



# **ALLEGHANY COUNTY**

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

MARCH 2019

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF ALLEGHANY  
Covington, Virginia**

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 7:00 P.M., in the Board Room of the County Governmental Complex thereof, the following action was taken:

<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>NOTE:</u>
Stephen A. Bennett, Chairman	YES
Cletus W. Nicely, Vice-Chair	YES
Shannon P. Cox	YES
G. Matt Garten	YES
James M. Griffith	YES
Richard L. Shull	YES
M. Joan Vannorsdall	YES

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Shull, that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, the current Comprehensive Plan for the County was adopted and effective May 7, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.2-2223, *et al* of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, requires the Comprehensive Plan be updated and readopted at least every five years; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on updates to the Comprehensive Plan on April 2, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Board determines that the County Comprehensive Plan as presented, along with other minor technical changes, is a proper and beneficial guide for the County's growth, development, and public policy making over the next five years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Comprehensive Plan be and is hereby adopted this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Comprehensive Plan be and is hereby commended and referred to County officials, Boards and Commissions, all interested public agencies, citizens, and other private interests as the County's official guide and plan pursuant to Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 3 of the Code of Virginia.

Unanimously adopted.

A COPY TESTE:

Melissa A. Munsey  
Melissa A. Munsey  
Deputy Clerk to the Board



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Stephen A. Bennett  
Shannon P. Cox  
Matt Garten  
James M. Griffith  
Cletus W. Nicely  
Richard Lee Shull  
M. Joan Vannorsdall

## COUNTY STAFF

### ADMINISTRATION

Jonathan A. Lanford, County Administrator  
Jim H. Guynn Jr., County Attorney  
Melissa Munsey, Deputy Clerk

### ZONING & PLANNING

Shelly Dudley Mongold, County Planner / Zoning Administrator

### PLANNING COMMISSION

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Kevin Terrell, Vice-Chairman, Jackson River District  
James Earwood, Jr., Boiling Springs District  
William Riley, Falling Spring District  
David Halsey, Clifton Forge West District  
Richard Engleman, Sharon District  
Dave Oeltjen, Clifton Forge East District

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James Griffith  
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Jon Lanford  
Shelly Dudley Mongold  
Jerry Morgan  
Brandon Parker  
Delores Quarles  
Brett Siebenkittel  
Eric Tyree  
Jacob Wright

## PREPARED BY

Benchmark Planning

## DATE PREPARED

March 2019

**NOTE:** This is the official Comprehensive Plan for Alleghany County's jurisdiction only.

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# SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION & VISION

*VISION: Allegheny County and the City of Covington are a model for cooperative planning and sustainable regional growth – working together to protect our environmental and cultural resources while promoting economic growth that supports the stability of the Allegheny Highlands. Together, we seek to achieve greater prosperity through collaborative relationships that connect the Allegheny Highlands economically, socially, and physically.*

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan sets forth the "blueprint" for the future of Allegheny County. It is the vision of what the community wants to become and the strategies to follow in order to realize that vision. The plan is comprised of goals and objectives that provide a framework for decision-making and the allocation of resources as they relate to the long-term development of the County. In addition to the Introduction, Goals & Objectives, and Community Profile, this Plan is comprised of nine (9) elements and an implementation scheme to form an integrated, unified plan. These elements include the:

- *Land Use & Community Character* - Planning for the most appropriate future use of land assuring a consistent character throughout the region.
- *Transportation* - Planning for the most appropriate general location, character, and extent of highways, rail, and other means of moving people and commodities.
- *Housing* - Planning for ways to ensure a decent residential environment for all residents.
- *Infrastructure* - Planning for the most appropriate future location and extent of public infrastructure.
- *Natural Environment* - Planning for the conservation of natural resources and sensitive areas.
- *Community Services* - Planning for the most appropriate future location, character, and extent of public lands, buildings, and facilities.
- *Historic & Cultural Resources* - Planning for the conservation of the County's historic and cultural resources.
- *Parks & Recreation* - Planning for the location, function, character, and extent of public park and recreation land, buildings, and facilities.
- *Economic Development* - Planning for the most appropriate way to sustain and grow the County's economic base.
- *Implementation* - Implementing strategies to achieve this plan's objectives, goals and the vision of the Allegheny Highlands.

The Alleghany County Comprehensive Plan is characteristically broad and long-range in nature, providing policy recommendations and guidance for the next 10-20 years. The plan extends beyond the current issues and anticipates limitations and opportunities that will shape future growth and development patterns. While the plan often describes and references other jurisdictions within Alleghany County, it only serves as the official Comprehensive Plan for Alleghany County. The City of Covington, while a partner with Alleghany County in the joint planning process adopted a similar, but unique plan for its jurisdiction. The towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate, have their own Comprehensive Plans that will continue to be in effect for their communities.

### LEGAL BASIS FOR PLANNING IN VIRGINIA

The legal basis for planning in Alleghany County, and all jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia that exercise planning and zoning authority, is established by the Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 22 Planning, Subdivision of Land and Zoning. This section of code details the elements that are required and the optional elements for inclusion into a Comprehensive Plan, including the provision that transportation plans be reviewed by the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure consistency with statewide plans and the inclusion of affordable housing designation and implementation measures. This plan addresses each one of these required elements.

### USE OF MAPS IN THIS PLAN

All maps provided as part of this Plan are general illustrations of County policies that are specifically described in the text. While Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology was used to render these maps, the precise borders shown may not indicate the absolute true location for various boundaries.

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is an important component of the local planning process. During this planning process, Alleghany County worked collaboratively with the City of Covington, establishing a joint steering committee to oversee the development of the comprehensive plan updates for each jurisdiction. The steering committee provided a broad base of input into the process to help ensure overall concerns throughout the community were communicated.

In addition to the steering committee's input, the plan also included the input of a variety of stakeholders and focus groups with expertise in various fields and elements of the plan. Approximately 50 people were interviewed during the process in the areas of transportation, land use, economic development, public safety, emergency services, public services, public utilities, education, parks and recreation, natural and environmental resources, downtown development, real estate, community development and various community organizations.

A project website was also established to help inform the community about the process and provide an opportunity to provide input. The project website was linked with a separate Facebook page for the project to generate additional input. The website page generated over 1,798 unique views. As part of the online and social media outreach, a survey was developed that generated over 400 responses, helping to inform the development of the vision and the plan.

Finally the community was provided opportunity to learn more about the plan at a public meeting held in May 2018 and public presentations and meetings with the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

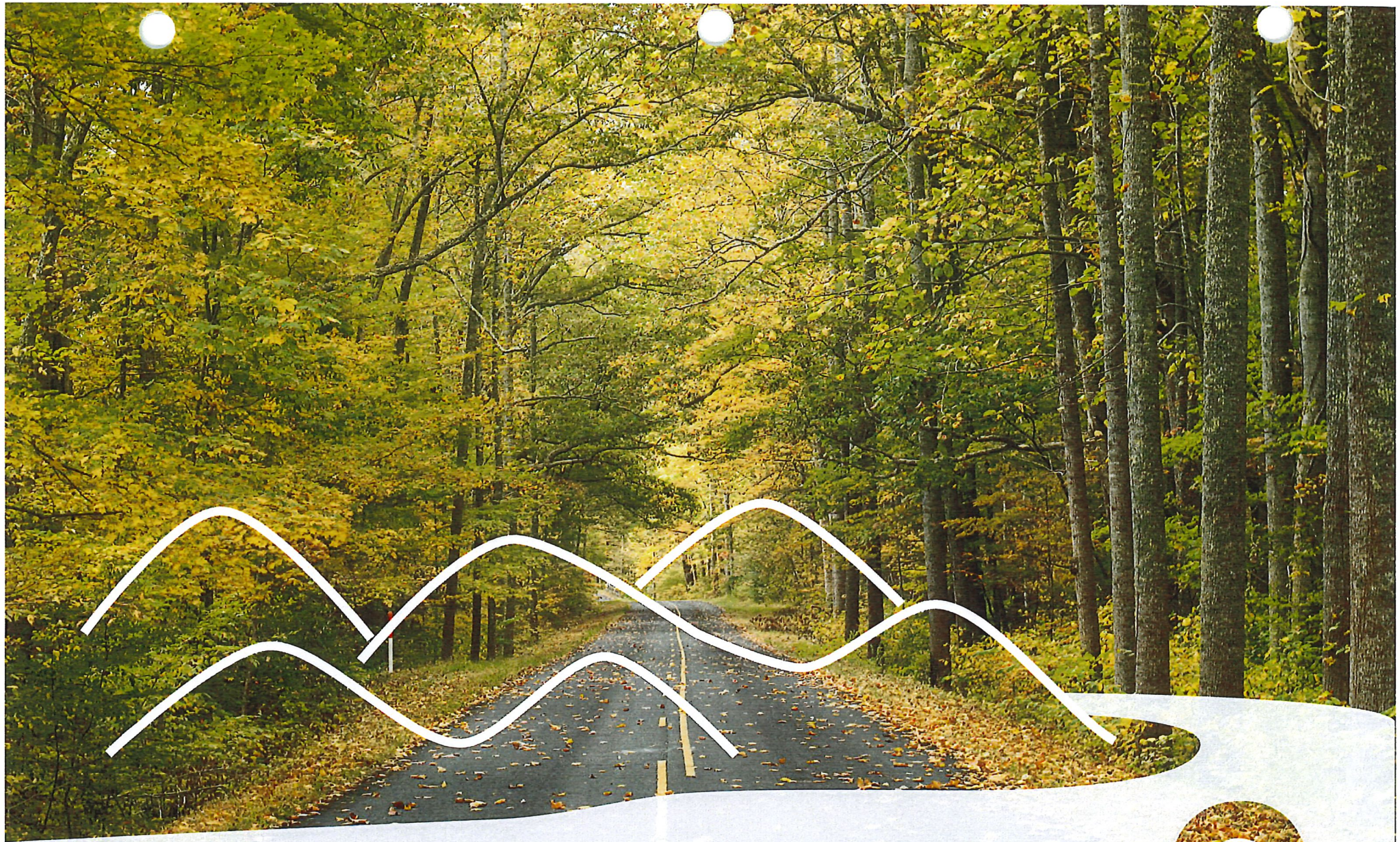
## ABOUT ALLEGHANY COUNTY

Alleghany County is located in the western part of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as part of the larger Appalachian Mountain region. The name of the county comes from "Allegheny," a Native American word meaning "endless," referring to the vast mountain viewshed. European immigrants first settled the area in 1746, and the County became established on January 5, 1822. The County, along with the City of Covington, incorporated in 1833; the Town of Clifton Forge, originally incorporated in 1884 and reverting to a town in 2001; and along with the Town of Iron Gate are now known as the Alleghany Highlands.

This region has gone through different growth spurts and economic changes since its inception, stemming largely from a robust agricultural sector raising cattle, producing milk, and growing corn, oats, wheat, and orchard fruits. By the mid-late 1700s, the area saw an increase in transportation infrastructure connecting to nearby places like Lexington, Virginia, and Lewisburg, West Virginia. Post-Civil War, industry started to boom, focusing first on iron, then on paper products, and various other industries. The Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Railroad was formed in 1867, consolidating two lines in the area. Clifton Forge (known as Williamson) was the dividing point for the railroad, growing due to its success.

The Great Depression affected the Alleghany Highlands region hard. The region's two iron companies closed, causing a decline in employment and eventually population. President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program eased the decline through employing people to fight fires, build roads, and construct Douthat State Park and the Longdale Recreation area. Since this time, both the economy and the population have fluctuated with the expansion and closures of industry in the area.





2



## SECTION 2. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Alleghany County and the City of Covington have come together to plan cooperatively for the future of the Alleghany Highlands. To further this effort, both entities participated in a joint planning process. Below you will find the mutually agreed upon goals and objectives. However, the implementation strategies, defined later, differ between the two plans.

This Comprehensive Plan sets forth guidance for Alleghany County and the City of Covington to achieve their vision. The Joint Steering Committee crafted goals and objectives to direct this plan. Goals, for the purposes of this plan, are statements about what the County and City aim to achieve. These statements give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the intended direction of the City and County. Objectives provide a defined course of direction that will set a framework for specific actions, or implementation strategies. The objectives herein provide guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administration as each make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments. It is important to note that due to the joint nature of this project, goals and objectives are the same for both the City and County. Implementation strategies will differ by jurisdiction.

***// Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success. //***

-Pablo Picasso





## GOAL 1

*The Alleghany Highlands will become known as the recreation & cultural hub of Western Virginia.*

**OBJECTIVE A. Develop arts and cultural centers within the Alleghany Highlands into tourism destinations.**

The existing fabric of arts and cultural centers within the Alleghany Highlands should be highlighted, drawing attention to these places as destinations for trips, both local and tourist.

**OBJECTIVE B. Promote the preservation of historic structures within the Alleghany Highlands to help maintain the community's unique sense of place.**

The Alleghany Highlands is rich in history, highlighting the importance for preserving existing structures. It is important to note that not every structure is historic, and not every historic structure has been kept in a condition suitable for restoration.

**OBJECTIVE C. Improve the health and vitality of the regional ecosystem.**

In order to reduce potential negative effects on environmental areas, planning and zoning measures need to ensure sensitive or designated lands retain their ecological value.

**OBJECTIVE D. Preserve the rustic mountain landscape and views that create the beautiful natural setting of the Alleghany Highlands.**

The mountain views add character and aid in the Eco-tourism and recreation economy for the Alleghany Highlands. While the US Forest Service owns a large portion of the mountain ridge

lines, it is important to place protective measures to ensure these areas remain undisturbed in the future.

**OBJECTIVE E. Improve connectivity and usage of the regional park system.**

The Jackson River Scenic Trail, associated parks, and open spaces are gems of the Alleghany Highlands. Continued connectivity will enhance these areas and improve usage of the facilities.

**OBJECTIVE F. Develop outdoor recreation- and Eco-tourism-related business opportunities.**

With the natural amenities in the Alleghany Highlands, this region is prime for extending the Eco-tourism-related economic sector. Focused business plans will help guide economic growth.

**OBJECTIVE G. Attract and Promote unique accommodations throughout the Alleghany Highlands.**

Although the Alleghany Highlands has many recreation and tourism destinations that attract people from outside of the region, there are limited lodging accommodations. The City, County and local Economic Development Corporation should seek to cultivate opportunities for new lodging, including the use of programs such as the Commonwealth of Virginia Tourism Development Financing Program.



**GOAL 2** *Our communities will develop the regional economy by supporting existing industry, embracing economic diversification, and fostering emerging business and industry sectors.*

**OBJECTIVE A.** Ensure that an adequate supply of land is available to meet future economic development needs.

A recent study was completed by the county that evaluated larger tracts of land for industry or new businesses. As an example, this study can be implemented by use of a joint revenue sharing agreement between Alleghany County and the City of Covington.

**OBJECTIVE B.** Increase business and industry development within the Alleghany Highlands.

The Highlands has strong roots in industry, be it iron, paper, or other materials. In order to keep a sustainable economy, the region will need to diversify its economy by increasing both business and industry.

**OBJECTIVE C.** Support the growth and expansion of the region's base economic sectors.

The region has an industrial and manufacturing based economy that relies upon a diverse array of support businesses. It is important to support these economic drivers throughout the Alleghany Highlands with a particular focus on expanding the presence of the tertiary/supply chain sectors that support major industries in the area.

**OBJECTIVE D.** Develop emerging sectors of our economy.

The foundation of the regional economy is industry, which allows the region to grow new and emerging sectors of the economy, such as unmanned aerial aircraft (drone) technology, Eco-tourism, as well as new economies as the opportunities arise.

**OBJECTIVE E.** Cultivate asset-based economic development.

One of the strongest ways to grow an economy is to leverage the area's assets. For the Alleghany Highlands, these assets are the natural environmental features of the region including ridge lines, dense forests, the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers, and a host of beautifully-maintained recreation facilities.



### GOAL 3

***Alleghany County and the City of Covington will improve and expand collaboration to provide effective and efficient services to citizens.***

**OBJECTIVE A. Continue collaboration and coordination between Alleghany County and the City of Covington on regional issues.**

Building on the existing long-range planning collaboration, the County and City should continue to work through regional issues, avoiding complication and garnering cost sharing opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE B. Coordinate infrastructure improvements throughout the Alleghany Highlands.**

The County should look into areas with decreased water, sewer, natural gas, and/or broadband services to determine if it is cost effective to extend or upgrade infrastructure. In areas that are targeted for development, utility improvements would be a catalyst for private investment.

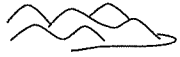
**OBJECTIVE C. Collaborate with the local education systems to improve career and technical-oriented education offerings in the region.**

Both Alleghany County and the City of Covington can leverage the education available at the K-12 schools, along with the Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, the Governor's School, and the Jackson River Technical Center, to modify or create programs relevant to the local employers and emerging

sectors, while highlighting the education opportunities that already exist in the region.

**OBJECTIVE D. Link the Medical/Hospital, Emergency Medical Service and Fire Protection efforts throughout the Alleghany Highlands to boost efficiency and coverage.**

While collaboration currently exists amongst services, continued communication between the services in different jurisdictions and between the services themselves can improve efficiency throughout the Alleghany Highlands.

**GOAL 4**

***Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.***

**OBJECTIVE A. Improve the quality of the housing stock in the Alleghany Highlands.**

Pockets of housing show disrepair and lack of maintenance, due to numerous factors. The City and County need to implement strategies aimed at helping to improve the baseline quality for housing and catalyze rehabilitation efforts.

**OBJECTIVE B. Expand the variety of the housing stock in the Alleghany Highlands.**

While available housing does exist, there is a lack of variety in housing, particularly for young professionals and aging residents. Providing a variety of housing types will allow for an increase in residents that prefer those housing types, reducing out-migration and offering an opportunity for in-migration.

**OBJECTIVE C. Upgrade the quality of commercial spaces in the City of Covington.**

The City has an established commercial fabric that has not been maintained consistently over the years. The City should work with property owners to refresh and update its commercial properties through building improvements, infrastructure upgrades, and landscaping projects.

**OBJECTIVE D. Cultivate infill and/or redevelopment within the City of Covington.**

There are numerous places throughout the City with vacant or dilapidated buildings that would benefit from redevelopment or demolition and infill development. The City will need to create a market and procedures to encourage infill and redevelopment efforts.

**OBJECTIVE E. Establish an urban trail network to connect residential and commercial areas with parks, schools, and the regional trail network, creating an active living environment.**

Develop a trail network for the City of Covington that can function as a recreation trail and transportation pathway. This trail can connect populated neighborhoods with City landmarks and schools, and connect to the County's trail system to help encourage active living.

**OBJECTIVE F. Launch a gateway development initiative to enhance key entrances into Alleghany County.**

While this region has a lot to offer, unless a visitor is headed to a specific location, there is little to entice a traveler off of Interstate 64. The region lacks a strong visual presence at many of the existing gateways. Key entrances need to be established that visually highlight their unique character and amenities.

**OBJECTIVE G. Improve land use compatibility in areas where incompatible development patterns and uses have been established that threaten the integrity of neighborhoods or quality of commercial areas.**

Throughout the City, there are adjacent incompatible uses in various locations. Care should be taken to implement regulations that will prevent this from happening in the future, while addressing the incompatibilities in the present.

**OBJECTIVE H. Improve the appearance in the City of Covington's downtown**

Proactive regulation, maintenance projects, and beautification projects can help alleviate the blight in numerous residential and commercial areas within the City of Covington's downtown.

**OBJECTIVE I. Revitalize downtown Covington**

Aside from appearance improvements for downtown Covington, the City should seek to market the core area for economic development, look for ways to increase foot traffic, add public art spaces, and so forth to encourage a vibrant and walkable downtown.

**OBJECTIVE J. Improve the Alleghany Highlands' road network.**

Road improvements are a never ending process; however, the City and County can communicate what is happening, what needs to happen, and how to move forward with prioritizing improvements that help catalyze economic development and residential revitalization.

**OBJECTIVE K. Decrease the amount of commercial vehicle traffic on residential streets.**

A consistent resident concern is the amount of commercial vehicle and truck traffic that travels along residential streets. To help alleviate stress on residential neighborhoods, commercial traffic can be routed off of traditionally residential streets to ensure safety and a continued flow of traffic.

**OBJECTIVE L. Maintain and upgrade bridge infrastructure.**

Many of the bridges in the Alleghany Highlands need maintenance repairs, expansion for sidewalks and/or bike lanes, and structural upgrades. While no bridge rates unsafe, care should be taken to upgrade and repair bridges on a prioritized schedule.



## **GOAL 5**     *Our region will reverse the population decline of the past several decades.*

**OBJECTIVE A.** Make the Alleghany Highlands a more attractive and appealing location for current and future residents.

Improving the region's appearance will help reduce the amount of population loss and draw new residents to the area.

**OBJECTIVE B.** Create a positive sense of place for the Alleghany Highlands to attract population growth.

Creating places and destinations throughout the Alleghany Highlands will help improve the aesthetics creating a positive sense of place to attract new residents.

**OBJECTIVE C.** Achieve a zero-net loss of population between 2020 and 2025.

This Plan should be implemented to slow and stop the population decline in the short-term.

**OBJECTIVE D.** Achieve a minimum five percent (5%) gain in population over year five-year (5) period between 2025 and 2040.

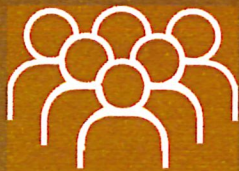
Implementing the strategies listed in implementation section of this plan will help grow the region's population in the long-term.







# COMMUNITY PROFILE



16,250  
POPULATION

The UVA Cooper Center **projection** for the County through the year 2045.

-29%  
NEGATIVE  
GROWTH



11,535  
PROJECTED  
POPULATION



Between 2000 & 2010 the Town of Clifton Forge reverted to a town. The Town's population (3,884 in 2010) has been added to county numbers.



2.33  
PEOPLE PER  
HOUSEHOLD

\$45,007  
MEDIAN  
HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME



\$55,400  
MEAN  
HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME

1 IN 6 PERSONS LIVE  
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL



Allegheny has more persons living below the poverty level than Virginia (1 in 9) and the U.S. (about 1 in 7).

County median age

47

State median age

38

2x GREATER THAN STATE OF VIRGINIA  
OLD AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO

Allegheny County's old age dependency ratio is almost twice that of Virginia's (41 compared to 21 respectively).



16% of the population have a Bachelor's degree or higher

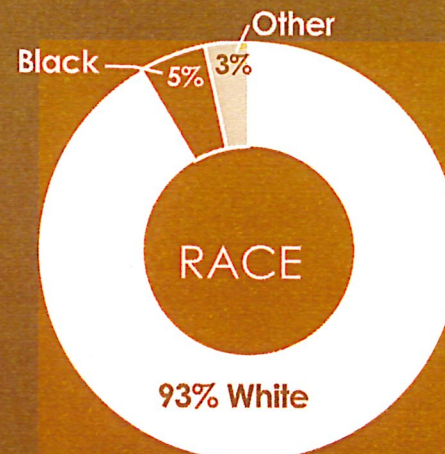


68% of the population have a High School diploma, some college or an Associates degree



16% of the population have no High School diploma

The County population with a Bachelor's degree or higher is 4% more than Virginia. In addition, the County has 4% more individuals with no High School diploma than Virginia.





## SECTION 3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The value of understanding a community's demographic characteristics cannot be overstated. Population and housing are directly related - with demand for housing rising and falling in correlation to population trends. Having a population with young professionals and retirees requires a different mix of housing types than one predominantly comprised of families. In a similar fashion, the area's demographics determine the number of schools, type of transportation services, and community service needs. The educational attainment of the population affects the number and types of jobs created in the community. How the population grows and changes also impacts the environment. Therefore, knowing the existing population characteristics will help guide the strategies that will lead to achieving the County's goals.

### POPULATION

Population growth has been a concern in Alleghany County for the past few decades. Looking at the trends, the population in the County grew between 1970 and 1980, but has declined slowly since then. While the data shows that population increased by about 3,000 people between 2000 and 2010, it is important to note that the Town of Clifton Forge reverted to town status and their population, roughly 3,000 residents, is now counted as part of the County's population. Without the Town's added population, there remains a decline in population.

### AGE

The age structure of Alleghany County shows a trend toward an aging community, meaning that the percentage of the older population is larger than the youth, young adult, and middle-aged population. This affects what types of services will be needed in the future, what types of housing or communities will be needed, and the overall economic standing of the County.

### HOUSEHOLDS

The number of housing units in Alleghany County includes 8,063 houses, of which 84 percent (or 6,781) are occupied. There are 2.33 people per household with a mean (or average) household income of \$55,400. The median household income is \$45,007, indicating that there are more households with income lower than the mean and fewer above. It should also be noted that the County has 17 percent of their population living below the poverty level.

### EDUCATION

Educational attainment in the County highlights the trade-oriented workforce that exists. Thirty-seven percent of the population older than 25 have a high school diploma, with 22 percent having attended some college. Post-secondary education statistics show that nine percent (9%) have associate's

degrees, 10 percent have bachelor's degrees and six percent (6%) have graduate or professional degrees. It is important to note that 16 percent of this population has no diploma or less than a 9th grade education.

## IMPLICATIONS

These statistics show that Alleghany County is losing roughly 1,000 people per decade, the existing population is aging, they are low-to-middle income, and have seen a decline in the size of the labor force. The percentage of the population under the poverty level is larger than the Virginia (11.2%) and the national percentage (14.5%). These numbers support the County's goal to grow population and invest in economic development to boost the Alleghany Highlands.

Alleghany's population loss highlights that there is a need to stabilize the population before it can begin growing again. This plan establishes a goal to do just that, by focusing on economic development, neighborhood and community investment, continued regional collaboration, and investing in the recreation and arts culture present in the Highlands.

