

Town of
Stephens City
Comprehensive Plan

2011-2031

**Town of
Stephens City,
Virginia**

**Comprehensive Plan
2011 – 2031**

Adopted

Tuesday, May 3, 2011

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Stephens City Comprehensive Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Importance of the Comprehensive Plan

Purpose

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that every community prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan to guide decisions regarding its future growth and development. The Planning Commission must also review the plan at least once every five years to determine if amendments are advisable.

State law governing the comprehensive plan is found in Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia. This section provides the purpose and scope of the plan, stating that “the comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants.” The plan is to be general in nature, and must include long-range recommendations for the general development of the community. It also may include designation of such items as proposed public and private land uses, proposed transportation facilities, community service facilities, historical areas, agricultural preservation areas, and groundwater protection areas.

Importance of the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is one of the most essential documents produced by a local government. The plan provides guidance for local development decisions affecting the community’s future growth and development. It also should be used in planning and budgeting for capital facilities needed to support desired growth. Nevertheless, the plan is not a regulating document.

Implementation of the plan occurs through other town ordinances, including the zoning and subdivision ordinances, which contain regulations for the use and development of both public and private property within the town. Therefore, these regulations must be as consistent with the goals of the plan as possible. It is also important that the decisions made by town officials be as consistent as possible with the plan, because Virginia courts have given great weight to local land use decisions made in conformance with an adopted comprehensive plan.

1.2 The Comprehensive Planning Process and This Plan

The Planning Process in General

Comprehensive planning is an on-going process. It begins with preparation and adoption of the plan, followed by implementation of the plan, and the periodic review and updating of the plan. Preparation of the plan usually starts with collecting and analyzing data about the town, which is then used to identify a preferred future or “vision” for the town and to set goals and objectives



for achieving that vision. Projections are also made regarding the future, such as the future size of the town's population and the level of public services needed to support that future population. Once long-term goals and objectives are established, specific strategies are developed that will help the town achieve those goals and objectives. The strategies include *policies* that town officials should follow in making development-related decisions, as well as *actions* that the town can take to further the plan's objectives in the short term. A *policy* is a course of action. An example of a policy for business development would be "to encourage tourism that is sensitive to the local environment and the historic character of the town." An example of a business-related *action* might be for the town "to survey existing town businesses to determine ways in which the town might assist them in maintaining and expanding their workforce."

The plan document incorporates the background data and projections, goals, objectives and strategies. Once adopted, it should serve as the framework for town decision-making to ensure that the town is successfully moving toward its desired future. This involves the next phase of the planning process – plan implementation. The comprehensive plan is implemented through the day-to-day decisions of town officials, including the adoption and enforcement of new regulations, establishment of new or expanded public services and programs, as well as annual budgeting and capital improvement programming.

The final part of the comprehensive planning process is the periodic review and updating of the plan. This is an on-going activity that regularly evaluates the data in the plan, identifies issues needing to be addressed, and examines the plan's objectives and strategies to determine if they are adequately addressing town issues and if the town is indeed making progress toward its desired future. Plan review/updating is critical to ensure that the plan continues to provide accurate guidance to town officials, who must deal with constant change and who must strive to maintain consistency and continuity in town decision-making.

The Process of Creating Stephens City's Plan

This Plan, adopted by the Town Council on October 4, 2005, is an update of the town's previous Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2002. This 2005 plan was developed by the Stephens City Planning Commission, with the assistance of planning consultants. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the plan on June 28, 2005. The Planning Commission on August 30, 2005 recommended and certified the draft plan to the Town Council, which adopted the Planning Commission's plan.

Organization of the Plan

This plan is divided into five major sections as follows:

- 1: Introduction
- 2: Stephens City – Past, Present and Future: An overview of the town's history, a snapshot of the town today, and the town's vision for tomorrow.
- 3: Goals & Objectives: to achieve Stephens City's vision for the future



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- 4: Detailed Plan: background information, issues, and relevant goals, objectives and strategies in nine subject areas: Town Character; Population Characteristics & Trends; Land Use; Historic Resources; the Business Sector; Transportation; Environmental Resources; Community Services and Facilities; and Housing
 - 5: Plan Implementation: Policies and Actions to be pursued during the first five years after plan adoption.

The first three sections provide a broad overview of the town and the plan's vision for its desired future. The last two sections fill in the details of how the town intends to pursue its vision through a broad range of specific policies and actions affecting all aspects of town life.

The town's vision and corresponding goals and objectives cannot be attained unless they are supported by the community, and the community is prepared to continuously monitor and change this plan as conditions change. This must involve not just the elected and appointed officials responsible for preparing the plan, but *all* citizens of the community, whose ideas and insights are essential to developing creative and realistic programs that will guide the town successfully through present and future challenges.



2.0 Stephens City – Past, Present and Future

2.1 Historical Overview

The second oldest town in the Shenandoah Valley, Stephens City was established in 1758 by Lewis Stephens on a portion of two of his properties along Stephens Run. Lewis' father Peter had traveled to the Shenandoah Valley from Germantown, Pennsylvania in the 1730's.

The town was laid out in a rectangular grid centered on Main and Fairfax Streets that included eighty lots and a central market house square similar to Quaker towns in southeastern Pennsylvania from which many of the town's German settlers came. The town developed quickly, with over 55 of the 80 original lots being sold and developed with houses by the mid- to late-1760's.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Stephens City, then known as Newtown, became a prosperous crossroads village with a variety of small-scale crafts and industries, including production of the renowned Newtown wagon. Located at the intersection of the north-south "Great Road" (Route 11) and the east-west Alexandria and Chester's Gap roads, the town remained prominent during the first half of the nineteenth century, with numerous occupations common to an agriculturally-based economy, including merchants, doctors, potters, weavers, hatters, shoemakers, house carpenters, and stone masons.

Of particular significance to the town was its wagon making industry, dating from the mid-1790s with the arrival of wagon- and plow-maker Peter Keeding. By 1820, at least ten wagon makers were located in the town, along with supporting trades, including twelve blacksmiths, four saddle and harness makers, and a tannery. The renown of the Newtown wagons and their role in the westward expansion of the frontier is of national significance.



Barry Carpenter 04

By 1836 Stephens City's population had grown to 700 persons inhabiting 88 dwellings. The town's population and prosperity peaked in the 1840's. Stephens City suffered the ravages and disruptions brought on by the town's location in the midst of Civil War conflicts, followed by major changes in transportation, industry and agriculture throughout the nation. Old industries declined and disappeared.

By the late nineteenth century, however, regional prosperity reemerged. Stephens City found its place serving the new agricultural community based in apple production, helped by a new railroad extension and town depot that increased access to national markets for the region's produce. The railroad also spurred industrial development in the early 1900's, including a limestone quarry, a steam-powered flour mill, an apple-packing shed, and a cooper making

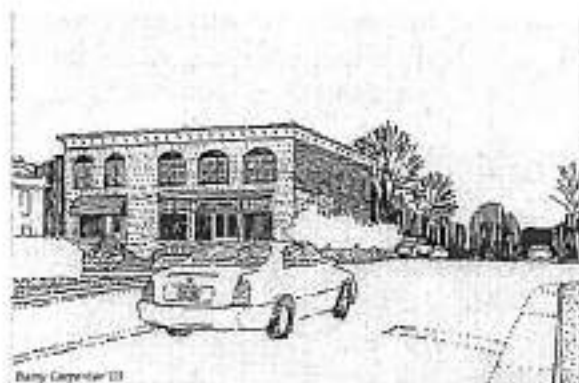


barrels for apple transport. The first electric lines in the county were installed to serve the quarry operations.

The industrial complex and associated houses that sprang up near the railroad depot at the intersection of Fairfax Street and Squirrel Lane were known as “Mudville.” Another area of “company houses” serving workers at the quarry was constructed along Row Lane and was known as “Buzzard Row.” These colorfully named neighborhoods were joined by “Frogtown”, later to be called “Upper Newtown,” on the north end of town. Although this is the high point of elevation in the town, a high water table caused marshy areas and a pond that Route 11 curved to miss. The pond provided great habitat for the neighborhood’s namesake frogs.

By the mid-twentieth century, Stephens City entered another period of economic decline, due to competition with nearby Winchester, a decline of remaining town industries, and the construction of Interstate 81, all of which adversely affected small businesses within the town. Since that time, the town has experienced periods of small-scale growth and decline, which has allowed the town to retain a very high degree of historical integrity and small town charm.

2.2 Stephens City at Present



Stephens City today finds itself at a crossroads – a very long way from the small frontier crossroads of its founders. In recent years, the town has been greatly affected by increasing commercial and residential development to its north and east, which has drawn away both its small-scale economic base and some of its population.

After growing by 47 percent in the 1970’s, the town grew by less than one percent during the 1980’s and actually lost 3.3% of its population between 1990 and 2000. While there was an

increase in the total number of households between 1990 and 2000, reduced household and family sizes were significant enough to cause the slight reduction in the town’s population. The population in 2005 was approximately 1,152, only 6 more than in 2000.

But growth and change is coming to Stephens City. Since 2005 a number of residential developments have been approved or are in the process of being approved totaling over 500 units. These units, developed over the next decade, could result in as many as 1,000 plus new residents, resulting in more than a 50% increase in the town’s population. More development proposals are expected. In addition, the town has annexed areas to the north and south to extend its corporate limits. The annexation initially added little population, but in the long run provides room for growth.



Major transportation changes are also expected to affect the town. A bypass road is currently under design, and the Virginia Department of Transportation is developing plans to widen I-81 and relocate the 307 Interchange currently serving the town to the south.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Stephens City is that it has retained its small-town character over centuries of development and change. The historic fabric of the town is very much intact, and the town has taken major steps during the past decade to ensure the preservation and enhancement of its historic resources. The town now hopes to capitalize on its historic resources and the planned annexation to secure its economic future and to gain greater control over the forces of growth and development pressing upon it from Frederick County.

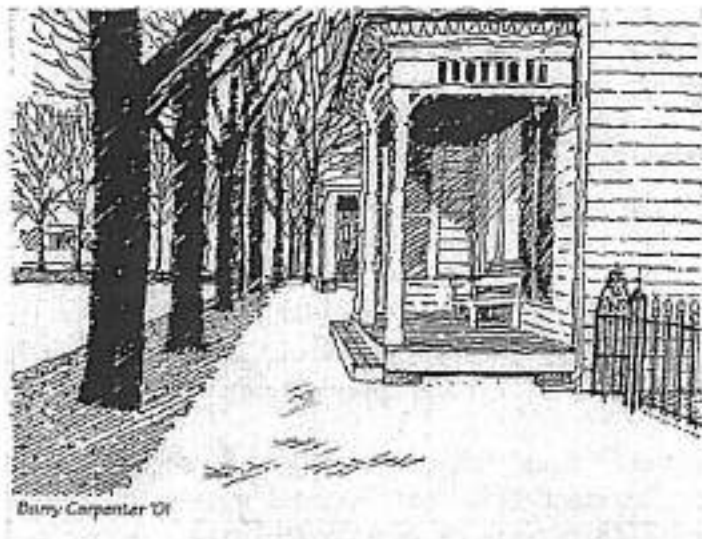
2.3 Vision for the Town's Future

The comprehensive plan is based upon a long-term *vision* for the future of the community. This vision is summarized in a *vision statement* that looks far into the future and articulates the town's desires for an ideal community. While this vision may take decades to achieve, by taking this long view the town can pursue shorter-term strategies that, over time, will move the community toward this ultimate goal.

The unique history and the quality of both the natural and built environment of Stephens City help to determine both the past and future character of the town. Preserving and enhancing these resources in a way that ensures the maintenance of Stephens City's small town character is very important to the town.

Stephens City's vision for its future can be summarized as:

Stephens City – A strong and caring community, with historic, small town charm and its own unique identity, within a healthy and prosperous environment.



Barry Carpenter '01

A major challenge for Stephens City in achieving this vision is fostering a strong sense of community, while encouraging a level of growth that can be absorbed by the town without destroying the characteristics that contribute to a strong community. To meet this challenge, the town must balance the preservation of its small town character with the provision of adequate incentives for quality economic development.



Meeting the challenges of guiding growth and redevelopment within the town will not guarantee that the town's vision will be achieved. Stephens City must also work to ensure that sprawling growth in surrounding parts of Frederick County does not envelope the town and undermine our goals and overrun the town's sense of place. Throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States the growing trend in planning practices has been to refocus and concentrate growth and development within existing towns and growth centers. This effort will continue to be a goal and desire of the Town of Stephens City as these trends are vital to the resurgence, revitalization and livelihood of the town.

This will require coordination and cooperation with Frederick County in jointly planning for compact, rational growth patterns and appropriate transportation systems for the greater Stephens City area.



3.0 Goals Adopted to Achieve Stephens City's Vision for the Future

In order to achieve its vision for the future, Stephens City has adopted nine goals for the town government and its citizens and business owners to work toward. These goals outline broad policies for future action that address the various elements of town character that the town wishes to protect and enhance. The goals will be used in Chapter 4.0 of the Plan to frame more detailed objectives and strategies, the latter outlining specific actions that the town can take to achieve the goals and realize its vision for the future. The order of the nine goals presented below does not reflect an assignment of priority or importance:

- Goal 1 Maintain and enhance a small town character and sense of community.**

- Goal 2 Manage growth to maintain and enhance the town's quality of life.**

- Goal 3 Increase the town's influence and control over growth and development in the greater Stephens City area through a better working relationship with Frederick County.**

- Goal 4 Preserve the town's historic resources and strong connection to its past.**

- Goal 5 Promote high quality commercial and industrial development.**

- Goal 6 Provide a safe and effective transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles in the town and surrounding area.**

- Goal 7 Preserve and enhance the town's environmental resources.**

- Goal 8 Provide adequate, high quality community services and facilities.**

- Goal 9 Preserve and enhance the town's housing stock.**



4.0 Detailed Plan with Supporting Background Information

4.1 Town Character

4.1.1 Background Information – a description of small town character

As noted earlier in this plan, one of Stephens City's greatest assets is its wonderful small town character. What is it that we mean by "small town character?" Stephens City is certainly small, with less than 2,000 residents and over 1,590 acres in the entire town. Small town character, however, is not just a function of population or geographic size. Rather, it is achieved by developing and maintaining high quality, distinctive and well-integrated neighborhoods, public spaces, workplaces and a downtown commercial core that together respect the town's past and ensure its future -- that create a "sense of place" for the community.



People naturally seek a sense of community. We want to be able to live in safe neighborhoods, to walk to the post office, to church and to shops, to have parks close to home, and to have recognizable landmarks in the landscape and the built environment that provide that familiarity and sense of place we refer to as "home".

Stephens City's small town character is found in its rural setting, its pleasant residential neighborhoods, its traditional development pattern with an old-fashioned Main Street, and its historic

buildings. Just as importantly, this character is found in the people who call Stephens City home and who have the community spirit to work together to preserve the town's unique identity and small town charm.

4.1.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Town Character

Stephens City's small town character is threatened by a number of forces, some of which are from within the town and some of which are from outside its current boundaries. Issues that must be addressed successfully in order to preserve the town's character include the following:

- New residential, commercial and industrial development proposed in town could threaten town character if not properly planned and designed.
- Sprawling development in Frederick County, primarily to the north and east of town, threatens to merge with the Town's compact development pattern, obliterating the town's "edge", its scenic rural setting, and its unique identity.
- Commercial strip development in Frederick County along Routes 11 and 277 draws business away from the town's traditional downtown and harms the historic character of the entrances to the town's historic district.



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- Agricultural lands ringing the growth area of the town are threatened by a decline in traditional agriculture in the region.
 - The downtown is in need of revitalization and streetscape improvements to promote business growth and retention.
 - The town is in need of local community gathering places, such as a coffee shop, and the great potential of the Newtown Commons property as a focal point for community events is yet to be fully realized.

4.1.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies Regarding Town Character

Goal 1. Maintain and enhance a small town character and sense of community.

Objectives and Strategies:

- 1.1 Define and promote Stephens City's unique identity and tradition.
 - 1.1.1 Develop a theme for Stephens City that builds upon the town's rich history and small town character, and implement a tourism marketing program based upon this theme
 - 1.1.2 Promote recognition of the town's identity by both local residents and visitors through a consistent theme included in all town communications, such as the newsletter and web site.
- 1.2 Enhance the traditional physical characteristics that contribute to the town's sense of place.
 - 1.2.1 Preserve the town's historic buildings through:
 - implementation of the town's Historic District Regulations
 - support of the historic preservation efforts of the Stone House Foundation
 - preservation of the town's own historic properties.
 - 1.2.2 Continue to implement streetscape improvements to major downtown streets, such as town directional signs, pedestrian-scale street lights, and street furniture, that will enhance the historic character of the town and help to reinforce the town's unique identity, as recommended in the Preservation Plan.



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- 1.3 Provide opportunities and places for people to meet and greet each other -- keep the community connected.
 - 1.3.1 Develop a community/farmers' market at Newtown Commons.
 - 1.3.2 Promote development of local coffee shops/restaurants that can serve as informal community meeting places.
 - 1.4 Define and preserve a distinct town "edge" surrounded by open space.
 - 1.4.1 Use the Future Land Use Map to define the edge of the town's growth area with a greenbelt of agricultural / conservation uses and open space surrounding it.
 - 1.4.2 Maintain a buffer of green space along Route 11 at the north and south ends of town as shown on the Future Land Use Map.
 - 1.4.3 Create physical entrance features at major town entry points that help to define the community's boundaries, provide a welcome to travelers and information on town events.
 - 1.4.4 Implement the recommendations of the Preservation Plan regarding the approaches and entrances to Stephens City.
 - 1.5 Continue and expand community-building events and activities.
 - 1.5.1 Continue and enhance the Newtown Festival, featuring the addition of more local marching bands.
 - 1.5.2 Develop community center programs for the Stephens City School property in conjunction with Frederick County that appeal to many sectors of the community. Make sure that activities for teens are given special attention.
 - 1.5.3 Continue fostering the growing relationship between the Sherando High School through events such the Sherando Spirit Week and more interaction between student organizations, the council and staff.
 - 1.6 Promote continued loyalty to and retention of local businesses.
 - 1.6.1 Develop a directory of local businesses and encourage promotional programs by local businesses to increase patronage (e.g., a local business "welcome packet" for new



residents, downtown sidewalk sales, cooperative coupon programs, etc.).

- 1.6.2 Survey local businesses to determine other ways the town might help to support them.
 - 1.6.3 Survey local residents to determine what types of local businesses they would support within the town.
 - 1.6.4 Support and nurture the continued development of the Stephens City Business Association.
 - 1.6.5 Lend aid through the fiscal budget and general support to Stephens City Business Association Sponsored events such as Christmas on the Commons, The Hop-In (Easter themed event) and other inspired ventures.
- 1.7 Foster civic participation by involving community groups in addressing community problems.
- 1.7.1 Support continued community involvement by local churches and civic organizations (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.) in helping town residents in need of food, clothing, shelter or other assistance.
 - 1.7.2 Seek the opinions of community groups when developing community programs.
 - 1.7.3 Gather information on the types of community service programs used in other communities (e.g., Christmas in April).



4.2 Population Characteristics and Trends

4.2.1 Background Information - demographic status and trends

Introduction

Stephens City provides a focal point for the increasing growth and development in central Frederick County. Statistics on population and the economy can help explain the changing nature of this area and the town's relationship to these changes.

The most recent United States Census took place in 2010; however at the time of this update no new data has been released. Therefore, for the purposes of the data presented in the following section will be represented from the established 2000 Census data and will be updated at such time the 2010 Census data is released.

Population Growth

Stephens City experienced substantial population growth between 1970 and 1980, but since that time population growth has shifted to nearby areas of Frederick County, just east of Interstate 81 and between the town and the City of Winchester. Table 4.2.1 provides a summary of population growth in the town over the past three decades as well as since 2000.

**Table 4.2.1. Population Growth
Local, Regional and State**

	Population					% Growth			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	'70-'80	'80-'90	'90-'00	'00-'10
Stephens City	802	1,179	1,186	1,146		+47%	+0.6%	-3.3%	
Frederick County	28,893	34,150	45,723	59,209		+18%	+34%	+29.5%	
Virginia	4.7 million	5.4 million	6.2 million	7.1 million	million	+15%	+14.8%	+14.4%	

Sources: U.S. Census of Population - 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and Weldon Cooper Center, 2004

The town actually experienced a loss of population between 1990 and 2000, while Frederick County and the Commonwealth of Virginia had fairly substantial population growth during this time period. Stephens City was not the only small northern Shenandoah Valley town to show a decline in population during the last decade, however. For example, Berryville, with a 2000



population of 2,963, and Middletown, with 1,105 people in 2000, each experienced a 4.3% drop in population between 1990 and 2000.

