a developer in the private sector.

Objective: To encourage development of a supervised housing complex by seeking out a developer in the private sector.

Policy:

1. Encourage residents to investigate home financing options offered by Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and the Veteran's Administration (VA).

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**Goal: Provide a range of community facilities and services to meet Lee County's current and emerging needs.**

### Utilities

Objective: To expand the scope of water and sewer service to meet future demands.

Policies:

1. Provide for adequate water service in accordance with Lee County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Study.
2. Extend water and sewer to developing areas and areas experiencing sanitation or water supply problems, including areas along the 58 corridor.
3. Require developers to install water distribution and sewerage collection.
4. Eliminate any possible sanitary health threats that are presently existent due to inadequate forms of waste water service or septic systems.

### Solid Waste

Objective: To provide for residential, commercial, and non-hazardous industrial solid waste disposal; particularly, in recognition that the establishment and operation of any sanitary landfill must be a function of the public sector due to the tremendous potential for adverse impact of such facilities on the environmental resources of the County and the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Industrial Park Development

Objective: To utilize the resources of the County to best locate industrial development within the County.

Policies:

1. Investigate the development of land adjacent to major transportation corridors for potential economic development.
2. Investigate the potential for economic development on land near or adjacent to the Lee County Airport.

3. Investigate opportunities to collaborate with partners in the Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority.

## Information Technology

Objective: To focus on the roles telecommunications are now playing on personal, commercial, and governmental growth and their importance on economic development.

Policies:

1. Identify telecommunication facility (towers, buildings, lines, etc.) locations and encourage the use of those locations that can ensure a broad range of services, with minimal impact and compatible with nearby land
2. Encourage competition among existing and new services that will offer low-cost, effective communications for businesses and residents.
3. Promote economic growth by encouraging businesses that make use of information technology.

## TOURISM AND RECREATION

Objective: To encourage expansion of Lee County's recreational activities and facilities and to improve the general appearance and promotion of the County's natural resources and tourism sites.

Policies:

1. Engage with local and regional tourism stakeholders and industry partners in collaboration with the Heart of Appalachia to maintain and grow market share of Lee County.
2. Investigate opportunities to partner with Scott County to market and build theme around Boone, Byway and entertainment (music and theater)
3. Create better access to County tourism/historic sites (Hensley Settlement, Sand Cave, etc.).
4. Investigate the coordination of events that utilize all of the County and State Parks (Wilderness Road, Thomas Walker, Leeman and Cumberland).
5. Provide tourism industry leadership to ensure the destination remains competitive.

## TRANSPORTATION

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

Policies:

1. Promote the completion of Highway 58 by completing the bypasses around the Towns of Pennington Gap and Jonesville.
2. Improve and enhance the road that serves Lee County Airport.

Objective: Promote feasible solutions to relieve current and future traffic and support specific land use objectives.

Policies:

1. Expand Lee County Airport services.
2. Investigate possible alternatives for public transportation to serve Lee County.
3. Use transportation measures for better access to historic sites in County via trails and access roads.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Objective: To maintain and continue to improve public safety for the residents and visitors of Lee County.

Policies:

1. Maintain the existing 911 system to be as accurate and accessible as possible.
2. Continue participation in the Regional Jail and identify any additional opportunities to streamline operations.
3. Improve the security within County Offices and the Courthouse Building.

## EDUCATION

Objective: To maintain and continue to develop the educational opportunities that are available for the residents of Lee County.

Policies:

1. Encourage school/business partnerships.
2. Investigate, with the School Board, the cost savings and feasibility of consolidating smaller schools to

maximize efficiency.

3. Advance policies that increase the number of candidates entering the teaching profession and encourage and support the recruitment development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and school leaders.

Objective: To use the increasing array of technology that is becoming available to improve the present and add to the educational selection and choices for Lee County residents.

Policies:

1. Incorporate technology training into the secondary education system with a focus on training for technology related careers.
2. Promote the envelopments of satellite centers at local schools for college level courses from local institutions of higher learning.

## Land Use

Objective: To maximize the current land use patterns that have been established while looking at possible land use changes that could better the development of the County

Policies:

1. Encourage development along transportation corridors

Objective: Minimize disturbance to existing land use when new land use takes place

Policies:

1. Practice responsible regrowth and planting.
2. Follow a sediment control plan.
3. Follow floodplain management practices.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan is even more important than its preparation and adoption because the plan will be of little use unless it is carried out. There are several techniques authorized by Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Code of Virginia, 1950 (as amended) that enable the Lee County to implement the plan once it has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. These include subdivision regulations, a zoning ordinance and capital improvements programming which are discussed below.

### Adopting the Comprehensive Plan

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

### Subdivision Ordinance

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

### Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance controls the use of land, lot sizes, the size and height of buildings, and the placement of buildings on the land. It also delineates district boundaries and specifies the activities that may be conducted in each district. Zoning helps preserve the existing character of an area by excluding incompatible uses while permitting those uses that can exist in harmony. However, it does not eliminate incompatible land uses that already exist in an area, but may provide a means of phasing out such uses if they are ever discontinued.

### Capital Improvements Program

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

accomplish over a five year period.

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

If Lee County develops a CIP, capital improvements recommended in the Comprehensive Plan should be considered among the projects to be included in the document. This would help tie together the timing, location, and financing of public improvements with the County's planning program.

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

### Citizen Participation

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

### Intergovernmental Coordination

Coordination among public and private decision makers is essential if the Comprehensive Plan policies are to be implemented. Without coordination, policies will overlap, their effectiveness will be reduced and costs will

be unnecessarily high. Consistent decisions and the facilitation of citizen support is likewise essential. The County must work closely with the three towns in the County, the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, and state and federal agencies to achieve the stated goals. The County cannot stand alone. It must be a team member, aware of its neighbor's activities and of new programs being considered by state and federal governments.

### Plan Review and Update

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

### Legal Status of Comprehensive Plan Enforcement

Chapter 22, Article 3 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia — in particular, § 15.2-2232 — grants legal status to an adopted Comprehensive Plan. Any violation or attempted violation of these State Code provisions and/or any provision of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan as referred to in § 15.2-2232 may be restrained, corrected or abated as the case may be by injunction or other appropriate proceeding brought by Lee County as authorized by Chapter 22, Article 1, Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia.

# Appendix A

## Existing Land Use Map

# Appendix B

## Future Land Use Map