The aging population highlights future needs for residents of Alleghany County. Having a large number of people over the age of 65 indicates there will most likely be increased medical needs and use of the medical system. In addition, in some areas, housing will need to accommodate residents who may

not be able to climb stairs or maintain their property. Looking forward, these concerns need to be accounted for in policy and action strategies to avoid negative effects.

In order to increase the median income in the area, economic development should focus on those economic sectors that show higher weekly wages for workers. Business and industry statistics indicated existing target industries in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, transportation warehousing, and financial services. Emerging target industries include food and beverage manufacturing, life sciences and IT. However, other business opportunities should not be discouraged solely because of economic sector, as new businesses may bring in future residents. Economic development strategies should be balanced in a way to support and retain existing jobs and residents while attracting new residents and new opportunities.







## SECTION 4. LAND USE

Alleghany County includes a portion of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, covering half of the County's land area. To grow smart, lands are highlighted for future development, lessening the pressure on rural, vulnerable land not appropriate for development.

Alleghany County is unique in that roughly 50 percent of its land area is owned by the United States Forest Service as part of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. An analysis of land cover from the National Land Cover Database 2011, shows that an additional 40 percent of Alleghany County's land area is forested, bringing the total to just under 260,000 acres of forested land.

Additionally, the county is part of the Appalachian Mountain region; therefore, there is a number of ridge lines and high elevation points that make development county-wide improbable. Between these ridge lines are areas that have been developed for mainly residential or industrial purposes, with agricultural land dispersed throughout the valleys.

Looking to the future, land uses should reflect the goals of the region, as well as the confines of the environment. In order to increase economic development, land needs to be set aside for potential industrial or commercial development, especially around the interchange areas along Interstate 64. While the short-term goal is to stabilize the population decline, the long-

term strategy is to encourage new opportunities and growth. In order to accomplish this goal, the Future Land Use Map, on the following page, highlights areas where concentrations of residential, commercial, or industrial development can be accommodated in the long-term.

### LAND USE

Due to the presence of extensive ridge lines, there are large areas where development is not appropriate. The mountain views create a unique viewshed that aids in attracting new residents and tourists. While many of these ridge lines are under the US Forest Service's jurisdiction, this plan recognizes the importance of these areas with the "Highlands" future land use designation. This land use category identifies these areas as very low development potential, helping to maintain the rural nature of the valleys and majestic views of the ridge lines. The natural features in the Highlands locations act as impediments to development, encouraging development toward the more appropriate areas with access to infrastructure in the county, helping to maintain the rural feel of the region and the Highlands.

## ALLEGHANY COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE MAP

This map shows land use categories as delineated by the color-coded shapes that generally outline the area designated for the identified future land use category, without being property-specific. This allows for discretion in administering the land use plan over the next decade. The descriptions for each of the land use designations are described below.

### HIGHLANDS

The Highlands are characterized by forests, mountain terrain, and open space that exemplifies Alleghany County's rural heritage. Scattered residences are located on large lots, roughly one per five acres. There are opportunities for rural business in these areas associated with farming, recreation, Eco-tourism, and providing services to rural residents.

### RURAL PRESERVATION

Areas designated as Rural Preservation have characteristics that make it more feasible for low density development within the greater Highlands category. These areas are appropriate for residential development that is compatible with the established low-density, rural land use patterns as well as small-scale commercial business that directly support these rural communities.

### RURAL COMMUNITY

Rural communities are situated within the Highlands where lots

become smaller and homes are closer to the street, exemplifying a more traditional settlement pattern and community.

### RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Residential transition locations consist of significant single-family residential areas that exist in close proximity to the City of Covington, the Town of Clifton Forge, or the Town of Iron Gate. These areas allow for a transition from the lower intensity of the rural areas into the higher density urban environments.

### HIGHWAY MIXED USE

Similar to residential transition areas, these areas function as a transition between the highway environment and the rural areas. These areas are designated for various commercial, industrial, or civic uses that rely upon access to a major transportation route.

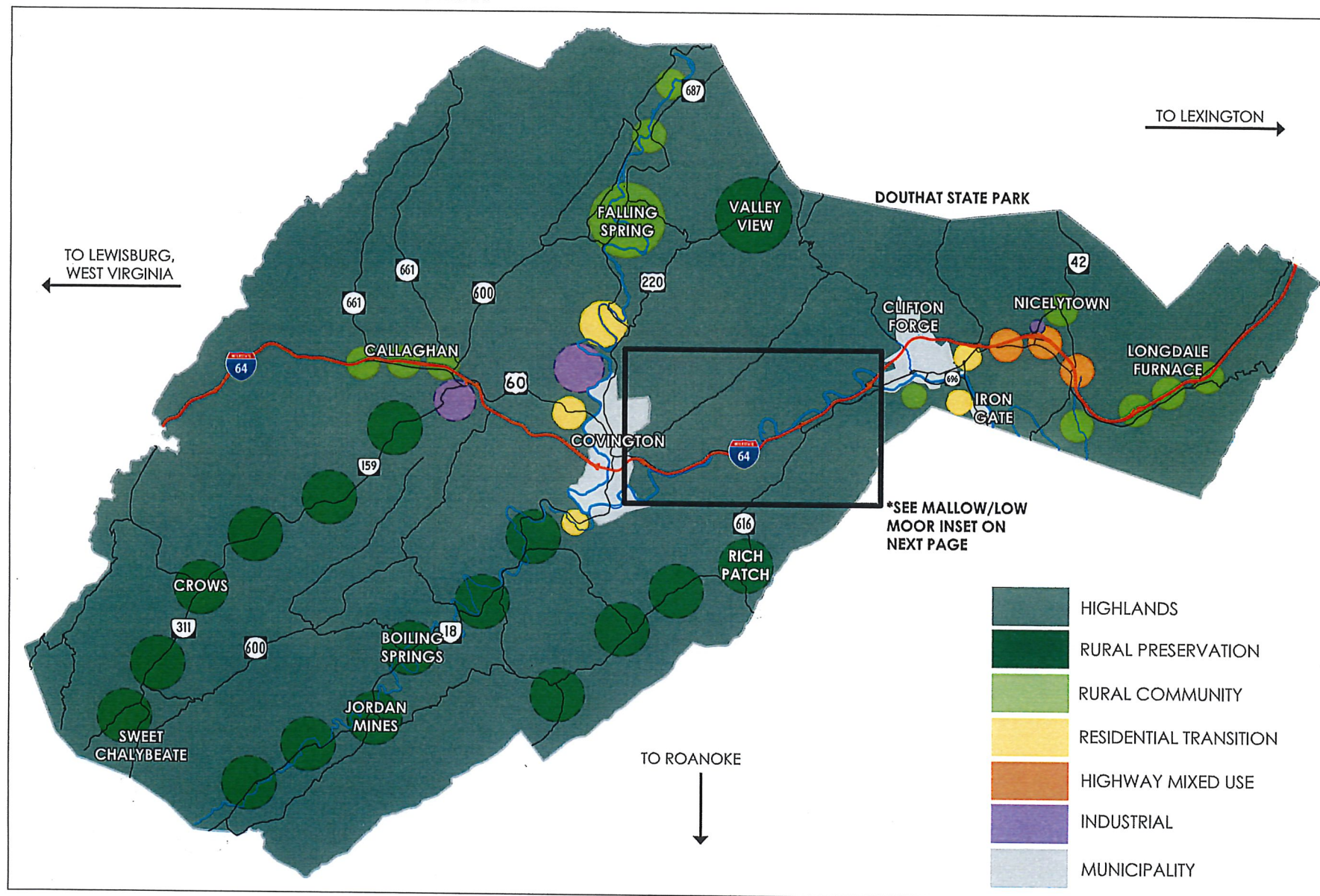
### CIVIC

Lands with civic designation are specifically used for government services and other public/non-profit uses.

### INDUSTRIAL

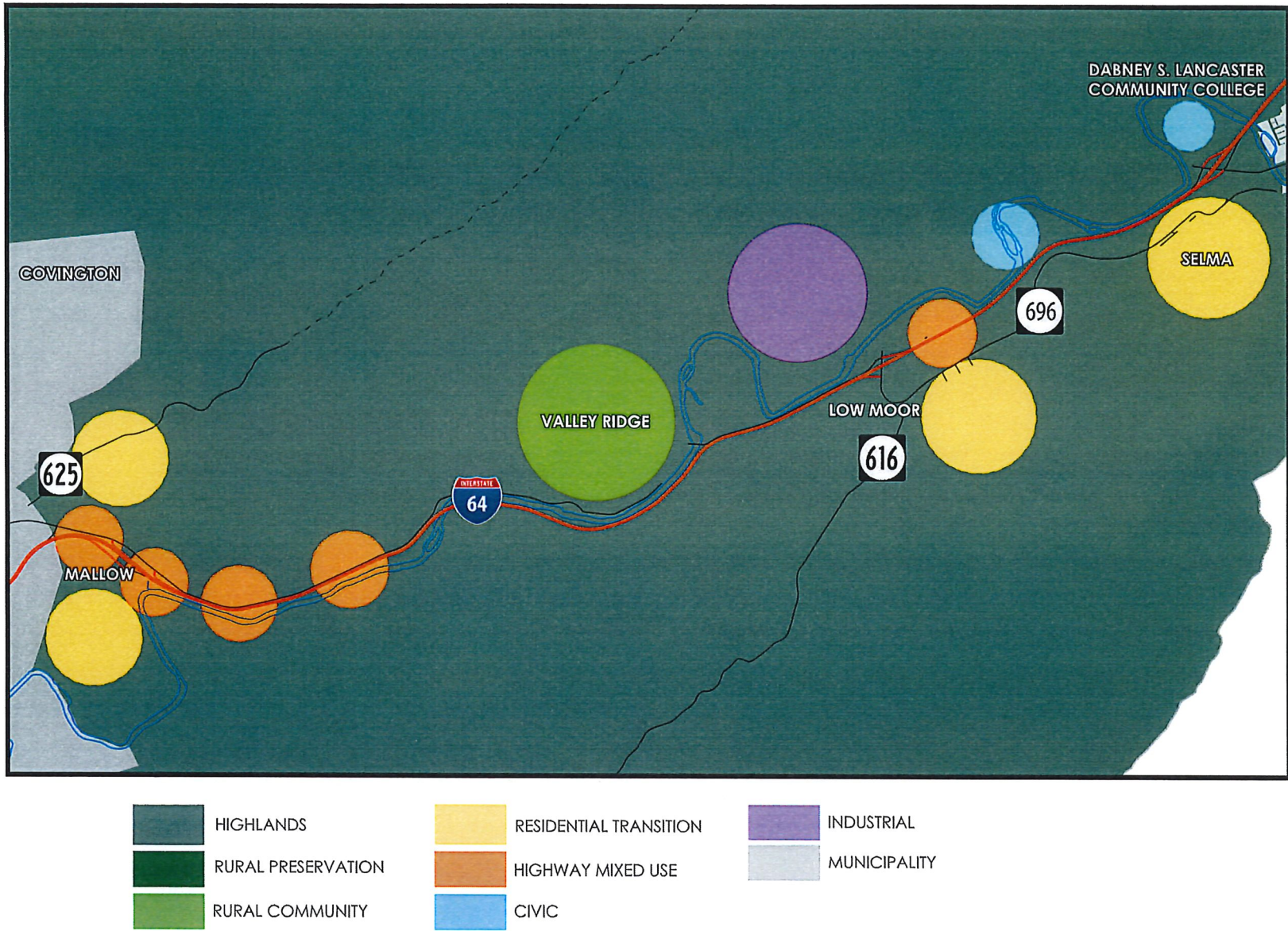
These areas are intended to provide land for Covington's industrial base and supporting uses in locations that are compatible with surrounding development and provide opportunities for growth.

▼ MAP 4.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE MAP





▼ MAP 4.2 ALLEGHANY COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE MAP - MALLOW/LOW MOOR



## IMPLICATIONS

While the mountain ridge lines and rural areas are important to maintain, there needs to be areas established for residential development opportunities once the population decline is stabilized. For this reason, there are two land use designations that allow for low density, rural development. The Rural Preservation areas are those areas within the valleys of the region where development pressure may occur, but services are not as easily available or cost effective to provide. Therefore, the Rural Preservation areas allow for some residential and commercial development, but at a density that is more appropriate for a rural area without services.

The Rural Community areas, however, allow for a more dense cluster of residential homes, and community-focused businesses, in areas where communities have started to form organically in the past. Callaghan, Falling Springs, and Longdale Furnace exemplify these types of communities. Community services may or may not exist, but these areas are close enough to existing service areas where extension in the future is not impossible.

Other land use designations such as Residential Transition, Highway Mixed Use, Civic, and Industrial, are located adjacent to, or nearby, existing transportation corridors, such as Interstate 64, or by the City of Covington, the Town of Clifton Forge, or the Town of Iron Gate.

Moving forward, the County needs to review existing zoning categories to determine if a County-wide rezoning will be necessary to complement this future land use map. Zoning standards may also need to be updated to reflect the intent of these future land use designations.







## SECTION 5. TRANSPORTATION

Alleghany County's transportation system plays an important role in achieving the vision for renewed economic vitality, as well as ensuring safety and a high quality of life for residents. Alleghany County's transportation system is composed of a network of roadways, rail lines, public transit, trails, and some sidewalks in some neighborhoods and areas adjacent to other jurisdictions such as Covington and Clifton Forge. Each of these elements perform an important role in the system that is vital to the success of the County. As indicated in the introduction, the City of Covington, while a partner with Alleghany County in the joint planning process adopted a similar, but unique plan for its jurisdiction. The towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate, have their own Comprehensive Plans that will continue to be in effect for their communities.

### TRANSPORTATION INVENTORY

The primary transportation routes providing accessibility into the county are US Routes 60 and 220, State Route 18, Interstate I-64, and several State secondary routes. Both I-64 and US 220 have been designated as corridors of statewide significance due to their multi-modal connections and mobility for long distance travel.

Truck traffic typically occurs on US 60, I-64, and US 220, contributing to heavy traffic and wear on the roads. The CSX

freight rail also passes through the County, providing access for industrial goods and materials.

Roanoke Area Dial and Ride (RADAR) and the Mountain Express provide transit services to certain locations within the County. These services connect residents to surrounding towns and counties and are an important resource for the elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who may not have access to their own vehicles.

Because Alleghany County is largely comprised of national forest, multi-use trails and pathways are located throughout the area. These trails provide access in some areas, but also promote the rural character and cultural heritage of the region. In addition to the existing trail system established in the rural area, an opportunity exists to continue efforts by the county and city to connect trails and pathways with regional trails and natural amenities, such as Douthat State Park. These linkages, over time, can help connect people to key destinations throughout the community without having to drive.

Another important mode of transportation are pedestrian and bike paths. Currently there are 546 miles of existing and proposed bike/ pedestrian facilities in the rural areas of the RVARC. In Alleghany County, these pathways are important for recreation as well as access within the region. The pathways can be

linked with the multi-use trails and create more opportunities for alternative transportation in the long-term. An opportunity exists to plan on the edges of Covington and Clifton Forge for potential bicycle and pedestrian connections as well.

Other modes of transportation that are significant to the County are freight and air. Both Buckingham Branch Railroad and CSX provide rail freight services to local and regional industrial users and Amtrak passenger rail services. There are two regional commercial airports which service the County, Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport and Greenbrier Valley Airport in Lewisburg, WV; however, there are several smaller commercial and private airports nearby: Ingalls Field airport, Barrows Airport, Hop-Along Airport, and Lynchburg Regional Airport.

## **FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADWAYS**

The Federal functional classification of roadways began with the passage of the Federal Aid Act of 1921. It established a federal aid primary system and, more importantly, the foundation for a system of national defense roads, later known as the national interstate system. The absence of uniformity among states hindered federal efforts to determine national needs. Subsequently, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 mandated the realignment of federal aid roads on the basis of a standardized functional classification system. This process remains in effect today.

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Functional classification outlines how travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network.

The bases of the functional usage of a roadway are mobility and accessibility. Travel can be logically related to the roadway's ability to access land and the mobility through an area. Different roadway classifications offer different levels of mobility and accessibility. For example, local facilities emphasize the land-access function. Arterials emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement, while, collectors offer a compromise between access and mobility.

The roadway functional classifications found in the Alleghany County include Interstates, Other Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, and Major and Minor Collectors. Other roadways are part of the local roads, which provide connectivity between the primary roadways. The following provides a description of each roadway functional classification type found in the county's transportation network. Map 5.1 displays the functional classifications of the major roads in the county.

### **Interstates**

Interstates are the highest classification and designed with mobility and long-distance travel in mind. This classification is for highways designated as part of the Eisenhower Interstate System. Roadways classified as interstates are limited access, divided highways with the highest level of mobility. There is also no ambiguity in the functional classification, as only the Secretary of Transportation can designate a roadway as an interstate. Interstate 64 is the only roadway for this classification in the county.

### **Other Principal Arterials**

Other Principal Arterials in the county include Hot Springs Road/US 220, and Market Avenue/US 220 between Clifton Forge and Iron Gate. The classification of Other Principal Arterials differs based on whether the facility is located in an urban or rural area. In rural areas, Other Principal Arterials serve corridor movements of substantial statewide or interstate travel and provides an integrated network without stub connections (dead ends). This network connects all or nearly all Urbanized Areas and a large majority of Urban Clusters with populations of 25,000 and over.

Other Principal Arterials in urban areas serve the major activity centers of a metropolitan area and the highest traffic volume corridors. These facilities carry a high proportion of total urban travel on the minimum amount of mileage and provide continuity for major rural corridors to accommodate trips entering and leaving an urban area. Lastly, Other Principal Arterials carry

a significant amount of intra-area travel, and serve demand between the central business district and outlying residential areas of a metropolitan area.

### **Minor Arterials**

The Minor Arterials in the county include a segment of Ridgeway Street at the I-64 interchange, a segment of Verge Street near US 220/Market Avenue and Forty Two Road connecting I-64 up into Bath County. Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher Arterial system. Classification is based on whether the facility is in an urban or rural area. In rural areas, Minor Arterials link cities and large towns, along with other major traffic generators, and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. The design in rural areas typically provides for relatively high overall speeds, with minimum interference to the through movement. Minor Arterials are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas within the state are within a reasonable distance of an arterial roadway. They also provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by rural collectors or local systems.

In urban areas, Minor Arterials interconnect with principal arterials, augment the urban principal arterial system, and

provide service to trips of moderate length at a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials. Minor Arterials include all arterials not classified as principal arterials and contain facilities that place more emphasis on land access. These facilities provide more land access than Principal Arterials without penetrating identifiable neighborhoods. Minor Arterials serve trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than Principal Arterials and distribute traffic to smaller geographic areas than those served by higher-level Arterials.

### **Collectors (Major & Minor)**

The collector classification includes the Major Collector and Minor Collector categories. Major Collector routes are longer in length; have lower connecting driveway densities; have higher speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors may. In rural areas, Major Collectors provide service to any county seat not on an arterial system, to larger towns not directly served by higher systems. Major Collectors also link these places to nearby larger towns and cities or with arterial routes and serve the most important intra-county travel corridor.

Major Collectors in Urban Areas provide land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas. These collectors distribute trips from the arterials

through the aforementioned areas to their ultimate destination, collect traffic from local streets, and channel it to the arterial system.

Major Collectors in the county include Jackson River Road, Midland Trail Road, Dunlap Creek Road, Potts Creek Road, Valley Ridge Road, Sulphur Springs Road, Douthat Road, a portion of Rich Patch Road, Roaring Run Road, Selma Low Moor Road, Golf Course View, Longdale Furnace Road, and Kanawha Trail.

In rural areas, minor collectors are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density. Minor Collectors collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. Minor Collector facilities provide service to the remaining smaller communities and link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

In urban areas, Minor Collectors serve both land access and traffic circulation in lower density residential and commercial/industrial areas. Typical operating characteristics of Minor Collectors include lower speeds and fewer signalized intersections. Minor Collectors penetrate residential neighborhoods, but only for a short distance.

Minor Collector roads in the county include Blue Spring Run Road, a portion of Rich Patch Road, McKinney Hollow Road,

Nicelytown Road, Airport Drive, a segment of Jackson River Road, Smith Bridge Road North, Friels Drive, Natural Well Road, East Morris Hill Road, and Indian Draft Road.

### **AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) conducts a program where traffic count data are gathered from sensors in or along streets and highways and other sources. From these data, estimates of the average number of vehicles that traveled each segment of road are calculated. In Map 5.2, a list of the roadway segments monitored in the city are listed with the estimated Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for that segment. The AADT is the total annual traffic estimate divided by the number of days in the year. As expected the most highly trafficked roads are the principal arterials with much lower traffic volumes on the minor collectors and local roads.

### **PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS & TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**

Alleghany County is part of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC), which is a voluntary association of local governments in the region who come together to make regional planning decisions, most prominently regarding transportation. The county relies heavily on the collective resources and experience leveraged by its involvement in the RVARC to assess the needs of its transportation system.

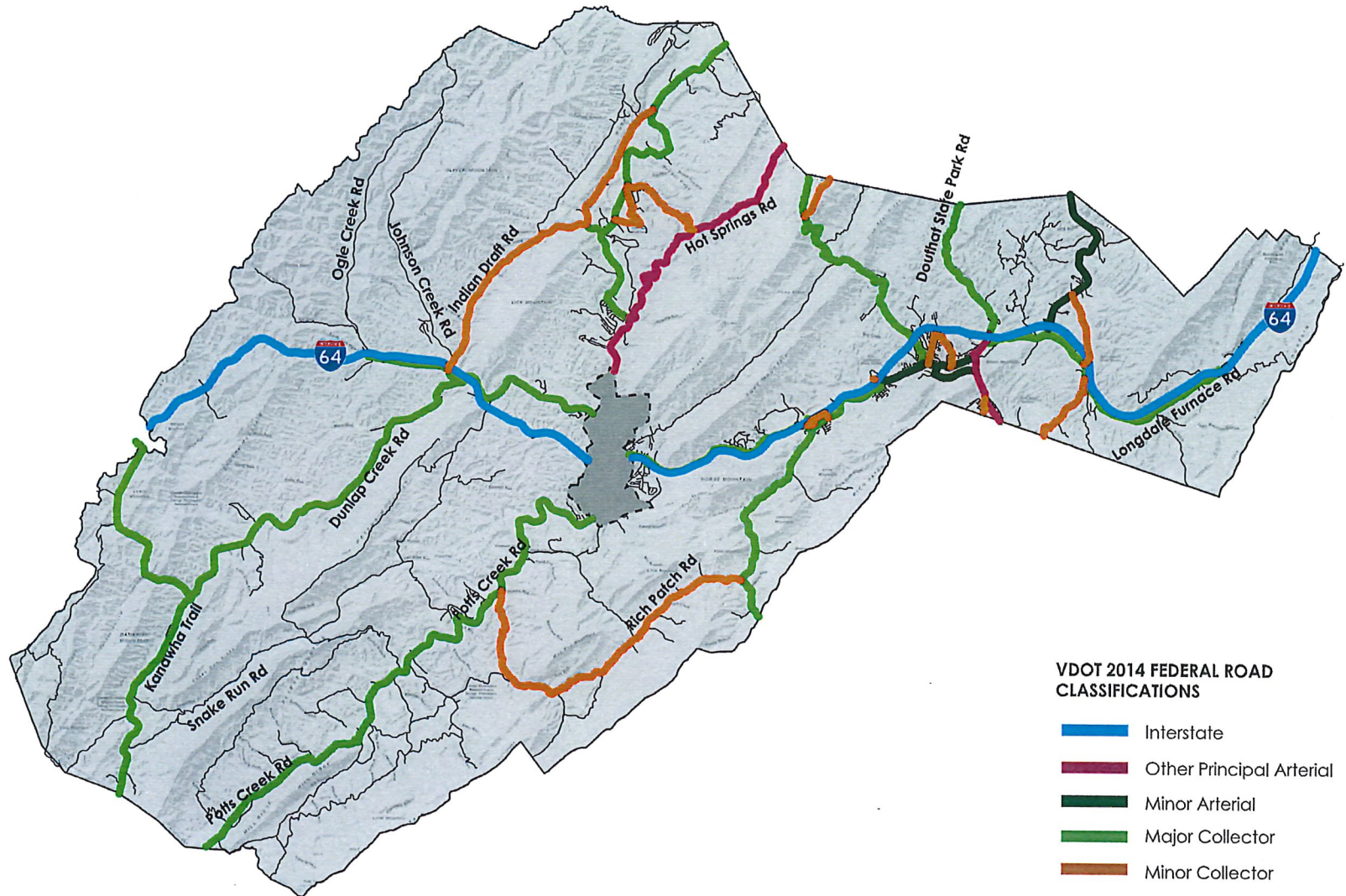
The RVARC region encompasses southwest Virginia and serves the counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, and Roanoke as well as the cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem and the towns of Clifton Forge, Vinton, and Iron Gate. This regional approach to transportation planning helps to ensure that projects are evaluated on a wider scale than just local needs; reinforcing the viability and functionality of the transportation network that the city relies on for its economic livelihood and enhances its accessibility for tourism.

Specifically, the county relies on the goals and projects identified in the RVARC 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan, the RVARC Rural Bikeway Plan 2006; the FY 2018 Rural Transportation Planning Work Program, and the VDOT Six year improvement Plan.