A drop in household size is the major reason for Stephens City's decline in population in the 1990's. Other factors might include a lack of available land for sale for housing development within the town and the large supply of developable land in the greater Stephens City area, especially east of Route 81. Stephens City saw only minimal growth between 2000 and 2004, approximately 6 persons (0.5%), while Frederick County grew by 11.4% during the same period.

Household and Family Characteristics

Table 4.2.2 provides 1990 and 2000 Census details on households and families in Stephens City, which helps to explain the town's population decline over the past decade. This information shows that, while there was an 8% increase in the total number of households between 1990 and 2000, there was also a 48% increase in the number of single households, resulting in a drop in the town's average household size. The reduced household size coupled with a reduced family size counteracted the increase in total households, resulting in the town's population decline. Stephens City's 2000 average household size (2.29) is also lower than either Frederick County's (2.64) or Virginia's (2.54).



**Table 4.2.2 Year 2000 Household and Family Characteristics
Stephens City**

Characteristic	Relationship	2000 #	2000 % of Households	2010 #	2010 % of Households
Total Population		1,147			
Total Households		500	100%		
Total Family Households		291	58%		
Family Households	w/children < 18 yrs	134	27%		
Female Households	w/no husband	50	10%		
	w/no husband & w/children < 18	31	6%		
Male Households	w/no wife	23	5%		
	w/no wife & w/children < 18	14	3%		
Total Non-Family Households		209	42%		
Single Households	Living alone	167	33%		
	Living alone > 65 yrs	48	10%		
Total Households	w/ indiv. > 65 yrs	103	21%		
	w/children < 18	150	30%		
Average Household Size		2.29			
Average Family Size		2.97			

*Selected statistics for comparison purposes

SOURCE: U. S. Census of Population, 2000, 2010

Table 4.2.2 also includes information that is useful in planning for public services, such as schools and social services. For example, 21% of town households include individuals over 65 years of age, including 48 households in which an elderly person lives alone. This is very similar to these percentages for Frederick County (20% elderly households) and Virginia (21%).

The town differs slightly from the county and state in households with children less than 18 years of age. Thirty percent 30% of town households include such school-aged children, compared to 39.5% of the county's households and 36% of Virginia's households.

Population Characteristics

Age and Gender. Information describing the age and gender characteristics of Stephens City's population from the 2000 Census is provided in Table 4.2.3. Examining the age composition of



the town's population can assist the town in planning the types of public facilities and services needed by town residents and the potential character of the labor force.

**Table 4.2.3. Year 2000 Population Age and Gender
Stephens City and Frederick County**

	Stephens City	%	Frederick County	%	Virginia %
Total Population	1,146		59,209		7,078,515
Male	531	46%	29,620	50%	49%
Female	615	54%	29,589	50%	51%
Age					
Under 5 years	72	6.3%	3,825	6.5%	6.5%
5 to 9	80	7.0	4,529	7.6	7.0
10 to 14 years	76	6.6	4,654	7.9	7.0
15 to 19 years	70	6.1	3,973	6.7	6.8
20 to 24 years	75	6.5	2,786	4.7	6.8
25 to 34 years	186	16.2	7,944	13.4	14.6
35 to 44 years	187	16.3	10,924	18.4	17.0
45 to 54 years	148	13.0	8,503	14.4	14.1
55 to 59 years	71	6.2	3,201	5.4	5.1
60 to 64 years	54	4.7	2,567	4.3	3.9
65 to 74 years	62	5.4	3,667	6.2	6.1
75 to 84 years	43	3.7	2,011	3.4	3.9
85 years & over	22	2.0	625	1.1	1.2
Median Age	35.6 yrs		36.7 yrs		35.7 yrs

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census of Population

Table 4.2.3 indicates that Stephens City's population is about the same median age as Virginia's, but slightly younger than Frederick County's population. The town's median age of 35.6 years is exactly five years older than it was in 1990, while the county and state median age increased by 3.7 and 3.6 years, respectively, over the past decade. This reflects the aging population trend nationwide. For all three jurisdictions, the largest age group is the 35-44 age group, and all have approximately the same percentage of school-aged population. Stephens City's elderly population (65 years and older) accounts for 11.1 percent of its population, compared to 10.7 percent for Frederick County and 11.2 percent for Virginia. Thus, Stephens City's age and gender characteristics closely mirror that of the county and state.

Race and Ethnicity. The 2000 Census collected more detailed information on the racial and ethnic characteristics of the population than previous censuses. It is therefore difficult to compare 2000 data to prior census information. The 2000 race and ethnicity data on Stephens City provides a snapshot of the diversity of the population that is valuable in its own right.



**Table 4.2.4 Year 2000 Race and Ethnicity
Stephens City, Frederick County and Virginia**

	Stephens City #	%	Frederick County %	Virginia %
One Race:	1,131	98.7%	98.9%	98.0%
White	1,030	89.9%	94.9%	72.3
Black or African American	75	6.5	2.6	19.6
Amer. Indian & Alaska Native	5	0.4	0.2	0.3
Total Asian:	18	1.6%	0.6%	3.7%
Asian Indian	0	0	0.1	0.7
Chinese	7	0.1	0.1	0.5
Filipino	3	0.3	0.1	0.7
Japanese	1	0.08	0.06	0.1
Korean	0	0	0.1	0.6
Vietnamese	0	0	0.02	0.5
Other Asian (1)	7	0.1	0.1	0.5
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander:	0	0	0.02	5.6
Some other race	3	0.3	0.6	2.0
Two or More Races in Combination	15	1.3%	1.0%	2.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	23	2.0%	1.7%	4.7%
Mexican	12	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%
Puerto Rican	4	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
Cuban	0	0	0	0.1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	7	0.6%	0.6%	2.9%

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census of Population



Table 4.2.4 indicates that Stephens City's population does not contain as many different racial or ethnic groups as Virginia, but is more diverse than Frederick County. The town's largest racial group after whites (almost 90% of the population) is black or African American (6.5%), followed by people of Asian descent (1.6%). While an ethnic, rather than racial group, Hispanics make up two percent of the town's population.

The 2000 Census allowed people for the first time to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. Only 1.3% of Stephens City residents claim to be multi-racial, compared to 1% of county residents and 2% of state residents.

Income. Table 4.2.5 provides income data for the town, Frederick County, and the state from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. The town's 1999 per capita income according to the 2000 Census was \$17,998, median household income was \$35,200, and median family income was \$41,827.

**Table 4.2.5. Income Data
Stephens City, Frederick County and Virginia**

		Stephens City	Frederick County	Virginia
Per Capita Income	1989	\$12,844	\$17,644	\$19,780
Per Capita Income	1999	\$17,998	\$21,080	\$23,975
Median Household Income	1989	\$30,476	\$32,806	\$33,328
Median Household Income	1999	\$35,200	\$46,941	\$46,677
Median Family Income	1989	\$34,231	\$35,958	\$38,213
Median Family Income	1999	\$41,827	\$52,281	\$54,169

SOURCES: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population; Virginia Employment Commission; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (REIS).

Income for town residents increased significantly by all measures from 1989 to 1999. Per capita income increased 40%, median household income increased by 15.5%, and median family income by 22.2%. However, the town lagged behind both the county and the state in all income measures in both 1989 and 1999.

Of the town's 1,146 inhabitants in 1999, according to the 2000 Census, 105 people (9.2% of the population) had incomes below the poverty level, including 18 families (6.2% of all families). The individual poverty rate was significantly higher than the 6.29% poverty rate in Frederick County and about the same as the state's 1999 poverty rate of 9.25%. Compared to the previous Census data for 1989, the data for 1999 showed an increase in poverty levels in Stephens City from 90 people (7.6% of the population) to 105 people (9.2%) and from 12 families (3.8%) to 18 families (6.2%).



Current Population Estimates

Current Town Population. The current population of Stephens City can be estimated based upon the town's average family and household sizes and the number of new houses that have been constructed in town since the 2000 Census was completed. Town building permit data indicates that one single-family detached dwelling was built in Stephens City in each of the years 2000, 2001 and 2005. One occupied dwelling was also demolished during this period. The net two additional houses are estimated to have increased the town's population by approximately 6 people, based on the town's average family size of 2.97 persons per family. The family size, rather than household size is used, because a single-family dwelling is most likely to contain a family. The town's current population is thus a total of approximately 1,152.

Current Population - Annexation Area. The number and type of houses in the planned annexation area can be used to estimate its current population. Table 4.2.6 summarizes these housing figures and the resulting estimated population in the annexation area.

Table 4.2.6. Annexation Area Population - 2005

Annexation Area	Housing Type	# of Units	Average # Persons per Unit*	Estimated Population
North of town	SF Detached	55		
South of town	SF Detached	11		
Total	SF Detached	66	2.97	196

* Average Family Size is used for single-family detached units.

SOURCES: Sympoetica survey; U.S. Census of Population, 2000

The addition of the annexation area population to the town would result in a total estimated 2005 town / annexation area population of approximately 1,348. It should be noted that when the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was prepared, the Town had proposed a larger annexation area that included townhouse and apartment areas east of I-81. The area east of I-81 was subsequently dropped from the annexation proposal, and so the estimated population for the currently planned annexation area is much lower than that estimated in the 2002 plan.



Build-Out Population and Planned Growth Rate

Build-Out Population. Estimating the potential ultimate population of the town if expanded as proposed under both current zoning and the recommended land uses in this plan permits a comparison of the different levels of growth permitted under each scenario. Under existing town zoning within the present Stephens City corporate limits and county zoning within the annexation study area, an additional 2,052 people would be added to the town, resulting in a potential future build-out population of the expanded town of approximately 3,400 people. Under this plan, approximately 2,012 people could be added to the town, for a future build-out population of 3,360 people. Thus, the changes in land use recommended by the plan will lower the projected future town population by approximately 1% compared to the population under current town and county zoning. This information is summarized in Table 4.2.7 below.

Table 4.2.7. Current and Projected Population of Stephens City and Annexation Area

Current Population			
	<u>2005</u>		
Stephens City	1,152		
<u>Annexation Area</u>	<u>196</u>		
Total	1,348		
Potential Build-out Population			
	<u>2005</u>	<u>Potential Additional</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under Current Zoning	1,348	2,052	3,400
Under Future Land Use Map	1,348	2,012	3,360

Planned Growth Rate. While the total amount of residential growth does not significantly change with the adoption of this plan, the plan does seek to set the rate of future growth at a level that can be adequately served by town utilities and services. Comprehensive plans have traditionally presented a series of population projections based upon various statistical assumptions about past growth trends. This is difficult to do for the Town of Stephens City since there has been no growth within the last 14 years, and since the last year has seen a dramatic increase in interest by the development community in the town.

The town's 1985 plan created population projections using four different assumptions, such as the average numerical and average geometric population change and the ratio of town population to that of Frederick County. The result was four sets of projections for the years 1990 and 2000 that were all too high, ranging from 20% to 45% above the actual 2000 Census population for the town. The 2002 plan did not attempt population growth projections because the town had lost population between 1990 and 2000. That plan set a desired growth rate of 3%.



In 2005, the town approved plans for 160 new single family homes and 45 town houses for a total additional population of approximately 578 persons. Additional residential development proposals have been submitted and approved. The town experienced a growth spurt during the middle of decade, but saw a decline in new construction towards the latter part of the decade due to economic conditions at the time. It is impossible to estimate the rate of housing construction and occupancy, but given the potential growth, the town would like to be ready for it. Therefore, the town has chosen a rate of 5 % as a planning figure so as to be ready for growth as it occurs.

4.2.2 Issues to be Addressed Population Growth and Characteristics

Issues that must be addressed successfully in order to address the town's growth rate and special needs of its population include:

- The town has not grown in the last decade, but would like to grow in the future at a reasonable rate.
- Population growth without job growth is not desirable.
- The variety of household incomes demands a variety of affordable housing.
- The town's growing elderly population does not have access to seniors housing within the town, forcing some to leave town when their housing needs can no longer be met.

4.2.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies Regarding Population and Demographics

Goal 2. Manage growth to maintain and enhance the town's quality of life.

Relevant Objectives and Strategies:

- 2.1 Maintain a balanced, mixed-use community with a variety of opportunities for housing, shopping, and employment.
 - 2.1.1 Plan for a population growth rate of about 5 % per year over the next two decades.
 - 2.1.2 Strive for a 1:1 ratio of jobs to housing within the town.
 - 2.1.3 Continue to provide housing for a range of economic levels within the town.
 - 2.1.4 Encourage the development of seniors housing within the town through town zoning and development regulations (See Strategy 9.3.1)
 - 2.1.5 Designate on the Future Land Use Map appropriate locations and adequate acreage for commercial and employment uses.



4.3 Land Use – Now and in the Future

4.3.1 Background Information - existing land use, zoning, and planned land use

One of the primary components of a Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Map. This map shows how the town would like to develop over the next twenty years. In preparing this map, town planners used maps of existing land use, how land is used now, and existing zoning as background information. They also examined previous plans adopted by the town as well as plans adopted by Frederick County for areas around the town. Then through the process of setting goals and holding hearings with town citizens, town planners developed the Future Land Use Map recommended in this plan. The following sets out the relevant background information.

Existing Land Use

For the preparation of this plan, data was collected on the existing uses of land inside the current town boundary and in the proposed annexation area. Fourteen categories of land use were mapped and tallied and then compared to land use as surveyed in 1981. The latter survey was completed for the preparation of the town's 1985 Comprehensive Plan; it covers only land within the current town boundary. Table 4.3.1 summarizes existing land use within the current town boundary in 1981, twenty years later in 2001, and then in 2005 as well. Due to differences in measuring technology, acreage figures for 2001 and 1981 do not compare well, so percentages of the total town area are used for comparison.

The changes from 1981 to 2001 are very interesting and quite surprising on first glance. In particular, vacant land within the town grew from 54.4% to 74.9% during this period. This growth in vacant land was due to the closing of large portions of a limestone quarry, which was categorized as industrial land in 1981. Consequently, land in industrial use dropped from 20.3% to 1.4% of the total town land area from 1981 to 2001. The percentages of the town's land used for residential, commercial and government / non-profit use stayed very close to the same from 1981 to 2001 and also to 2005. Park land shows growth in both 2001 and 2005, though land used for transportation and utilities has gone down in acreage from 1985. The latter change may be due more to how land was categorized during the surveys than to an actual reduction in these land uses. This analysis shows that the town has actually changed very little between 1981 and 2005 in how its land is used. The primary change was the conversion of the quarry to vacant land and the addition of some park land.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Table 4.3.1 Existing Land Use within the Current Stephens City Town Boundary

Existing Land Use	2005	2005	2001	2001	1981
	Acres	% of Total Area	Acres	% of Total Area	% of Total Area
Undeveloped					
Vacant	328.1	35.2 %	341.1	36.6 %	
Agriculture	354.0	37.9 %	358.1	38.4 %	
Subtotal	682.1	73.1 %	699.2	74.9 %	54.4 %
Residential					
Single Family Detached	93.1	10.0 %	92.9	10.0 %	
Townhouses	31.1	3.3 %	26.4	2.8 %	
Multi-family	9.1	1.0 %	9.1	1.0 %	
Subtotal	133.3	14.3 %	128.4	13.8 %	14.1 %
Commercial					
Retail	14.5	1.6 %	14.5	1.6 %	
Office	5.6	0.6 %	5.6	0.6 %	
Subtotal	20.1	2.2 %	20.1	2.2 %	2.4 %
Industrial	13.4	1.4 %	13.2	1.3 %	20.3 %
Government / Non-Profit					
Institutional	11.9	1.3 %	11.9	1.3 %	
Public Facility	8.6	0.9 %	8.6	0.9 %	
Subtotal	20.5	2.2 %	20.5	2.2 %	2.0 %
Park	19.5	2.1 %	8.5	0.9 %	0.3 %
Infrastructure					
Transportation	20.0	2.1 %	19.0	2.0 %	
Utility	24.1	2.6 %	24.1	2.6 %	
Subtotal	44.1	4.7 %	43.1	4.6 %	6.5 %
TOTAL	933.0		933.0	100.0 %	100.0 %

SOURCES: 1985 Town Plan, Town staff, Sympoetica.

Current Zoning

Figure 4.3.2 shows how land is zoned within the Town of Stephens City and in the annexation area, which is under the regulatory jurisdiction of Frederick County. The zoning districts set out what land uses and types of development can occur under current regulatory requirements. Table 4.3.2 tallies the areas of land affected by Stephens City's zoning, and Table 4.3.3 shows zoning acreages in the annexation area. The total areas zoned are less than the total area of the town and annexation area because roads are not included.



Table 4.3.2 Zoning within the Current Stephens City Boundary

Zoning District		2005 Acres	2005 %
Residential			
R-1	Lowest Density, 1 lot per 40,000 square feet	360.3	
R-2	Low Density, 1 lot per 20,000 square feet	241.1	
R-3	Medium Density, 1 lot per 10,000 square feet	52.7	
R-O	Res./Office/Business Mix, 1 lot per 10,000 sf	20.2	
Subtotal		674.3	73.8 %
Business			
B-1	Business District	38.9	
B-2	Community Business District	17.9	
B-3	Travel Business District	1.3	
Subtotal		58.1	6.4 %
Mixed Use			
NDD	Newtown Development District	45.5	5.0 %
Industrial			
I-1	Industrial Transition District	123.6	
I-2	General Industrial District	11.5	
Subtotal		135.1	14.8 %
TOTAL		913.0	100.0 %

Table 4.3.3 Zoning within the Annexation Area

Zoning District		2005 Acres	2005 %
Residential			
R-A	Rural Areas, one unit per 5 acres	401.4	
R-P	Residential Performance, up to 10 units per ac.	38.8	
Subtotal		440.2	63.8 %
Business			
B-1	Neighborhood Business District	0.0	
B-2	General Business District	27.6	
Subtotal		27.6	4.0 %
Industrial			
M-1	Light Industrial District	3.7	
EM	Extractive Manufacturing District	218.0	
Subtotal		221.7	32.2 %
TOTAL		689.5	100.0 %

SOURCE: For both Table 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, Sympoetica, Town and County records.



No significant zoning conflicts were discovered in the preparation of the plan. While it appears that a very large percentage of the town is zoned R-1, about half of the R-1 land is owned by the town and planned for park use or used for water supply storage. Due to the annexation there is a significant amount of land zoned industrial and available for new manufacturing or other employment uses.

Stephens City's Zoning and Other Land Use Management Ordinances

In Stephens City, the use and development of land is managed primarily through three ordinances: the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, the Karst Terrain Ordinance and the Water Supply Protection Ordinance. These ordinances will be the primary regulatory tools used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, as part of the comprehensive planning effort an analysis of the ordinances was undertaken to determine areas where they might be improved and provide better means for plan implementation. To further diagnose the effectiveness of the town's guiding documents, in 2007 the town partnered with Paradigm Design to perform a Policy Audit of the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and Preservation Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance

The Stephens City Zoning Ordinance was completely revised and reenacted on October 3, 2000. In most areas, it is very complete and up-to-date and will provide an excellent tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The ordinance includes many innovative zoning concepts, such as cluster and planned unit developments, and provides a very comprehensive set of regulations for signs.

General Intent of the Ordinance

Section 23-1 of the Zoning Ordinance sets out the objectives of the ordinance. These objectives mirror those included in Section 15.2-2283 of the State Code, but omit one that is of particular interest to the town: "...to protect surface and ground water." The town is concerned about water quality, so including this objective in Section 23-1 of its ordinance would be logical.

Open Space Requirement in Residential Zoning Districts

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan identified issues with the open space provisions of the zoning ordinance. In particular, it was noted that R-1 and R-2 Residential Zoning Districts required cluster development with 50% of the land set aside as conservation area. The plan recommended a reduction in required open space and better definition of the type of open space desired. The Town followed through with this recommendation by amending the open space provisions of the Zoning Ordinance in 2002.



Defining and Managing Conservation Areas

The new open space sections of the Zoning Ordinance provided a more detailed description of the lands to be included in conservation areas and how they should be managed as recommended in the 2002 plan.

The Industrial Districts

The 2002 Plan indicated that the town's one Industrial Zoning District needed improvement. Land zoned industrial in town had not developed, and interest in the land from prospective industrial developers was not high. While this low level of interest was related to a lack of direct access to sewer service, town officials were concerned that the Zoning Ordinance might also present obstacles.

In 2003, the Town completely rewrote the industrial sections of the Zoning Ordinance and created two districts – the Industrial Transition District, I-1, and the General Industrial District, I-2. These districts permit a wide range of uses by right, though some uses are limited in an adopted Source Water Assessment Program Overlay District around the water supply reservoirs in the quarries. The uses are defined by NAICS code and therefore reflect the latest in commercial and industrial uses of today's market. When the new industrial districts were adopted, new provisions were also added to the code to address required impact analyses at rezoning, outdoor storage, nuisances, protection of on-site environmental features and landscaping, buffering and screening. The zoning text was adopted and the two zones were applied to the official zoning map at the same time. Table 4.3.2 shows the acreage within the town limits that was rezoned I-1 and I-2.

Since adoption of the new industrial district, there has been increased interest in industrial development in town and one owner has shown the town draft plans for an area north of Fairfax Street, where the proposed new bypass will cross.

Newtown Development District

This planned unit development district is a very flexible one, which could be quite attractive to developers. The current Newtown Development District (NDD) zoning district regulations need to be reviewed to determine whether they will produce the type of development the town desires and whether they will be easy to implement both during the development period and afterwards.

The NDD zone presents an opportunity to permit mixed-use development much like what was built in the early history of the town. In the planning field, this is called "Neo-traditional Development" or "Traditional Neighborhood Development." Such development follows the following principles:



Principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development

- Offers a new model for development that updates pre-1940s traditional development patterns of towns and cities
- Provides a mix of uses so that residents have opportunities to live, recreate, learn, worship, and even work and shop in their neighborhood
- Mixes housing types at a range of densities and costs
- Includes a central retail/office core or "downtown" within walking distance of residences
- Serves many transportation modes: automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, transit. Does not allow the automobile and parking to dominate.
- Connects people and places through a network of streets, alleys, sidewalks and paths
- Creates civic identity and a sense of community through a system of parks, streetscapes, and civic, public and institutional uses
- Concentrates new development in environmentally suitable areas and preserves important environmental and cultural resources

Such principles should be included in the objectives for the Newtown Development District ordinance to support the town's desire to maintain its existing small town character.

Corridor Districts

The Zoning Ordinance does not have any special provisions to protect views along commercial corridors and particularly at gateways to the town. Route 11 and 277 corridor overlay districts are appropriate for consideration.



Parking and Lighting

Stephens City has very high parking requirements that deserve reexamination. For example, retail stores are required to provide 1 space for each 100 square feet of retail floor area (10 spaces / 1000 sq. ft.). Frederick County requires half that level of parking at 1 space for each 200 square feet (5 spaces / 1000 sq. ft.). The Urban Land Institute (ULI), a service and research organization for developers, recommends 1 space for each 250 square feet for small-scale retail



and shopping centers (4 spaces / 1000 sq. ft.). Another example of a high parking requirement is that for office uses. Stephens City requires 1 space per 200 square feet of office space. Frederick County requires 1 space per 250 square feet. ULI recommends 1 space per 333 square feet (3 spaces / 1000 sq. ft.).

Some localities have also considered adopting maximum as well as minimum parking requirements to keep parking lots from growing too large and unsightly. To improve the appearance of the streetscape, they encourage or require the placement of some of the parking to the sides or rear of buildings. This minimizes the problem of large parking lots lining the roadways and sets development patterns that are closer to and more compatible with older town development patterns.

The ordinance addresses lighting of parking lots and the prevention of light leakage onto adjacent properties. However, there is a new phenomenon among retail establishments, particularly gas stations and fast food restaurants, to increase lighting to excessive levels. Lights are so bright that they mask the night sky and emit an intense glow that even cut-offs cannot diminish.

The town officials are currently working on the re-organization and re-write of these sections within the Zoning Ordinance.

The Subdivision Ordinance

In September of 2010 the Town Council repealed and enacted the rewritten Subdivision Ordinance. Many of the recommendations that were incorporated into the rewrite of the Subdivision Ordinance were a result of the 2007 Policy Audit's recommendations. The ordinance was written to be user friendly not only to staff and town officials but also to the citizens of Stephens City. The ordinance walks through the process of creating minor or major subdivisions, with easy to follow instructions as to the procedures of platting subdivisions within the corporate limits as well as creating design standards for subdivisions. Also included in the rewritten Subdivision Ordinance is the procedure for submitting site plans to town officials. In general the rewritten Subdivision Ordinance provides the citizens and staff alike an up-to-date and easy to use policy document with regard to all issues dealing with subdivisions within the Town of Stephens City.

Water Supply Protection Ordinance

This ordinance was adopted in May 2000. The town is interested in improving its water quality protection standards along the following lines:

- Add a requirement for water quality controls as an element of stormwater management (Best Management Practices) per MS4 requirements.



- Include a minimum stream buffer requirement. A 100-foot buffer is used by many localities. Such a requirement could also be applied to sinkholes, caves, and quarries.

Source Water Assessment Program Overlay District

In 2003, the town adopted a special overlay district to protect its water supply reservoirs based on information provided by the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP). The district prohibits certain industrial uses that present risks for contamination of surface and ground waters. The boundary of the new overlay district follows the source water assessment area delineated by VDH.

Stephens City Comprehensive Plan – Planning History

The most recent Comprehensive Plan for Stephens City was adopted in 2005. Prior to 2005, the Town adopted a plan in 1985 and amended it in 1992. In 1996, the town adopted its Preservation Plan as a further addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. The town decided to update the 2002 plan because of a number of changes in circumstances, including revisions to the proposed annexation area boundary based on recommendations of the Commission on Local Government and the town's adoption with Frederick County of a revised future land use map for the annexation area. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan provided comprehensive policies for the entire town and the proposed annexation area in one document, therefore making it easier for citizens to understand the unified vision and adopted policies for the future of Stephens City.

This complete 2010 Comprehensive Plan is an update to the existing 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan thus supersedes the previous 1985, 1992, 2002 and 2005 plans.



Frederick County Comprehensive Plan

Frederick County's Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2007 and provides a context relevant for planning in Stephens City. The plan includes the Stephens City annexation area and the Joint Land Use Plan adopted in July 2003 and revised and adopted in February 2009 by both the county and the Town of Stephens City. The land use plan outside the town shows:

- North of town: North of this residential and mixed use area, the plan recommends a linear buffer of conservation/open space on both sides of Route 11. West of Route 11 and east of the railroad tracks, the plan recommends areas of mixed use and light industrial/manufacturing use, with the industrial area located adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- West of town: A large area of conservation/open space is shown on land owned by the town and county around the water supply quarries. This area is scattered with by-right residential dwellings and large lot subdivisions. The area west of town is still dominated with mostly agricultural uses.
- South of town: The majority of the uses are agricultural and industrial with rural residential and scattered highway commercial businesses. The Town of Middletown continues to grow at a modest pace in a similar fashion to the town. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan included the County's Southern Land Use plan including the provisions to promote agribusiness and called for the protection of the integrity of the prosperities voluntarily placed in the South Frederick Agricultural and Forestal District.
- East of town: Interstate I-81 serves primarily as the dividing line between the town and the county. The lands east of I-81 within the county are primarily commercial and residential uses along the Route 277 (Fairfax Pike) corridor. In 2008, the Frederick County Board of Supervisors adopted and approved the Route 277 Triangle and Land Use Plan. The plan essentially calls for higher residential densities, mixture of uses, and promotes better walkability. The plan also calls for distinctive transportation plans which included the relocated I-81 Exit 307 interchange which will tie into the Stephens City Western Bypass.
- Western by-pass: The plan also shows a western by-pass road to connect to the proposed new I-81 interchange south of town.

The county uses a general bubble diagram to map land uses. In 2009, through a joint effort the county and the town greater defined the uses within the annexation area. The Joint Land Use plan adopted in February of 2009 can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this Comprehensive Plan. This Stephens City Comprehensive Plan takes those bubbles of land use and translates them into the town land use plan's more precise land use delineation style.



4.3.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Land Use and Development

Land use and development issues that have been identified for attention based on this land use analysis and input at public meetings include the following:

- The Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map must represent the most current annexation area approved by the Commission on Local Government and the updated joint land use plan adopted with Frederick County.
- The town's compact and distinctive small town character is threatened by sprawling development around the town in Frederick County.
- Agricultural and conservation lands ring the growth area of the town and if preserved, would help define the town's edge and maintain its identity.
- New developments would better support preservation of the town's existing traditional development patterns if they were developed in the style of "Traditional Neighborhood Development," as defined in Section 4.3.1.
- Downtown is recognized as the town's commercial hub. Land use plans and other policies of the Comprehensive Plan should recognize downtown as the primary commercial area.
- The town does not have enough well placed land for employment uses. These uses should be accommodated in the annexation area to the maximum extent practical.
- The town should offer land where seniors housing and office uses could be developed.
- The Zoning Ordinance should support continued traditional mixed use in downtown.
- Pocket parks should be provided in new development areas.
- The Stephens Run floodplain presents a significant flood hazard and should not be planned for development.
- The performance standards in the Water Supply Protection Ordinance could be strengthened.

4.3.3 The Future Land Use Map

Figure 4.3.1 on page 4-37 shows the Future Land Use Map, the town's policy guide for land use decisions and ordinance amendments. The town's Southern Land Use Plan will further define and layout the general land use patterns and development desired for the South Western portion of the town. The recommended land uses are defined as follows:

Stephens City Future Land Use Categories

Agriculture / Conservation

Around the edge of town, agricultural and conservation uses are planned. They are shown on the future land use map in a very light green. These uses reflect current and historical uses of this land as well as act as a belt of green space around the town proper. Uses specifically planned for this area are:



- Agriculture, including cultivated fields, pastures, orchards and other similar low intensity agricultural uses, but excluding intensive poultry, cattle and hog operations and other intensive agricultural uses involving multiple large buildings.
- Forestry, including wooded areas cultivated for harvest, Christmas tree farms and similar uses.
- Conservation uses, including natural areas, wetlands, gardens, landscaped buffers, parks.
- Low density single family residential uses at a maximum density of one unit per five acres. Cluster subdivisions may have lot sizes as small as two acres with open space preserved to maintain a density of one unit per five acres. Churches, schools and other institutional uses and public uses that are designed to complement the rural character of the area and to provide at least 50% open space. Large buildings and parking lots are discouraged, though they may be appropriate if architectural detailing and landscaping mask their size. Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from public view with landscaping, walls, fences or other architectural elements.
- The Town has an adopted Agricultural District and should look into down zoning existing parcels in rural areas of the Town that are currently in agricultural use and are not served by utilities and are not slated for utilities for future growth and expansion.

Low Density Residential



Single family residential areas at a density of one unit per 20,000 square feet are shown on the future land use map in yellow. New subdivisions permitted in Low Density Residential areas should be cluster subdivisions that preserve open space; minimum lot sizes can be as small as 10,000 square feet as allowed in the R-1 District in the Zoning Ordinance. Low Density Residential Areas shall be served by public water and sewer systems.

Churches and other institutional uses and public uses are appropriate for Low Density Residential Areas, but should be designed to complement the residential character of the area and provide at least 40% open space. Large buildings and parking lots are discouraged, though they may be appropriate if architectural detailing and landscaping mask their size. Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from public view with landscaping, walls, fences or other architectural elements.

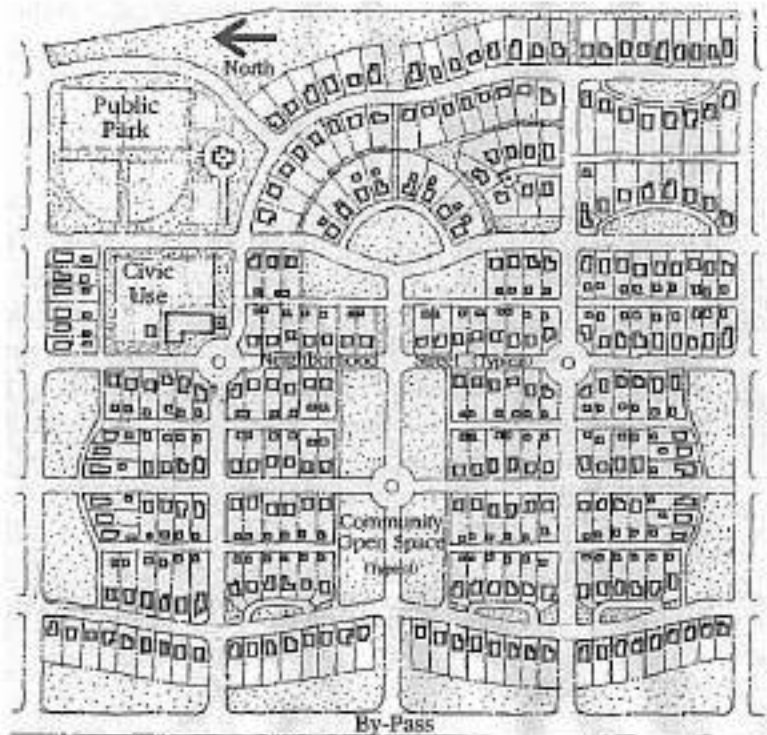
Medium Density Residential

The majority of the single-family residential areas of the town are planned for Medium Density Residential uses, which are shown in orange on the future land use map. The recommended maximum density for this area is one unit per 10,000 square feet; minimum lot sizes can be as



small as 5,000 square feet as allowed in the R-2 District in the Zoning Ordinance. Medium Density Residential Areas shall be served by public water and sewer systems.

Churches and other institutional uses and public uses are appropriate for Medium Density Residential Areas, but should be designed to complement the residential character of the area and provide 40% open space. Large buildings and parking lots are discouraged, though they may be appropriate if architectural detailing and landscaping mask their size. Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from view with landscaping, walls, fences or other architectural elements.



Seniors housing, specifically nursing homes, assisted living and congregate care facilities, are appropriate in the medium residential area at a density of 20 units (one bedroom per unit) per acre. Generally, these projects should contain 60 or fewer units, though the optional use area noted by an * on the future land use plan is appropriate for a project of up to 100 units.

The Medium Density Residential area is the primary future residential area in town. The future land use map illustrates the general pattern of development recommended for this area, that is, an extension of traditional town development. Rather than isolated subdivisions characterized by wide curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, this plan recommends a connected extension of existing grid street patterns, small blocks, parks and civic uses (churches, schools, community centers). On-street parking and traffic calming devices should be provided on interior neighborhood streets to prevent speeding. Sidewalks must be constructed on at least one side of each street and provide connections to town-wide trails and to existing and planned parks, community centers, and downtown. The Transportation section of the plan provides more detail about streets, sidewalks and trails. The drawing above shows a traditional town development pattern for a portion of the Medium Density Residential as an illustration of the type of development that is desired.

High Density Residential

High Density Residential uses are shown in dark brown on the future land use map. These areas are recommended for single family attached and multifamily housing at a maximum density of



10 units per acre. Seniors housing, specifically nursing homes, assisted living and congregate care facilities, of 100 or fewer units are appropriate at a density of 20 units (one bedroom per unit) per acre. While the block bounded by Germain, Martin, Water and Locust streets is planned for high density residential use, this plan recommends that existing single family detached houses in this block be preserved and not redeveloped into townhouses, multifamily units or seniors housing.

Churches and other institutional uses and public uses are permitted, but should be designed to complement the residential character of the area and provide at least 40% open space. Large buildings and parking lots are discouraged, though they may be appropriate if architectural detailing and landscaping mask their size.

For all uses permitted in the high density residential area, parking lots should be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened from public view with landscaping, walls, fences or other architectural elements.

Downtown Mixed Use

The future land use map, Figure 4.3.1, shows Stephens City's downtown area in orange. A mix of residential, retail, restaurant, office, and lodging uses are recommended for this area. These uses should reflect the historic scale of buildings in downtown with buildings generally not exceeding three stories in height or more than 5,000 square feet in building footprint. Buildings with larger footprints are appropriate if they are designed to appear like smaller connected buildings through architectural detailing. Adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings is encouraged within the downtown area and new buildings should reflect the historic character of the area. Standard chain architecture is not desirable in the context of downtown. Building fronts should address Main, Germain and Mulberry Streets with setbacks reflecting existing setbacks and parking provided to the rear or sides of buildings rather than in front. The Preservation Plan for the Town of Stephens City should be used as a guide for new development in downtown.

Downtown is not uniform in its character and because of this, more specific recommendations are provided for four areas of downtown labeled on the future land use map:





D-1: This area covers the southern end of downtown and is zoned B-1 and NDD. The area contains retail, office and residential uses as well as a large number of institutional and public uses. Expanding retail use is recommended as long as it respects the historic character of the area and focuses on the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Larger highway oriented uses are present near I-81, which uses may remain, but not be significantly expanded. Shopping centers, while permitted by special use permit in B-1, must be designed to blend into the historic character of the area with buildings brought to the street and parking in the rear.

D-2: This area is located in the center of downtown and is zoned R-O. It is primarily residential in character, though conversion of these residential buildings into offices, restaurants, and bed and breakfast establishments is permitted as long as the buildings continue to appear residential on the exterior. Special permit uses should be conditioned to ensure they blend well into this residential area with minimal visual and traffic impacts. Large surface parking lots are not appropriate for this area of downtown.



D-3: Located adjacent to I-81, area D-3 is primarily residential in character with a mix of single family housing, townhouses and apartments. It is zoned mostly R-3. Such residential uses are recommended for the future, though residentially scaled new office uses are also appropriate, especially near the interstate. Seniors housing, including nursing homes, assisted living and congregate care facilities, would be compatible as well. Retail, restaurant and other commercial uses are not recommended in D-3. New development in this area should be designed to place open space and parking areas adjacent to the interstate. Buildings should be brought to the street and parking placed in the rear.



D-4: The northern end of downtown is zoned B-2 and contains more retail uses than the rest of downtown. Retail, restaurant, office, and lodging uses are permitted in this area and are recommended for the future. Uses in this area are intended to meet the everyday retail needs of surrounding neighborhoods. New development and redevelopment should preserve the historic character of the area. Shopping centers, while permitted by special use permit in B-2, should be designed to blend into the historic character of the area with buildings brought to the street and parking in the rear.

Commercial (Community and Highway)

Community: A small area of community-serving retail, restaurant and office uses is planned outside of downtown along North Main Street across from the Barley Drive intersection is shown in red on the future land use map. These areas may be developed as conventional commercial areas and shopping centers, though interior and perimeter landscaping of parking lots is essential to making these uses aesthetically compatible with surrounding residential areas and to presenting an attractive view along roadways. Building heights should not exceed two stories and building footprints, generally no more than 10,000 square feet. Buildings with larger footprints are appropriate if they are designed to appear like smaller connected buildings through architectural detailing. The Community Commercial area should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods by sidewalks and/or pedestrian and bicycle paths.



Highway: These commercial areas are located to provide services to the motoring public and to the region. Colored red on the future land use map they include retail, restaurant, entertainment, lodging and auto-oriented uses with good access to I-81, Route 11, Route 277 and the Stephens City Western Bypass. Buildings of large and small footprints are appropriate for these areas, though larger buildings should be articulated with architectural detailing designed to mask their size and appropriately sited to the existing topography. Extensive site landscaping is required to frame and accent buildings, to screen parking lots, and to provide shade and reduce the apparent size of large parking lots. Additional sky signs are not recommended, as these areas are highly visible from I-81.

Employment

Large areas of land along the rail line are planned for employment uses. They are colored purple on the future land use map. Employment uses include:

- light manufacturing
- research and development
- offices and flex space
- wholesale establishments
- service oriented businesses
- warehousing and distribution accessory to manufacturing and wholesaling
- accessory commercial uses, including lunchrooms and delis within employment buildings and business service uses: copy shops, mailing centers, equipment rental, and computer and equipment repair shops.

Mini- warehouses or storage facilities unless part of an approved use are not allowed in the Employment area. Uses that handle significant amounts of toxic or hazardous materials are also not allowed due to the presence of water supply storage facilities within and near the area. Buildings of large and small footprints are appropriate, though larger buildings should be articulated with architectural detailing designed to mask their size. Extensive site landscaping is



required to frame and accent buildings, to screen parking lots, and to provide shade and reduce the apparent size of large parking lots.

Within the Employment area, two locations for optional uses are indicated by a “+”. These locations may be appropriate for convenience retail, auto service station, or restaurant uses designed to serve workers in the Employment area.