### **VTRANS 2040**

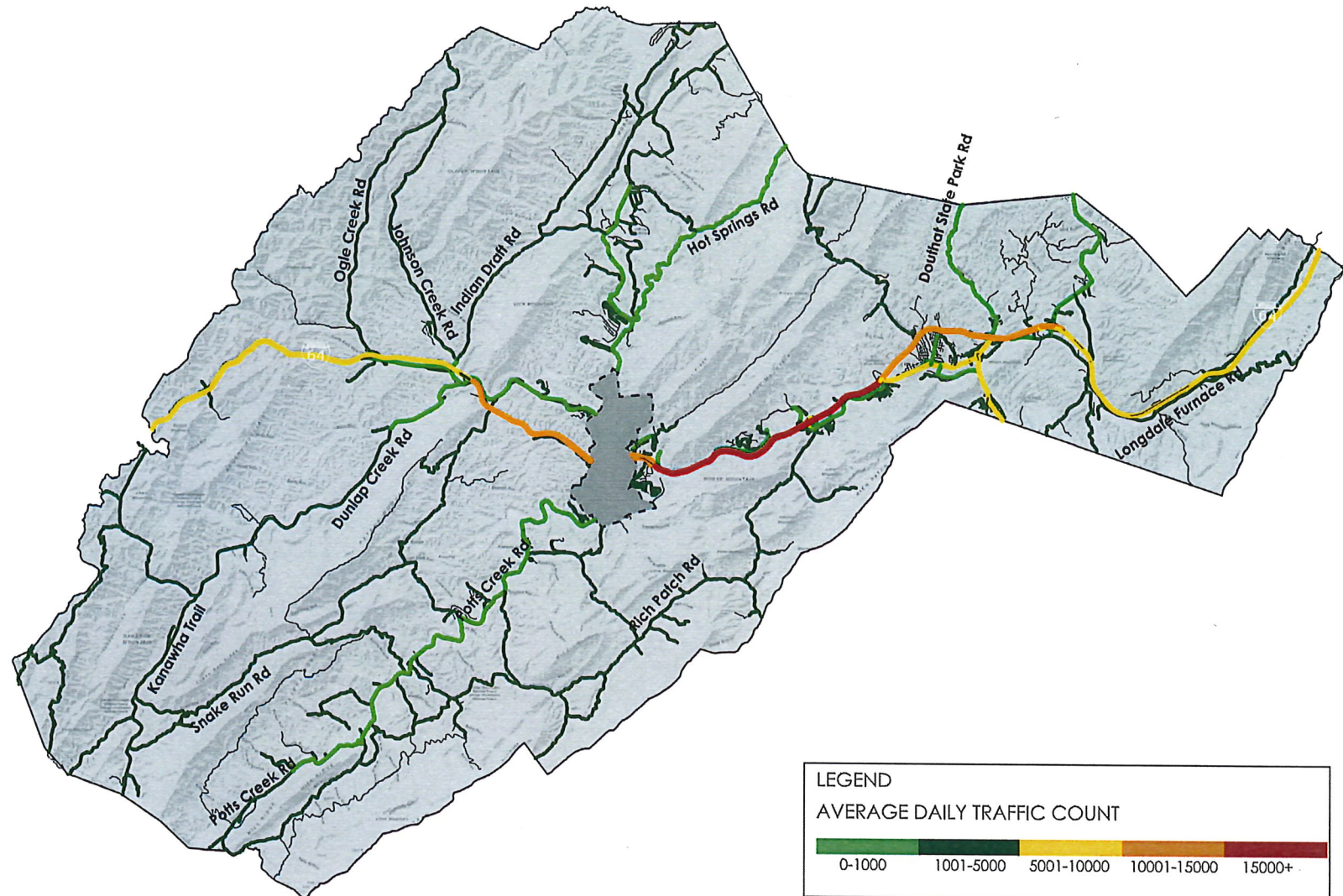
In addition to the regional focused plans, the county also relies on the statewide VTrans 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan. VTrans 2040 is Virginia's statewide long range, multimodal transportation plan. Led by the Commonwealth's Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, VTrans 2040 is a policy document that focuses on the needs of the Commonwealth's Corridors of Statewide Significance, the multimodal regional networks that support travel within metropolitan regions, and improvements to promote Urban Development Areas (UDAS).

▼ MAP 5.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY FEDERAL ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS





▼ MAP 5.2 VDOT 2017 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC - VOLUME RANGES





VTrans 2040 establishes goals in the areas of safety and security; system maintenance and preservation; mobility, connectivity, and accessibility; environmental stewardship; economic vitality; transportation and land use coordination, and program delivery. Through this document, the state has significantly shifted mobility priorities from being primarily single occupancy vehicle oriented to a multimodal model. State and federal transportation dollars are now allocated through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in part based on how well projects support the goals and objectives of VTrans 2040.

The county is located along Segment C1 of East-West Corridor (I-64) of the corridors of statewide significance. Segment C1 begins at the West Virginia border and progresses east to the junction of Interstates I-64 and I-81. This segment serves Alleghany and Rockbridge counties, as well as the Cities of Covington and Lexington. The segment does not travel through any area covered by an MPO. The segment includes portions of US 60 and runs concurrently with a portion of US 220. Segment C1 acts as a major corridor for through freight travel in Virginia, providing access to the mountains and areas west. Segment C1 also connects smaller urban areas, such as Clifton Forge and Covington, as well as multiple natural, historical, and cultural resources.

**Highway Facilities:** I-64 is primarily a rural highway with four lanes in Segment C1. When not running concurrently with I-64, US 60 (in Covington and Lexington) and US 60 Business (in Clifton Forge) run parallel to I-64 in the urbanized areas within the segment. **Transit Services:** Amtrak offers service at Clifton Forge in Segment C1. As stated earlier, RADAR, a non-profit transit agency based in the Roanoke Valley, operates the Mountain Express, which provides a transit connection between Covington and Clifton Forge. There is one Park-and-Ride location within close proximity to I-64 northwest of Lexington.

**Rail Facilities:** CSX's Coal Corridor runs through Segment C1.

**Port Facilities:** Although there are no port facilities located directly adjacent to Segment C1, CSX's Coal Corridor does provide connections to multiple Port of Virginia facilities in the Hampton Roads Area.

**Airport Facilities:** There are no commercial airports in this segment.

**Major planned and future projects include:** There are no major planned projects to improve safety or increase capacity on Segment C1 at this time.

**Summary of Needs (VTrans 2040):** The plan analyzed travel demand, traffic conditions, redundancy and mode choice,

safety metrics, congestion metrics, and reliability metrics. While the corridor as a whole plays an important role to the movement of freight and traffic, there were no major projects identified for Segment C1. The study only identified needs for Covington and Clifton Forge.

## **BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLANNING**

Allegheny County utilizes the RVARC Bikeway Plan. The general recommendations from the RVARC Rural Bikeway Plan include:

- Apply, by default, the VDOT Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations to all corridors in the transportation network;
- Utilize cost-effective techniques, where applicable and practicable, to better accommodate bicyclists;
- Improve ancillary bicycle accommodations, signage, and support facilities;
- Encourage bicycling through education, awareness, and advocacy; and
- Market the region's outdoor recreation and tourism resources.

In addition, the Rural Bikeway Plan presents a list of recommended corridors for bicycle accommodations by jurisdiction emphasizing accessibility and connectivity between town centers and outdoor recreation facilities that is listed in Table 5.2. Some of the improvements recommended for these

corridors are limited to: roadway and shoulder maintenance, striping on the right edge of lanes to provide a paved shoulder for bicyclists, and improved signage and roadway facilities.

Detailed planning would be required, at the local and regional levels, to develop and implement a bicycling network and realize the benefits of bicycling. A list of the potential routes are listed in Table 5.2.

In addition to working with jurisdictions in the county on bicycle routes, the county will continue to work closely with the urban areas to identify where connections can be made to the existing pedestrian networks and regional trails.

## **SUMMARY OF ASSUMPTIONS & NEEDS**

As recognized in these regional and statewide plans, although the population of the county has significantly declined, the volume of traffic on the county roadways has not significantly changed. The primary planning assumption is that the county is not experiencing rapid growth or other statewide projected changes; however, there are some safety, geometric and operational deficiencies on a number of roadways in the county that will warrant investment in improvements over the plan horizon.

In general, the most pressing issues and needs related to the county's transportation system is the replacement of several

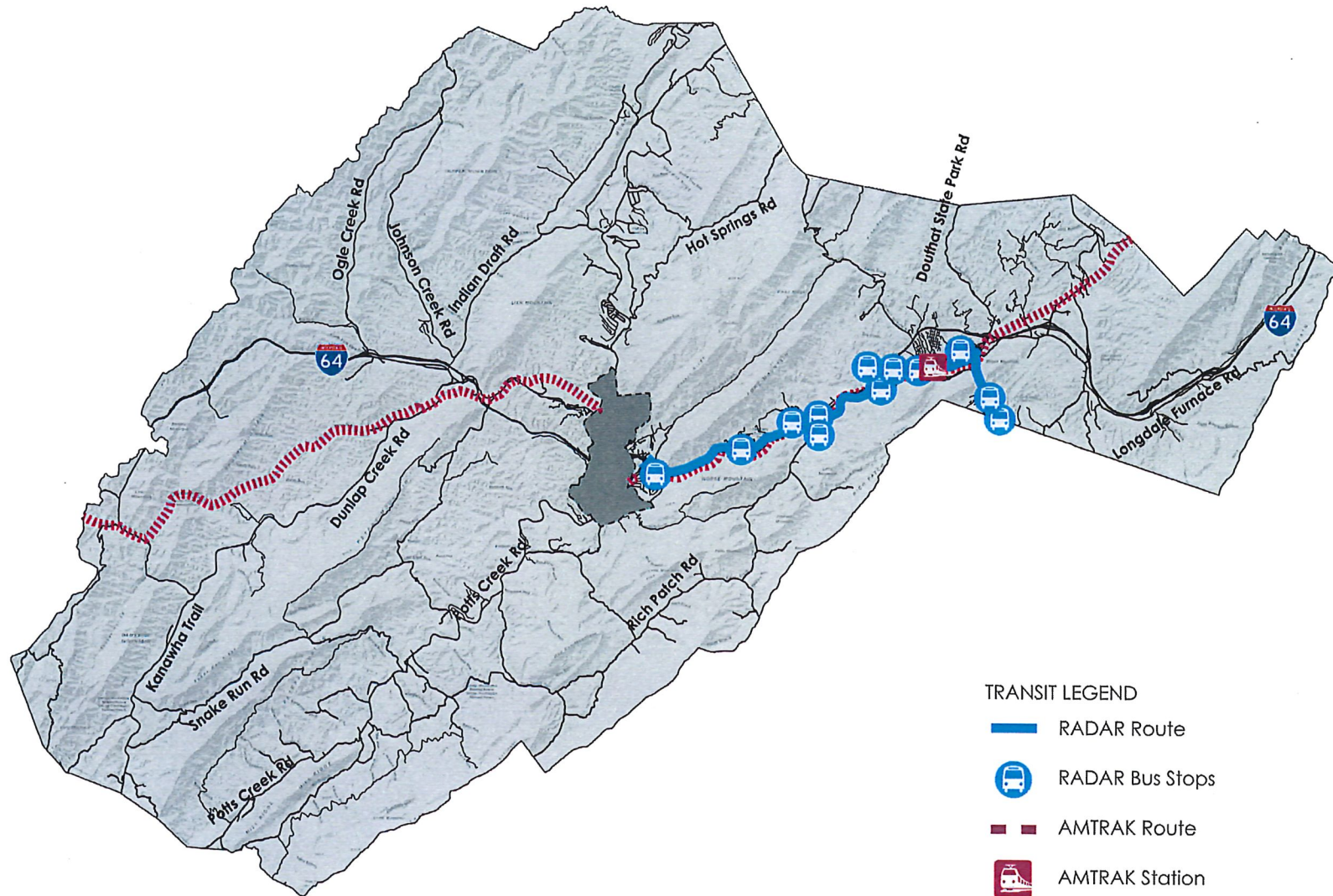


TRANSPORTATION

▼ TABLE 5.2 2006 RURAL BIKEWAY PLAN, ROANOKE VALLEY-ALLEGHANY REGIONAL COMMISSION - ALLEGHANY COUNTY ROUTES

ROADWAY	FROM	TO
ROUTE 18 (POTTS CREEK ROAD)	PITZER RIDGE ROAD	CRAIG COUNTY CL
PITZER RIDGE ROAD	POTTS CREEK ROAD	CITY OF COVINGTON SCL
ROUTE 159 (DUNLAP CREEK ROAD)	1-64 /EXIT	ROUTE 311
ROUTE 60 (GLAFTON ROAD)	1-64 /EXIT 27	CLIFTON FORGE EGL
ROUTE 60	VALLEY RIDGE ROAD	CITY OF COVINGTON EGL
ROUTE 60 (MIDLAND TRAIL ROAD)	1-64	CITY OF COVINGTON WGL
ROUTE 60 I 220	CLIFTON FORGE WGL	DABNEY DRIVE
ROUTE 220	CITY OF COVINGTON NCL	ROUTE 687
ROUTE 311 (KANAWHA TRAIL ROAD)	CRAIG COUNTY CL	WEST VIRGINIA STATE LINE
ROUTE 600	ROUTE 159	ROUTE 641
ROUTE 641	ROUTE 600	ROUTE 687
ROUTE 629 (DOUTHAT ROAD)	1-64 /EXIT 27)	BATH COUNTY CL
ROUTE 638	ROUTE 687	ROUTE 666
ROUTE 666	ROUTE 638	ROUTE 600
ROUTE 687 (HOT SPRINGS ROAD)	ROUTE 220	ROUTE 638
SELMA-LOW MOOR ROAD	US 60/ 220	1-64 (EXIT 21) / WINTERBERRY AVE.
VALLEY RIDGE ROAD	CITY OF COVINGTON EGL	WINTERBERRY AVE.
WINTERBERRY AVE.	1-64 /EXIT 21) / ROUTE 696	VALLEY RIDGE ROAD
WINTERBERRY AVE.	1-64 /EXIT 21) / ROUTE 696	ROAD TERMINUS

▼ MAP 5.2 ALLEGHANY COUNTY TRANSIT ROUTES





bridges. In addition, the county will continue to support transportation projects for jurisdictions in the county and the overall plans for the region.

## **TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

In response, the county has identified thirty-four transportation projects that are shown on Map 5.3 and listed in Table 5.3. In addition to these projects, the county will continue to support SMART SCALE applications by the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge in their efforts to improve multimodal opportunities in areas where planned improvements extend into areas that are in the county's jurisdiction that includes bicycle, pedestrian and trail improvements. The county will also work closely with the Town of Iron Gate on projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries such as the proposed US 220 widening project, which will require significant study and coordination to complete.

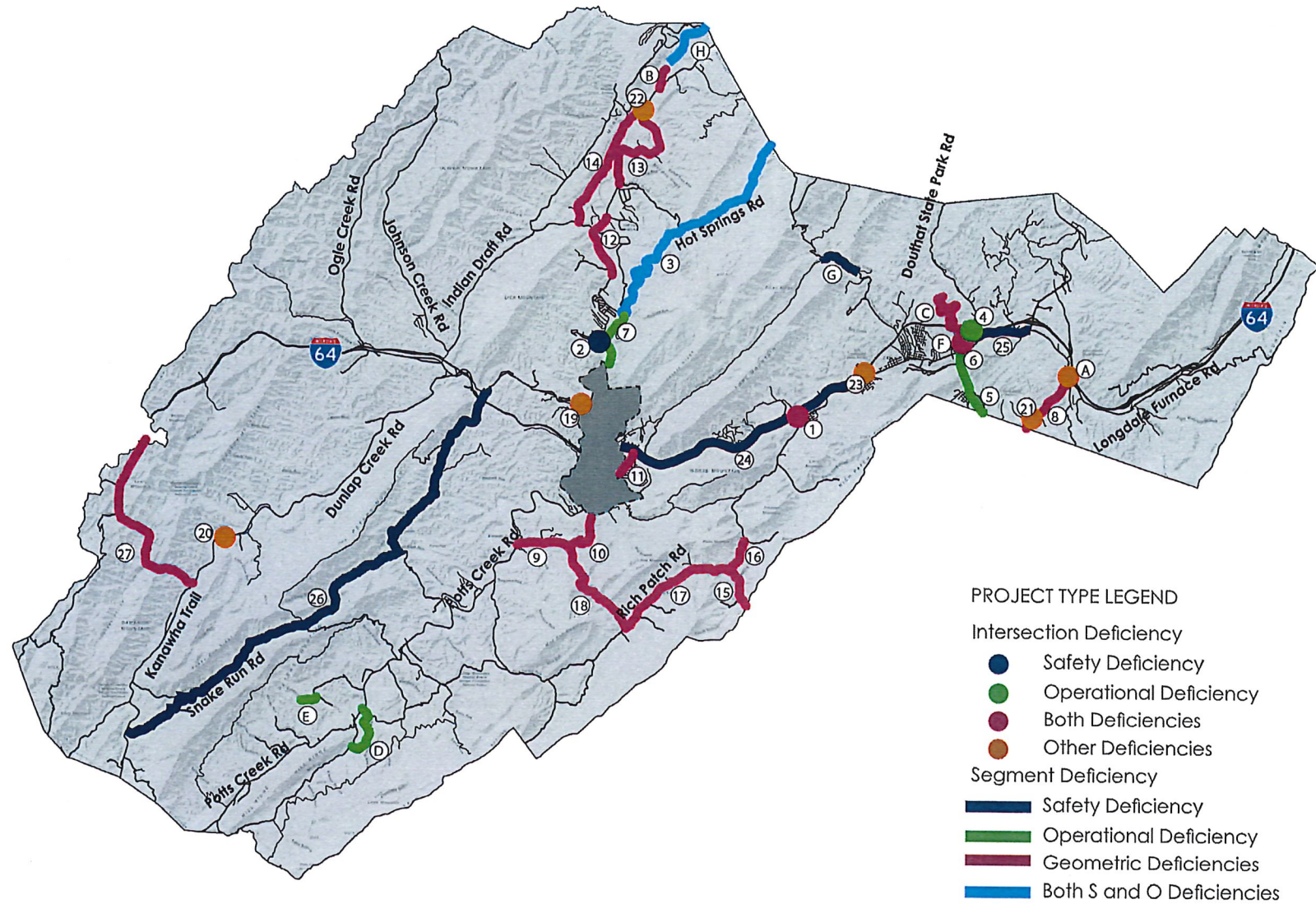
## **SIX-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) program for allocating funding for rail, public transportation, commuter assistance, bicycle, pedestrian, interstate and primary highway transportation projects over the next six years. The program is updated annually. Typically, the CTB conducts hearings in the fall of each year to gather public and local government input on priorities for transportation funding. These meetings provide local

governments with an opportunity to have input on priorities for the Interstate and Primary systems.

The CTB and VDOT make a concerted effort to assemble projects in the SYIP so they can move through the development process in an orderly fashion. As projects are being developed, many issues arise that must be addressed, such as citizen concerns, project development, or environmental issues. Projects must also be fully funded to move to construction. Most projects require multiple years of funding. Projects are removed from the SYIP once they are completed. Projects are also taken out of the SYIP if there is not enough funding to finance them or if preliminary engineering determines that the project is not feasible. The county's projects for the FY 2019 SYIP program are listed in Table 5.4.

▼ MAP 5.3 ALLEGHANY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS





# TRANSPORTATION

▼ TABLE 5.3 TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS & DESCRIPTIONS

MAP #	NAME	SCOPE OF WORK
1	1-64 exit 21/VA 696	Reconstruct interchange at Low Moor ( <b>recently completed</b> )
2	US 220/ VA 778	Relocate parking and reconfigure intersection with potential traffic signal
3	US 220 at VA 687 to Bath County	Assess need for truck runaway ramps and consider widening
4	1-64/ US220	Upgrade interchange
5	US 220 / Botetourt County line to US 60 Bus.	Widen to urban 4 lane roadway
6	US 60 BUS./ US 220 to I-64	Widen to urban 4 lane roadway
7	US 220/Northern Corp. Limits- Covington to VA 687	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies
8	VA 633 (McKinney Hollow Rd.)/ Botetourt Co. Line to VA 269	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies
9	VA 657/ VA 18 to VA 619	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies
10	VA 657/VA 619 to Covington Corp. Limits	Widen to urban 2 lane road
11	VA 647/ Eastern Corp. Limits	Widen to urban 2 lane road
12	VA 687 (Jackson River Rd.)/ VA 642 to 0.35 miles North of VA 641	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies
13	VA 687/VA 640 to VA 638 S.	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies
14	VA 666/ VA 641 to VA 638	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies and safety improvements (11 ft lanes)
15	VA 621/ Botetourt Co Line to VA 616	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (10 ft lanes)
16	VA 619 (Rich Patch Rd)/ VA 621 to VA 622	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11 ft lanes)
17	VA 619 (Rich Patch Rd)/ VA 619 S to VA 621	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11 ft lanes)
18	VA 619 (Hayes Gap Rd)/ VA 616 to VA 657	Reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (10 ft lanes)
19	US 60 (Midland Trail) at Ogle Creek	Replace Bridge
20	VA 159 at Crow Run Bridge (Dunlap Creek Road)	Replace bridge
21	VA 633 (Longdale Furnace) at Cowpasture River	Replace bridge and reconstruct bridge approach
22	Natural Well Rd Route 638 at Jackson River	Bridge Replacement
23	VA 696 over CSX RR; Route 696 Selma-Low Moor Road, Karnes Creek Bridge	Replace Bridge and upgrade approaches; replace bridge on route 696 and route 1308 with single structure on 696
24	I-64/ Jackson River/ SAB to US 60	Replace guardrail and median rail
25	VA 633 (Rural Rustic Road)/ US 60 to VA 42	Improve roadways as per Alleghany Comp. Plan

▼ TABLE 5.3 TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS &amp; DESCRIPTIONS (CONTINUED)

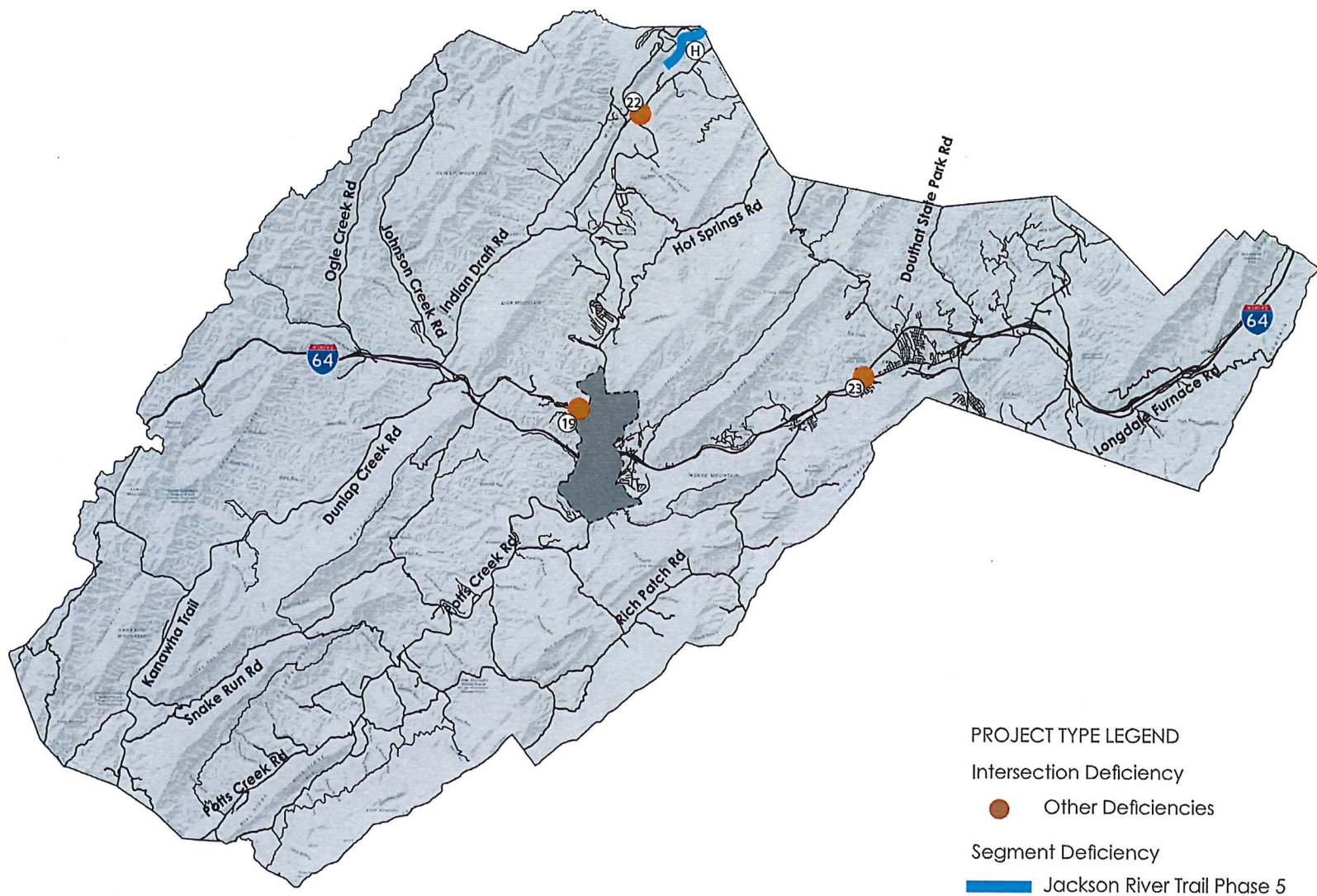
MAP #	NAME	SCOPE OF WORK
26	VA 600/ VA 311 (Kanawha Trail) to US 60	Improve roadways and tunnels at CSX Railroad based on study
27	VA 311 (Kanawha Trail)/ VA 159 to WV County line	Construct identified geometric deficiency improvements
A	Rte. 616 (Blue Springs)	Bridge rehabilitation
B	Rte. 637, Rural Rustic Rd, Sycamore Bend Rd	Reconstruction no added capacity
C	Turner Rd	Reconstruction no added capacity
D	Jonestown Rd	Resurfacing
E	Stone Mountain Rd	Resurfacing
F	I-64 exit 27; US 220	Reconstruction of interchange
G	VA 606 (Sulfur Springs Road) from Reservoir Trail to Dolly Ann Drive	Install guardrail and rumble strips
H	Jackson River Trail Phase 5	Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles

▼ TABLE 5.4 FY19 SYIP PROJECTS

FY 2019 SYIP		
UPC	Project	Funding Allocations
88564	Route 638 Bridge Replacement over Jackson River	\$3,440,244
90492	Route 661 Bridge Replacement over Ogle Creek	\$623,073
98957	Route 696 Bridge Replacement over Karnes Creek	\$3,442,113
112935	Jackson River Trail Phase 5	\$1,908,000



▼ MAP 5.4 ALLEGHANY COUNTY PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS - FY19 SYIP PROJECTS









# HOUSING PROFILE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010 and American Community Survey, 2010, 2016



8,063  
HOUSING UNITS

\$111,500

MEDIAN  
HOME  
VALUE\*



\*Home value of owner-occupied homes

71%

HOUSING  
UNITS 39 YRS.  
& OLDER



Virginia's percentage of housing units that are 39 years and older is 49%.