Where employment uses abut residential areas, it is important to mitigate potential impacts of those employment uses. To this end, the following mitigation measures are recommended:

- Where the employment area abuts residential uses on Family Drive at the south end of the annexation area, a 100’ landscaped buffer must be provided to screen employment uses from the residential uses. The landscaped buffer should be planted to provide an opaque screen with twice the number of evergreen trees required in the Zoning Ordinance’s Screen / Buffer Yard 2. In addition, no access to the employment use area should be permitted from Family Drive.
- Where the employment area abuts land planned for medium or high density residential uses in the central part of town along Crooked Lane and its planned extension, a 75’ landscaped buffer must be provided to screen employment uses from residential uses. The landscaped buffer should be planted according to the specifications of the Zoning Ordinance’s Screen / Buffer Yard 2. East-west streets connecting this employment area to adjacent residential areas should be signed for “no trucks” within the residential areas.

Within the employment area, one alternate use area is planned. In the area located in the southeast corner of the planned By-pass / Fairfax Street intersection and west of the floodplain, the Land Use Plan map shows mostly employment use with an area of high density residential use adjacent to the floodplain. This high density residential use area may be expanded westward reducing the size of the employment area, as long as a 150’ buffer of open space is maintained along the By-pass and a significant amount of employment area is maintained adjacent to the intersection. The alternate use area is noted by a crosshatch on the Land Use Plan. The cross hatch indicates the area that may be developed in high density residential and open space instead of employment use.

Mixed Use

Mixed use development areas are found throughout the town in light brown. Through the use of the Newtown Development District, a mixture of retail commercial, service oriented commercial, and office uses are planned with mixtures of residential types of housing ranging from single-family detached, single-family attached and multifamily. Residential units located on the second or third floor above retail and office uses are encouraged. Compact development including street design that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle movement and residential units served by rear alleyways are encouraged. Seniors housing, specifically nursing homes, assisted living and congregate care facilities are appropriate in the mixed use area at densities negotiated through the development process. The Land Use Plan map suggests an appropriate location for seniors



housing as noted by an “***”. The mixed use area is not appropriate for industrial uses or mobile home parks.

The mixed use area is recommended to be developed under the Newtown Development District and designed according to the principles of traditional neighborhood development listed on page 4-18. The future land use map illustrates the general pattern of development recommended for this area, that is, an extension of traditional town development. Rather than standard suburban development characterized by isolated pods of single uses and wide curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, this plan recommends a connected extension of existing grid street patterns, small blocks, parks and civic uses (churches, schools, community centers), and a fine grained mix of retail, office and residential uses. On-street parking should be provided on interior streets to discourage speeding. Sidewalks must be constructed on at least one side of each street and provide connections to town-wide trails and to existing and planned parks, community centers, and downtown.





Conservation Open Space

Colored dark green on the future land use map, these are green spaces to be left undeveloped so as to protect floodplains, enhance entrance corridors or provide noise buffering. Most land planned as conservation open space is located within the 100-year floodplain. Passive recreational use, particularly walking and bicycling trails, is permitted and encouraged in these areas. Open space may be privately held or publicly owned as parkland. Land in the conservation open space category may fulfill the open space requirements for Low, Medium, and High Density Residential and Mixed uses.

The conservation open space shown along Route 11 at both the north and south ends of town is intended to enhance the visual appearance of these two entrances. These areas are planned to remain in natural or landscaped open space with historic features, including stone walls, preserved. The existing rural hedge/tree row or natural vegetation may be preserved, or a line of deciduous shade trees, planted a minimum of 40 feet on center, may be installed with appropriate accent shrubs and ground cover. The intent is not to create a screen buffer, but rather a pleasant gateway transition from surrounding areas. The width of this entrance corridor open space should be at least 200 feet on both sides of Route 11, except that it is planned to be wider, extending to I-81 on the east side of Route 11 south of town.

Public Park / Private Neighborhood Park



The dark green shading on the future land use map also represents public park or private neighborhood park. Some of this land is already owned by the Town of Stephens City or Frederick County and is dedicated to public recreational use. In currently undeveloped areas, green areas are also shown to represent future parks that are expected to be dedicated to the town or land set aside as private neighborhood parks to be maintained by a property owners association. The residential zones require the setting aside of open space. The parks are appropriate for recreational use or to provide a landscaped visual amenity for the neighborhood. The future land use map is intended to show the approximate amount and general distribution of park land in future residential areas, but not exact locations.



Public Facilities

These uses include town hall, the post office, the community center and the water treatment plant. All are owned by public entities and are colored blue on the future land use map. Expansion or redevelopment of these public uses should respect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. With the exception of the water treatment plant, large new buildings and parking lots are discouraged, though they may be appropriate if architectural detailing and landscaping mask their size.



Party September 13

Hollis Land Tract

The Hollis tract contains approximately 93 acres in the northwest central portion of the Town. A western portion of the tract has been dedicated for the future Stephens City Western Bypass. This tract is important to the future of the Town because it is one of the last remaining large land bays that has yet to be planned for. It is not anticipated that development will occur anytime in the next 10 to 15 years, but for the purposes of this plan it is important to describe what the vision is for future development.

The Stephens City Western Bypass connection across the property is highly important as it will provide an alternative to north and south travel other than Route 11/ Main Street. The development along the bypass would consist of commercial business development with limited access points in order to not create too many connection points along the Stephens City Western Bypass. The bypass is more aptly described as a boulevard. It would lend itself to complimenting architecture of the surrounding Town. The buildings would be located close to the boulevard with parking in the rear so as not to be the main focus of the architecture. Development may include but are not limited to service oriented businesses, professional office and retail establishments. Many of the design aspects of the development would follow the principles in the Town's Newtown Development.

Development on the Hollis Tract would also feature a distinctive east-west connector street linking Main Street and the western bypass. This connector would be a continuation of the existing grid layout of streets and would be designed to logically allow for connections of existing streets. The tract would also feature an identified open space for recreation and public use.

The Hollis property may contain mixed use residential development, but ultimately residential development would not be the main focus of the development. Residential development would be designed to blend in with the commercial and professional development and single family



residential development would be designed to follow the principles of the Newtown Development District.

The western side of the Stephens City Bypass would lend itself to encourage light industrial or businesses that could utilize access to the railroad. The western side could also be a continuation of the commercial businesses with limited access points.

The Hollis tract is an important piece to complete the Town's development. It would logically follow approved development to the north and south as they have been substantially completed. The first piece of the Hollis tract to be constructed should be the connection of the Western Bypass through the property. As the Town continues to grow and distinctive development patterns have been identified, the Hollis tract will develop accordingly.

Southern Land Use Conceptual Layout

The Southern Land Use conceptual layout is a visual concept of what the Town envisions within the southern portion of the Town. This area is described within the Joint Land Use Plan which was a collaborative planning effort between the Town of Stephens City and Frederick County. The Joint Land Use Plan can be found within Appendix 1 in the back of this Comprehensive Plan.

The conceptual layout visually shows a relocated 307 interchange along with a mixture of commercial, light industrial and higher density residential. The conceptual layout also demonstrates a good deal of open space and dedicated conservation easements as well as a trails network and street system. Design layouts should place focus on the buildings fronting major roadways with parking in the rear or out of sight. These trends compliment the goals and design ideas echoed throughout the entire document.



For more visions of the future of Stephens City, please reference images in the Appendix 2 at the end of the Comprehensive Plan.



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



4.3.4 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies Regarding Growth and Land Use

Goal 2. Manage growth to maintain and enhance the town's quality of life.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Maintain a balanced, mixed-use community with a variety of opportunities for housing, shopping, and employment.
 - 2.1.3 Plan for a population growth rate of about 5 % per year over the next two decades.
 - 2.1.4 Strive for a 1:1 ratio of jobs to housing within the town.
 - 2.1.5 Continue to provide housing for a range of economic levels within the town. Designate new residential growth areas to accommodate housing needs on the Future Land Use Map.
 - 2.1.6 Encourage the development of seniors housing within the town through town zoning and development regulations (See Strategy 9.3.1).
 - 2.1.7 Designate on the Future Land Use Map appropriate locations and adequate acreage for commercial and employment uses.
- 2.2 Preserve and revitalize Stephens City's downtown as the town's primary commercial area and community focal point.
 - 2.2.1 Implement the recommendations of the Preservation Plan regarding the identification and stabilization of historic buildings in disrepair.
 - 2.2.2 Adopt in conjunction with the annual budget a Capital Improvements Plan that funds lower cost projects as well as planning for larger cost projects in the years to come.
 - 2.2.3 Continue to seek funding, such as the SAFTEA-LU program, to develop and implement a downtown streetscape improvement plan.
 - 2.2.4 Review downtown zoning district regulations to ensure that they promote the development of a balanced mix of both tourist and community-oriented businesses within the downtown.
 - 2.2.5 Address parking needs in downtown (See Objective 6.4).



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- 2.2.6 Continue development of Newtown Commons as a focal point for community activities and gatherings.
 - 2.3 Ensure that future development respects and preserves the town's historic, architectural and natural resources. (See Objectives and Strategies under Goals 4 and 7)
 - 2.4 Control sprawl in the Stephens City area.
 - 2.4.1 Use the Future Land Use Map adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan to prevent sprawl and insure compact traditional development within town.
 - 2.4.2 Create a cooperative town/county planning program for the greater Stephens City area that encourages development patterns respecting the town's history and its desire to remain a separate and unique community.
 - 2.4.3 Ensure that the extension of town utilities promotes development compatible with the town's vision for the north, south, and western lands outside the greater Stephens City area.
 - 2.4.4 Continue to oppose any county or VDOT transportation plans that promote sprawl in the Stephens City area.
 - 2.5 Promote appropriate infill development while protecting existing uses.
 - 2.5.1 Implement community-wide design guidelines that ensure the compatibility of infill development with existing uses.
 - 2.5.2 Review town regulations to ensure that they provide adequate buffering between incompatible land uses.
 - 2.6 Encourage traditional development patterns with a pedestrian scale for new and infill development within and outside of town.
 - 2.6.1 Consider the adoption of traditional neighborhood development standards within the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances that would be applicable in both standard residential and business zoning districts and the Newtown Development District.
 - 2.6.2 Review commercial zoning districts to ensure that they promote a small-town, rather than suburban style and scale of development.



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- 2.7 Provide adequate open space and recreational facilities in new and existing neighborhoods.
 - 2.7.1 Maintain a requirement for the provision of open space in new residential projects at an appropriate small-town scale. Ensure that a portion of this open space is suited to and developed as recreational space.
 - 2.7.2 Identify opportunities for the enhancement of recreational facilities within existing neighborhoods.
 - 2.8 Phase growth with the availability of roads, infrastructure and other public services.
 - 2.8.1 Use the impact assessment for proposed rezonings to review proffers addressing project impacts on roads, town utilities, and other public services.
 - 2.8.2 Develop a phasing plan for the extension of town utilities within the water and sewer service area.
 - 2.9 Retain agricultural uses as an important aspect of the community.
 - 2.9.1 Identify areas on the Future Land Use Map that are appropriate to remain in agricultural use for the foreseeable future (e.g., contain prime agricultural soils, are actively farmed, etc.).
 - 2.9.2 Down zone portions of land within the town currently in agricultural use that are currently zoned residential.
 - 2.10 Develop a program to support the viability of homeowners' associations.

Goal 3. Increase the town's influence and control over growth and development in the greater Stephens City area through a better working relationship with Frederick County.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Create the town's preferred vision for the greater Stephens City area.
 - 3.1.1 Develop and implement a cooperative planning program for the greater Stephens City area (See Strategy 2.4.2).
 - 3.1.2 Engage the residents and businesses of the greater Stephens City area in a process to develop a common vision for the future of the area as part of the cooperative planning program.



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- 3.2 Seek greater coordination and cooperation with Frederick County in planning for and managing growth in the areas surrounding the town.
 - 3.2.1 Establish regular communications/meetings between town officials and county representatives to discuss growth management issues.
 - 3.2.2 Use the cooperative county/town planning program recommended in Strategies 2.4.1 and 3.1.2 to develop a Stephens City Area Plan that is adopted by both the Town Council and the County Board of Supervisors as the comprehensive plan for the Stephens City area. This area plan should address land use and development issues beyond the town limits and annexation area.
 - 3.2.3 Include corridor plans for land uses along Route 11 and Fairfax Street (Route 277 / Route 631) in the Stephens City Area Plan.
 - 3.4 Manage the extension of town utilities to promote the town's vision for the greater Stephens City area.
 - 3.4.1 Consider using a Commission Permit process to evaluate the conformance of proposed utility extensions with the adopted comprehensive plan for the greater Stephens City area (See Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia).
 - 3.4.2 Include a utility phasing plan in the greater Stephens City area plan (See Strategies 2.8.2 and 3.3.2).
 - 3.5 Support transportation plans that promote the town's vision for the greater Stephens City area.
 - 3.5.1 Include a preferred transportation plan as part of the greater Stephens City area plan.
 - 3.5.2 Actively participate in Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), VDOT and Frederick County planning and funding programs that may affect the transportation system in the area.



4.4 Historic Resources

4.4.1 Background Information - efforts to preserve the town's resources

As described in Chapter 2 of this plan, Stephens City has an interesting and rich history of which it is quite proud. The town has worked very hard toward preserving its historic resources with a major effort being the adoption of its *Preservation Plan* in March 1996. The town has followed the recommendations of the *Preservation Plan* by adopting the Newtown/Stephensburg Historic District as an overlay zoning district in the Zoning Ordinance. This district establishes a Historic Preservation Commission, which must approve any proposals for reconstruction, alteration or restoration of contributing buildings or structures within the district before any such actions may be taken. The Commission must also review all proposals for land development in the district. These strong controls are designed to preserve the town's historic character.

The Preservation Plan includes many other policies and recommendations, which are hereby included by reference in this Comprehensive Plan. One important recommendation that should be noted is the extension of the jurisdiction of the Historic District to other properties along Route 11. The Zoning Ordinance refers to a Historic Road Corridor District, the designation of which is reserved for future action.

While the Historic Preservation Commission has been diligent in its duties, there is a realization that it could do more, particularly in educating property owners about historic preservation and the general citizenry about the town's history. The Historic Preservation Commission has developed an award program for Historic Preservation and recognition program for upkeep to properties within the Historic District.



Private sector efforts in historic preservation should also be noted. The Stone House Foundation has purchased, renovated and opened a museum in town, the Newtown History Center. This private, non-profit group has also purchased the Newtown Tavern, built in 1819 and located on the southeast corner of Main and Fairfax Streets. The Foundation operates a visitor and orientation center and museum.

4.4.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Historic Resources

- The town could do more to promote and educate citizens and visitors about town history.
- Education programs on historic preservation techniques are needed for owners of historic properties.
- Heritage tourism could be a keystone for downtown revitalization.



- The annexation area will bring in new historic properties that deserve preservation.
- Not all recommendations of the Preservation Plan have been implemented.





Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies Regarding Historic Resources

Goal 4. Preserve the town's historic resources and strong connection to its past.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Continue to research and disseminate information about the history of Stephens City.
 - 4.1.1 Encourage the Historic Preservation Commission and the Stone House Foundation to sponsor the publication of a booklet on the history of Stephens City.
 - 4.1.2 Arrange for sale of the booklet at local museums, retail shops, Town Hall and the Newtown Festival.
 - 4.1.3 Periodically include an article about town history in the town newsletter and on the web page.
- 4.2 Develop and implement an interpretive and heritage tourism marketing plan for the town.
 - 4.2.1 Work with the Stone House Foundation to develop this plan.
 - 4.2.2 Coordinate the town's efforts with other interpretive and tourism marketing efforts, e.g. the Virginia Civil War Trails Program, Civil War Sesquicentennial, Frederick County Tourism Programs, local hotels, bed & breakfast establishments, other tourist oriented businesses
 - 4.2.3 Contribute to the development and funding of interpretive signage and tourism marketing materials, such as brochures, town web page, etc., to implement the interpretive and heritage tourism marketing plan. Pursue the installation of a Stephens City Historic District directional sign on I-81.
- 4.3 Improve efforts to educate property owners in the historic district about the importance and appropriate methods for historic preservation.
 - 4.3.1 Under the auspices of the Historic Preservation Commission, publish a booklet describing the approval process for changes to buildings and sites in the historic district. Include information about the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.



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- 4.3.2 Arrange with the Historic Preservation Commission to sponsor yearly workshops on preservation techniques for historic buildings.
 - 4.3.3 Utilize available local expertise in historic preservation from the Valley Regional Office of the Department of Historic Resources, Preservation of Historic Winchester, etc.
 - 4.4 Recognize quality historic preservation projects.
 - 4.4.1 Initiate an awards program for quality preservation projects, such as rehabilitation projects, infill development, etc.
 - 4.4.2 Recognize award recipients with a ceremony and plaque or marker.
 - 4.5 Promote protection of historic resources in the annexation area.
 - 4.5.1 Reconsider expansion of the historic district as recommended in the Preservation Plan.
 - 4.5.2 Review other historic resources in the town and annexation area for inclusion in the historic district, such as:
 - Industrial historic sites associated with the quarries
 - McCloud's Hill on Route 11 south of town
 - Stone walls along Route 11 north of town
 - The drive-in movie theater
 - Civil War Signal Tree
 - 4.6 Use recommendations of the Preservation Plan in developing plans and ordinances affecting land use along the important road corridors (Route 11, Route 277, and Route 631) that lead into town - the approaches to the historic district.
 - 4.6.1 Incorporate the Preservation Plan as a supplement to this Comprehensive Plan.
 - 4.6.2 Use the Future Land Use Map in this Comprehensive Plan in making decisions about land use along these roads.
 - 4.6.3 Revise the Zoning Ordinance, using the design recommendations of the Preservation Plan and Comprehensive Plan, to include provisions to preserve the character of approaches to the historic district, perhaps in the form of a corridor overlay district.



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- 4.6.4 Work with Frederick County and local citizens to seek designation of Route 11 (through town and south to the Shenandoah County line) and Marlboro Road (Route 631) as Virginia Byways as appropriate after extensive public involvement
 - 4.7 Honor the historic character of Main, Germain and Mulberry Streets, as well as other side streets in the historic district, in the implementation of road improvement and streetscape plans.
 - 4.7.1 Avoid significant widening of these streets.
 - 4.7.2 Design landscape improvements to reflect an informal rural town character and to avoid regimented equi-distant placement of trees.
 - 4.7.3 Provide sidewalks on only one side of streets that have narrow rights-of-way, but on two sides along Main Street.
 - 4.7.4 Plant more street trees and pedestrian accommodations.
 - 4.8 Seek approval from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the U.S. Department of Interior to become a Certified Local Government for historic preservation.



4.5 The Business Sector

4.5.1 Economic and Employment Information

Employment

Resident Employment. 2005 employment data is not available for Stephens City, but is available for Frederick County and Winchester City. Data for 2000 is available from the 2000 Census for all three jurisdictions. The information in Table 4.5.1 is referred to as “resident employment” because it tells how many of the jurisdiction’s residents are employed.

The most striking statistic from this table is the very low unemployment rate for Stephens City in 2000 compared to Winchester and Frederick County. The state had a higher unemployment rate in 2000 of 4.5%. Also interesting is the significant drop in the local unemployment rates between 2000 and 2005. Stephens City likely continues to enjoy a low unemployment rate. Both Frederick County and Winchester have lower 2005 unemployment rates than Virginia, which had a rate of 3.4% in March 2005.

**Table 4.5.1. Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data*
Frederick County & Winchester City**

	Year	Civilian Labor Force	Total Employment	Total Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Stephens City	2000	597	588	9	1.5%
Frederick Co.	2000	24,925	23,845	1,080	4.3%
Winchester	2000	12,732	12,147	585	4.6%
Frederick Co.	2005	38,219	37,207	1,012	2.6%
Winchester	2005	14,331	13,872	459	3.2%

*Not seasonally adjusted

SOURCES: 2000 Census; Virginia Employment Commission, March 2005

At Place Employment. “At Place” employment refers to the jobs that are physically located within a jurisdiction. Again, data is not readily available on the number and types of jobs within Stephens City, but information is available for the Frederick County/Winchester area that provides an indication of the character of the local economy of which the town is a part.

The Virginia Employment Commission’s *Virginia’s Electronic Labor Market Access (VELMA)* system gives a detailed breakdown of types of businesses and employers as of the first quarter of 2000 in both Frederick County and Winchester. Table 4.5.2 summarizes some of this information.



**Table 4.5.2. At-Place Employment Data
Frederick County & Winchester City
First Quarter, 2000**

	Frederick County			Winchester City		
	# of Establishments	Average Employment	Weekly Wage	# of Establishments	Average Employment	Weekly Wage
Agriculture	59	418	\$336	9	40	\$346
Contractors	205	1,719	\$566	74	600	\$581
Manufacturing	67	3,858	\$661	32	6,196	\$674
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	74	848	\$1,097	36	515	\$725
Wholesale Trade	88	1,034	\$607	88	1,053	\$580
Building/Garden Supplies	8	100	\$549	9	325	\$551
Furniture, Apparel, Miscellaneous Retail	52	269	\$259	190	4,046	\$305
Auto Dealers & Service Stations	36	426	\$484	47	717	\$486
Food Stores	38	390	\$284	36	811	\$321
Restaurants	39	727	\$197	103	1,861	\$210
Hotels & Lodging	14	227	\$218	14	278	\$225
Financial Services, Insurance & Real Estate	57	379	\$864	146	939	\$1,315
Personal, Business & Amusement Services	85	1,144	\$256	199	2,119	\$253
Repair Services	42	228	\$461	44	327	\$662
Professional Services	115	3,742	\$476	316	5,351	\$591
Museums, Gardens, Membership Organizations	9	54	\$232	27	189	\$455
SUBTOTAL - Private establishments*	1,021	16,851		1,391	25,497	
Local Government	18	2,462	\$497	30	1,275	\$529
State Government	-	-	-	20	165	\$610
Federal Government	12	68	\$598	11	389	\$984
TOTAL Jobs & Employment*	1,051	19,381		1,457	27,326	

* Listed jobs and employment columns total less than total shown because some businesses are too small to be reportable due to confidentiality requirements.

SOURCE: Virginia Employment Commission, *Virginia's Electronic Labor Market Access (VELMA)*



This table indicates that Winchester in 2000 had a total of 1,391 business establishments, employing 25,497 people. There were 1,021 businesses employing 16,851 people in Frederick County in 2000 according to this data.

Table 4.5.2 also indicates the types of different businesses that provide jobs to area residents. The highest percentage of private jobs in both the county and city is in manufacturing (23% of county jobs and 24% of city jobs), followed by professional services (18% of county jobs and 21% of City jobs). These are also relatively high paying jobs. Other large private employer categories include, for the county, contractors (10%; also representing the largest category of businesses); personal, business and amusement services (almost 7%); and transportation, communications and utilities (5%). The next largest employers for the City include furniture, apparel and miscellaneous retail (almost 16%), restaurants (about 7%) and wholesale trade (4%). Government jobs accounted for almost 13 percent of Frederick County's jobs and almost 7 percent of Winchester's jobs in 2000.

Businesses in Stephens City

According to town business license data, as of May 2005 there were 99 permanent businesses operating within the corporate limits. In 2001, there were only 87 businesses, so the town has seen a 14% increase in four years. A breakdown of the number and types of permanent businesses within the town is provided in Table 4.5.3.

**Table 4.5.3
Businesses by Type
Stephens City – 2005**

Business Category	Number of Businesses	Percentage of Businesses
Contractors	17	17.2 %
Retail	15	15.2 %
Wholesale/Retail	4	4.0 %
Auto Dealers and Service Stations	4	4.0 %
Food and Convenience Stores	4	4.0 %
Restaurants	2	2.0 %
Banks, Financial Services, Real Estate	7	7.1 %
Business Services	17	17.2 %
Personal Services	17	17.2 %
Professional Services	2	2.0 %
Repair Services	4	4.0 %
Utilities	5	5.1 %
Manufacturing	1	1.0 %
Totals	99	100%

SOURCE: Town Business License Data, Town Staff



Contractors and personal services make up the two largest categories of town businesses at 20 percent each. These are followed by retail at 15 percent, business services at 11.5 percent, and the financial services/real estate category at 7 percent. Services of all types represent 46 percent of the town's businesses, which is characteristic of a small town in which local businesses predominate.

4.5.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding the Business Sector

Stephens City would like to promote a vibrant and healthy business sector that provides jobs for residents and a strong and stable tax base. Weaknesses and strengths that should be addressed are as follows:

- Stephens City has not been successful in attracting new industry in the past.
- The town amended the industrial zoning district section of the Zoning Ordinance in 2003 to make it more attractive to businesses. Developers have shown more interest in industrial development in town.
- Downtown is experiencing some vacancies and is not the commercial hub that it could be, particularly for retail uses that would attract tourists and other customers from outside the town.
- Stephens City needs special attractions, like more diverse restaurants, shops or entertainment venues, to attract customers.
- The town's rich history offers opportunities for heritage tourism promotion.
- The town's business taxes and fees are relatively low.

4.5.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies for the Business Sector

Goal 5. Promote high quality commercial and industrial development.

Objectives and Strategies:

- 5.1 Market the availability and advantages of the town's industrial sites, including railroad and interstate access.
 - 5.1.1 Include information on the town's industrial sites on the town's web page.
 - 5.1.2 Coordinate marketing efforts with those of Frederick County and the State of Virginia.
- 5.2 Maintain the town's competitive advantage through low business taxes and fees.
- 5.3 Enhance the role of the downtown commercial core as a community focal point for the greater Stephens City area.



-
- 5.3.1 Promote the growth of a community/farmers' market at Newtown Commons or at another location within the town.
 - 5.3.2 Promote the development of commercial community gathering spots, e.g. restaurant, coffee shop.
 - 5.4 Encourage a major economic attraction.
 - 5.4.1 Contact suitable attractions across the State to explore the possibility of their establishing a satellite attraction in Stephens City.
 - 5.4.2 Explore possible alternative uses for the old quarry, such as an industrial history center or rock climbing center.
 - 5.6 Promote tourism related to the town's history and nearby Civil War sites.
 - 5.7 Support the retention of existing local businesses and attraction of high quality businesses to the downtown.
 - 5.7.1 Continue the growth and development of the Stephens City Business Association.
 - 5.7.2 Organize a downtown revitalization committee to develop and implement a revitalization program.
 - 5.7.2 Consider affiliating with Virginia's Main Street Program or otherwise utilizing Main Street techniques to revitalize downtown.



4.6 Transportation

4.6.1 Background Information – existing and programmed roadway, pedestrian and bicycle facilities

This section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the existing inventory of transportation facilities within the town limits of Stephens City. Section 4.6.1.1 discusses the existing types of major roads within the current town limits. The long-range 2030 roadway improvements needed for the Stephens City area are summarized in Section 4.6.1.2. The latter are drawn from the Win-Fred Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2030 Transportation Plan.

4.6.1.1 Current Existing Roads

This section of the transportation element details the current existing roadway segments in and around the Town of Stephens City in Frederick County.

Interstate: I-81

Virginia Interstate I-81 runs north/south directly adjacent to the easternmost existing Stephens City Corporate town limit. I-81 in this area is a 4-lane divided limited access Interstate Highway. The standard single lane on and off-ramp diamond interchange with Route 277 has a traffic signal at either end of a 3-lane overpass bridge with no sidewalks. Driveway and roadway intersections with Route 277 located very close to the I-81 interchange require a complex traffic signal system that causes significant congestion. This interchange does not meet current VDOT standards.

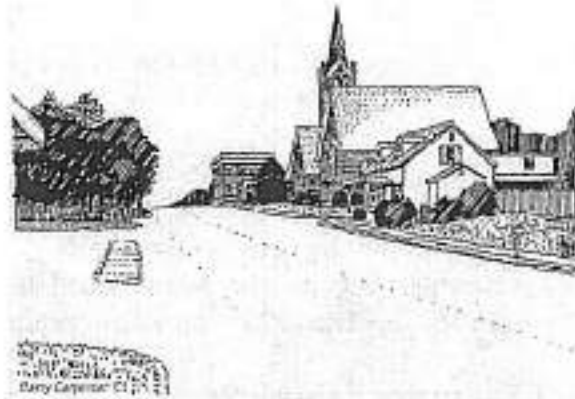
Primary: 11 & 277

US 11 is the only local north-south primary route through the center of existing Stephens City. It is basically a 2-lane road with widened area to provide supplemental turn lanes at certain local street intersections within the town limits. Since it is the only continuous roadway connecting the northern and southern sections of the town, it carries a significant local and through traffic load during the normal peak hours. Tight curb radii at major street intersections greatly reduce the operating capacity of this major road.

Virginia Route 277 is the major east-west road through Stephens City east of Route 11. Town Route 631 (Fairfax Street) is its extension to the west of Route 11. Within the existing town limits, the road is 2 lanes wide. No pedestrian or bike trails/sidewalks exist on Route 277 east of the existing town corporate limit and I-81.



Inside the existing town limits, the tight intersection vehicle turning radii and narrow right-of-way (ROW) of Route 277 cause operational problems in the central area of Stephens City. This is partially created by the existing commercial/residential land uses immediately adjacent to the roads in the downtown area. The close proximity of another Route 277 signalized intersection just to the east of the I-81/Route 277 interchange, at Routes 647/1012, further complicates the efficient operation of Route 277 and the interchange



ramps. This condition is exacerbated by the existing commercial land uses immediately adjacent to these roads in the downtown area. Vehicle queue backups often completely block the area between the 3 closely spaced traffic signals, thus increasing congestion and reducing safety.

In addition, the traffic queues back up into the town and affect the operation of the traffic signal at Main Street (Route 11). The lack of adequate eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) Route 277 left turn lane vehicle storage areas on the bridge and for the EB approach to the Routes 647/1012 intersection are the most severe constraints to the safe/efficient operation of Route 277 in this area. Even with the addition of a separate southbound (SB) right turn lane on the I-81 SB off-ramp, extreme periods of congestion will remain at this location even during traditional non-peak hours. The constrained ROW and current ramp configuration virtually prohibits the possibility of a low-cost interchange upgrade solution for the interchange. Additional ROW, rebuilding/ widening of the I-81 overpass bridge, removal of existing commercial businesses, and extensive relocation of existing intersecting roadways would most likely have a measurable traffic and economic impact on the town in the proposed annexation area.

Town N/S Streets: Mulberry St., Main St., Germain St., & Barley Dr.

Within Stephens City, the major north-south town streets are all basically 2-lane roads with limited road widenings at adjacent commercial entrances. The major north-south streets of Germain Street and Barley Drive run parallel to Main Street and connect the residential sections of the town. Mulberry Street, east of Main Street, connects both commercial and residential land uses.

Town E/W Streets: School St., Fairfax St., Locust St., & Short St./Steele Ct.

The major east-west town streets are also basically 2-lane roads with limited road widenings at adjacent commercial entrances and newer residential subdivisions. The major streets east-west streets of School Street, Fairfax Street, Locust Street, & Short Street/Steele Court run parallel to Route 277/Fairfax Street and connect Mulberry Street, Germain Street, and Barley Drive to Main Street (Route 11) in the town.



4.6.1.2. Long Range 2030 Proposed Roadway, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Facility Improvements

This section of the transportation element details the long-range year 2030 roadway segments identified as needed roadway infrastructure improvements for the area around Stephens City in Frederick County. This information is based on 2030 Transportation Plan for the Win-Fred MPO.



Interstate: I-81 Widening & 277 Interchange Relocation



VDOT plans to widen Interstate I-81 to at least a 6-lane facility with dedicated truck lanes. Detailed plans for the widening will not be initiated until the current process to prepare an environmental impact statement is complete.

VDOT plans for the existing interchange at Route 277 remain uncertain, but it has become increasingly apparent that this interchange is not performing at an acceptable level of service and that there is insufficient space to improve it without major adverse impacts to local businesses. The Win-Fred MPO Transportation Plan recommends that the interchange be moved to the south of the current town boundary.

The 2030 Transportation Plan also recommends a new bridge over I-81 just north of Stephens City and a new connector road linking to Route 642, Tasker Road to the east.

Primary: 277

In 2008, Frederick County officials approved the Route 277 Triangle and Urban Center Land Use Plan which detailed transportation improvements to the Route 277 corridor. The most distinguished change in this plan opposed to previous plans for this corridor is the parallel application of the Rt. 277 Parkway which would act as a limited access parkway linking the relocated I-81 #307 exit directly to Route 522. The existing Route 277 (Fairfax Pike) would be



significantly reconstructed into an urban primary collector. This section of Fairfax Pike would be designed for an urban setting and would feature roundabouts and be designed slower speeds.

Secondary: 651 Extension (Shady Elm Road)

Route 651, just to the northwest of Stephens City, is proposed in the MPO 2030 Transportation Plan to be extended south to the Stephens City Western Bypass.

Town E/W Streets: Fairfax St.

Fairfax Street (Route 277) within the town corporate limits will need to be upgraded to handle the additional traffic from future developments as well as the increasing traffic from the western parts of Frederick County.

4.6.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Transportation

Since the adoption of the “Winchester Area Transportation Study – Year 2020 Transportation Plan” in 1998 and the 2030 Transportation Plan with the Win-Fred MPO changes have occurred that warrant a reexamination of the recommendations made in that plan. In particular, as VDOT has examined the issues of widening I-81, it has become apparent that the interchange at Route 277 poses significant design issues. Interest has increased in relocating this interchange to the south. Major transportation issues were identified during this planning process as follows:

- The I-81 / Route 277 interchange does not function well now and will not likely in the future when I-81 is widened. Relocation of this interchange to the south is needed.
- There are congestion problems on Route 277 on both sides of the interchange, but particularly on the east side, where complex and dangerous turning movements are found at the Aylor Road, Town Run Lane and Stickley Drive intersections.
- Congestion and truck traffic on Main Street could be diverted to the Stephens City Western Bypass, shown on the 2030 Plan. The Stephens City Western Bypass would then serve as a by-pass of the town for north-south through-traffic.
- If the I-81 / Route 277 interchange is relocated to the south, then it would be logical to connect the Stephens City Western Bypass to this interchange.
- Additional east-west road connections across the railroad tracks, to supplement that provided by Fairfax Street, would improve vehicular access to the western sections of the town and annexation area.
- Creating a connected road system is important. Grid street systems promote a connected town, while numerous cul-de-sacs create barriers.
- Traffic calming may be needed in this connected street system to prevent speeding.
- Passage Lane has two tight curves that present some safety issues.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities in and around town are inadequate. It should be easy for residents to walk to downtown, to work, to town parks, even eventually to Sherando Park in Frederick County.



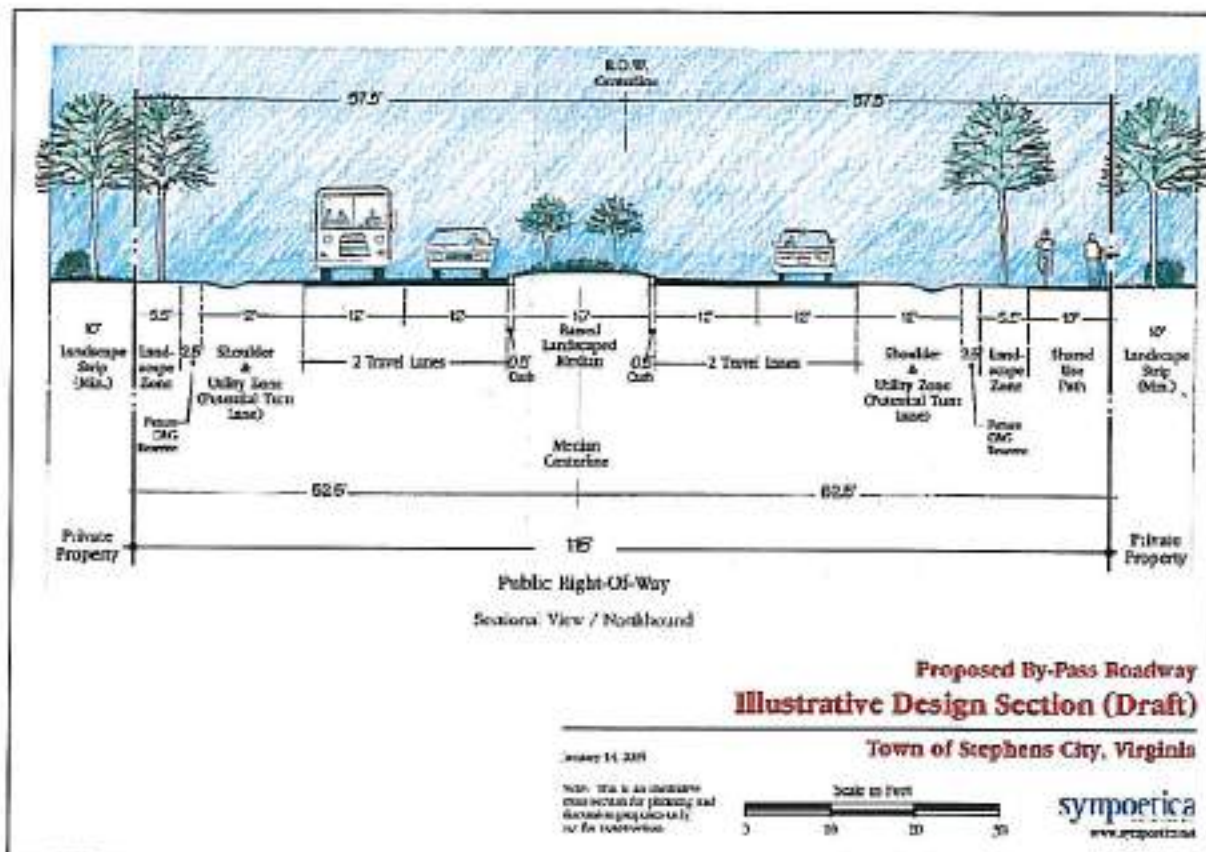
- Many people perceive parking in downtown to be inadequate. The town should study this issue and address it.

4.6.3 The Transportation Plan

The Future Land Use Map, Figure 4.3.1 on page 4-31, shows the recommended vehicular transportation improvements needed to address the issues described above and to serve the land uses shown. Figure 4.6.1 on page 4-57 shows the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan. The following describes the recommended transportation improvements:

Stephens City Western Bypass (West of 11 from North to South Town Corporate Limits)

The extension of Route 651 (Shady Elm Road) to the Stephens City Western Bypass is shown on the 2030 Plan is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map. This by-pass would allow developable land west of Route 11 to have adequate alternative transportation access to a major north-south arterial-type road other than existing Route 11. The alignment of Route 651 Extended is shown on the Future Land Use Map is general and may be revised with more detailed information and engineering. Access management to limit curb cuts and entrances is critical for successful implementation of an efficient transportation corridor. The following drawing illustrates the town's recommended cross section for the by-pass.





Interstate I-81 Widening

Stephens City supports the widening of I-81, but the design should minimize impacts on existing businesses and residences now located along the right-of-way. The most compact design possible is recommended.

Closing of Existing I-81/277 Interchange and Relocation of the Interchange South Along I-81 (To Connect to 651 Extended)

This plan recommends that the I-81 / Route 277 interchange be closed and relocated south of the town at a location where it can provide access to the Stephens City Western Bypass. As shown on the Future Land Use Map, a single-point urban interchange (SPUI) design is proposed because of the limited space between Route 11 and Town Run Lane. The Town of Stephens City recommends closing of the existing interchange and this location, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, and design for a relocated interchange for the following reasons:

- With the relocation of the interchange, traffic circulation around the existing Route 277 bridge crossing of I-81 will be improved. Conflicts between ramp turning movements and local access turning movements will be removed. Closing of existing access points to local businesses will be avoided.
- The new interchange location minimizes adverse impacts on the floodplains and wetlands of Town Run and on the community center and park at School Street.
- The new interchange will directly connect to Stephens City's recommended by-pass.
- The by-pass road extending across this new interchange can be connected to Warrior Drive to the east, a major collector road for the development area in Frederick County east of I-81.
- The single point urban interchange solves the narrow space problems presented by existing roads and development.
- The new interchange location is close enough to the existing interchange location that travelers will still have easy vehicular and visual access to existing highway-oriented businesses.

Relocation of Route 277 to the South Along Warrior Drive to Intersect I-81 (At Relocated I-81/651 Extended Interchange)

As a further way of reducing the traffic volumes on the existing Route 277, realignment of it south along Warrior Drive is recommended. Warrior Drive would turn west to cross Town Run and connect to the relocated I-81 interchange and the Stephens City Western Bypass.

E/W Connector Road (North of Relocated I-81/651 Extension Interchange & South Town Corporate Limits)

If the relocated I-81 interchange from Route 277 is moved as recommended, then the inclusion of an additional east-west collector-type road to the road network in the annexation area in the south end of town would be advantageous. A new east-west connector road would allow



adequate transportation access for land parcels between the relocated I-81 interchange and the new annexed Stephens City Corporate Limit. This east-west road link would create alternative transportation access to supplement restricted minor access directly to Route 11.

Roundabout at Stephens City Western Bypass and Rt. 651 Extended (Shady Elm Road)

This plan recommends that a roundabout be constructed at the intersection of the Stephens City Western Bypass and Route 651 Extended (Shady Elm Road). This intersection will serve as a major gateway feature into the northern portion of the town. In an effort to keep the number of signalized intersections to a minimum within the town, a roundabout is a very effective, efficient, and safe alternative as it cuts down on head on and “t-bone” types of vehicular accidents.