24%

INCREASE IN UNITS  
LACKING COMPLETE  
KITCHENS BETWEEN  
2010 AND 2016



-62%

REDUCTION IN UNITS  
LACKING COMPLETE  
PLUMBING BETWEEN  
2010 AND 2016



4x

Between 2010 and 2016, the number of more than one occupant per room quadrupled.



66%  
OWNER  
OCCUPIED



18%  
RENTER  
OCCUPIED



16%  
VACANT

Overall occupancy decreased by 1% between the 2010 Census and the ACS 2016 5-year estimate, maintaining a lower renter occupancy than the State.

VIRGINIA RENTER OCCUPANCY (2016)

34%

ALLEGHANY RENTER  
OCCUPANCY (2016)

18%

## PERCENTAGE OF SINGLE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

	2000	2010	2016
ALLEGHANY	20%	25%	31%
VIRGINIA	20%	25%	26%

Between 2010 and 2016

23%



INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF RENTERS  
PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME  
ON HOUSING

-14%



DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF  
HOMEOWNERS PAYING 30% OR MORE  
OF INCOME ON MORTGAGE

18%



INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF  
HOMEOWNERS WITHOUT MORTGAGES  
PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME ON  
HOUSING COSTS



## SECTION 6. HOUSING

The housing stock in Alleghany County varies between homes on smaller lots representing established Rural Communities and homes on large lots located throughout the Highlands. Many of the existing neighborhoods, such as Callaghan, Falling Springs, Boiling Springs, Crows, Jordan Mines, Longdale Furnace, Nicelytown, and Valley View have a history of settlement indicative of the mid-to-late twentieth century, as evidenced by the fact that over half of the existing housing units in the County were built prior to 1980 (83% of homes are over 30 years old). These homes are predominantly single-family, detached homes (83%) that are valued at \$149,999 and below (66%). The median (or middle) value of these homes are \$111,500, up from \$77,500 in 2000.

### OCCUPANCY

The County has 8,063 total housing units, 84 percent of which are occupied. Of the occupied units, 79 percent are owner-occupied and 21 percent are renter-occupied, down from 22 percent in 2010. While the percent of renter-occupied housing would traditionally cause concern, this increase is indicative of a national trend post 2008 Recession, known as the "Great Reset." Nationally, renter rates are stable or increasing for all income brackets, including upper-middle class families. Important to note is that Alleghany County's percentage is still lower than Virginia's renter-occupied rate of 34 percent.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Code of Virginia §15.2-2223.D., states that the comprehensive plan "shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated."

The US Census defines housing problems as issues dealing with the lack of complete kitchens, lack of complete plumbing, having more than 1.01 persons per room, or costing more than 30% of the household's monthly income. In terms of complete kitchens, the County went from 29 units lacking kitchens in 2010 to 36 in 2016, an increase of 24 percent. The County reduced the amount of units lacking complete plumbing by 62 percent, from 65 in 2010 to 25 in 2016. The number of units with more than 1.01 persons per room jumped from 18 in 2010 to 78 in 2016.

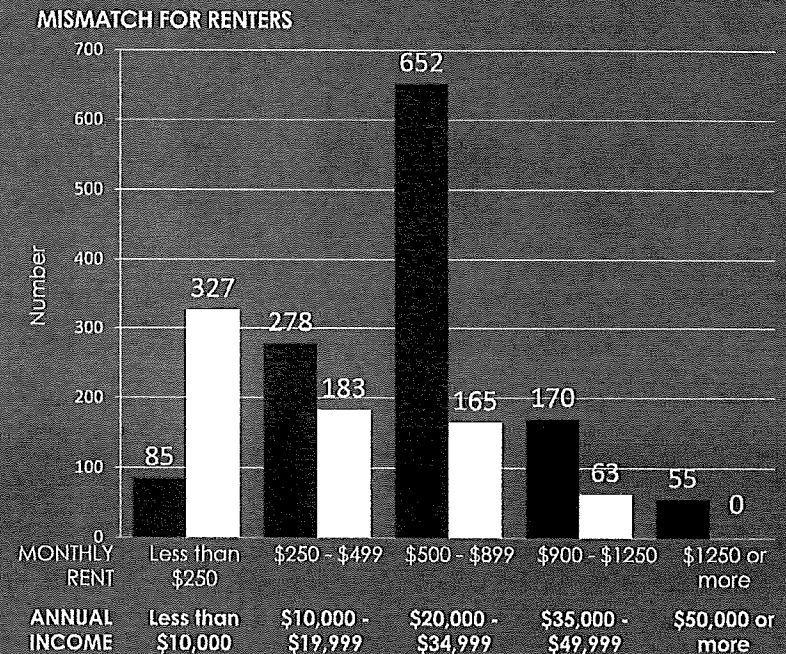
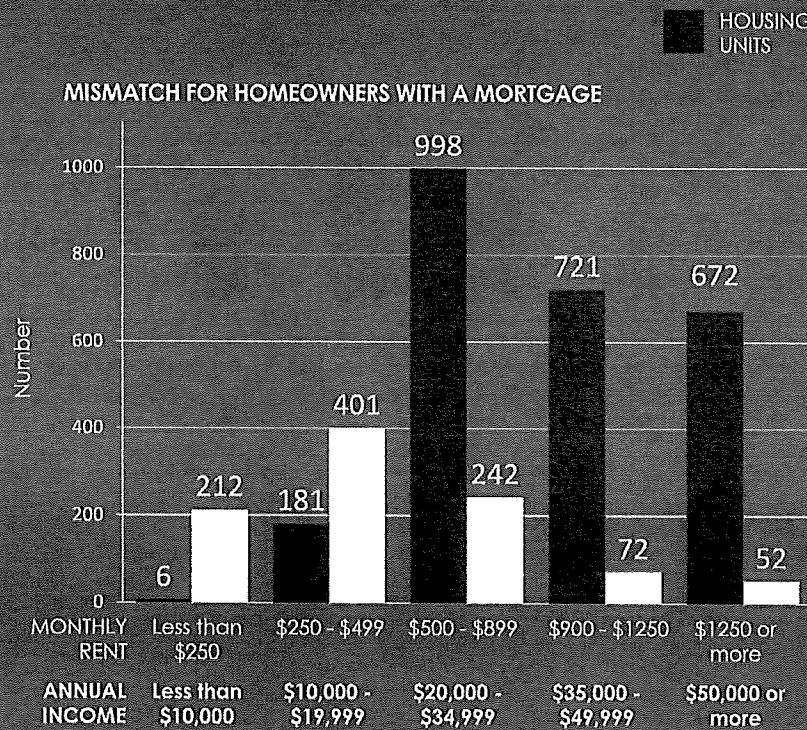
There is an increase in the amount of people that pay 30 percent or more of their income on housing for those that rent and those who own homes without having a mortgage (466 to 572 and 252 to 298, respectively), while homeowners with a mortgage paying 30% or more of their income decreased

from 766 to 658 between 2010 and 2016. These statistics are supported by the fact that median gross rent increased from \$504 in 2010 to \$636 in 2016, and that the percentage of rentals below \$300 per month reduced from 28 percent to 6 percent over the same six-year period, highlighting the increase in rental costs. Important to note, the median gross rent for Allegheny County is 56 percent of the State's for 2016.

The Affordable Housing Mismatch chart highlights that there is a need for housing with monthly costs lower than \$499, for those with a mortgage, and lower than \$250 for renters, with a significant shortage of supply for homes in those ranges. This highlights the housing needs for current residents in the Allegheny Highlands.

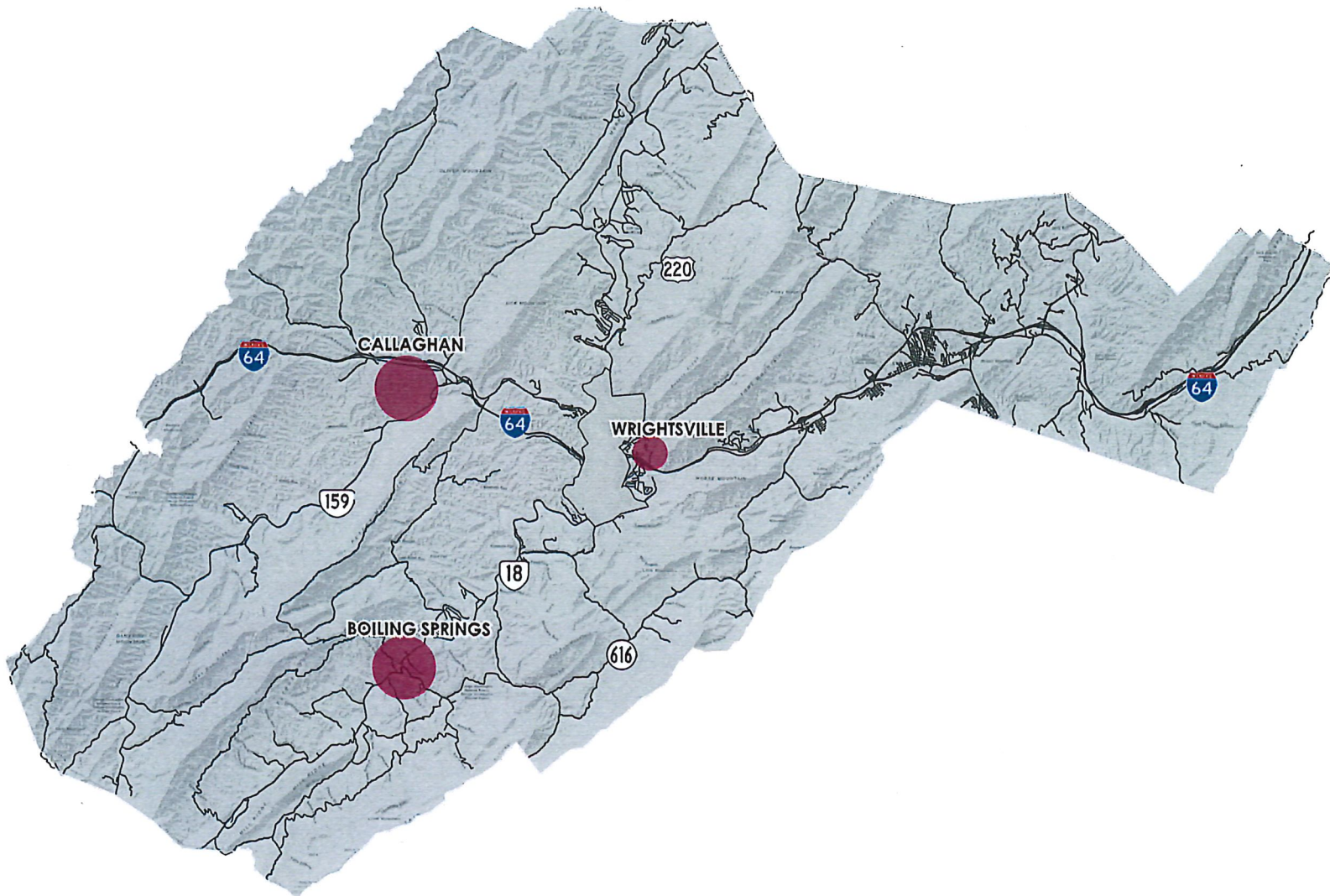
### AFFORDABLE HOUSING MISMATCH Source: American Community Survey, 2016

When the number of households, who are paying 30 percent or more of household income on housing, exceeds the number of housing units, there is a shortage of housing options. Whereas if there is a lower number of households than the number of units, there is an over-supply of housing options.





▼ MAP 6.1 COMMUNITIES WITH IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEEDS (SOURCE: 2013 ALLEGHANY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN)



## IMPLICATIONS

These numbers show that the housing stock is older, requiring more maintenance and repair than newer homes. There are relatively the same amount of renters, but this follows a national trend and not indicative of issues within Alleghany County. In terms of affordable housing, the County has worked hard to lower the units lacking plumbing (by 62%), which was a focus of County efforts. The County will need to also focus on units lacking a complete kitchen, as those homes rose by 24 percent, indicative of the age of the housing stock. The increase in number of people per room is likely a symptom of the increase in people below the poverty level (17%) and the rising rent costs (increase of 25% over the last 6 years).

The focus of future efforts in the County should be placed upon maintenance and rehabilitation programs, especially kitchens, as well as monitoring the rental market to ensure adequate housing for the renter-population. Different resources are available to homeowners, renters, local governments, non-profits and other entities to help alleviate maintenance issues. While the County may not be the responsible organization for such measures, the County can work with citizens, non-profit groups, and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to leverage resources.

Balancing these existing needs while creating an inviting environment for new development is necessary for Alleghany

County's future. With the decline in population, the County can address the current issues without additional pressure for new development potential. However, the County still needs to create the opportunity for new development as a way to invite population back into the region. Elevating the rental stock and existing older homes will be a start to beautifying the area and creating a diverse and stable housing stock for current and new residents, while showing potential residents and developers that their investments will be secure and stable.

## IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEEDS

In 2013, Alleghany County identified three areas of focus for housing need based upon public comments, surveys, and individual requests. These areas remain the focus, as progress in housing needs takes substantial investment. Below are the identified areas and a brief description of their respective issues.

### CALLAGHAN

This area is home to roughly 500 residents living in single-family homes and one of three mobile home parks. Maintenance and repair concerns in this area include structural deterioration for some homes and roof replacement, porch repair, and other minor improvements for others. The area is served by public water, but not by public wastewater. While homes in this rural community all have indoor plumbing, septic monitoring will be important to ensure quality of the treatment in place.

## **BOILING SPRINGS**

The Boiling Springs area has historically grown haphazardly, with residents extending roads and adding low quality housing for additional family member needs, as well as some lots selling for additional development. The area does not have public water or wastewater access, and depends upon springs, wells, and septic systems for basic needs. Due to the lack of structured growth, this area will need focused attention to monitor and remedy issues as funding resources become available. In 2003, the County received a Community Development Block Grant to improve Bens Run Road and should look to continue aiding in grant and improvement opportunities.

## **WRIGHTSVILLE**

The Wrightsville area is historically African American and low-income and has seen deterioration in the recent past due to maintenance issues. Currently, some of the homes exhibit structural and/or foundation deterioration, along with infrastructure deterioration and the need for minor repairs. The majority of homes in this area have public water and wastewater, but the quality of plumbing should be monitored as well. The County recently received a comprehensive planning grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to analyze needs in this area and determine priorities for the forthcoming implementation grant.

## **RESOURCES**

There are numerous resources available to local governments, non-profits, and residents themselves. These include, but are not limited to:

- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia Housing Development Authority
- USDA Rural Development
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project.







# INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE

## WATER SOURCES & SYSTEMS

JACKSON RIVER  
SMITH CREEK  
LAKE MOOMAW



6 PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS  
10 PUBLIC WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

## WATER & WASTEWATER LINES



25 MILES OF WATER LINES



36 MILES OF WASTEWATER LINES

## OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES



ISLAND FORD  
TRANSFER STATION



1 GAS PROVIDER  
COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA



2 COMMUNICATION PROVIDERS

**LUMOS**

TELEPHONE

CELL PHONE

INTERNET SERVICE

**SHENTEL**

TELEVISION

INTERNET SERVICE



3 ELECTRIC PROVIDER

DOMINION ENERGY

CRAIG-BOTETOURT ELECTRIC CO-OP

BARC ELECTRIC CO-OP



## SECTION 7. INFRASTRUCTURE

Given Alleghany County's rural nature, the majority of land in the County is outside of public utility service areas. However, what falls within the service areas are supplied by six (6) public water systems, 10 public wastewater systems, and various sources. It is important to note that the County, the City of Covington, the Town of Clifton Forge, and the Town of Iron Gate work together through numerous, complex contracts to meet the needs of residents in each service area and along the fringes of each jurisdiction. The county-wide study for Alleghany County Water/Sewer/Drainage Study, completed in 2006, serves as the base information for this section.

### WATER

The main source of water in the Alleghany Highlands are the Jackson River, for central and western service areas of the County; Smith Creek, for the eastern service areas of the County; and various tributaries and springs. The Jackson River water flows from Lake Moomaw, through the Gathright Dam down through the County, via pulse releases monitored by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Smith Creek is a mountain spring leading to the Clifton Forge Reservoir and on to the Jackson River.

The main concerns for the water systems in place relate to upgrading lines and low fire protection in certain areas, some

of which the County has already completed. With declining population, there is not a high demand for water to new development and there is adequate water capacity, but the County should investigate expanding services in key locations to help encourage development, particularly around the Low Moor area.

### WASTEWATER

Wastewater systems through the County are operated by the County, City of Covington, Town of Clifton Forge, or via a private system. In 2011, the County opened the Lower Jackson River Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant that addressed a majority of issues identified in the 2006 Water/Sewer/Drainage Study, such as infiltration and inflow (I&I).

While minor maintenance on lines throughout the County, and on lines connecting to municipal systems, will always be an issue, the main focus of future work should be placed on reducing and eliminating I&I issues throughout the system. In certain areas, the County may look at partnering with the City of Covington and Town of Clifton Forge to leverage resources and address these issues. Additional issues may arise if water becomes available to additional neighborhoods, which may necessitate the extension of wastewater shortly after.



## WELLS & SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Given that the large portion of County residents are outside of service areas, many residents rely on private wells or septic systems. The state monitors these systems. As issues arise with wells or septic systems for neighborhoods or small areas, as opposed to isolated individuals, the County may evaluate the need for the future extension of services.

## STORMWATER

Stormwater is generally handled by roadside swales, with larger stormwater best management practices for larger developments. Leaves can clog some of the stormwater swales, which leads to standing water and mosquitoes. This is a common issue in the region. The County may look into an outreach program to educate residents on the importance of keeping stormwater swales clear of debris.

## SOLID WASTE

In 1996, Alleghany County constructed and continues to operate the Island Ford Transfer Station, off of Valley Ridge Road. This is the primary location for refuse, which is then collected and transferred to an approved sanitary landfill daily. Recycling is encouraged and operated by Jackson River Enterprises for businesses. The County should analyze the potential for residential recycling opportunities based upon the desire of residents.

## ELECTRIC, COMMUNICATIONS, & NATURAL GAS

Electric power is available throughout the County by Dominion Energy, Craig-Botetourt Electric Co-op, and BARC Electric Co-op in the north and northeast portions of the County. Although it is not a readily available source of electric power today, solar farms and other alternative energy sources may provide additional electric power over the next ten to twenty years.

Lumos provides telephone, cell phone, and internet services in the County, while Shentel provides television and internet services throughout the County. Fiber optic lines providing Broadband connections have been placed throughout the County, but coverage is uneven closer to the urban areas due to lack of connection.

Natural Gas is available in limited areas in the County, serviced by Columbia Gas of Virginia.

## IMPLICATIONS

Reviewing population growth and projected growth in Alleghany County, there is sufficient capacity for existing and new development. However, there are many areas that may warrant the extension of water and wastewater service, as wells and septic tanks fail, or to attract commercial and industrial development, mainly along I-64 and in the Low Moor area. Please see the Future Land Use map for locations.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

While there has been a water, sewer, and drainage study completed in 2006, many projects have been completed and conditions may have changed over the last 12 years. The County needs to update the study to ensure adequacy. Additionally, it is important for the County to create and adopt a Capital Improvement Plan. This document will help prioritize maintenance and replacement projects, expansions, and other projects in the County, weighing timelines and costs. This plan will ensure that projects are budgeted, funding can be obtained, and the project will be completed in a specified timeline.

The solid waste transfer station is running adequately at this time. Should there be a sharp incline in population, the County may need to increase capacity for transferring refuse. The County may need to look at additional sanitary landfills to dispose of refuse should nearby landfills reach capacity. Potential collaboration with the City of Covington and/or other localities may prove to be a good financial and long-term solution.

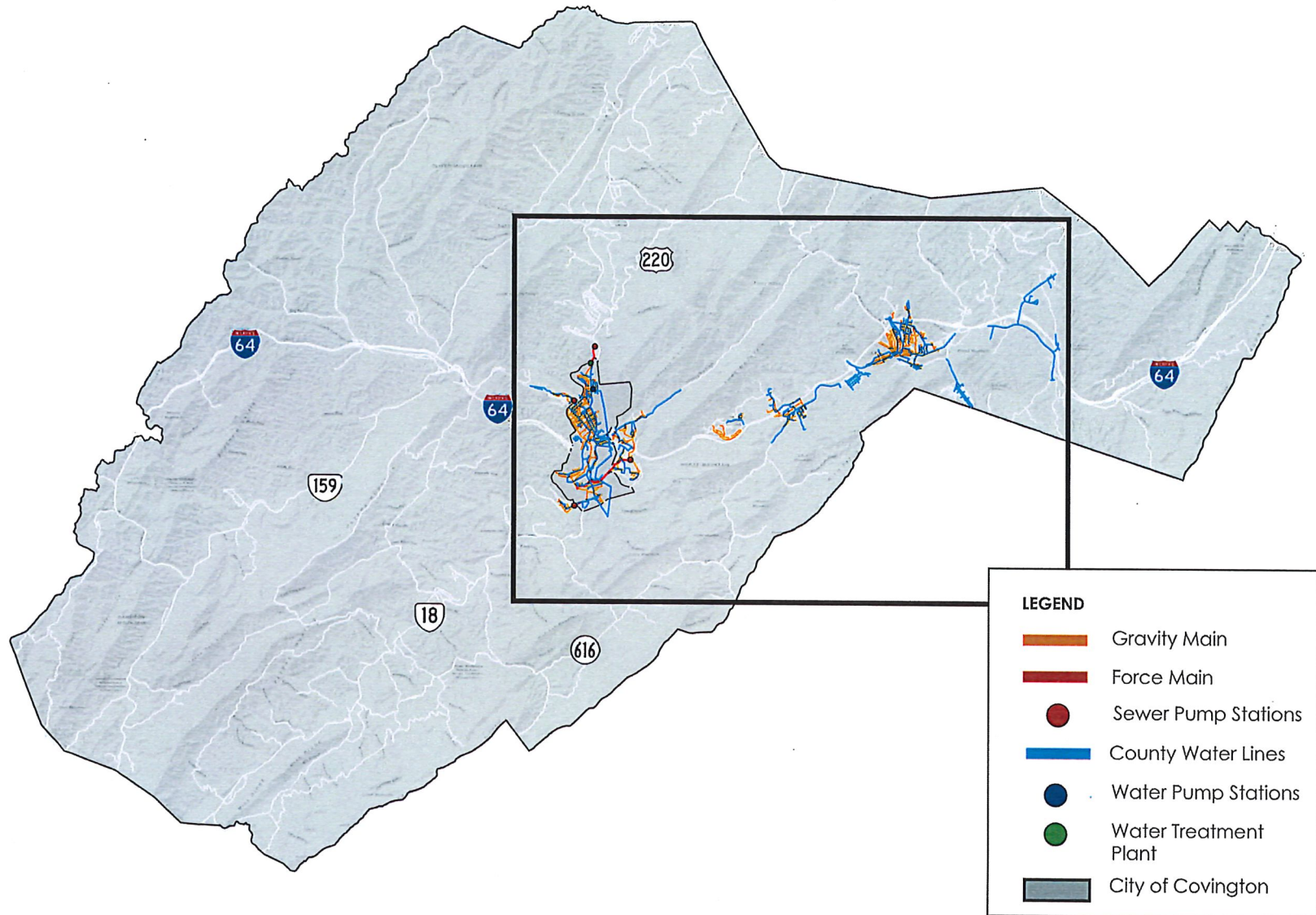
Broadband was installed throughout the County via a grant for rural locations. Because of that, many places closer to the City of Covington do not have affordable access to this service. The County should collaborate with the City of Covington to acquire funding to complete fiber optics and broadband availability throughout the Alleghany Highlands to ensure even access.

Natural gas is in the County, but only available in limited areas. While this utility is needed for certain industries or commercial uses, installing natural gas is expensive and may prove to be cost-prohibitive for expansion.

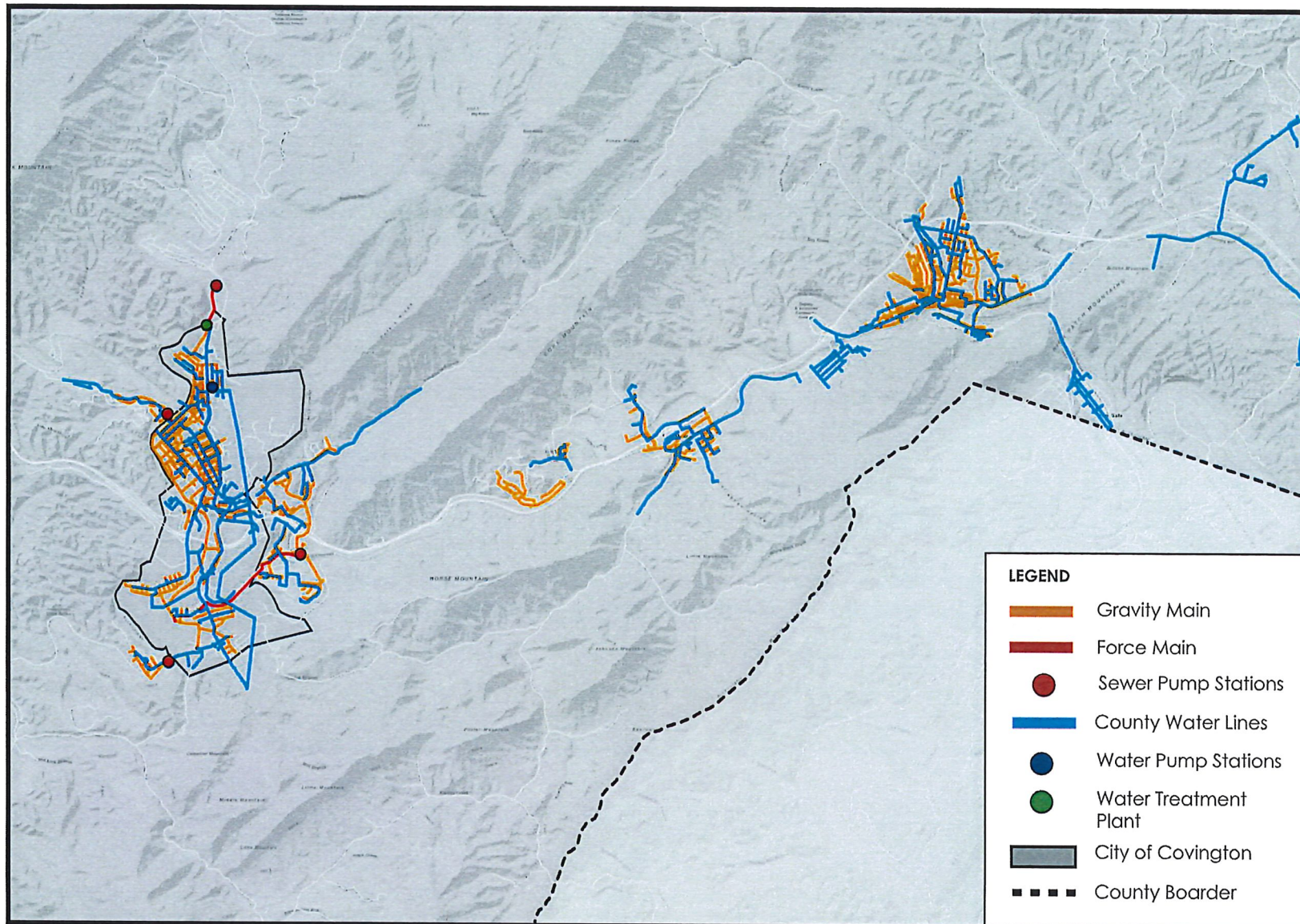
In terms of economic development, the County needs to review property for industrial and/or commercial uses and analyze whether they have adequate services. The County is currently in the process of studying this, with an estimated completion date in late summer, early fall 2018. Recommendations from this study should be included in the Capital Improvement Plan.



▼ MAP 7.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE



▼ MAP 7.2 ALLEGHANY COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE INSET









# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROFILE

## FLOOD EVENTS IN PAST 50 YEARS

Source: Flood Insurance Study, 2010



Hurricane Camille [August 1969]  
Tropical Storm Agnes [June 1972]  
Flood Event [March 1973]  
Flood Event [December 1973]  
Flood Event [November 1985]  
Hurricane Jeanne [October 2004]

## AMBIENT AIR QUALITY

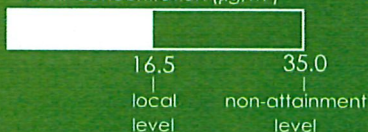
Source: Virginia Ambient Air Monitoring Data Report, 2016

The Highlands are in the Blue Ridge Monitoring region with a monitoring station located in Roanoke. The last report for the Roanoke station had no days exceeding attainment levels.



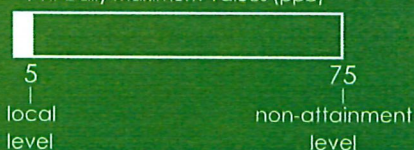
### PARTICULATE MATTER

\* 24-Hr Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )



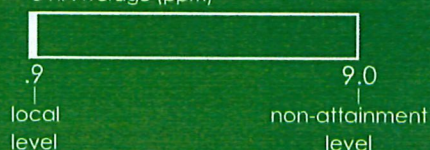
### SULFUR DIOXIDE

\* 1-Hr Daily Maximum Values (ppb)



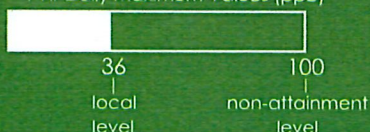
### CARBON MONOXIDE

8-Hr Average (ppm)



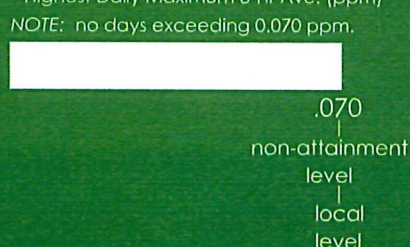
### NITROGEN DIOXIDE

\* 1-Hr Daily Maximum Values (ppb)



### OZONE

\* Highest Daily Maximum 8-Hr Ave. (ppm)



\* 3-year average, 2014-2016

## RARE SPECIES & NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation database, as of April 30, 2018, includes 65 rare species and natural communities within the Alleghany Highlands that need environmental planning consideration.

24 PLANTS

25 ANIMALS

16 NATURAL COMMUNITIES



Of these 65 species and natural communities, 23 have a Federal and/or State legal status (whichever is more rare).

6 LISTED ENDANGERED

2 LISTED THREATENED

1 PROPOSED THREATENED

14 SPECIES OF CONCERN



## SECTION 8. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Alleghany Highlands is rich in environmental capital, with extensive forest stands, good air and water quality, and scenic ridge lines. Half the County's forested land lies with the United States (US) Forest Service maintained George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, protecting it from development pressure. Maintaining the quality of these environmental resources will be important as the County looks to grow in the future.

### RIDGE LINES

The Highlands have a mountainous terrain as part of the Appalachian Mountain region of the United States. Because of this, the elevation of the County goes from 1,025 feet at the Town of Iron Gate, to 4,072 feet at Big Knob on Warm Springs Mountain in the northern portion of the County. These mountain ridge lines are mostly forested and part of the George Washington Jefferson National Forest. The City of Covington resides in a valley between these ridge lines.

### FORESTS

Fifty-one percent of the Highland's forested land is within the George Washington Jefferson National Forest, stewarded by the US Forest Service. The remaining forested areas are privately owned and within the County's Highlands land use classification, designated for maximum development at roughly

one home per five acres. These privately-owned forested areas are important to the region's economy via tree harvesting and timbering. It is important to support this industry's growth and success.

### WATERSHED

The Alleghany Highlands are located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, specifically the James River Watershed Basin. The Jackson and Cowpasture rivers run through the County, forming the James River around the Alleghany and Botetourt County line. Lake Moomaw, at the northern portion of the County, was created by the Gathright Dam project in 1979, located on the Jackson River. This dam and associated lake are managed by the Norfolk District of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

There is a limited amount of any pollutant that a water body can tolerate before it causes a violation of water quality standards called the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). When water bodies exceed these values, they are placed on the 303(d) list, or the list of Impaired Waters, so called because of Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. The 2016 Impaired Waters list contains seven (7) entries for Alleghany County. The TMDL schedule ranges from 2010 - 2020, ensuring that these impairments are being monitored.

It is important to note that the County crosses minimally into the Maury (easternmost tip) and the Greenbrier (westernmost boundary) watersheds as well, but the vast majority of land lies within the Upper James, as stated above.

## FLOODING & FLOODPLAINS

According to the Flood Insurance Study completed in December 2010 for Alleghany County and associated municipalities, the Jackson River has a relatively well-defined channel, with riverbanks and adjacent land being well vegetated with grasses, shrubs, and trees. This helps to cut down on flooding impacts, as vegetation can slow water down, absorb water, and is evidence that there are limited structures in the floodplain. Wilson Creek does have residential structures in its floodplain, while Smith Creek has a fair amount of residential and commercial buildings in the floodplain as it goes through the Town of Clifton Forge.

Flooding can occur all year, but the chances for flooding are slightly higher in winter and spring, due to snow melt and spring rain showers flowing down the mountains and into the tributaries, pooling in the valleys. These valleys are also the location of the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge, leading to more development in and around floodplains. Flood events will tend to run their course within a day, with extensive rainfall events clearing within a few days, which can cause substantial damage to homes and structures within the floodplain.

## LISTED ENDANGERED & THREATENED STATUS SPECIES



Peregrine Falcon  
(Listed Threatened)



James Spynymussel  
(Listed Endangered)



Shaggy Coil Snail  
(Listed Endangered)



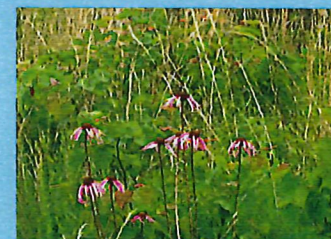
Appalachian Grizzled Skipper  
(Listed Threatened)



Shale Barren Rock Cress  
(Listed Threatened)



Bentley's Coralroot  
(Listed Endangered)



Smooth Coneflower  
(Listed Threatened)



Northeastern Bulrush  
(Listed Endangered)



While the Gathright Dam was constructed for the purpose of flood control along the Jackson River, there are two tributaries that join the river south of the dam that can still cause flooding, Dunlap Creek and Potts Creek. There is a small dam along Smith Creek, north of the Town of Clifton Forge, but it does not hold enough water to cause a substantial reduction in flood events. Additionally, Smith Creek can flood itself, flood because of backwash of the Jackson River, and/or flood if portions of the Town of Clifton Forge's culvert system becomes clogged.

### AIR QUALITY

The Alleghany Highlands are part of the Blue Ridge Monitoring Network for ambient air quality. Roanoke is the closest station that is within the monitoring network for the Highlands. As of the 2016 Virginia Ambient Air Monitoring Data Report, the Alleghany Highlands are in attainment for all of the measured pollutants.

The State of Virginia monitors particulate matter in two sizes ( $PM_{2.5}$  and  $PM_{10}$ ), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and ozone for the Blue Ridge network. Roanoke's station measured averages for all pollutants well below the allowable limits.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is calculated from concentrations of ground-level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide, most commonly seen as green, yellow, orange, or red air quality days. In 2016, Roanoke

dropped into the yellow, or moderate range, for a few days in April, May and June, but maintained a majority good, or green, rating the rest of the year.

### SPECIES OF CONCERN

In the Alleghany Highlands, there are numerous endangered species or species of concern that have been spotted in the region. These species range from the Yellow Lance (mussel), which is a proposed threatened species, to the Northeastern Bulrush (plant) listed as endangered, to various others that are listed as species of concern, or those species that have not been petitioned to the endangered, threatened or candidate list, but have been identified as important to monitor.

### IMPLICATIONS

The Alleghany Highlands has a vast and rich environment full of impressive ridge lines, dense forests, and scenic waterways. Maintaining the ridge lines within the Highlands is important as they offer land area for the forests, offer habitat to many species, and create the unique views that draw tourists. The majority of ridge lines are within US Forest Service jurisdiction, however, measures should be established to protect these areas from development should the US Forest Service sell the land.

The forests are essential to the Alleghany Highlands because they offer habitat, offer the raw resource for the timber trade, and allow for improved water quality, as tree roots absorb many water-born pollutants. Many of the forests are single-age forests, leading to one habitat type and reducing the sustainability of the tree harvest/timber trade. Land owners, the US Forest Service, and the County can come together to encourage diversification of the forests in a way that sustains environmental and economic quality.

As the Alleghany Highlands are part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, water quality is extremely important to maintain for state and federal regulations. Currently, water quality meets standards for the main concerns of the Chesapeake Bay, namely total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and total suspended solids. However, the seven (7) incidents noted on the 303(d) list include evidence of E. Coli in Falling Springs Creek and the Jackson River, fecal coliform in Smith Creek, benthic community (stream/creek bed) impairments in the Jackson River, low dissolved oxygen in the Jackson River, PCB (organic chlorine) evidence in fish tissue in the Jackson River, and water temperature in Potts Creek. Sources of these impairments include septic systems, urbanized areas, sanitary sewer overflows, industrial and municipal point source discharges, natural conditions, and/or other unknown sources. While the state monitors these conditions and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting, the County can monitor potential decline in septic

systems, increases in stormwater, and other potential events that could reduce water quality in the region.

Flooding is and will continue to be an issue for the Alleghany Highlands, especially down river from Dunlap and Potts Creeks and along Smith Creek. Impacts from flooding will be concentrated around the City of Covington, the Town of Clifton Forge, and potentially the Town of Iron Gate due to the density of housing and structures in the flood zone. Structures should not be developed within the floodplains, if it can be avoided, as each structure reduces the flood carrying capacity of that area and increases the chance for flood hazards. Before any construction in or immediately adjacent to floodplains, the economic benefit should be weighed against the increase in flood hazards. Additionally, the Alleghany County Code could be revised to reflect these concerns.

Air quality is not a identified as an existing concern for the region today, however, since the monitoring station for the region is in Roanoke, the County may want to reach out to the station to discuss a way to monitor air quality closer to home. In the event that additional industrial development occurs in the region, more monitoring of air quality can help ensure good AQI ratings in the future.

Out of sixty-five listed species (as of May 2018) in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Rare Species



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Search, 14 (22%) are listed as a federal species of concern, six are listed as endangered at the federal and/or state levels, and two are listed as threatened. To protect these species, habitat quantity and quality should be maintained to offer a good environment for these species to thrive.

If the County population does stabilize and experience growth, there will be development pressure on sensitive forest land; potentially along the ridge lines; and could negatively affect water quality, flood risk, air quality and/or rare species. While the state of Virginia does monitor for environmental quality, the County may want to include provisions to maintain a higher quality of monitoring through the development approval process.

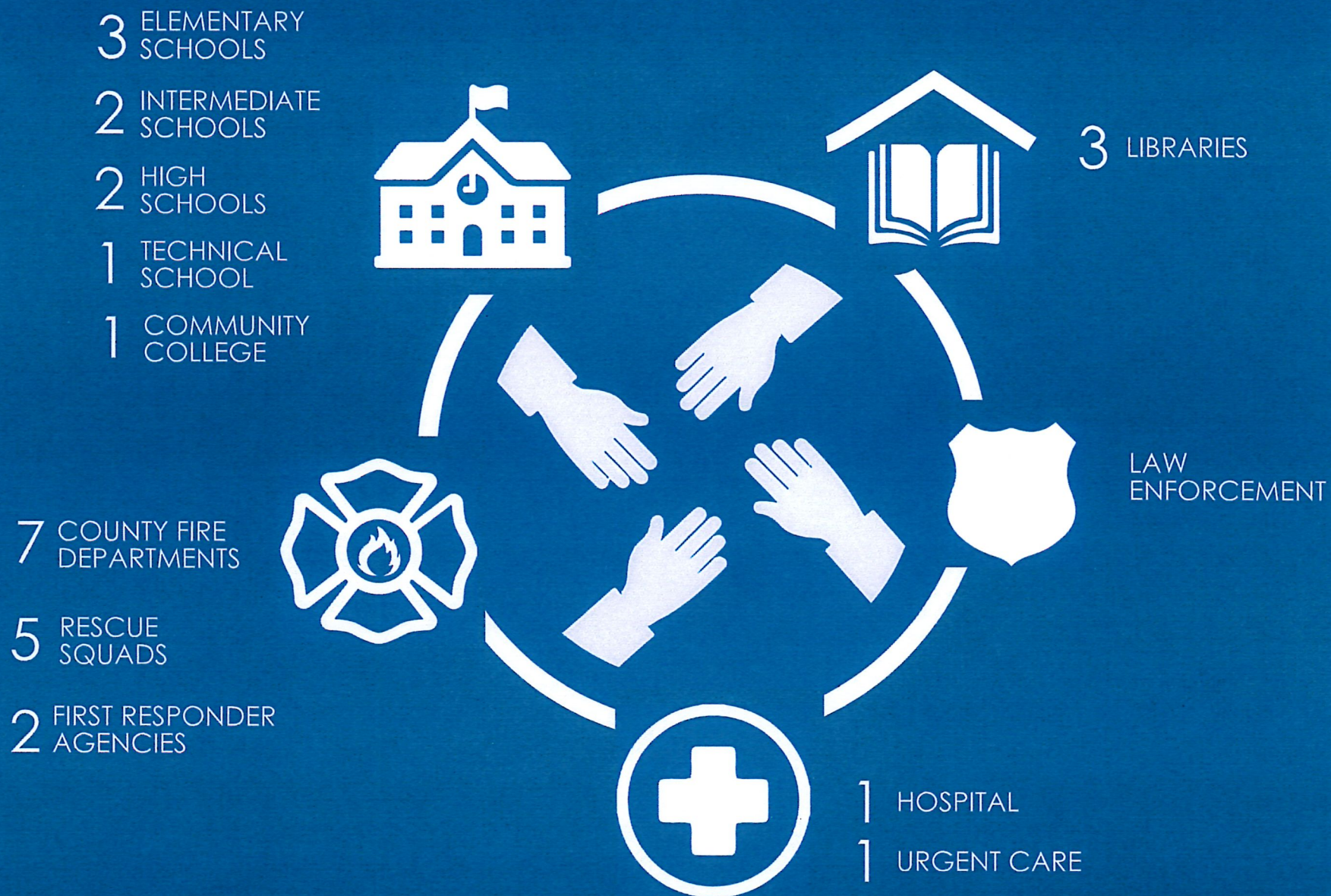


A photograph of a college sign for Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. The sign is blue with white text. A white wavy line graphic is overlaid on the image, starting from the left, passing over the sign, and ending on the right. The background is a dense forest of trees with green and yellow foliage. The foreground is a light green and white gradient.

DABNEY S. LANCASTER  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# COMMUNITY SERVICES PROFILE



## SECTION 9. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Alleghany County provides many services to its residents, such as schools, libraries, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, and a hospital. With the decline in overall population, these services have also been affected. The County should evaluate the efficiency and efficacy of these services, making associated updates or changes to procedures, and services that can assimilate future growth.

### SCHOOLS

Alleghany County has seven (7) active schools run by a school board, superintendent, and school principals. Two schools, the Boiling Spring Elementary School and the Falling Spring Elementary School, have recently been closed. The County still owns these facilities, but as part of the Cardinal Community Assistance Program through the Virginia Economic Developers Association they are actively being marketed for sale. One school, the Jackson River Technical Center, is a collaborative venture with the City of Covington, offering many technical programs that will provide continuing adult education and diploma/technical certification for high school students.

The overall population decline has led to a decline in school enrollment as well, leading to the closure of the two elementary schools. This decline has slowed, from about 100 students per year to roughly 40 students per year currently, but it is estimated

that the schools have lost one third of overall enrollment in the last 20 years. Additionally, with the closure of Boiling Springs Elementary, some students have bus routes close to or over one hour each way to attend school.

Regardless of declining numbers, the County school system is well-rated and offers a 91 percent graduation rate. The County partners with the City of Covington, the Governor's School, and the YMCA for many programs. Technology has been updated in all County schools, which currently have a goal of a five-year replacement schedule. Additionally, the County has been accepted into the New Tech Network, a problem-based learning system that will be tailored to local problems and implemented in grades 9 and 10.

School system needs are focused on the Alleghany High School, which needs significant renovation.

### LIBRARIES

There are three libraries within Alleghany County - the Alleghany Highlands Regional Library, the Clifton Forge Public Library, and the library at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. These libraries are important resources for children and adults alike as they offer numerous programs throughout the year and provide online access for those without it. Usage of the libraries



will fluctuate with population, but these libraries provide basic functions in the communities and should be maintained as much as possible.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Alleghany County operates a Sheriff's Office, which serves notices from the court system, serves as bailiff at the courthouse, enforces local and state laws, operates the regional jail, houses the E-911 Communications Center, and oversees safety programs and the Regional Drug Task Force.

## **FIRE**

Alleghany County has a volunteer-based fire/rescue service dispersed throughout the County, and dispatched through the County's E-911 Communications Center. The County has first responder coverage and mutual aid agreements with the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge. The County also participates in the United Fire and Rescue Association, comprised of seven (7) county fire stations, five (5) rescue squads, and two (2) first responder agencies. The County utilizes an Enhanced E-911 communication system that can automatically locate and identify numbers to reach callers faster as well as a reverse 911 system for community notifications. The City of Covington's fire and EMS services have responded to County 911 calls if the volunteers are not available to do so in the County facilities.

## **HOSPITAL**

The local hospital, the Lewis Gale Hospital - Alleghany, is located in Low Moor. The hospital serves the Alleghany Highlands and adjacent areas with general medical and surgical care, along with emergency services. Due to retirement and difficulty in recruiting, the hospital's medical staff has declined.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Population decline is the largest impact on community services, affecting school enrollment, school closures, a reduction in the amount of volunteers available, and a reduction in medical staff. In terms of school enrollment, the decline has caused the loss of jobs in the education and the closure of two elementary schools, requiring many students to have lengthy bus rides in order to attend public school. Given these circumstances, it would be advantageous to analyze other options to reduce travel time, offering students more time for learning, homework, and family life.

The fire and rescue services are based upon volunteers. With population declining, so do the number of volunteers; human resources are at half of the capacity of five years ago. This has the potential to cause service disruptions in response. The rescue operations, focusing on medical calls, heavily outnumber fire calls, but with a limited pool of qualified and EMS certified volunteers, it may be hard to keep pace with demand. The County does offer training to emergency management

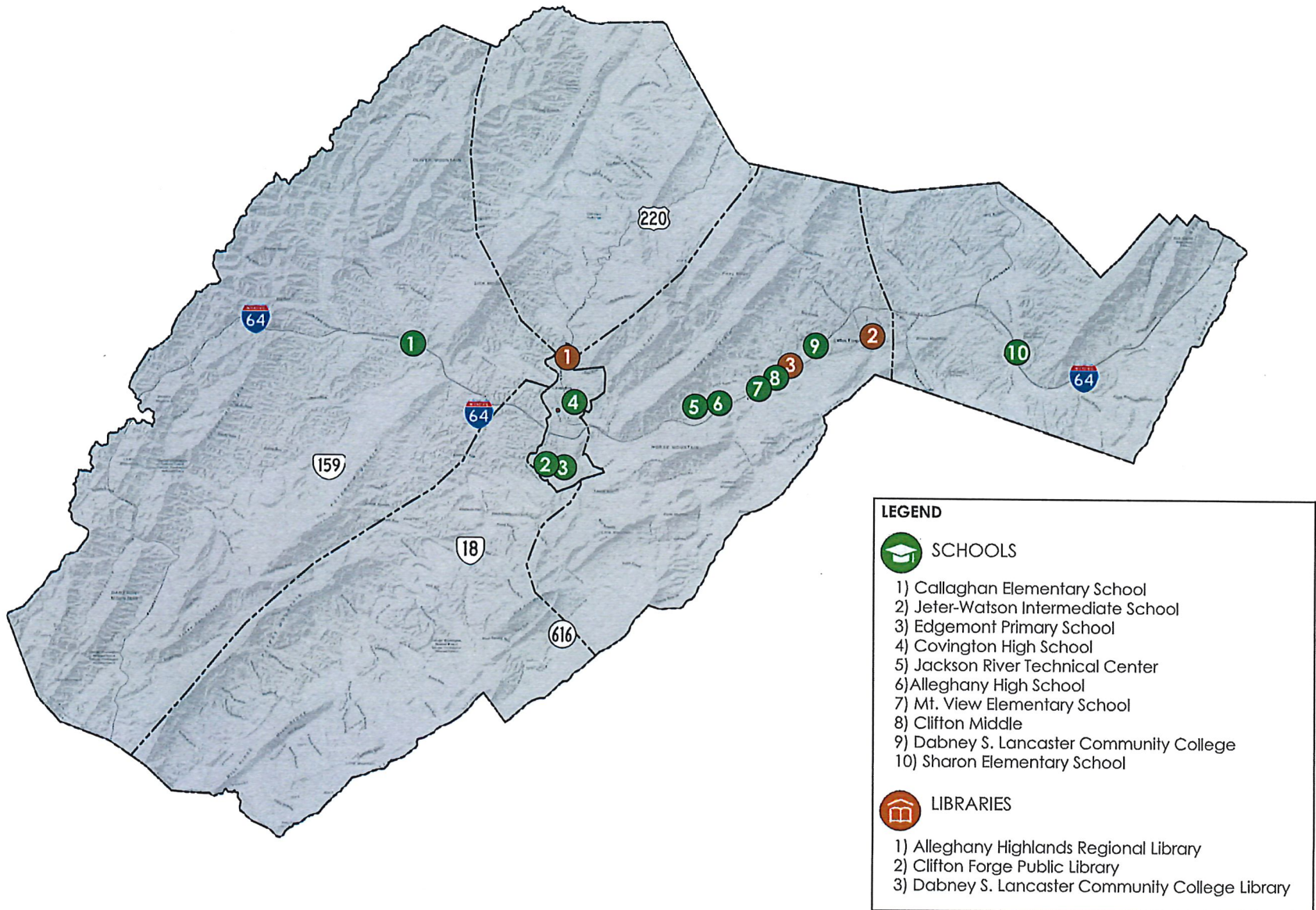
## COMMUNITY SERVICES

personnel, but if they can find a higher paid opportunity elsewhere, there is little to keep them in Alleghany County without having other paid employment opportunities. While the services are adequate when fully staffed, it should be a priority for the County to retain and recruit volunteers throughout the Alleghany Highlands. To accomplish this, the County can explore the use of residency requirements for paid training, paid opportunities, or looking into other avenues of retention such as a public-private partnership with Highland's companies. It would be beneficial to look at ways to collaborate with nearby fire and rescue stations to share resources and leverage the availability of volunteers. Increasing collaboration would also include creating a consolidated 911 system with the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge to further leverage limited resources.