Route 642 Extension

To further relieve traffic congestion on Route 277, this Plan recommends a connector road from Route 642 (Tasker Road) west across I-81 to Route 11 as recommended in the “Winchester Area Transportation Study – Year 2020 Transportation Plan” and the Win-Fred MPO 2030 Transportation Plan. This Plan further recommends that this connector road be extended westward to Route 11 and a connector road loop into the Stephens City Western Bypass.

Pedestrian Sidewalks/Bikeway & Trails

This section of this chapter outlines the summary of a pedestrian/bikeway enhancement plan which combines the existing sidewalks and bikeways in the town with the facilities proposed using both CIP funds and SAFETEA-LU Transportation Enhancements Federal Fund Allocations for sidewalk extensions.

Recommended Additions to Existing N/S Sidewalks

The existing inventory of north-south sidewalks in the town identifies some missing sections of sidewalks needing connection. The following are missing sections that need to be addressed:

1. East side of Main Street between Steele Court to Stephens Court,
2. West side of Main Street from a point just south of School Street to the existing southernmost town corporate limit, and
3. All sidewalks on Locust Street except between Filbert Street and Short Street.

Recommended Additions to Existing E/W Sidewalks

The existing inventory of east-west sidewalks in Stephens City identified missing sections of sidewalks needing connection. The following are missing sections that need to be added:

1. North side of Locust Street from Main Street to Mulberry Street.
2. North side of Fairfax Street.



Pedestrian / Bicycle Facility Recommendations as a Result of Closing the I-81 / Route 277 Interchange

With the proposed relocation of the existing I-81 / Route 277 interchange, conflicting vehicle turning movements on the I-81 overpass will be eliminated and the need to widen this bridge may be deferred. Since there would be no immediate turns at either end of the bridge with the ramps eliminated, the extra available area on the bridge deck could be used to provide for a much-needed pedestrian/bikeway. If this protected facility were added on the south side of the bridge it would match up with the current town's Proposed Pedestrian/ Bikeway Plan link on the south side of Fairfax Street. The proposed pedestrian/bikeway concept in the Sherando Area could continue further west on the south side of Route 277 to provide access from Sherando High School and the Sherando Park to the Town of Stephens City. It is also suggested that supplemental north-south pedestrian facilities could also be constructed on Routes 641, 647, 1012, and 1085 to provide access to several high density residential subdivisions in this area along Route 277.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Safety Enhancements

This plan recommends three enhanced pedestrian / bicycle safety crossings of the By-pass to connect the trail on the east side of the By-pass with areas of the town west of the By-pass. One of the crossings is located west of downtown and leads to the future Quarry Park. The second is located just north of the first, where a proposed new east-west street crosses the by-pass. The third is located in the south annexation area at the intersection of the By-pass with the E/W Connector Road described above. An enhanced pedestrian / bicycle safety crossing could include such facilities as an overpass bridge, an underpass, special signalization or other facility to ensure a safe and easy crossing of the By-pass by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Recommended pedestrian and bicycle facilities of the Comprehensive Plan are presented in the Bikeways and Trails Plan shown in Figure 4.6.1 on page 4-58.



BIKEWAYS AND TRAILS PLAN



4.6.4 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Transportation

Goal 6. Provide a safe and effective transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles in the town and surrounding area.

Objectives:

- 6.1 Promote the development of alternative thoroughfares and other transportation improvements to improve traffic flow and enhance safety within the town.
 - 6.1.1 Work with VDOT to accommodate the planned widening of I-81 while seeking the reduction and mitigation of any adverse impacts (taking of land or buildings, noise, etc.) of the widening.
 - 6.1.2 Promote the relocation of the Route 277 / I-81 Interchange to a point approximately 4,400 feet south of its existing location as shown on the Future Land Use Map. Work with VDOT and Frederick County to obtain a smooth connection from Route 277 to the new interchange via Warrior Drive. Provide a connection to Route 11 and the Stephens City Western bypass from the new interchange (See Strategy 6.1.3).
 - 6.1.3 Promote the construction of the Stephens City Western By-Pass. This By-Pass should connect to the town's recommended relocated Route 277 / I-81 Interchange and the intersection of the Route 651 (Shady Elm Road) extended. The approved alignment for the By-Pass through town is shown on the Future Land Use Map. The town recommends a four-lane cross section illustrated in Section 4.6.3.
 - 6.1.4 Promote the development of an east-west road connecting the Stephens City Western bypass to Route 11 with a side connection to a ramp off the relocated I-81 interchange.
 - 6.1.5 Support the extension of a connector road from Route 642 west across I-81 to Route 11 and the Stephens City Western By-Pass north of town as shown on the Future Land Use Map and further promote its extension across the railroad tracks to curve and connect to Passage Lane.
 - 6.1.6 Promote the realignment and paving of Passage Lane to remove its sharp curves and improve its safety.
- 6.2 Extend the town's grid pattern of streets into new development areas.



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- 6.2.2 Use the Future Land Use Map as a guide for extension of the town's grid street pattern into new residential and office areas.
- 6.2.3 Complete several street connections in downtown as shown on the Future Land Use Map, specifically including a connection between Comer Lane and Steele Court and Filbert Street and Highview Ave.
- 6.3 Develop a system of bicycle and pedestrian trails and sidewalks that provide safe and convenient access among town neighborhoods, parks, public facilities, employment and commercial areas, as well as to schools, parks and other destinations in the greater Stephens City area.
- 6.3.2 Use the Bikeways and Trails Plan included in this Comprehensive Plan as a guide for bicycle and trails improvements.
- 6.3.3 Seek funding for and construct the following missing sidewalks:
North-South Segments
- Missing on the east side of Main Street between Steele Ct. to Stephens Ct.,
 - Missing on the west side of Main Street from a point just south of School Street to the existing southernmost town corporate limit, and
 - Missing all sidewalks on Locust St. except between Filbert St. and Short St.
- East-West Segments
- Missing on the north side of Fairfax Street from Mulberry St. to I-81 and
 - Missing on the north side of Locust Street from Main St. to Mulberry St.
- 6.3.5 Seek developer or VDOT funding for the two enhanced pedestrian / bicycle safety crossings of the By-pass generally as shown on the Bikeways and Trails Map.
- 6.4 Provide adequate parking for existing and future development.
- 6.4.2 Review the town's minimum parking standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that adequate, but not excessive parking is required of new development. In particular, minimum parking standards for retail and office uses should be examined.
- 6.4.3 Consider adopting maximum as well as minimum parking requirements to limit excessively large parking lots.



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- 6.4.4 Consider allowing the portion of required parking needed to meet peak demand to be constructed with pervious surfaces, such as compacted gravel or grass block.
 - 6.4.5 Perform a parking study in downtown to determine parking needs and pursue development of new parking areas, if needed.
 - 6.4.5.1 Work with landowners in downtown to identify rear areas of lots that could be combined and developed into shared public parking lots.
 - 6.4.5.2 Take advantage of opportunities to buy or lease property in downtown for parking.
 - 6.5 Ensure that new development provides its fair share of required pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular transportation facilities.
 - 6.5.2 Update the sidewalk, bicycle lane, and road requirements in the Subdivision Ordinance to include right-of-way dedication and appropriate implementation of the transportation improvements recommended in this Comprehensive Plan. Implementation may include construction of the facilities or contributions to an escrow account for such construction.
 - 6.5.2 Set up an escrow account to receive contributions toward transportation improvements and develop rules for its administration.
 - 6.5.3 Limit direct access to Route 11 and the By-Pass (Route 651 Extended) in planned commercial and industrial areas; use interparcel access and intraparcels street systems to limit direct access points.
 - 6.5.4 Limit direct access to Route 11 and the By-Pass in planned residential areas; use minor streets of the planned grid street system to provide direct access to lots.
 - 6.6 Promote traffic calming where needed on town streets.
 - 6.6.1 Utilize the grid pattern of streets with on-street parking to act as a traffic calming technique in planned residential areas. Vary the alignment of the grid to accommodate natural features and also to slow traffic.



-
- 6.6.2 Where speeding becomes a problem on local streets, study and implement appropriate traffic calming techniques such as pavement narrowing, parking bulb-outs, roundabouts, raised crosswalks and speed tables. Avoid closing or cul-de-sacing streets.
- 6.7 Explore the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to support transportation improvements related to new development.



4.7 Environmental Resources and Issues

4.7.1 Background Information – the town’s environmental context

An analysis of natural resources and environmental conditions provides a baseline of information useful for determining recommended land uses and growth areas. This section of the plan is designed to highlight the salient environmental factors useful for decision making.

Geology

Two types of rock formations underlie the Town of Stephens City, the dividing line between the two formations being located generally along Route 11. To the east of this line, is found the Martinsburg Formation, which is comprised of shales and sandstones. These rock types weather to form broad, relatively level plateaus separated by steep stream valleys. An example of one of these steep ravines is found in the proposed annexation area east of I-81 and Town Run Lane. Soils derived from the Martinsburg Formation are generally not well suited to intensive agriculture or for septic drainfields. However, a few soils derived from the Martinsburg Formation are classified as prime agricultural soils.

To the west, one finds Limestone and Carbonate Rock Formations, which do generally produce prime agricultural soils, some of the finest in the county. Terrain in the limestone area tends to be rolling with few steep ravines. Soils derived from limestone are generally better than Martinsburg Formation soils for septic drainfields, except where bedrock is located close to the surface and soils are thin. The *Frederick County Soil Survey* (Soil Conservation Service, 1987) indicates that many of the soils in the western part of the town are shallow with a number of rock outcrops and gravelly areas. Any areas planned in town for significant growth will need to be served by a public sewer system if that growth is to occur, because of bedrock close to the surface and other soil factors.

One of the most important characteristics of the limestone rock of the Shenandoah Valley is its tendency to develop caves, solution channels and sink holes as acid rainwater dissolves the limestone over time. The geologic term for such limestone areas is “karst.” Karst areas are particularly susceptible to groundwater contamination because of the direct connection between the surface and groundwater through sinkholes and along cracks in surface bedrock. Contamination that seeps down through the sinkholes and cracks can reach the honeycomb of channels and caves below, potentially travelling long distances through these conduits. Because the Town of Stephens City depends on surface and ground water in the pits and tunnels of a former limestone quarry for its water supply, concern about groundwater quality is quite high. The town has developed a Water Supply Protection Ordinance to address this concern.

The limestone underlying western Stephens City is valuable as a mineral resource, primarily as crushed stone. The quarry in town operated for many years, but is now closed.



Soils

Soils information can be used to evaluate the development suitability of land and therefore informs the land use planning process. The following table lists the soils found in the Town of Stephens City and their important characteristics.

Table 4.7.1 Stephens City Soil Characteristics

Number	Name	Flood Potential	High Water Table	Hydric	Bedrock Depth (Hardness)	Steep	Septic Suitability	Prime Farmland
1C	Berks	None	No	No	20-40" (soft)	No	Poor	No
3B	Blairton	None	.5 - 3'	No	20-40" (soft)	No	Poor	Yes
5B	Carbo	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	Yes
5C	Carbo	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	No
6C	Carbo / Oaklet	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	No
7C	Carbo / Oaklet (Rock)	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	No
8B	Chilhowie	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	No
8C	Chilhowie	None	No	No	20-40" (hard)	No	Poor	No
9B	Clearbrook	None	0 - .5'	No	20-40" (soft)	No	Poor	No
14B	Frederick / Poplimento	None	No	No	>60" (hard)	No	Fair	Yes
14C	Frederick / Poplimento	None	No	No	>60" (hard)	No	Fair	No
17E	Frederick / Poplimento (Rock)	None	No	No	>60" (hard) (outcrops)	Yes 15-45%	Poor	No
20B	Guernsey	None	2-3.5'	No	50-80" (soft)	No	Poor	Yes
28	Lobdell	Occasional	2-3.5'	Yes	>60"	No	Poor	Yes
29	Massanetta	Occasional	2-3.5'	No	>60"	No	Poor	Yes
32B	Oaklet	No	2-3.5'	No	>60"	No	Poor	Yes



32C	Oaklet	No	2-3.5'	No	>60"	No	Poor	No
33C	Opequon / Chilowie	No	No	No	12-20" (hard)	No	Poor	No
33C	Opequon / Chilowie	No	No	No	12-20" (hard)	Yes 15-45%	Poor	No
34	Pagebrook	Frequent	2-4'	No	>60"	No	Poor	No
35	Pagebrook	Frequent	2-4'	No	>60"	No	Poor	No
36	Quarry Pits	Yes	-	No	Varies	No	Poor	No
38B	Sequoia	No	No	No	20-40" (soft)	No	Poor	Yes
40B	Timberville	Frequent	No	No	>60"	No	Poor	Yes
41B	Weikert / Berks	No	No	Yes*	10-40" (soft)	No	Poor	No
41C	Weikert / Berks	No	No	Yes*	10-40" (soft)	No	Poor	No
41D	Weikert / Berks	No	No	Yes*	10-40" (soft)	Yes 15-25%	Poor	No
41E	Weikert / Berks	No	No	No	10-40" (soft)	Yes 25-65%	Poor	No
44B	Zoar	No	1.5-2.5"	Yes	>60"	No	Poor	Yes

Source: Frederick County Soil Survey (Soil Conservation Service, 1987)

* Hydric in drainageways only.

It is useful to summarize the implications of the table provided above. With regard to flooding, five soil types show evidence of occasional to frequent flooding. In most cases, these soils are located in the designated 100-year floodplain of Stephens Run. However, there are a few areas where these soils are found in smaller swales that are not in the 100-year floodplain. These areas are mapped in a Summary Environmental Constraints Map maintained in the town office.

Six of the soils above exhibit high water tables, which limit the installation of basements, but otherwise are not severely constraining for development. Five soils are classified as hydric. Two of these hydric soils, Lobdell and Zoar, are hydric throughout their extent. The others, all forms of Weikert/Berks, are only hydric where they are found in drainageways. Hydric soils are indicators of wetlands, the development of which is regulated by the Corps of Engineers and is generally discouraged. The Lobdell and Zoar soils in Stephens City are located within the 100-year floodplain, and therefore are included in this area on the Summary Environmental Constraints Map.

Many of the soils in Stephens City are shallow with bedrock within 40" of the surface. When this rock is hard, as is found in the limestone areas, it can cause development to be expensive if grading is required. This is recognized as a fact of life in the Valley that generally does not prevent development, but does make it costly. An exception is development dependent on septic drainfields, which cannot be installed in areas where bedrock is present near the surface.



Soils with a D or E letter suffix are generally located on steep slopes, 15% or greater. Soil scientists are quite conservative in assigning slope designations. The Summary Environmental Constraints Map therefore shows steep slopes as indicated by topographic maps.

As the table indicates quite clearly, most soils are poorly suited for septic systems. Only Frederick / Poplimento soils in the B and C slope categories are considered fairly well suited for septic systems. These soils are not extensive in Stephens City, being found in only small isolated pockets. Therefore, it is safe to say that if vacant areas are to develop at town-like densities, public sewer service will be needed.

Finally, soils were examined for their quality for farming. Rather large areas of Stephens City and its annexation area contain prime farm soils, as designated by the *Frederick County Soil Survey*. It should be noted that there is a significant amount of prime farmland all around Stephens City, even to the east, which is underlain by the Martinsburg Formation. Areas to the west of the town have particularly high quality soils for farming. Prime farm soils were considered in defining Agricultural / Conservation areas on the Future Land Use Map.

Topography

The topography of Stephens City can be described as gently rolling. There are a few small scattered areas of steep slopes (15% or greater) that are mapped on the Summary Environmental Constraints Map. Grading of such slopes can cause a great deal of erosion; many localities limit development on steep slopes.

Water Resources and Water Quality

Most of Stephens City is drained by Stephens Run located south of town. A small portion of the town drains to the north toward Opequon Creek. All of the land on the north side of town drains toward Opequon Creek, while the land on the south side drains toward Stephens Run.

Water Quality - Impaired Streams

Both Stephens Run and Upper Opequon Creek have been designated "impaired streams" by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Both violate Federal and state water quality standards for fecal coliform (bacteria) due to nonpoint source pollution (stormwater runoff). DEQ has prepared a study of the Upper Opequon and determined that the sources of bacteria in the water include animal wastes from farm fields, failing septic systems, and pet and wildlife wastes. These are the likely sources of bacteria in Stephens Run as well. These sources are found primarily in the rural portions of the watersheds of these streams. Runoff from the developed portions of the watershed may contribute pet and wildlife wastes, but is not the major cause of violations of the water quality standards in these streams.



Stormwater Management for Water Quality Control

Water quality is an issue for Stephens City because as it grows and the area around it continues to grow, the water in its streams will be impacted by construction site erosion and sediment, phosphorus & nitrogen (from fertilizers) and other pollutants in stormwater runoff. Because Stephens City is part of the Winchester MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area or “growth area”), it has been designated by EPA as an “MS4” (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) under Phase II of EPA’s stormwater regulations. New rules by EPA require MS4s to develop comprehensive stormwater management programs by July 1, 2006. The stormwater requirements will include provisions to address water quality as well as quantity.

Floodplains

While Opequon Creek and its floodplain lie outside the town limits and annexation area, Stephens Run flows along the southern edge and through the proposed southern annexation area. The approximate 100-year floodplain boundary for Stephens Run is shown on the Future Land Use Map. This boundary is considered approximate because a recent complete study of the floodplain is not available. The boundary along the southern edge of the new Stephen’s Landing project has been delineated, but the remainder is currently being redrawn by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The designated floodplain is highly prone to flooding and should not be developed. It should be preserved in open space.

Noise

Interstate 81 is a significant source of ambient noise that will continue to grow in impact as traffic, particularly truck traffic, increases over time. It is very likely that noise levels east of Route 11 in town exceed the Federal Highway Administration noise standard of 67 dBA Leq for residential uses. The encouragement of residential uses adjacent to I-81 will only subject more citizens to unacceptable noise levels. However, when I-81 is widened, it is likely that the Virginia Department of Transportation will erect noise walls to lessen the noise impact. Whether or not noise walls are erected when I-81 is widened twenty or more years from now, the town plans to encourage new development to be designed so that parking areas and open space are located next to the interstate and buildings are kept as far away as possible from the interstate.

Air Quality

In 1997 EPA adopted a new, more stringent standard for ozone pollution as measured over an 8-hour period. Air quality monitoring in the Winchester / Frederick County area has shown occasional violations of this new 8-hour ozone standard every year since 1992, when data that could be compared to the standard was first collected. Based on this data, EPA could have designated the Winchester / Frederick County area as a “nonattainment area” (i.e. not attaining the ozone standard). But because the area is only marginally “nonattainment,” EPA decided to designate it an “early action area.” This allowed Winchester and Frederick County to avoid the stringent air quality control measures applied to nonattainment areas and instead adopt an Early



Action Compact with Virginia and EPA to implement voluntary measures to bring the area's air quality into compliance.

The city and county established a Northern Shenandoah Valley Air Improvement Task Force, which developed an Ozone Early Action Plan. This plan has been adopted by Winchester and Frederick County and approved by Virginia DEQ and EPA. The plan sets out two sets of air pollution emission reduction strategies, local and state/regional/national. The local strategies apply to all of Frederick County, including Stephens City. There are six local Phase I strategies were to be implemented by December 31, 2005. Phase II strategies will be implemented later if it is determined that the Phase I strategies are insufficient to bring the region's air into compliance with the ozone standard. The local Phase I strategies are:

1. Ozone Action Days and Public Awareness
 - General Public Awareness Program
 - School-based Public Awareness Program
 - Education and Promotion Campaign
 - Employer-based Ozone Action Days
 - Area Sources Ozone Action Days
 - Dynamic Message Signs
 - Video Monitor Deployment
 - Lawn and Garden Equipment Usage regulation for State/Local Governments
 - Other State/Local Government Restrictions (Refueling, Pesticides)

Most relevant for Stephens City is the need to cooperate on Ozone Action Days. The town will be notified the day before DEQ forecasts that ozone levels are high and likely to exceed the standard. The next day, the town will be asked to refrain from certain pollution producing activities, such as the use of mowing and gardening equipment and the refueling of vehicles.

2. Vehicle Miles Reduction Programs
 - Enhanced/expanded NSVRC Ridesharing Program
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation
 - Green Space Preservation
 - Promotion of Mixed Use Development
 - Promotion of Telecommuting

Stephens City can support the air pollution reduction effort by incorporating these strategies into the Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Map and Bikeways & Trails Plan are designed to do that. The plans should be followed with implementation.