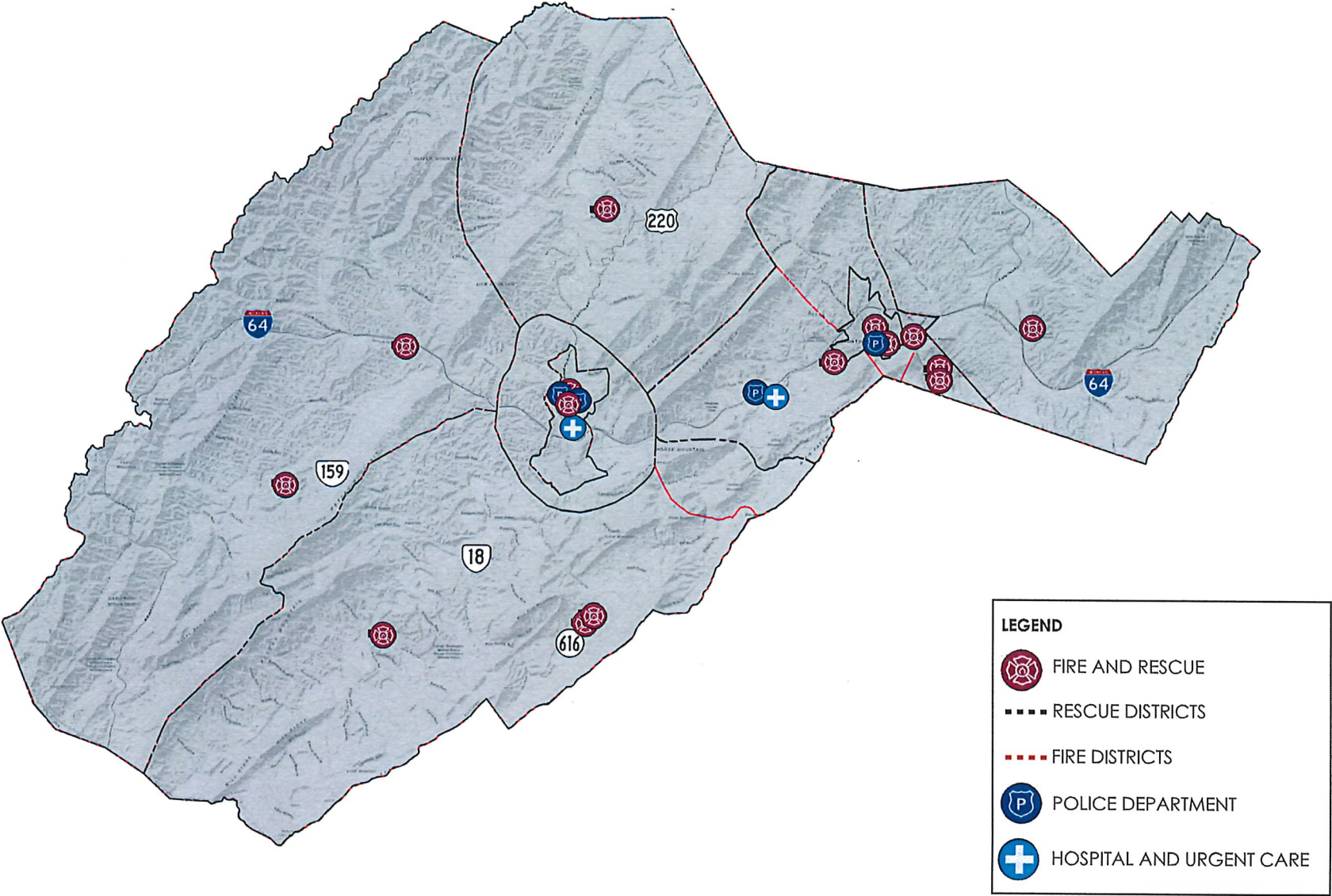
These issues are mirrored in the hospital where there is difficulty in recruiting new doctors, operating with about half of the primary care providers as they have in the recent past. While this is due to retirement of doctors, there are few young doctors to replace retirees due to the cost of medical school loan repayment versus the likely salary of medical professionals in the area. The County can potentially leverage federal and state rural medical programs to attract young doctors into the area.



▼ MAP 9.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES



▼ MAP 9.2 ALLEGHANY COUNTY EMS, FIRE, AND POLICE STATIONS









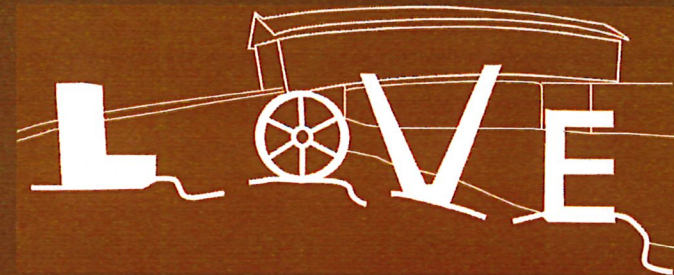
# HISTORIC & CULTURAL PROFILE

# #1

ONE OF THE MOST  
PHOTOGRAPHED  
VIRGINIA  
LANDMARKS

The only remaining wooden, covered humpback bridge of its design. Built in 1857, it is the oldest covered bridge in Virginia. The landmark is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Source: Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, <http://www.visitalleghanyhighlands.com/main/index.php>



## 4 CIVIL WAR SITES

1. Averell's Salem Raid
2. Jackson River Depot
3. Lucy Selina Furnace
4. Australia Furnace

Source: Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, <http://www.visitalleghanyhighlands.com/civil-war>

## 13

NATIONAL  
REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC  
PLACES

The Highlands has a wealth of historic buildings & districts; see this section's maps for a full inventory.

Source: National Register of Historic Places, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp>

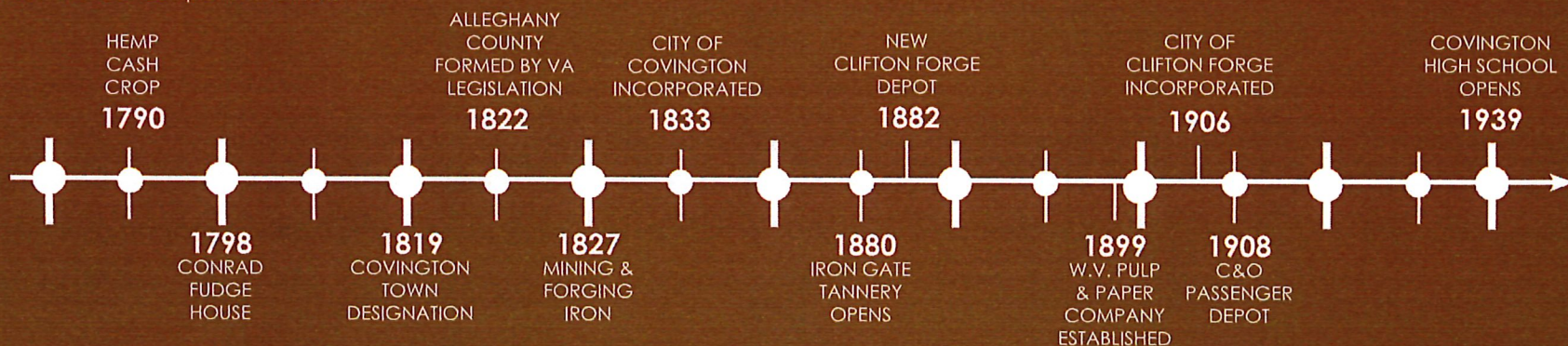
## 8 CULTURAL SITES

Enjoy cultural events at one of the Uniquely Alleghany venues like the Historic Masonic Theatre or at the River Rock Amphitheater.

Source: Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, <http://www.visitalleghanyhighlands.com/uniquely-alleghany>

## HISTORIC MILESTONES

Sources: Previous Comprehensive Plans





## SECTION 10. HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

During the early settlement of Alleghany County, the principal economic driver was the cultivation of grains, hay, hemp and the raising of livestock. During the time between 1790 and 1825, early farmers aimed to be self-sufficient. With a primary identification as a self-reliant agricultural community, the Alleghany Highlands experienced slow growth until the late 1800s, when the area had an economic boom with the establishment of industry.

Agriculture became supplemented by the mining and forging of iron, as the region contained rich deposits of iron ore. Mines and furnaces were established as early as 1827, but did not see substantial growth until after the Civil War, 1865. During the war, the furnaces were used to support the Confederacy, as many of the County residents fought for the Confederacy under the Stonewall Brigade. After production demand from the war had ceased, these mines and furnaces continued to experience increased demand for the mining of iron ore and the production of pig iron. Due to the iron industry, Alleghany County experienced growth in the late 1800s until the early 1900s. This growth was occurred predominantly in the communities surrounding the mines and furnaces. As the iron industry grew, it quickly became the Highland's main source of economic support, until the early 1900s when competition started to shut down operations.

Though the iron industry had faded by the early 1900s, it aided in the establishment of an industrial workforce within the Alleghany Highlands. As a result, the stage was set to encourage industrial growth. The majority of this growth was located in the City of Covington. The C&O Railroad was also a major force in generating growth in the Alleghany Highlands. The Railroad operated daily passenger trains through Covington and provided many of the large heavy industries in the area with access to rail transportation. This rail availability made Covington one of the highest freight paying stations on the C&O rail line.

The C&O Railroad was especially vital for the explosive growth of Clifton Forge. In 1889, the Clifton rail yard was designated as the major stop and dividing point for C&O. As such, many of the businesses and industries in Clifton Forge were either owned or relied heavily on C&O operations. In the 1950s, Clifton Forge took a major economic hit when the steam engine was replaced by diesel locomotives, not supported by many of the shops in Clifton Forge. In addition to locomotive changes, the C&O Railroad made other adjustments to their operations, and by the 1980's many of the C&O shops had closed. As a result, the population in Clifton Forge dropped and, due to financial hardship, reverted from a city back into a town in 2011.

From the industrial boom through modern times, there have been many industries that have passed through the Alleghany Highlands. Many of those that remain in operation are supporting industries of WestRock. WestRock, originally known as West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, is the largest and most continuing boost to the economy. The Mill started operation in 1900 as one of the area's primary employers. It has changed ownership and expanded numerous times and continues to thrive within the Alleghany Highlands. WestRock continues to serve as a vital economic driver for both the County and City.

Though the late 1800s through the mid-1900s exhibited significant growth within the City of Covington and Clifton Forge, it was not until the mid to late 1900s that the County experienced substantial residential growth. The largest amount of new housing within the County occurred between 1960 and 1979, which since 2010 accounts for 31 percent of the housing stock. This is due to the post-World War II nationwide trend to focus growth outward from city core development into the suburbs, known as suburban sprawl.

There are six national register historic districts, which contain a total of 1,057 contributing historic resources, and thirteen national register historic sites designated throughout Alleghany Highlands. The contributing historical resources within the districts are largely associated with the economic growth experienced within region during the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth

century. The listing of these districts and sites on the national register does not impose any additional restrictions on what the property owner may do with a designated property. However, these contributing resources and sites contain historical or architectural significance and are a source of community identity and cultural pride.

**LUKE'S MOUNTAIN** – Designated in 1998, the district contains 23 contributing historic resources, mostly of which are single-family residences and agricultural buildings built in the mid-nineteenth century by members of the Luke Family. William A. Luke Sr. owned the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company.

**ROSEDALE** – Designated in 1998, the district contains 79 contributing historic resources, most of which are mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century residential housing.

**COVINGTON** – Designated in 1991, the district contains 110 contributing historic resources, which encompasses the historic core of the City of Covington. The majority of the district is composed of late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century commercial, governmental, educational, religious, industrial and residential structures.

**LONGDALE FURNACE** – Designated in 1998, the district contains 38 contributing historic resources built during the mid to late-nineteenth century, which were associated with the



operations of the Longdale Iron Company and housing for the company's personnel.

**CLIFTON FORGE RESIDENTIAL** – Designated in 2012, the district contains 730 contributing historic resources that are predominantly single-family residential units dating to the turn-of-the twentieth century.

**CLIFTON FORGE COMMERCIAL** - Designated in 1992, the district contains 77 contributing late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century buildings located within the central business district of Clifton Forge.

## CULTURE

The heart and culture of the Alleghany Highlands has remained throughout the historic transitions. One of the greatest attractions and source of community pride is the natural beauty of the area. Nearly half of the County is designated as National Forest, most of which was purchased by the U.S. Forest Service during the 1930's and 1940's when the iron industries were closing. Along that same time, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) recruited enrollees from the area to construct roads, trails, and lookout towers, and to plant trees. The CCC was also responsible for the construction of Douthat State Park and the Longdale Recreation area.

The Longdale Recreation area, formally know as Green Pastures, holds historical significance in that it was originally build as a miniature Douthat park for the African American community during the period of segregation. After desegregation, the park remained a valuable recreation asset for many residents of the Alleghany Highlands. The park was constructed in 1938 and the U.S. Forest Service is currently working on a restoration project for the park.

During the World War I, the Alleghany Highland community came together to support victory gardens located below the Rosedale Community. This garden was cultivated to provide a sustainable source of locally grown produce during the war. The County has acquired the land and at the request of the family donating the land has named it Rose Dale Park, which was the original name of the community before it was combined into Rosedale. The park is just over 14 acres and includes public parking, river access, and two graded soccer/football fields. A small community garden may be incorporated in the future if interest is expressed by the community. If a community garden is established in the future, informational signage could be placed at the site of the garden to recognize its historic past.

The Humpback Bridge also serves as a source of community pride. The bridge was built in 1857 and was restored in 1953 after the local woman's club began a campaign for the restoration of the bridge. The bridge is now the only remaining wooden,

covered, humpback bridge in the United States. The area around the bridge serves as a wayside park and contains one of the area's most unique pieces of artwork. The LOVEwork at Humpback Bridge art piece was created using materials historic to the area. The bricks for the "L" are from historic structures, the gear, "O," is from one of the old paper machines at WestRock, the "V" shape in the tree represents the area's natural beauty, and the railroad ties forming the "E" represents the area's connection to the railroad. This is one location that represents the full history of the Alleghany Highlands.

Cultural activities and civic organizations have played a critical role in the continued support of the area's historic and cultural resources. The Alleghany Highlands Art Council and the Alleghany Highlands Center for Performing Arts provide a nurturing environment in the support of the performing arts. The Alleghany Highlands Art and Craft Center provides a center for exhibits, studio space, and educational opportunities. The Alleghany Historical Society and the Alleghany Highlands Genedological Society have been continually active in the community to preserve the history and genealogy of the Alleghany Highlands and to educate citizens on the history of the area. The City of Covington is currently developing a heritage museum, downtown, that will highlight the region's industrial roots.

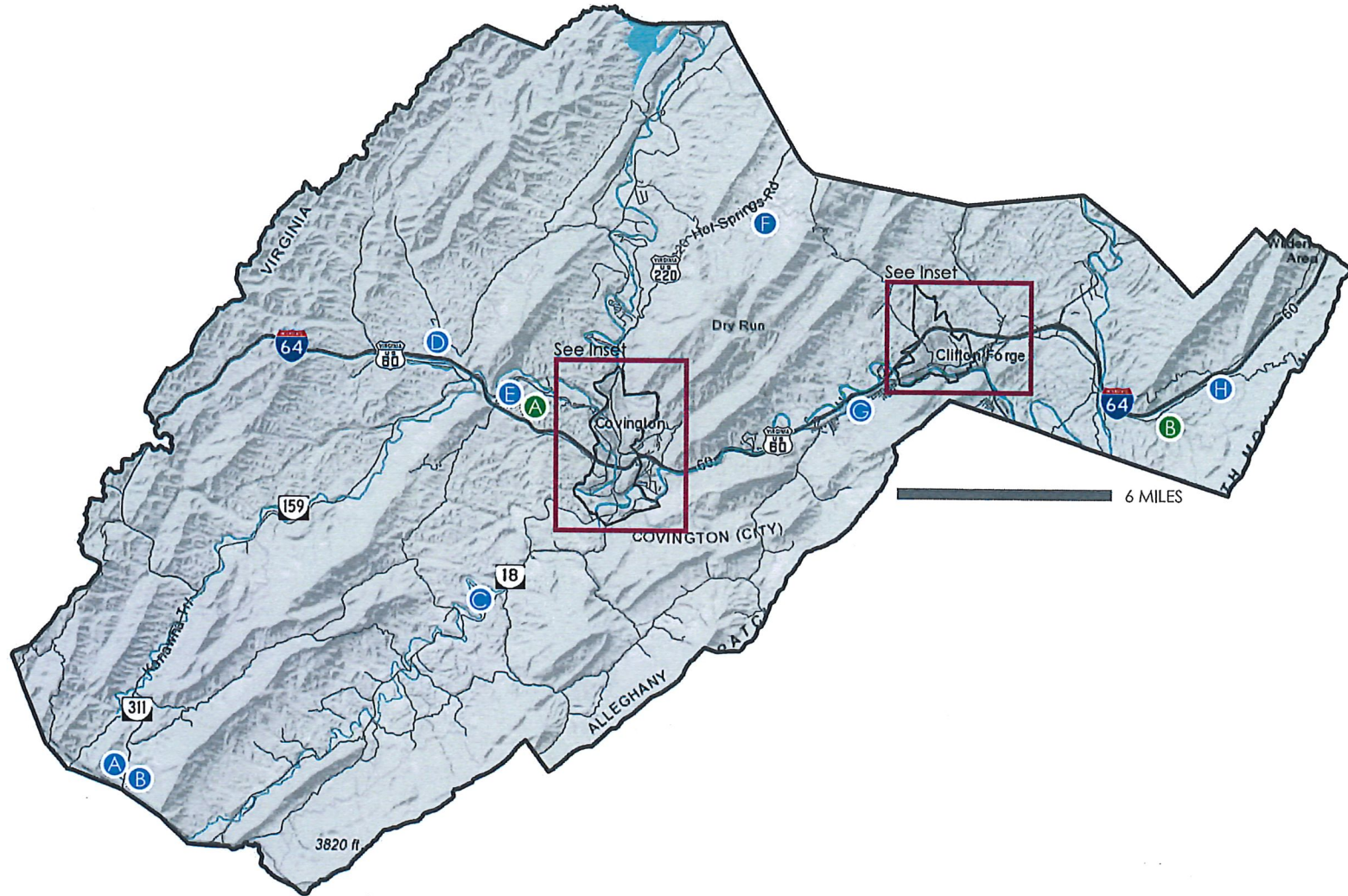
**WRIGHTSVILLE** - The Wrightsville neighborhood is a historically African-American neighborhood settled in 1867 by freed slaves Archie and Mary Wright. The community included a local and African-American-owned restaurant, the Golden Arrow Tea Room and Restaurant, as well as the African-American built church, Wrightsville Baptist Church, built in 1904. This area was also the site of the first black school in Alleghany County. The Wrightsville Heritage Museum celebrates this history and is located off of E Madison Street and Wrightstown Avenue. The Wrightsville Baptist Church is located next door on E Madison Street.

## IMPLICATIONS

One of the largest age groups for the Alleghany Highlands is the 65+ group. While there are other implications with an aging population, one that is important to historic and cultural resources is that the residents remember the region during its boom and growth and helped contribute to that prosperity. This group knows why the area was thriving and wants to see it that way again. A majority of the historic and cultural groups have members of this group on their boards, running events, or as members and supporters. Their memories and insights are extremely important to the region as a whole and for potential growth, as they hold the experiential knowledge that newcomers and young residents do not have - they know what the area has to offer and how to get through difficult times.



▼ MAP 10.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY: HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES

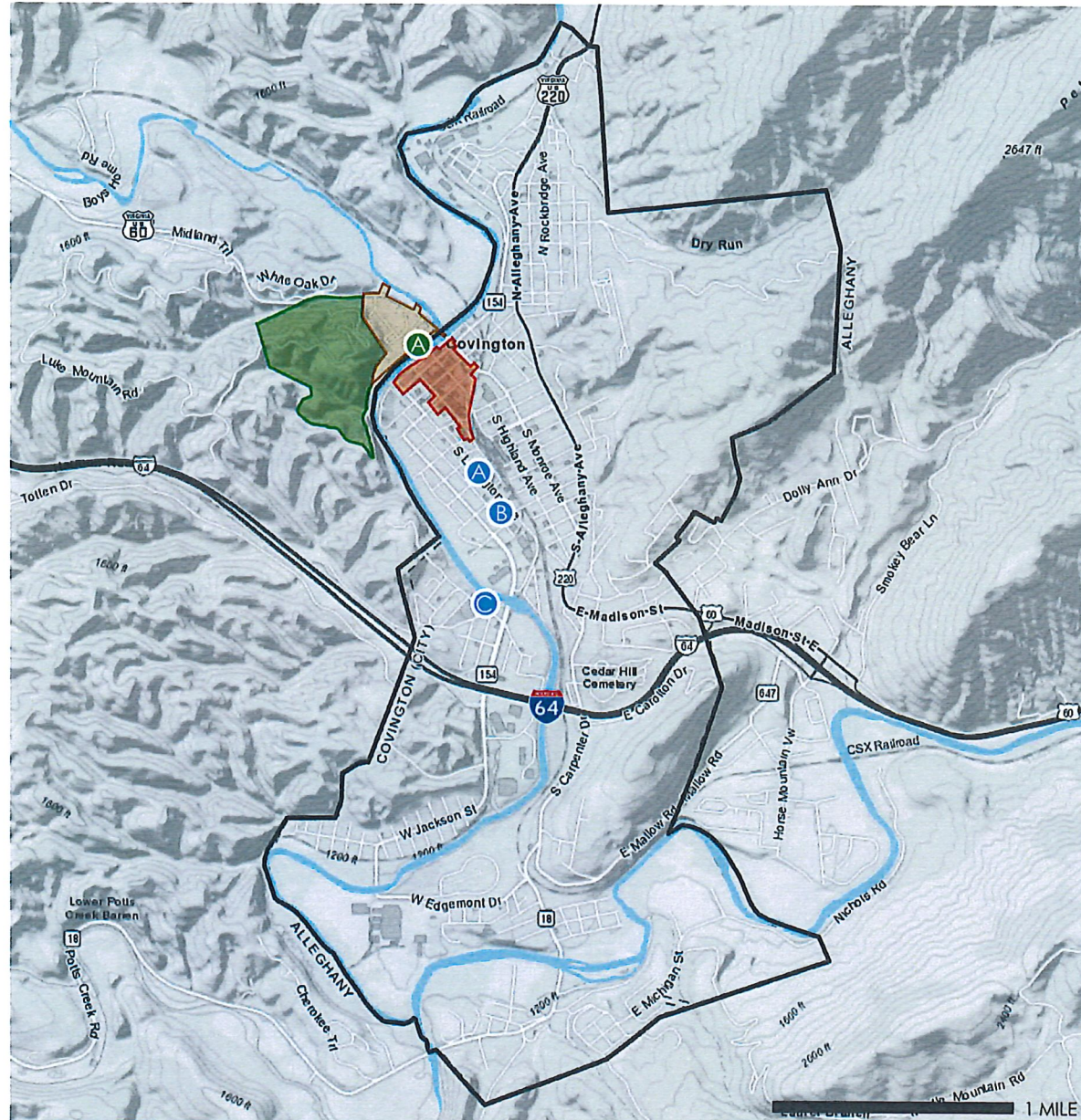
- |   |                            |   |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| <b>A</b> Sweet Chalybeate Hotel         | <b>D</b> Milton Hall       | <b>G</b> Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church  |
| <b>B</b> Sweet Chalybeate Springs Lodge | <b>E</b> Humpback Bridge   | <b>H</b> Longdale Furnace Historic District |
| <b>C</b> Persinger-Wright House         | <b>F</b> H.R. Massie House |   |

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- |                        |
|------------------------|
| <b>A</b> LOVEwork      |
| <b>B</b> Longdale Park |



▼ MAP 10.1 COVINGTON INSET: HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES

- Rosedale Historic District
- Covington Historic District
- Luke's Mountain Historic District

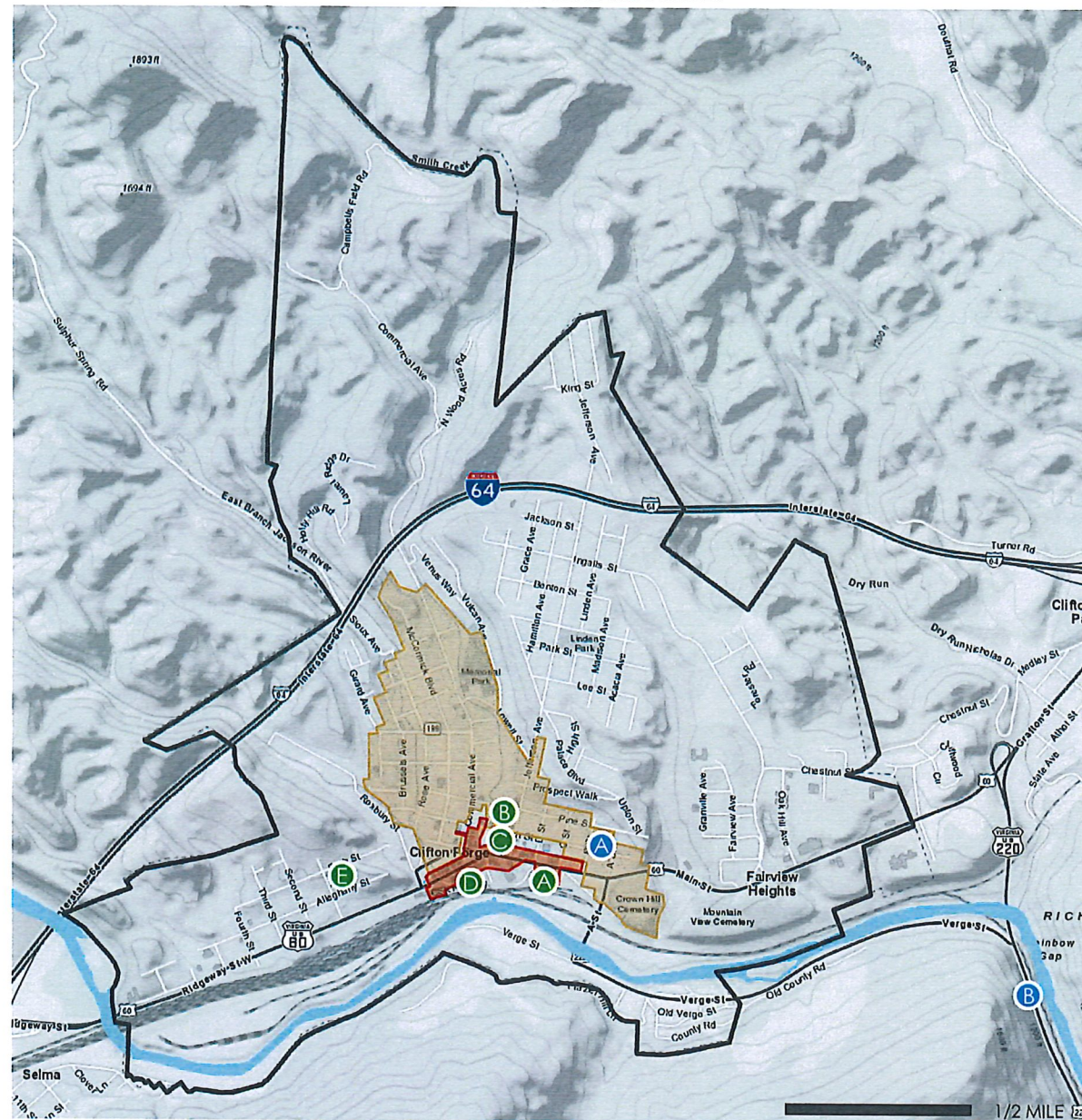
- A First Baptist Church
- B Covington High School
- C Conrad Fudge House

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- A Rosedale Park



▼ MAP 10.2 CLIFTON FORGE INSET: HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES



## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES

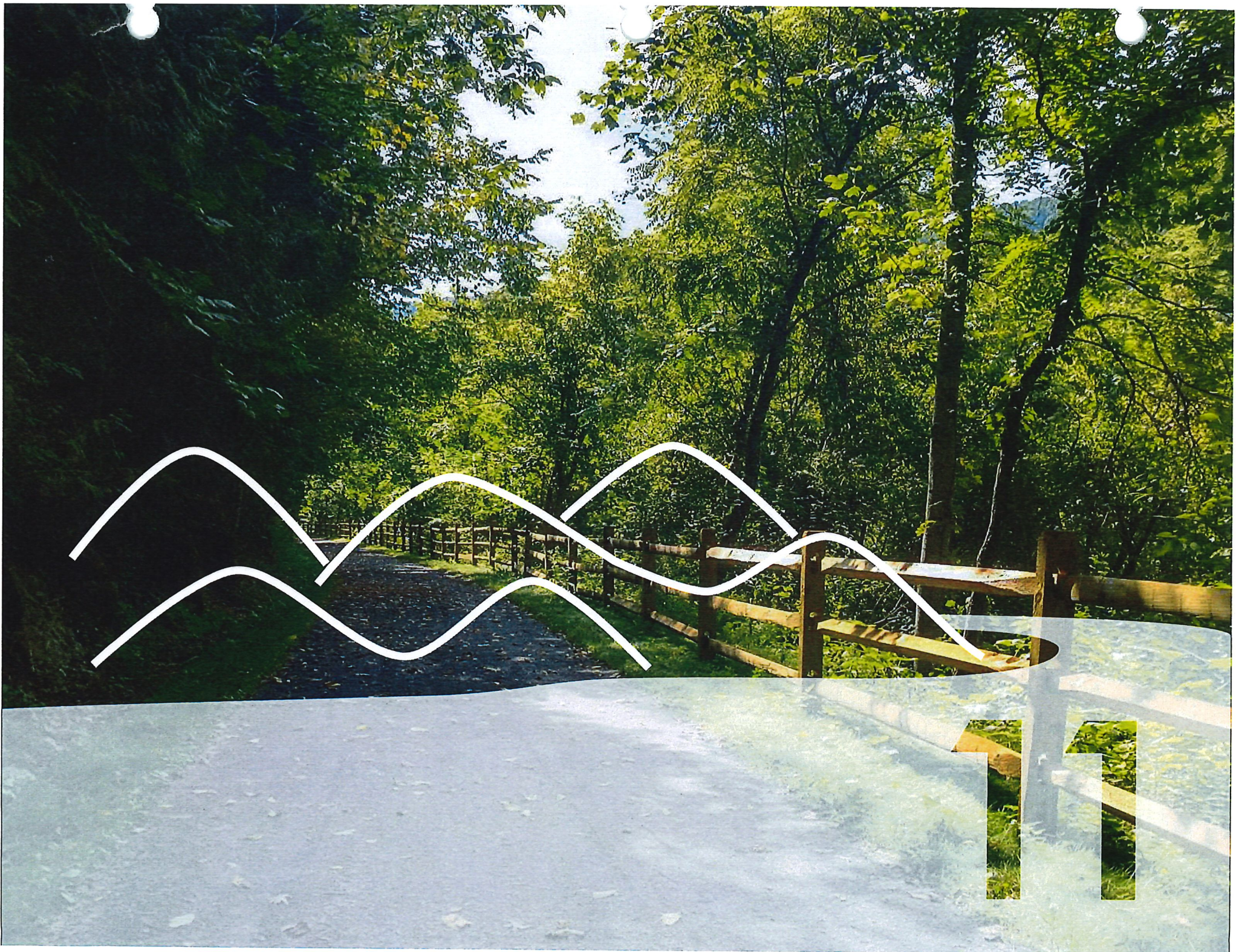
- Clifton Forge Residential Historic District
- Clifton Forge Commercial Historic District

- A Jefferson High School
- B Clifton Furnace

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

- A C&O Railway Heritage Center
- B Clifton Forge School of the Arts
- C Historic Masonic Theatre
- D Allegheny Highlands Arts & Craft Center
- E Ridgely Historic Gardens







# PARKS & RECREATION PROFILE



137,987  
FORESTED ACRES  
IN THE COUNTY



15  
ATHLETIC FIELDS  
& COURTS



4

DESIGNATED  
CAMPGROUNDS

112\* MILES OF TRAILS

\* Includes planned extension of Jackson River Scenic Trail to Bath County

Permitted Trail Usage



26



20



13



MOST VISITED  
WATERFALLS IN THE  
HIGHLANDS

BEST MOUNTAIN  
BIKING IN THE  
REGION

15 PARKS  
WITH  
RIVER  
ACCESS

And 11 public boat  
launches

With Class I & II Rapids  
the rivers are great for  
Kayaking and Tubing!



Source: Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, <http://www.visitalleghanyhighlands.com/main/index.php>



## SECTION 11. PARKS & RECREATION

Many parks and recreation spaces exist within the Alleghany Highlands region. From traditional playgrounds to wildlife viewing areas to trails to water-based activities, this region has a plethora of opportunities for anyone who enjoys the outdoors. Not only do these spaces increase quality of life for existing residents, but they create an economic sector that thrives on the region's natural assets. Supporting these opportunities will be key in growing the recreation economy.

### RECREATION & PARKS

The open spaces and natural resources of the Alleghany Highlands are primary assets to the region. These resources should be conserved, while allowing for the enjoyment of these places by residents and tourists alike. There are many places throughout the Highlands for recreation opportunities, specifically wildlife sites, recreation trails, boating access points, sites for fishing, the forests themselves, sports fields, and even a few golf courses in the region. Additionally the County Parks and Recreation Department and the local YMCA have numerous recreation programs from camps and swimming to youth sports leagues and fishing. The City of Covington has a network for city parks as well as the Jackson River Sports Complex, a relatively new and highly regarded park attracting numerous sporting events. There is a City pool, located downtown and along the Jackson River, offering recreation and scenic views.

The County also borders Lake Moomaw and Douthat State Park, offering unique recreation opportunities managed by the State or Federal governments.

The Alleghany Highlands offers many park opportunities that enhance the quality of life in the region. These parks are operated and managed by different levels of government include the City of Covington, Town of Clifton Forge, Alleghany County, State of Virginia, the US Forest Service, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Each park site has unique amenities that can be reviewed in the follow map and chart.

The shining star of Alleghany County is the Jackson River and the lands surrounding the beautiful waterway. The County acquired land known as the Hot Springs Branch of the C&O Railway and developed the Jackson River Scenic Trail. This trail is fine gravel where the old railroad bed used to lie, extending from just north of the City of Covington to the Smith Bridge trailhead, north to the Natural Well trailhead for just over 17 miles. There is a newly proposed trailhead at Cedar Creek in Bath County. This trail stopped at the northern boundary of the City of Covington in a way that will allow the City to create an urban trail network that ties into the trail. This trail is the site of the Jackson River Scenic Trail Marathon, 10k, and 5k races.



There are numerous recreation opportunities through the US Forest Service, as roughly half of Alleghany County is owned by the agency. There are recreation areas, wilderness viewing areas, and numerous trails. Uniquely, the Eastern National Children's Forest exists where over 1,000 children planted trees in 1972, one year after a wildfire burned 1,176 acres on Potts Mountain. There is a nearby monument to the children and the names of the children were placed in a time capsule to be opened on its 100th anniversary in 2072.

## TOURISM

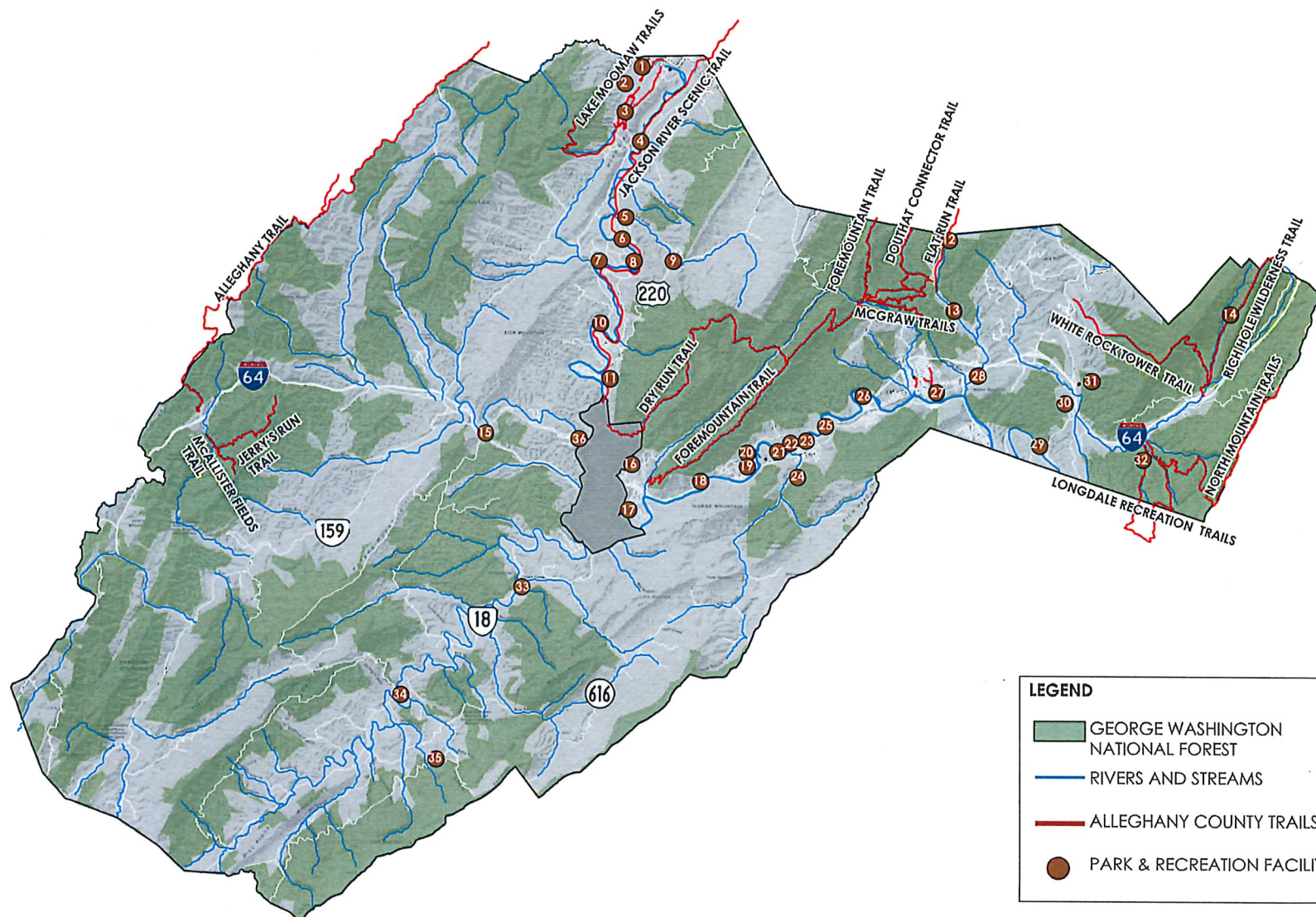
Tourism related to parks and recreation facilities within the Alleghany Highlands is part of asset-based economic development. Tourism is largely monitored and encouraged by the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism (Chamber of Commerce), partially funded by the transient occupancy tax. The Chamber of Commerce has been marketing these recreational resources to the benefit of the region. The Chamber of Commerce has introduced and continued the Alleghany Gran Fondo Cycling Festival, which brings numerous cyclists and cycle enthusiasts to the region. Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce has also been instrumental in the marathon races along the Jackson River Scenic Trail. Other projects of the Chamber of Commerce include a new logo for the Alleghany Highlands region, mimicked throughout this plan; signs utilize this logo throughout the Highlands. The next stage of this initiative is to complete wayfinding signs linking the various amenities of the region.

## IMPLICATIONS

The park and recreation assets of the Alleghany Highlands are some of the area's top assets, which can be cultivated and grown to improve the economy and market the area to an entirely new set of potential residents, known as asset-based economic development. This is one of the strongest economic opportunities the region has. Increasing the connection between the existing trails and the other nearby amenities will only strengthen the system.














Aside from maintaining and growing the trails and parks in the area, land could be designated next to the trailheads, or in strategic locations along the trails, to accommodate outfitters, small food establishments, coffee houses, cycle repair shops, etc., that would cater to the users of the trails and the crowds for events. There is also an opportunity for hotel and other lodging catered to tourists and recreation enthusiasts. This is a current opportunity that is ready for development. Care should be taken to ensure that the development of support businesses does not negatively impact the natural areas themselves. The City and County may want to look at provisions in the future whereby new development should consider setting aside land and/or accessibility to trails, parks and other recreational uses.

▼ MAP 11.1 ALLEGHANY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

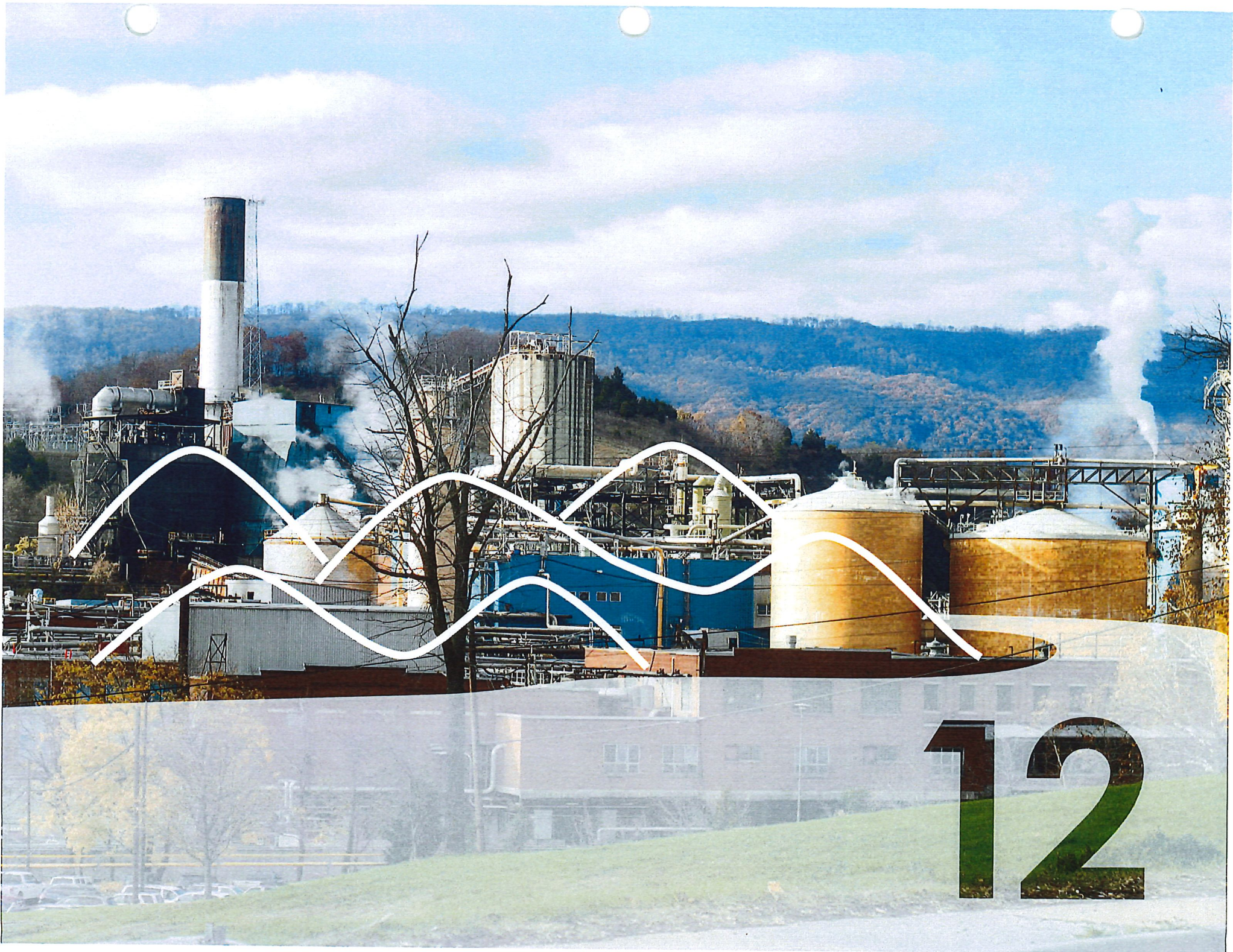




PARKS & RECREATION

MAP #	PARK/ RECREATION FACILITY NAME	 BASEBALL FIELD	 COURTS	 WILDLIFE	 HIKING / TRAIL	 OPEN PARK SPACE	 PICNIC SHELTER	 PLAY-GROUND	 RIVER ACCESS	 ATHLETIC FIELD	 CAMPING	 BOAT LAUNCH	 GOLF COURSE	 RESTROOM FACILITY
1	Coles Point			X	X		X		X	X		X		X
2	Lake Moomaw			X					X			X		
3	Morris Hill Campground			X	X		X	X			X			X
4	Johnson Springs											X		
5	Falling Springs State Park			X	X		X		X					
6	Smith Bridge				X				X			X		X
7	Indian Draft											X		
8	Cliffview Country Club								X				X	X
9	Falling Springs Playground	X				X		X						
10	Petticoat Junction											X		
11	Intervale Trailhead				X									
12	Douthat State Park			X	X	X			X		X	X		X
13	Buckhorne Campground										X			X
14	Rich Hole Wilderness Area			X	X				X		X			
15	Humpback Bridge					X	X		X					X
16	Altamont Park	X				X	X	X						X
17	Brentwood Playground					X		X		X				
18	Island Ford			X								X		
19	Alleghany Country Club												X	X
20	Mt. View Park	X	X				X	X		X				X
21	YMCA		X						X					X
22	Winterberry Park					X	X		X					
23	Alleghany Government Complex						X		X					X
24	NF Shooting Range					X	X							
25	Low Moor Boat Ramp								X			X		
26	DSLCC		X		X	X				X				
27	Booker T Washington Park		X		X	X	X	X						X
28	Cliffondale Country Club												X	
29	Evans Tract			X								X		
30	Sharon Baseball Complex	X										X		X
31	Sharon Park	X					X	X	X					
32	Longdale Recreation Area				X		X		X					X
33	Potts Creek Park					X			X					
34	Boiling Springs Park	X	X			X	X	X						
35	Eastern National Children's Forest			X	X									
36	Rose Dale Park					X			X	X				



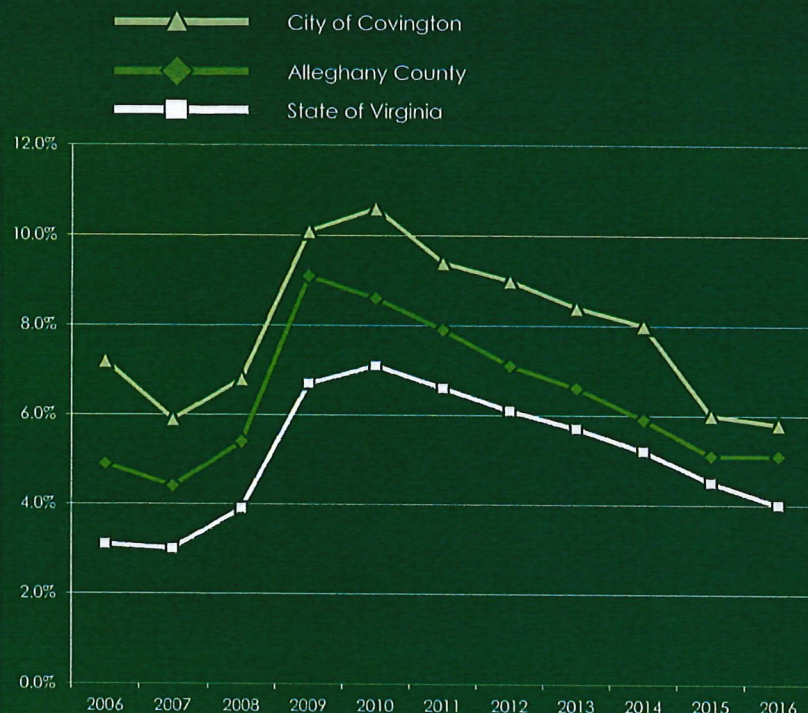




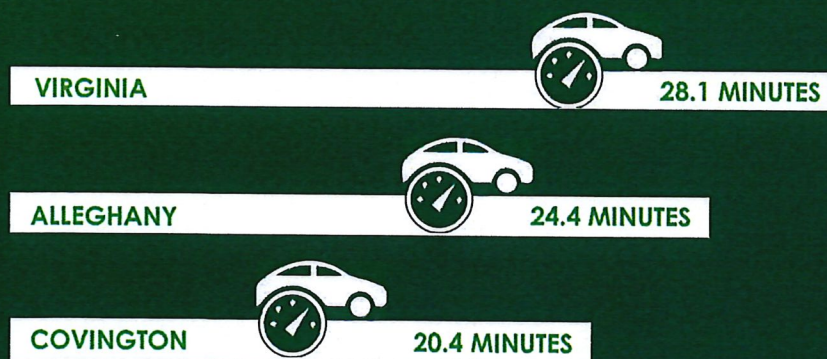
# ECONOMIC PROFILE

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, 2018 and American Community Survey, 2016

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, % (2016)



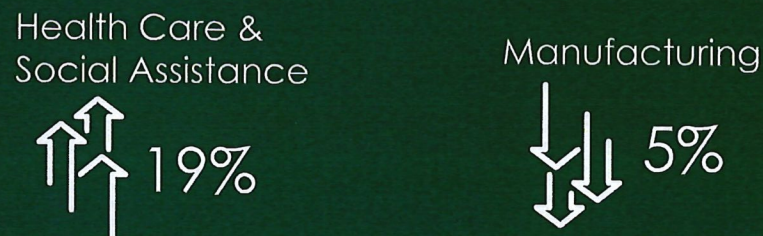
## COMMUTER MEAN TRAVEL TIME, MINUTES (2016)



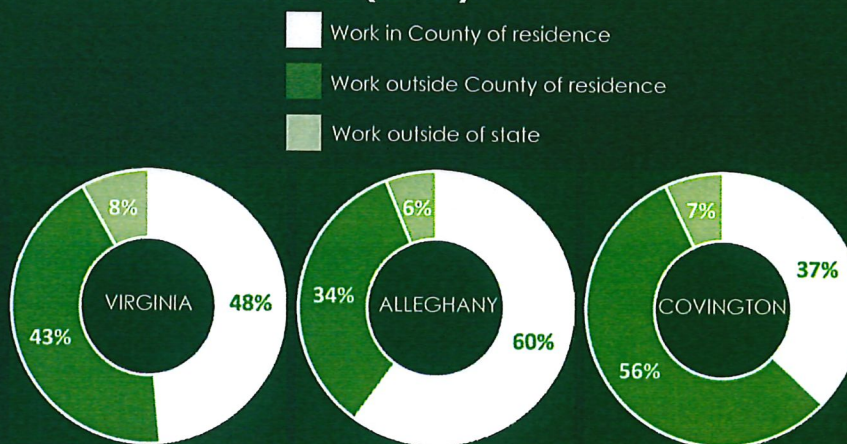
## LARGEST INDUSTRIES, % (2018)



## LARGEST INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS, % (2016)



## PLACE OF WORK, % (2016)





## SECTION 12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The success of the local economy is critically important to the sustainability and growth of the region. In the past, as mentioned throughout this Plan, when large employers left the area, so did the people and tax income of those residents. That being said, the Alleghany Highlands has many unique resources that can bring prosperity back into this region. While many may want to return to the way the region was when thriving, it is important to realize that a more sustainable growth will happen with diversification of the local economy, based on the underlying assets of the region.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

*Virginia Labor Availability Report - 2010*

*Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan - 2008*

*DRAFT RVARC Economic Development Strategy - 2017*

*Need for New Lodging Accommodations in Virginia's Alleghany Highlands Assessment - 2017*

*Defining and Implementing a Vision for Economic Growth in the Alleghany Highlands - 2014*

### ECONOMIC PROFILE

Based upon the 2018 Virginia Employment Commission Alleghany County Profile, the top three largest industries are government (29%), health care and social assistance (23%), and manufacturing (13%). While no projections exist for government employment, manufacturing is projected to drop five percent (5%) by 2024, while health care and social assistance will increase 19 percent by 2024. The top five growth occupations in the County include personal financial advisors (51.4%), home health aides (47%), nurse practitioners (37%), medical assistants (33%), and physician assistants (32%). This information shows that 80 percent of growth occupations are within the medical field, further evidenced by the 19 percent of new hires for the health care and social assistance industry.