3. Open Burning Restrictions
4. Engine Idling Restrictions
5. School Bus / Heavy Duty Fleets Retrofits
6. Voluntary Industrial Reductions



These four strategies will be carried out by Winchester and Frederick County and the private sector.

The reader is referred to the complete Ozone Early Action Plan for details on the local Phase II strategies and the state/regional/national strategies.

It is very important that Stephens City cooperate with Frederick County and Winchester in implementing the Ozone Early Action Plan, because if the region is not successful in reducing ozone levels, it will be declared "nonattainment." Nonattainment areas must develop significantly more detailed plans and implement much more expensive and restrictive measures to reduce air pollution than those outlined in the Ozone Early Action Plan.

Once a locality is declared nonattainment for ozone, it must develop a nonattainment plan, or else lose Federal transportation funding. The Department of Environmental Quality will assist localities in preparing their plans. The plan will have to address emissions from both mobile sources (automobiles, trucks, etc.) and stationary sources (industries, heating plants, etc.). DEQ will develop an air quality model to determine the sources of these pollutants and the best way to reduce emissions.

To control mobile source emissions, the county may have to implement vehicle emissions testing as is now required in Northern Virginia. With regard to industries, new plants and some existing plants in Frederick County and Winchester that undergo expansion or modification may be required by DEQ to install air pollution control equipment that meets the Lowest Achievable Emission Rate (LAER). New or expanding businesses may also be required to offset what they do emit by acquiring offset credits or by reducing emissions from other existing facilities in the county. Currently such offsets are required in Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads. Eventually, these special air quality controls may apply to new industries that wish to locate in Stephens City. Such restrictions can be a disincentive for an industry to locate in an area.

Toxic and Hazardous Materials

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) maintains records on the location of toxic and hazardous waste generating facilities, disposal sites, and pollution releases in the Commonwealth. The most numerous potential sources of contamination are underground petroleum storage tanks. DEQ's list of the regulated underground petroleum storage tank facilities within Stephens City and its annexation study area includes 21 separate tanks owned by seven different enterprises, including gas stations, industries, and government. Clean up and closing of DEQ's case files have been accomplished at all but one of those spill sites. The fact that spills do occur indicates that the town should be vigilant in approving new potential sources, particularly within its water supply protection area.

DEQ records also show six hazardous material users / generators in Stephens City. Five of the six handle small amounts of hazardous materials (less than 100 kilograms/month). One handles



a moderate amount of material (100 - 1000 kilograms/month). Materials handled include such substances as auto body paint, waste oil, and dry cleaning fluids.

Natural Areas

The Town of Stephens City is mostly developed except for a large former quarry area, the annexed areas and several farms. Most of the woodlands within town have been removed for development or farming. A few areas have been allowed to grow back into woodland. The largest trees are found in a thin line along Stephens Run. Quality trees are also found in a 13-acre woodland along the railroad tracks south of the former quarry in the Phase II annexation area. Otherwise, significant natural areas have not been noted within the town.

4.7.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Environmental Resources

Based on this research, the following are the major environmental issues for Stephens City:

- Perhaps the most important issue is the high potential for groundwater contamination due to the karst geology underlying the town. Since the town depends on ground and surface water collected in former quarry pits for its water supply, it is of vital interest that this issue continues to be addressed.
- The Stephens Run floodplain presents a flood hazard.
- Noise from I-81 adversely impacts residences and other noise sensitive uses in town.
- Frederick County and Winchester have an ozone problem. Stephens City should cooperate in the implementation of the Ozone Early Action Plan so as to assist in reducing ozone levels.
- Underground petroleum storage tanks and hazardous material handlers are present in town and could affect groundwater quality if spills should occur.

4.7.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Environmental Resources

Goal 7. Preserve and enhance the town's environmental resources.

Objectives:

7.1 Preserve sensitive environmental resources, such as floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

7.1.1 Review the Zoning Ordinance to strengthen current restrictions of uses within the 100-year floodplain. Prohibit development (including fill, buildings, storage, parking, and septic systems) in the 100-year floodplain, but allow agricultural, passive recreational and water dependent uses and public uses recommended in this Plan, such as, road crossings.) Include standards for permitted uses so as to prevent adverse impacts to flood handling and water



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- quality. Revise the Subdivision Ordinance to match the Zoning Ordinance.
- 7.1.2 Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to remove requirements that open space in subdivisions must be free of weeds and graded, stabilized and completely improved prior to dedication to the town. Ensure that Subdivision Ordinance requirements regarding open space and conservation areas match those in Section 23-531 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 7.2 Implement improved stormwater management to address both water quantity and quality.
- 7.2.1 Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to include Virginia's recommended stormwater management ordinance, modified to require Best Management Practices for stormwater quality control as necessary to meet DCR and EPA requirements for MS4s.
 - 7.2.2 Seek assistance in reviewing plans for compliance with the new ordinance. Such assistance could be provided by Frederick County and/or the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District, or a private consultant hired by the town with fees paid by the private developer.
- 7.3 When financially feasible, extend sewer service to existing and planned development within the town and annexation area to reduce dependence on on-site sewage disposal systems. Such sewer extensions must be in conformance with this Comprehensive Plan. (See strategies under Objective 8.1)
- 7.4 Adopt improved measures to protect the town's water supply.
- 7.4.1 Add to the Zoning Ordinance's objectives listed in Section 23-1: "To protect surface and ground water."
 - 7.4.2 Review and revise the town's Water Supply Protection Ordinance to strengthen its water quality provisions, particularly to address Best Management Practices for stormwater management, to establish minimum buffers around streams, sinkholes, caves and quarry pits, and to require the preparation and implementation of farm plans for water quality control.
- 7.5 Promote tree preservation and planting.



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- 7.5.1 Through the site plan and subdivision review process, seek the preservation of existing trees to the maximum extent possible, while accommodating the proposed use.
 - 7.5.2 Embark on a tree planting program along town streets and in town parks.
- 7.6 Enhance the town's aesthetic character by preserving significant natural features and scenic vistas.
- 7.6.1 Require developers to note natural features (streams, trees, rock outcrops, wetlands, topography) and scenic vistas on site and subdivision plat applications and to show how the development design protects these features.
- 7.7 Promote public and private actions to maintain and improve air quality.
- 7.7.1 Cooperate with Frederick County and the City of Winchester in the implementation of the Ozone Early Action Plan.
 - 7.7.2 Install sidewalks and trails and require new developments to do the same to encourage walking and bicycling as alternative non-polluting transportation modes.
 - 7.7.3 Implement the Bikeways and Trails Plan.
 - 7.7.4 Include mixed use areas on the future land use map.
- 7.8 Consider noise impacts when planning for and approving development of lands near I-81, Route 11, and the planned bypass.
- 7.8.1 Work with VDOT to ensure that plans for widening of I-81 address noise impacts to the town.
 - 7.8.2 When reviewing site and subdivision plans, require that buildings containing noise-sensitive uses (residential uses, churches, schools) be placed as far from I-81 as possible. Instead, locate parking and open space along the interstate.



4.8 Community Services and Facilities

4.8.1 Background Information – public services and facilities for the community

Community services and facilities support existing and planned development and contribute substantially to the health, safety, education, and general welfare of town residents. Community services and facilities serving Stephens City include:

- General Government Services;
- Public Safety Services;
- Public Schools;
- Cultural and Recreational Facilities;
- Public Works; and
- Public Utilities.

Responsibility for providing community services and facilities for Stephens City residents is divided between the town and Frederick County. The town currently provides general government services, public utility service, police protection and some recreational facilities for town residents. The county's responsibilities include the provision of public schools, libraries, and regional recreation and open space facilities. Fire and rescue services, which are provided by volunteers, receive financial support from the town and county.



Darryl Geyser/127

General Government Services

The town's administrative and police services are housed in the Town Hall at 1033 Locust Street, which also includes a Council Chambers and space for storage of town records. Town administrative staff consists of a Town Manager, Town Planner/ Assistant Town Manager, Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. Social services and the court system are provided by Frederick County, as well as voter registration and real estate records and assessment.

Public Safety Services

Town police protection is provided by four-full-time officers, the Chief of Police, three officers and a part-time administrative assistant. The Frederick County Sheriff's Department and the Virginia State Police supplement town police protection. Central dispatching for police and other emergency services in the town is provided through the Sheriff's Department. The county jail is used to incarcerate persons arrested by town police.



Fire and Rescue Services.

Stephens City Fire and Rescue (Co 11), housed on Mulberry Street, is one of the busiest in the county. The company operates two pumpers, a mini pumper, two ALS ambulances, an ALS chase vehicle and a mobile unit. The station also houses Truck 1, a 110 foot E-One Quint ladder truck purchased by the county. Town and county contributions, as well as private donations support the Fire and Rescue Company.

Public Schools

School children from Stephens City attend Frederick County Public Schools. Students attend Middletown Elementary School, located on Mustang Lane in Middletown, Robert E. Aylor Middle School, located on Aylor Road just east of I-81, and Sherando High School, located just off of Route 277 East behind Sherando Park. The Dowell J. Howard Center also provides secondary and post-secondary vocational and technical education at 156 Dowell J. Circle in Winchester.

The most recent published enrollment and capacity information for the schools serving Stephens City is provided in Table 4.8.1.

**Table 4.8.1. School Enrollment and Capacity
Public Schools Serving Stephens City**

School	Grade Level	Practical Capacity	2010-2011 Enrollment	Percent of Practical Capacity
Middletown Elementary	K-5	662	586	89%
Robert E. Aylor Middle	6-8	850	592	70%
Sherando High School	9-12	1,400	1,506	108%

* The middle school has 6 modular units supplementing existing classrooms.
SOURCE: Frederick County School Board

Total enrollment in county schools in 2010 was 13,167, an increase of 1,805 students or 15.9 percent since 2004. In the 2008 Frederick County Public Schools Division Comprehensive Plan the school system project that the total enrollment for the school system will be over the 15,000 mark spread out amongst a projected 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools and 4 high schools. As of 2010 at the time of this Comprehensive Plan the 13th elementary school, 5th middle school and 4th high school have yet to begin construction.

Higher Education Opportunities. Two institutions of higher education are located within a convenient distance of Stephens City –Shenandoah University in Winchester and the Lord



Fairfax Community College in Middletown. Founded in 1875, Shenandoah University offers more than 60 academic programs of study at the undergraduate and graduate level, a world-class conservatory, a thriving NCAA Division III athletics program and a wide variety of student activities. Approximately 3,000 students are enrolled at Shenandoah University in five schools: School of Arts & Sciences; Harry F. Byrd, Jr. School of Business; Shenandoah Conservatory; School of Health Professions; and the Bernard J. Dunn School of Pharmacy.

Founded in 1970, the Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) is a nonresidential, two-year public institution of higher education with campuses in Middletown and Warrenton, Virginia. The Middletown campus is located at 173 Skirmisher Lane in Middletown. LFCC is one of 23 institutions in the Virginia Community College System. The College provides a comprehensive program of instructional and student support services and has a student enrollment of approximately 5,000.

Cultural and Recreational Facilities

Town Facilities. Town neighborhood parks include a 0.7-acre tot-lot with play equipment on Bel Air Street, a playground with play equipment, volleyball and horseshoes on Farmview Avenue, and a baseball field, concession stand and Scout Hall on the town municipal office lot on West Locust Street. The town owns the old Stephens City School, located on the east side of South Main Street at Mulberry and School Streets. A basketball court and playground are available there for town use, and the building and grounds offer the potential for a full-fledged community center facility for the town.

The town's Newtown Commons property at 5155 Main Street represents a significant recreational asset for the community. This 3.24-acre site includes an outdoor performance stage, which is used during town celebrations and festivals, including the annual Newtown Heritage Festival. This festival, held annually on the first weekend in June, celebrates the town's original name and its heritage in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when it was famous for production of the Newtown wagon that carried settlers westward. The Newtown Commons also features a picnic shelter and a fully functional concessions building and restrooms.

The town also has plans to convert its 168-acre quarry property, located on the west side of town, to a community park. In the mean time, the town has leased 11 acres of this property to Frederick County National Little League for three baseball fields.

County Facilities. Town residents have access to the 330-acre Sherando Park on Route 277 approximately two miles east of town. This district park includes 4 soccer game fields, 2 soccer practice fields, 4 baseball/softball fields that support the youth and adult sports leagues serving the Stephens City area. There are also 5 picnic shelters, a gazebo and an outdoor swimming pool. The Sherando High School behind this park also includes a community center with a weight room and racquetball courts that are available for use by town residents. These adjacent facilities help to provide the district-level park facilities needed by both town and county residents in the area. Ayler Middle School offers a football field and multi-purpose court,



According to State recreational standards contained in the Virginia Outdoors Plan, the existing neighborhood and community parkland within the town is sufficient to meet the needs of the present population as summarized in Table 4.8.2. There is sufficient district parkland within the immediate Stephens City area to meet town and annexation area demands, and the development of the planned quarry park and trails system will help to satisfy the additional recreational demands of future town and county residents.

Table 4.8.2. Town Park and Recreation Supply and Demand

Type of Facility	State Standard (Acres/Population)	2005 Supply		2005 Demand		Build-out Demand	Build-out Surplus/Deficit*
		Town	County **	Town	Town & Annex. Area	Town & Annex. Area	Town & Annex. Area
Parkland							
Neighborhood and Tot Lots	3 ac /1,000	3.5 ac	0	3.4 ac	4.0 ac	10.1 ac	-6.6 ac
Community	3 ac/1,000	16 ac	0	3.4 ac	4.0 ac	10.1 ac	+5.9 ac
District	4 ac/1,000	0	330 ac	4.6 ac	5.4 ac	13.4 ac	+317 ac
Total Parkland	10 ac/1,000	19.5ac	330 ac	11.4 ac	13.4 ac	33.6 ac	+316 ac
Outdoor Facilities							
Baseball Field	1/6,000	1	8	1	1	1	0
Softball Field	1/3,000	0	4	1	1	2	1
Football Field	1/10,000	0	1	1	1	1	1
Soccer Field	1/5,000	0	6	1	1	1	1
Basketball	1/5,000	1	1	1	1	1	0
Volleyball	1/1,000	1	0	1	2	4	3
Tennis	1/2,000	0	0	1	2	4	4
Pool	1/10,000	0	1	1	1	1	0

Notes for Table 4.8.2:

* Surplus/deficit is based on existing town facilities, except for district & total parkland, which includes nearby county parks.

** County park facilities at Sherando Park and school facilities at Ayler Middle School.

*** Newtown Commons and ball fields on Passage Lane.

SOURCE: Virginia Outdoors Plan; Town Office; and Frederick County Dept. of Parks and Recreation

Regional, State and Federal Recreational Facilities. State recreational standards also recommend a minimum 400-acre State park within a 50-mile drive of Stephens City. There are three State Parks within 50 miles of Stephens City: Andy Guest - Shenandoah River State Park (Warren



County) - 1,600 acres; Sky Meadows State Park (Loudoun County) - 1,862 acres; and New Market Battlefield (Shenandoah County) - 280 acres. In addition to these State facilities, the Northern Virginia 4-H Center in Warren County has numerous hiking trails and offers summer camps for area youth. Nearby Federal lands with recreational opportunities include Shenandoah National Park, the Appalachian Trail, and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Smithsonian Institution's Conservation and Research Center near Front Royal also offers summer camps and educational programs run by the National Zoo.

A 1992 National Park Service Study, "Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia," identified six battlefield sites in Frederick County and Winchester. Future preservation of these sites will offer passive recreational and educational opportunities for area residents.

The Shenandoah Valley was a key theater in the Civil War, the site of numerous battles and skirmishes up and down the Valley Pike. Armies of the north and south passed through Stephens City many times with major battles occurring just to the north at Kernstown (March, 1862, and July, 1864) and to the south at Cedar Creek (October, 1864).

In 1997, Congress established the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, which includes Frederick County and Stephens City. A Commission was appointed at that time to develop a plan for preserving 10 battlefields within the 8-county district. The Commission published its plan in September 2000 and included detailed strategies for the preservation of Second Kernstown and Cedar Creek as well as the other eight battlefields.

At this time, 315 acres have been protected at Second Kernstown and almost 1,200 acres at Cedar Creek, the two battlefields closest to Stephens City. Though not included among the Commission's list of battlefields, First Kernstown has also received preservation attention from the Glass Glen Burnie Foundation, which owns about 300 acres. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Commission has been succeeded by a nonprofit foundation to carry on its work. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is actively pursuing the acquisition of land and easements at both Cedar Creek and Second Kernstown battlefields. In addition, the National Park Service has established a unit at Cedar Creek Battlefield, open as Belle Grove Cedar Creek National Historic Park. Stephens City now has a recognized National Battlefield at its doorstep.

Libraries. Town residents have access to the Handley Library in Winchester, an endowed library partially funded by the county. Libraries are also available in the public schools, at Shenandoah University and at the Lord Fairfax Community College.

Solid Waste Management and Stormwater Management

The town provides solid waste collection and disposal services to town residents through a contract with a private trash hauler. The town does not have a public works department, and the maintenance of stormwater management facilities is primarily the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) where such facilities have been built within the public right-of-way. As is the case with most small towns, stormwater runoff problems occur in older areas of town where no comprehensive stormwater drainage system exists.



Public Utility Facilities

Sanitary Sewer System. With exception of the former wastewater treatment plant site (WWTP), the Stephens City sewer system lies entirely on the west side of Interstate 81. It consists of 12" and smaller lines and generally serves the area bounded by Interstate 81 on the east, Grove Sweet and High View Avenue on the west and the town limits on the north and south. The 12" sewer passes under Interstate 81 just north of Stephens Run and passes through a flow meter before it ties into the FCSA system just on the east side of the interstate. From here it flows through a combination of 14" ductile iron and 15" PVC sewer lines for approximately 2,100 feet to the Stephens Run Pumping Station. From there, wastewater is transported to Frederick County's Parkins Mill Wastewater Treatment Plant.

A new regional sewage pumping station located on Stephens Run within the Stephens Landing subdivision the western area of the town. Wastewater from this pumping station is conveyed by force main to the FCSA system at a connection point on the east side of I-81.

In March 2005, the town adopted the Stephens City Sewer Study, which estimates future increases in sewage flows that will be generated by projected growth in the town and annexation area. The study projects the development in ten (10) years of approximately 1,123 new residential units and 266 acres of commercial/industrial land expected to generate about 575,000 gallons per day of sewage flow. The study examined several options for handling these increased flows and recommended that the town continue to work with the FCSA to handle wastewater treatment. FCSW has recently expanded the Parkins Mill WWTP and has received a new discharge permit raising the discharge limit from 2 to 3 million gallons per day (MGD). The study recommends that the town negotiate with the FCSA to secure a portion of this additional capacity. Also recommended are upgrades to the transmission systems, including increasing the capacity of the transmission main from town to the Stephens Run Pump Station, upgrade of the pump station, and exploration of the feasibility of directing some of the wastewater flow north to the existing FCSA force main near the Appleland Sports Center. In 2009 this study was revised and expanded upon with the creation of Wasterwater System Master Plan by Stowe Engineering that addressed the overall system needs and problems with regard to infiltration and inflow.

Water System. Water for the Town of Stephens City is supplied by the Frederick County Sanitation Authority (FCSA), which operates a water treatment plant located in the northwest corner of the town. The source of the water is ground and surface waters in the pits and tunnels of a former quarry which is owned by the Town. Water from the FCSA system enters the Stephens City water distribution system at two metered connection points. One point is located at the west end of Fairview Drive, and the other is located on the west side of the CSX railroad just south of the existing FCSA water transmission line.

The water distribution system consists of a network of 2", 4", 6" and 8" water mains, which are generally located in or along existing town streets or rights-of-way. In general the water distribution system is confined to the same service area as outlined for the sewer system above.



with one exception. This exception is the new service area in the western portion of the town served by the converted wastewater force main that serves West Fairfax and the western side of the CSX railroad to the north quarry area.

Sections of the water system infrastructure is reaching the end of its useful life, and those of the trunk water mains should be replaced to meet future water demands. A report on the condition of the water system, and future needs, has been prepared and should be reviewed as development occurs.

The Frederick County Sanitation Authority's water facility pumps up to 3 million gallons of water per day (MGD) from the James H. Diehl Water Filtration Plant. Water is treated at the filtration plant, which was put into operation in 1994. The plant is capable of treating up to 4.0 MGD. It is configured for an additional filter unit that will increase capacity to 6 MGD. The Authority has three elevated and two ground storage tanks with a total capacity of 3 million gallons of system water storage. Current water usage in the Authority's customer area is 2.3 million gallons per day.