Median household income, or the middle household income, was \$45,007 in 2016, while it was \$43,160 in 2010 and \$28,545 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, there was an increase in median household income of \$14,615, roughly \$1,500 per year, while the growth between 2010 and 2016 has been \$1,847 for six years, highlighting a slower income growth.

The majority of residents (86%) drive alone to work, which on average takes 24 minutes. Sixty-one percent of residents work within the County, while 34 percent work outside the County.



Unemployment rates for the County have fluctuated in the last 10 years, starting with roughly five percent (5%) in 2006, rising to nine percent (9%) in 2009, and falling back to five percent (5%) in 2016. While the unemployment rate seems relatively low today, comparing that to the increase in individuals below the poverty level, up from seven percent (7%) in 2000 and 11 percent in 2010, shows that while there are more people working, they are not making enough money or normal life expenses, a circumstance known as underemployment.

In regard to commercial retail trends, according to the ESRI Retail MarketPlace Profile, there are numerous retail goods and services where there is a demand for products that outweigh the supply, called the leakage factor. Retail business and services with a leakage factor of 50 or more (0-100 scale) include motor vehicle and parts dealers; building materials, garden equipment, and supply stores; clothing & clothing accessories stores, sporting goods, hobby, and books & music stores, general merchandise stores, and miscellaneous store retailers. Out of these, it is important to note that while there seems to be leakage outside of Allegheny County for residents to obtain these goods, there is a strong trend toward online shopping, which is not specifically accounted for in these numbers.

## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

It is important to note that transportation is essential to the economy; industry cannot locate where employees, goods,

and resources are not accessible. Allegheny County has high accessibility along Interstate 64 and along the CSX railway, creating multiple opportunities for shipping and accessibility for many industries. This creates an important opportunity to the region, as there is available land along the interstate for industrial development.

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Allegheny County's future land use designations take into account existing conditions, as well as desired conditions to accommodate economic development. While there are different designations with associated densities and uses, all designations can allow for some type of economic development. For instance, Highland, Rural Preservation or Rural Communities can accommodate economic development common in rural areas, assuming the land is developed in a way to keep ancillary development low density and respectful of the natural area surrounding the site. Additionally, while Highway Mixed Use and Industrial land use designations are separate, either area may allow certain industrial or commercial uses, depending upon the circumstances. If land is determined to be best suited for industry or commercial spaces, the future land use map should be updated to reflect the intended use of those areas.

## **TOURISM**

Tourism has proven to be strong and creates part of the foundation of the region's economy. With the many events held in the area's parks and open spaces, many dollars have been brought into the area. Domestic travel impacts have increased from 2011. While increases have been modest, this highlights that tourism and the region's natural assets are economically strong in the region. This source of income can be leveraged for stronger impacts as recreation and parks increase.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

The Alleghany Highlands has numerous economic development related plans and/or reports completed for the region, some with a general focus and some with a targeted focus. Each plan includes goals and recommendations, both short- and long-term. Not all reports recommend the same strategies, but all look to the region's future. This Comprehensive Plan looked at the recommendations of five (5) of these reports and incorporates support for many of these initiatives through suggested implementation strategies. Further information on economic development initiatives for the Highlands can be found via the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation or Chamber of Commerce.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The data shows the changes in the region's economy since the loss of numerous large employers. With the median income increases by roughly \$300 per year, down from \$1,500 per year and increase in poverty levels, the area has been negatively affected by the loss of industry. The workforce, as discussed in the community profile, mainly has high school education attainment and labor-based experience, which creates a need for additional industry in the Alleghany Highlands. It would be easy to think the only way to improve the economic conditions of the region is to attract another large industry; however, history has shown that this strategy can greatly improve the economy for the short-term, but also significantly handicap the economy should that operation close. Industry is definitely important, but the economic strategies for the future should be based on the region's assets, industrial workforce, and natural resources; the growth occupations in the region, namely in the healthcare field; and diversification of large employers. The tourism economy needs to be encouraged and needs further investment to improve.

While there is a low rate of unemployment, the slow growth in income levels and the increase in poverty levels highlights the issue of underemployment in the region, namely people who want to work full-time, but can only find part time employment or those individuals who are qualified for upper level positions, but can only find work in entry-level positions. In the future,



the City and County should look to incentivize industries that will bring a higher quality of positions to the area for qualified residents to fill.

Lastly, while there is a fair amount of retail leakage out of the Alleghany Highlands, it is important to note that commercial retailers will follow population increases. It will be important for the City and County to recruit industry with job creation to the area to increase the population, allowing for the viability of existing and future retail establishments to provide retail goods and services to residents and potential employment for area residents.





13



## SECTION 13. IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the actions of the County's elected and appointed officials, staff, and community stakeholders, as the County moves forward. This is a plan of action, with a focus on strategies and corresponding action items to achieve the vision. At a minimum, County staff, the Planning Commission, and Board of Commissioners should review and monitor implementation progress on an annual basis. This will provide the Board the opportunity to set priorities during each budget cycle to ensure that the budget includes the necessary funds or other resources needed to implement the plan.

The strategies and action items outlined in the plan were compiled into an implementation matrix to be used as a quick and easy reference. Each strategy is categorized by the jurisdiction it applies to, the timeframe for implementation and the estimated cost related to implementing each strategy. The following are descriptions of each of the categories in the implementation matrix:

### CITY/COUNTY CATEGORY

This portion of the matrix indicates if the strategy applies to the City, County or "Both" jurisdictions.

### TIMEFRAME CATEGORY

This portion of the matrix represents the timeframe in which each action step can be addressed. The timeframe is the length of

time it takes to achieve a strategy, once begun. Timeframes are indicated in the matrix as short-term, intermediate, or long-term. Below is a description of each timeframe.

- Short-term - can be achieved in less than two years.
- Intermediate - can be achieved in two to five years.
- Long-term - may take longer than five years to achieve.
- Ongoing - Some action items are designated as "ongoing" due to need for constant efforts toward implementing the strategy.

### COST CATEGORY

This column in the matrix represents resources that are primarily related to financial resources necessary to complete the implementation action items. The table uses the "\$" symbol to represent a theoretical range of necessary capital. Actual resources could be more or less depending on the final scope of the project or more detailed cost estimates. The ranges are as follows:

- \$ - Less than \$25,000
- \$\$ - \$25,000-\$100,000
- \$\$\$ - \$100,000-\$500,000
- \$\$\$\$ - More than \$500,000
- Policy – Not outside of normal annual budget expenditures

**Goal 1: The Alleghany Highlands will become known as the recreation & cultural hub of Western Virginia.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE A: Develop arts and cultural centers within the Alleghany Highlands into tourism destinations</b>				
A.1	Highlight existing museums, cultural centers, cultural and historic sites, and historic landmarks through local government internet and social media sites to increase awareness.	Both	Short-term	\$
A.2	Develop a common marketing plan to improve connections between museums, cultural centers, and historic landmarks within the Alleghany Highlands.	Both	Short-term	\$
A.3	Invest in public art as a way to catalyze reinvestment in the City of Covington and Town of Clifton Forge.	Both	Intermediate	\$ - \$\$
A.4	Make regular and recurring public investments in existing cultural and tourism destinations.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$
A.5	Promote the cultural hub in Town of Clifton Forge.	County	Ongoing	Policy - \$
A.6	Continue to invest in the Alleghany Highlands recreation, arts, and cultural programming.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$
A.7	Collaborate with Douthat State Park and the US Forest Service to improve programming.	County	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE B: Promote the preservation of designated historic structures within the Alleghany Highlands to help maintain the community's unique sense of place.</b>				
B.1	Preserve the historic character in the City of Covington and Town of Clifton Forge downtowns by encouraging property owners to voluntarily make historically accurate repairs and renovations to contributing historic structures.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
B.2	Support Olde Town Covington and Clifton Forge Main Street in their historic preservation efforts.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$
B.3	Link historic structures, buildings, and various other locations to the regional trail network.	Both	Intermediate	\$\$



**Goal 1: The Alleghany Highlands will become known as the recreation & cultural hub of Western Virginia**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
B.4	Integrate historic sites with the current wayfinding signage program.	Both	Short-term	\$
B.5	Invite the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to facilitate public education meetings for developers and property owners looking to invest in historic structures.	Both	Short-term	\$
<b>OBJECTIVE C: Improve the health and vitality of the regional ecosystem.</b>				
C.1	Identify areas adjacent to significant natural features and recreational assets that should be maintained to support the viability of these assets	Both	Short-term	Policy
C.2	Create a regional forum with area non-profits and other agencies to discuss concerns and approaches to maintaining and improving the overall ecosystem and the region's viewsheds.	Both	Intermediate	Policy
C.3	Partner with the US Forest Service and private land owners to diversify forest habitat, supporting individual efforts for conservation easements.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
C.4	Identify ways to partner with the US Forest Service to improve the maintenance of their existing facilities, including the existing trails, that connect the City of Covington, Town of Clifton Forge, and to Douthat State Park	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$\$
<b>OBJECTIVE D: Preserve the rustic mountain landscape and views that create the beautiful natural setting of the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
D.1	Prepare an assessment and study of the mountain viewsheds and ridgelines that form the Alleghany Highlands.	Both	Short-term	\$
D.2	Develop a ridgeline protection ordinance that protects prominent views.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
D.3	Require a viewshed analysis for major development proposals.	Both	Intermediate	Policy

**Goal 1: The Alleghany Highlands will become known as the recreation & cultural hub of Western Virginia**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE E: Improve connectivity and usage of the regional park system.</b>				
E.1	Ensure park facilities and historic sites are included in the regional wayfinding signage program.	Both	Short-term	Policy
E.2	Continue to support the Jackson River Scenic Trail segments and finish the Alleghany County trail system.	County	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$
E.3	Create an urban trail network to link the Jackson River Scenic Trail to the City's parks, residential, and commercial areas as well as providing a connection along Alleghany Avenue. Thus improving walkability and encouraging non-motorized, active transportation.	Both	Intermediate	\$\$
E.4	Develop a pedestrian trail connection from the Jackson River Sports Complex across the Jackson River to the Commerce Center off of South Durant Road.	City	Intermediate	\$\$\$
E.5	Connect the Town of Clifton Forge with the US Forest Service and Douthat State Park Trail network.	County	Intermediate	\$\$\$
E.6	Connect the urban trail network to Fore Mountain Trail	City	Intermediate	\$\$\$
E.7	Utilize existing park facilities to emphasize a healthy lifestyle and active living by including outdoor fitness equipment and similar amenities.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE F: Develop outdoor recreation and eco-tourism related business opportunities.</b>				
F.1	Develop an outdoor recreation and eco-tourism business recruitment plan.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$
F.2	Develop a plan to encourage the development of trailside parks, facilities, and recreation oriented businesses along trail heads.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE G: Attract and Promote unique accommodations throughout the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
G.1	The City, County and local Economic Development Corporation should seek to cultivate opportunities for new lodging establishments.	Both	Intermediate	Policy
G.2	Prepare and adopt a Tourism Zone ordinance and apply for assistance through the Commonwealth of Virginia Tourism Development Financing Program.	Both	Intermediate	Policy



**Goal 2: Our communities will develop the regional economy by supporting existing industry, embracing economic diversification, and fostering emerging business and industry sectors.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE A: Ensure that an adequate supply of land is available to meet future economic development needs.</b>				
A.1	Evaluate land resources for future economic development needs.	Both	Short-term	\$\$
A.2	Utilize zoning to protect lands suitable for industrial or commercial development.	Both	Short-term	Policy
A.3	Plan phased extension of utilities for potential industrial or commercial development.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$\$\$\$
A.4	Create and maintain an inventory of available development sites.	Both	Short-term	\$
A.5	Identify urban fringe areas for collaborative economic development projects and alternative energy opportunities such as solar farms.	Both	Short-term	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE B: Increase business and industry development within the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
B.1	Develop economic development incentives along with the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation to attract business and industry to the region.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$\$\$
<b>OBJECTIVE C: Support the growth and expansion of the region's base economic sectors.</b>				
C.1	Identify support industries that supply and provide services to WestRock and Ingevity.	Both	Short-term	Policy
C.2	Establish a Council to advise on needs of the business community in the Alleghany Highlands to ensure business retention.	Both	Short-term	Policy
C.3	Collaborate with existing businesses to identify local government infrastructure improvements.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
C.4	Partner with industry to share costs of utility improvements	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$
C.5	Support existing small businesses throughout the Highlands.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$

**Goal 2: Our communities will develop the regional economy by supporting existing industry, embracing economic diversification, and fostering emerging business and industry sectors.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
C.6	Work with CSX to improve rail service to industrial areas in the region.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$\$
C.7	Generate a jobs gap analysis to highlight sectors where more workforce training is needed.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE D: Develop emerging sectors of our economy.</b>				
D.1	Promote the City of Covington's investments in, and support for, the drone industry.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
D.2	Identify and implement infrastructure improvements needed to foster emerging economic sectors.	Both	Intermediate	\$\$
D.3	Partner with local education systems to offer programs focused on drone technology.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE E: Cultivate asset-based economic development.</b>				
E.1	Develop an outdoor recreation and eco-tourism business recruitment plan.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$
E.2	Sustain natural areas within the Alleghany Highlands to retain and grow the region's eco-tourism industry.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
E.3	Identify areas adjacent to significant natural features and recreational assets to be maintained as natural environment.	Both	Intermediate	Policy
E.4	Develop a plan to encourage development of trailside parks, facilities, and recreation-oriented businesses along trailheads.	Both	Intermediate	Policy



**Goal 3: Alleghany County and the City of Covington will improve and expand collaboration to provide effective and efficient services to citizens.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE A: Continue collaboration and coordination between Alleghany County and the City of Covington on regional issues.</b>				
A.1	Enhance the public transportation system to be a more convenient and coordinated system throughout the Alleghany Highlands.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$\$
A.2	Create common development regulations for urban fringe areas to better coordinate development activities between jurisdictions.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE B: Coordinate infrastructure improvements throughout the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
B.1	Provide utilities and/or upgrades in underserved areas.	Both	Long-term	\$\$\$\$
B.2	Align infrastructure and the capacity of public services with planned growth areas.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$\$
B.3	Provide broadband/wireless internet access (WiFi) to the City of Covington, Town of Clifton Forge and Town of Iron Gate, as well as immediately adjacent areas of Alleghany County where service currently does not meet today's need.	Both	Intermediate	\$\$\$
B.4	Improve coordination between public utility systems throughout the Alleghany Highlands.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
B.5	Leverage local government resources to address inflow and infiltration concerns in the wastewater collection system.	Both	Intermediate	\$\$\$\$
<b>OBJECTIVE C: Collaborate with the local education systems to improve career and technical-oriented education offerings in the region.</b>				
C.1	Support additional programming at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and the Jackson River Technical Center for workforce training, adult education, and emerging economic sector programs.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$
C.2	Partner with business and industry to provide workforce training to residents.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$\$\$

**Goal 3: Alleghany County and the City of Covington will improve and expand collaboration to provide effective and efficient services to citizens.**
**Goal 3**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
C.3	Provide County school system with projects addressing current community needs for the New Tech Network program, which focuses on problem-based learning.	County	Short-term	Policy
C.4	Encourage the City school system to explore new and innovative education programs.	City	Ongoing	Policy
C.5	Improve the partnership between the City and County School Boards/systems.	Both	Ongoing	Policy

**OBJECTIVE D: Link the Medical/Hospital, Emergency Medical Service and Fire Protection efforts throughout the Alleghany Highlands to boost efficiency and coverage.**

D.1	Consolidate radio and 911 systems.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$\$\$
D.2	Collaborate on mock disaster training within the region.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
D.3	Identify funding opportunities that will help attract and retain employees in the region's medical services industry.	Both	Short-term	Policy
D.4	Support the United Fire Association and its ongoing efforts to improve cooperation and collaboration between local fire service agencies.	Both	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$
D.5	Coordinate efforts to implement the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for the protection of life and property.	Both	Ongoing	Policy



**Goal 4: Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE A: Improve the quality of the housing stock in the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
A.1	Prepare an assessment of residential structures in neighborhoods for reinvestment or targeted demolition.	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
A.2	Prepare an evaluation of neighborhood conditions.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$
A.3	Develop a matching grant program for the improvement of owner-occupied housing.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$\$
A.4	Utilize building and minimum housing code enforcement, along with grant programs, to rehabilitate the deteriorated housing stock in the City of Covington.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$
A.5	Demolish five percent (5%) of residential structures per year that are designated as dilapidated and cannot feasibly be rehabilitated.	City	Long-term	\$\$
A.6	Implement a rental registration program to ensure that rental properties meet minimum housing standards prior to their occupancy by tenants.	City	Intermediate	Policy
A.7	Add additional staff to monitor minimum code requirements and violations.	City	Short-term	\$\$
A.8	Assist neighborhood organizations and work with advocacy groups to build community capacity and improve neighborhoods.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE B: Expand the variety of the housing stock in the Alleghany Highlands.</b>				
B.1	Prepare an analysis of the housing stock detailing the availability and need for housing tailored to young professionals, young families, and older residents.	Both	Short-term	\$
B.2	Encourage the development of housing types targeted for young professionals and young families.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
B.3	Encourage the development of housing types that offer the ability to age-in-place, targeted to people over the age of 55.	Both	Ongoing	Policy

<b>Goal 4: Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.</b>				
ID	Implementation Strategy	City / County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE C: Upgrade the quality of commercial spaces in the City of Covington.</b>				
C.1	Proactively enforce property maintenance regulations to ensure the quality of nonresidential buildings.	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
C.2	Fund a program to assist the owners of long-standing commercial development to implement enhancements to their property to improve the overall appearance of the property.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
C.3	Establish a program structure that will ensure buildings in the program outlined in C.2 retain tenants.	City	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE D: Cultivate infill and/or redevelopment within the City of Covington.</b>				
D.1	Create infill/redevelopment regulations to ensure the compatibility of infill development with the existing character of neighborhoods and commercial areas within the City.	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
D.2	Identify priority funding locations for residential infill/redevelopment.	City	Short-term	Policy
D.3	Identify priority funding locations for commercial infill/redevelopment	City	Short-term	Policy
D.4	Offer incentive programs for qualifying infill or redevelopment projects.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
D.5	Create a Downtown Overlay zoning district	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
D.6	Update screening and buffer regulations to enhance the compatibility of new development with differing uses and density.	City	Intermediate	Policy
D.7	Create a vacant land inventory for use in promoting infill development opportunities to developers.	City	Short-term	Policy
D.8	Institute a lot cleanup/demolition program within the City to remove unsafe structures in areas where there is infill development potential.	City	Short-term	Policy - \$\$



**Goal 4: Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City or County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE E: Establish an urban trail network to connect residential and commercial areas with parks, schools, and the regional trail network, creating an active living environment.</b>				
E.1	Develop an Urban Trail Network plan for the City of Covington	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
E.2	Build a pedestrian connection from the Jackson River Sports Complex over the Jackson River to the Commerce Center on South Durant Road.	City	Intermediate	\$\$\$
E.3	Require new, infill and redevelopment projects to connect to the urban trail network or set aside land to create future connections.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
E.4	Connect trails to residential areas in order to link neighborhoods to recreation and other services.	City	Intermediate	Policy - \$\$
E.5	Restore existing historic brick sidewalks in the downtown area.	City	Short-term	\$\$\$
E.6	Improve the overall maintenance of sidewalks.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$
<b>OBJECTIVE F: Launch a gateway development initiative to enhance key entrances into Allegheny County.</b>				
F.1	Designate gateway areas/corridors for prioritized investment and overlay regulation.	Both	Short-term	Policy
F.2	Investigate options for moving the Allegheny Highlands Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center to a more prominent, visible, and accessible location.	Both	Long-term	Policy
F.3	Continue the installation of branded signage and landscaping at designated gateway locations.	Both	Short-term	\$\$
F.4	Designate transportation improvement projects in established gateways as priority investment projects.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE G: Improve land use compatibility in areas where incompatible development patterns and uses have been established that threaten the integrity of neighborhoods or quality of commercial areas.</b>				
G.1	Complete a comprehensive zoning map revision to reduce the amount of spot zoning that exists within the Allegheny Highlands.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$

**Goal 4: Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City or County	Timeframe	Cost
G.2	Complete a comprehensive zoning code update that includes enhancements to development standards to improve the compatibility of new development within the City of Covington/Alleghany County (i.e. outdoor storage requirements, buffers between uses, etc.).	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$\$
G.3	Identify specific areas with complex compatibility issues and work with property owners to develop solutions.	Both	Intermediate	Policy
G.4	Utilize transitional zoning districts to buffer between districts of significantly different intensity.	City	Intermediate	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE H: Improve the appearance in the City of Covington's downtown</b>				
H.1	Continue to implement a streetscape master plan for downtown Covington.	City	Intermediate	\$\$\$\$
H.2	Utilize façade grants to help facilitate the improved appearance of at least two (2) downtown buildings annually.	City	Long-term	\$
H.3	Create a Downtown Overlay zoning district.	City	Short-term	Policy - \$
<b>OBJECTIVE I: Revitalize downtown Covington</b>				
I.1	Maintain involvement in the Virginia Main Street Program through the Olde Town Covington Main Street organization.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$
I.2	Create a direct link from Exit 14 off of Interstate 64 to Main Street.	City	Long-term	\$\$\$\$
I.3	Encourage the development of action-oriented strategies that implement the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to downtown revitalization.	City	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE J: Improve the Alleghany Highlands' road network.</b>				
J.1	Create a timeline for completion of road improvements and make available for the public.	Both	Short-term	Policy
J.2	Research Smart Scale and alternative funding sources for safety improvements within the region.	Both	Ongoing	Policy



**Goal 4: Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City or County	Timeframe	Cost
J.3	Work with Virginia DOT on transportation improvement plans in the region.	Both	Ongoing	Policy

**OBJECTIVE K: Decrease the amount of commercial vehicle traffic on residential streets.**

K.1	Designate specific transportation routes to commercial and industrial centers that mitigate truck traffic in residential neighborhoods and improve overall mobility throughout the Highlands.	Both	Intermediate	Policy - \$
K.2	Improve transportation routes for truck traffic to alleviate pressure on neighborhood streets.	Both	Long-term	\$\$\$\$

**OBJECTIVE L: Maintain and upgrade bridge infrastructure.**

L.1	Evaluate and fund major bridge renovation projects in the City of Covington on the South Durant Road and Rayon Drive Bridge.	City	Long-term	\$\$\$\$
L.2	Evaluate, collaborate, and fund bridge renovation projects along the Route 60/Rosedale Bridge.	Both	Long-term	\$\$\$\$

**Goal 5: Our region will reverse the population decline of the past several decades.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City or County	Timeframe	Partners
<b>OBJECTIVE A: Make the Alleghany Highlands a more attractive and appealing location for current and future residents.</b>				
A.1	Explore post-graduation residency requirements in the Alleghany Highlands for students who receive grant funding for higher education and technical training programs in the local area.	Both	Short-term	Policy
A.2	Create ex-officio positions for young residents to participate on local advisory boards.	Both	Short-term	Policy
A.3	Evaluate the need for housing types tailored to retirees, aging residents, and young professionals.	Both	Short-term	Policy - \$

**Goal 5: Our region will reverse the population decline of the past several decades.**

ID	Implementation Strategy	City or County	Timeframe	Cost
<b>OBJECTIVE B: Create a positive sense of place for the Alleghany Highlands to attract population growth.</b>				
B.1	Market the unique identity of the City of Covington and Alleghany County.	Both	Ongoing	\$
B.2	Designate gateway areas/corridors for prioritized investment and enhanced development regulation.	Both	Short-term	Policy
B.3	Invest in public art as a way to catalyze reinvestment in the City of Covington and Town of Clifton Forge.	Both	Intermediate	\$ - \$\$
B.4	Establish an Urban Trail Network to connect residential and commercial areas with parks, schools, and the regional trail network.	City	Short-term	\$\$
B.5	Revitalize Downtown Covington.	City	Ongoing	Policy - \$\$\$\$
B.6	Focus economic development efforts to capitalize on our best assets, such as our natural capital.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
B.7	Establish a joint city/county planning committee modeled after the Comprehensive Plan steering committee to actively work together on the implementation of this plan and projects along jurisdictional boundaries.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE C: Achieve a zero-net loss of population between 2020 and 2025.</b>				
C.1	Implement the objectives and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan to reverse the decline in population.	Both	Ongoing	Policy
<b>OBJECTIVE D: Achieve a minimum five percent (5%) gain in population over each five-year (5) period between 2025 and 2040.</b>				
D.1	Implement the objectives and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan to help grow the region's population.	Both	Ongoing	Policy