Stephens City has adopted a water and sewer service area, which is shown on the Future Land Use Map. This governs the extension of water and sewer service within and around the town.

4.8.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Community Services and Facilities

The Planning Commission identified a number of issues related to community services and facilities that need to be addressed. These include:

- The county is planning future public safety facilities to serve the Stephens City area that may be located outside of the town, which may threaten the continued viability of the town's existing fire and rescue station.
- There is a lack of recreational activities within the town for the town's youth and for families with children.
- The location of major Civil War battlefields near the town provides new cultural and recreational opportunities for the town.
- The town has several parks that have not been developed. Newtown Commons Park has great potential as a community cultural and recreational focal point that has yet to be fully realized, and development of the Quarry Park is unfinished.
- The town and the greater Stephens City area lack comprehensive pedestrian and bikeway systems, making access to area recreational facilities very dependent upon the automobile.
- Infiltration and inflow problems in the town's sewage collection system have not been corrected, adversely affecting the town's flow allotment with Frederick County.
- Both town water and sewer service will need to be upgraded to support service to the remainder of the town's utility service area.
 - Town utility extensions must be affordable to the town and must be consistent with the adopted water and sewer service area and with the comprehensive plan's goal of managed growth.



4.8.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Community Services and Facilities

Goal 8. Provide adequate, high quality community services and facilities.

Objectives:

- 8.1 Improve the town's wastewater collection system and seek additional treatment capacity to provide adequate wastewater handling capability for the town and proposed annexation area.
 - 8.1.1 Continue efforts to reduce infiltration and inflow of stormwater and groundwater (I & I) into town's sewage collection system to reduce its effects on the town's flow allotment with Frederick County.
 - 8.1.2 Work with Frederick County to negotiate new wastewater flow allotments for the town as growth occurs in the current and expanded town limits and as the FCSA upgrades its WWTPs, particularly the Parkins Mill WWTP.
 - 8.1.3 Upgrade the existing wastewater collection system to meet increased flow demands as the town grows in a manner that is affordable to the town and is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
 - Increase capacity of FCSA transmission main to Stephens Run Pump Station
 - Upgrade the Stephens Run Pump Station
- 8.2 Implement improved stormwater management to address both water quantity and quality.
 - 8.2.1 Improve town's existing stormwater infrastructure to insure that stormwater runoff is adequately conveyed to adequate receiving channels and to minimize the risk of damage to town and adjoining property.
 - 8.2.2 Work with developers to insure that they adequately address the stormwater management needs requirements of the town and the developer's project.
 - 8.2.3 Require developers to implement Best Management Practices measures through adoption of a comprehensive stormwater management ordinance addressing both water quantity and quality.
- 8.3 Adopt improved measures to protect the town's water supply. (See Strategies under Environmental Resources section)



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- 8.4 Maintain high quality public safety and emergency services within the town.
 - 8.4.1 Work with county and volunteer fire and rescue officials to continue to provide a cost-effective volunteer system for the area.
 - 8.4.2 Maintain a liaison with fire and rescue officials and the county to plan for future public safety needs, and work with the county in the proper location of required fire and rescue facilities within or adjacent to the town.
 - 8.4.3 Continue to maintain an adequately sized police force as the town's population grows.
 - 8.5 Provide efficient and effective town government services to residents, businesses and property owners.
 - 8.5.1 Plan for future town administrative and police space and personnel needs as they are needed.
 - 8.5.2 Coordinate town expenditures with the comprehensive plan through an annual capital improvements program.
 - 8.5.3 Seek regular feedback from town residents and businesses concerning the quality of town services provided.
 - 8.6 Provide adequate and timely public information through the town's web site and newsletter.
 - 8.7 Work with Frederick County to ensure adequate parks and recreational activities and facilities for the town's families and youth.
 - 8.7.1 Cooperate with the county in developing and implementing new recreational facilities and programs tailored to the needs of all town citizens and particularly teens.
 - 8.7.2 Update the Quarry Park Master Plan and seek funding for its implementation.
 - 8.7.3 Update the Newtown Commons Park Master Plan as needed to accommodate a community / farmers' market, Veteran's Memorial and relocation of the stage. Consult with the County Department of Parks and Recreation regarding potential areas of cooperation in developing the Newtown Commons property as a major center of community cultural activities for the area. Approach the Bluemont



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- Concert Series or other groups for a possible partnership to bring regular summer concerts to the park.
- 8.7.4 Negotiate with VDOT to obtain surplus right-of-way when the Rout 277 / I-81 interchange is relocated so that the land can be redeveloped into a green space and entry feature for the town. Prepare and implement a master plan for this new parkland.
 - 8.7.5 Plan for parks and open space in the greater Stephens City area plan.
 - 8.7.6 Complete and implement the town's bikeway and trail master plan and include a bikeway and trail component within the greater Stephens City area plan.
 - 8.7.7 Explore both public (town, county, state, Federal) and private (contributions from businesses, service organizations) funding sources for park, bikeway and trail development. Utilize the cash proffer system as allowed within the Virginia State Code.
- 8.8 Obtain the town's proportionate share of community services provided by other governmental agencies.
- 8.8.1 Work with the county in the proper location of required human service facilities within or adjacent to the town.
 - 8.8.2 Seek cooperation from the county in meeting identified community service needs of town residents.

4.9 Housing

4.9.1 Background Information – the town's housing stock

The most recent United States Census took place in 2010; however at the time of this update no new data has been released. Therefore, for the purposes of the data presented in the following section will be represented from the established 2000 Census data and will be updated at such time the 2010 Census data is released.

The 2000 U.S. Census included information on current housing within the town. This information is summarized in Table 4.9.1.

**Table 4.9.1 Year 2000 Housing Data
Stephens City and Frederick County**



	Stephens City	Frederick County
Total Housing Units	546	23,319
# Occupied Units	500	22,097
# Vacant Units	46	1,222
# Vacant – Seasonal Use	3	344
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.5%	1.6%
Rental Vacancy Rate	8.4%	4.7%
# Occupied Units - Owner	238	17,752
# Occupied Units - Renter	262	4,345
Average Household Size- Owner-Occupied Units	2.41 persons per household	2.67 persons per household
Average Household Size- Rental Units	2.18 persons per household	2.54 persons per household

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing

This table shows that Stephens City in April of 2000 had a total of 546 housing units, with almost 92 percent of them being occupied. This compares to 95 percent of all housing units within the county being occupied. The table indicates that the town has higher vacancy rates for both its homeowner and rental housing than the county. The Census found that the town has more housing units occupied by renters (262) than by owners (238), with over 52 percent of all occupied units being rentals. This is very different than the situation in the county, where only 20 percent of occupied units are rentals.

Housing Mix

Table 4.9.2 provides a breakdown of the different types of dwelling units found in the town and with the addition of the annexation study area. This is referred to as the town's housing mix. This table indicates that 56 percent of the town's housing units are single-family detached dwellings, 19 percent are single-family attached units (either duplexes or townhouses), and 25 percent are multi-family units.

Of the multi-family units, 90 units, or 66 percent of them, are found in the town's five apartment complexes, with the rest being located in conversions of former single-family homes, primarily along Main Street. The townhouse units are located primarily along Ravenwood Road, Bridle Court, Filbert Street, and Mulberry Court. Not included in the townhouse total for the town are 18 additional townhouses found on Mulberry Court that are located outside the corporate limits.

The table also indicates how the possible annexation would affect the town's housing mix. As can be seen, the annexation would increase the amount of single family detached housing by 66 units, but add no attached or multi-family housing. The town's housing make-up will remain predominantly single family detached housing.



Table 4.9.2
Housing Mix - 2005
Stephens City and Annexation Area

Type of Housing Unit	Stephens City		Town plus Annexation Area	
	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units
Single-Family Detached	304	56%	370	61%
Duplex	8	1%	8	1%
Townhouse	97	18%	97	16%
Multi-Family	137	25%	137	22%
Total	546	100%	612	100%

SOURCE: Sympoetica, Town office data

Housing Affordability

The U.S. Census shows that housing in Stephens City is generally more affordable than housing in Frederick County. In 1999, the median owner-occupied housing unit value was \$114,300 in Frederick County compared to Stephens City's \$89,800. In the same year, the median gross rent was \$620 per month in Frederick County and \$548 per month in Stephens City. The age of the town's housing stock and the high percentages of apartments and town houses account for this affordability.

In 2005, the regional housing market is experiencing a boom, and housing prices are rising rapidly. New housing that has recently been approved and is under construction in town will be priced at the current market rate. This will add to a variety of housing available in town, serving the needs of higher income people. Thus the new housing combined with the town's older housing is expected to meet most of the current and future needs of residents of varying levels of income. Still, those in the lowest income brackets will experience difficulties in finding affordable housing because of general price rises. In order to serve the needs of these and future residents, the town is working with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit low income housing provider to locate lots within town for new affordable houses. The town has recently completed a Community Development Block Grant project on Crooked Lane that rehabilitated two houses



and constructed five new Habitat for Humanity houses benefitting qualified low-moderate income households. The project also provided new connections to the town's water and sewer system as well as a street extension and made through streets out of two streets that previously ended in a cul-de-sacs. This allows for a continuation of the Town's focus on keeping a grid pattern.

4.9.2 Issues to be Addressed Regarding Housing

The housing data presented in this section confirms the housing-related issues raised by citizens during development of this plan, including:

- The high percentage of rental housing units within the town has resulted in some neighborhoods that are not well kept and that are in need of revitalization.
- There is a need to encourage more owner-occupied housing within the town to promote a better balance and variety of housing.

4.9.3 Relevant Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Housing

Goal 9. Preserve and enhance the town's housing stock.

Objectives and Strategies:

- 9.1 Promote the maintenance of existing residential properties.
 - 9.1.1 Encourage and support community housing rehabilitation programs.
 - 9.1.2 Seek enforcement of the Frederick County Housing Code for deteriorated residential properties that pose a public safety risk.
 - 9.1.3 Consider adopting a town property maintenance ordinance requiring the maintenance of the existing housing stock, pursuant to Section 15.2-906 of the State Code to be enforced by a partnership between the Town and Frederick County Buildings and Inspections Department.
- 9.2 Promote homeownership within the town.
- 9.3 Provide for a variety of high quality housing options for the town's residents.
 - 9.3.1 Provide incentives for the development of seniors housing in areas convenient to community services as shown on the Land Use Map.
 - 9.3.2 Maintain housing as an important component of the town's mixed-use downtown.



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- 9.3.3 Develop community-wide design guidelines that encourage new housing compatible with the town's historic character and support other Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives.
- 9.4 Plan and implement public improvements that can enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods.
 - 9.4.1 Analyze existing neighborhoods that may need community development assistance and develop recommended community development projects for these areas.
 - 9.4.2 Seek funding assistance from sources such as the SAFETEA-LU federal grant program for the implementation of needed public improvements within existing residential neighborhoods.
 - 9.5 Designate areas and implement measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all income levels.
 - 9.5.1 Continue to work with Habitat for Humanity to identify locations for low income affordable houses.
 - 9.5.2 Continue to pursue and implement Community Development Block Grants from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for low income housing rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of infrastructure serving such housing units.



5.0 Plan Implementation Actions During the First Five Years

The following projects, programs, and amendments to ordinances and plans are recommended for priority attention during the period of 2010 to 2015:

5.1 Projects

- Continue promoting the community / farmers' market at Newtown Commons or at another venue within town.
- Revise the Quarry Park master plan and begin its implementation.
- Prepare corridor design plans for Route 11 and Fairfax Street (Route 277 / Route 631) and zoning overlay districts to implement the plans.

5.2 Programs

- Continue improving the Capital Improvements Program.
- Support established business association and create a downtown revitalization plan.
- Apply to become a Certified Local Government for historic preservation.
- Apply to become a designated Main Street Community.
- Expand the town's Economic Development Program to promote new employment sites and to lure a special attraction to the town.
- Initiate a cooperative county/town planning program for the greater Stephens City area. Involve VDOT in this planning program so as to promote good transportation planning as recommended in this Plan.
- Work with Historic Preservation Commission on publications and workshops about proper preservation techniques.

5.3 Amendments to Regulations

- Revise the Zoning Ordinance according to 2007 Policy Audit and include the following:
 - Addition of agricultural / conservation zoning district
 - Revision of the floodplain regulations
 - Revision of parking requirements
 - Address lighting regulations
 - Address outdoor storage regulations.
- Update the Water Supply Protection Ordinance

5.4 Amendments to this Plan

- Update the data when available from the 2010 Census.
- Update this plan at the end of five years (2015).

APPENDIX 1

Joint Future Land Use Plan and Map

STEPHENS CITY/ FREDERICK COUNTY

FUTURE LAND USE FOR PROPOSED ANNEXATION AREAS

(Draft Update Endorsed by Joint Land Use Committee, October 23, 2008)

(Draft Recommended by Frederick County Planning Commission, December 17, 2008)

(Draft Recommended by Stephens City Planning Commission, January 5, 2009)

(Final Draft Approved by Stephens City Town Council, February 3, 2009)

(Final Map Approved by Stephens City Town Council, March 3, 2009)

(Final Draft Approved by Frederick County Board of Supervisors, April 8, 2009)

(Final Map Approved by Frederick County Board of Supervisors, April 8, 2009)

The Town of Stephens City, Virginia, map depicts a conceptual plan for future land uses within the proposed annexation area around the Town of Stephens City. The map was originally developed by county staff working with the Stephens City town manager, and was jointly adopted by Frederick County and the Town of Stephens City on July 9, 2003 and July 1, 2003, respectively. The foundation of the map is both the County's Route 11 Corridor Plan contained within the county's Comprehensive Policy Plan and the town's 2001-2021 Comprehensive Plan. In 2008, the Joint Land Use Plan was updated based upon the efforts of the Joint Land Use Committee who undertook an evaluation of past and current planning activity within the area and provided guidance on a revised land use and transportation plan.

The proposed annexation area is made up of two phases. Phase I consists of a northern and southern portion comprising a total of approximately 360 acres. The northern area of Phase I is adjacent to the town's northern boundary and extends west from I-81, across the railroad. The southern portion of this phase is situated at the town's southwestern boundary, surrounding the Lime Kiln. Phase II of the proposed annexation area is also located south of the town. It comprises an area of roughly 350 acres lying between I-81 and the railroad and extending south to Family Drive.

Overall, the general concept of the land use plan is to allow for growth around the existing town which is compatible with the existing scale and style of Stephens City. Industrial areas are sited to make use of the rail lines while being buffered from view of Route 11 and existing or proposed residential areas.

A major collector road is shown running west of town that would function as a bypass, drawing through traffic from Route 11 and thereby out of the center of town. The "bypass" is intended to assist in reducing congestion at the Route 11 Fairfax Pike intersection. The collector road ties in with a relocated Route 277/Interstate 81 interchange to the south of the present location and to a new overpass of I-81 at an extended Tasker Road to the north. This major collector road would be fed by other new, minor collector roads as well as the existing street system. An extension of this major collector road would provide connectivity with the proposed Shady Elm Collector Road. Key gateway intersections are proposed to include roundabout intersections that will provide effectively functioning intersections with a design quality that enhances the Town.

General categories of future land uses are depicted within the proposed annexation areas by colored areas. These areas of future land use are mixed to coordinate and integrate with each other, take advantage of and implement the transportation improvements, and relate with the existing character and context of the Town. These general land use categories are described as follows:

Conservation/Open Space:

These areas are shown in green and account for roughly 300 acres. The areas are located 1) along the Route 11 corridor north of, and south of, the town (depicting an area to be buffered), 2) an area of approximately 15 acres adjacent and connected to the Stephens City Western Bypass and central to this area of development to be utilized by the Town as a park or other public use, 3) an area west of the railroad around the northern quarry, and 4) a low lying area south of town and west of Route 11. The intent of these areas would be to preserve these areas from development for environmental, recreational, and/or aesthetic reasons. The rural corridor preservation buffer along the east and west sides of Route 11 could be up to a maximum 200' in width. An additional road efficiency buffer should be provided between any residential development and the proposed Stephens City Bypass.

Institutional Use:

This area is depicted with a pink checked hatch and is shown to the north on the eastern side of the Route 11 corridor. The area consists of approximately 25 acres of existing and future institutional land uses. A private school is currently located in this area. The intent of this land designation is to serve the public at large through an institutional use that might consist of school (private or public), church or non-profit organization, recreational use, or a government entity. Appropriate amenities may include dormitories, recreational or athletic fields, administration and maintenance facilities, and other similar uses that are customarily associated with this type of institutional land use.

Medium Density Residential:

These areas are depicted in yellow and are shown north of town on both sides of the Route 11 corridor. The area east of Route 11, total roughly 27 acres, is designed to complement the existing residential land uses and complete the area between Route 11 and Interstate 81. The area west of Route 11, between Route 11 and the Western Bypass and totaling roughly 40 acres, is designed to reinforce the residential character of the northern portion of the Town and integrate this residential land use into the proposed areas of Commercial and Mixed Use. The area of medium density residential south of Fairfax Pike is consistent with the residential land use approved by the Town for this property. It is the intent of this land use designation to provide for residential development at a density of approximately four units per acre. This residential development shall implement the standards of New Urbanism and be integrated into the surrounding land uses and orientated towards the internal street network.

Highway Commercial/Commercial/Office:

This area totaling approximately 135 acres is shown in orange and is located in several of the annexation areas at key intersections, but most prominently, in the area immediately west of the future relocation of Interstate 81 Interchange, west of Route 11. This area of land use is intended to provide typical highway commercial uses such as retail, restaurants, and office uses. It is located to take advantage of both the significant Interstate traffic that could be anticipated from the relocated interchange, and the local traffic that would be utilizing the local collector road network.

Mixed Use:

This land use is identified in three locations. The first area is located north of the proposed east west collector road adjacent to the northern boundary of the Town, west of Route 11, and contains roughly 15 acres. The second area is located south of Town, west of Route 11, and adjacent to the collector street connecting the Western Bypass with Route 11. This area is also roughly 15 acres. The third area is at the western gateway to the Town, south of Fairfax Street, and encompasses the area of existing residential lots and an area of approved commercial development. This area is approximately 25 acres in size. These areas would be a mix of commercial, business, and office uses with the possibility of up to twenty-five (25) percent of the land area being available for single family attached residential land uses at a density of four units per acre. In addition, second story and above residences located above commercial land uses shall be permitted. These second story and above residential uses shall be considered bonus residential uses that do not count towards the residential density of the mixed use area. This area of mixed use development shall implement the standards of New Urbanism and be integrated into the surrounding land uses and orientated towards the street network.

Mixed Use Age Restricted:

This land use designation is identified in one location in the area north of Town and west of Route 11. This area contains approximately 20 acres. This area would be a mix of age restricted residential land uses at a relatively high residential density, up to approximately 8 units per acre, and shall contain a variety of residential housing types. In addition, this area shall contain a mix of commercial, business, or office uses that would be located on a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the site. The intent of this land use designation would be to serve active older adults in an environment that takes advantage of the unique characteristics of the Town adds value to the broader community. This area of mixed use age restricted development shall implement the standards of New Urbanism and be integrated into the Town, the surrounding land uses, and orientated towards the street network which shall be a continuation of the Town's grid pattern.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

It is essential to ensure that the infrastructure, in particular transportation infrastructure, and the necessary community facilities are provided in a timely and coordinated manner in order to enable the successful implementation of the land use plan.

The County and the Town agree that any development in implementation of the Joint Land Use Plan shall fully mitigate the impacts associated with the request and shall

further the goals of the Joint Land Use Plan, the County's Comprehensive Policy Plan, specifically with regards to transportation policy, and the Town's Comprehensive Policy Plan. Key community infrastructure components identified in the Joint Land Use Plan, the County's Comprehensive Policy Plan, and the Town's Comprehensive Policy Plan shall be fully recognized and development projects shall seek to implement the Community Facility, transportation, and infrastructure needs of the County and the Town.

The land use designations of the Joint Land Use Plan that will form the basis for future zoning amendments were designed in coordination with the infrastructure, in particular transportation infrastructure, and the necessary community facilities. Therefore, future development applications shall address the impacts of the project and shall further the implementation of the infrastructure and community facility transportation improvements identified in the respective Comprehensive Policy Plans. This may include the design and construction of key segments of proposed roads and intersection/interchanges. Consideration of future development applications within the study area should only occur when an acceptable level of service has been achieved and key elements and connections identified in this plan have been provided.

APPENDIX 2

Conceptual Visuals for the Town of Stephens City

