

RESOLUTION 8-A-22

**A RESOLUTION REFERRING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2021  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**WHEREAS**, Town Council adopted the current Comprehensive Plan (the “Adopted Comprehensive Plan”) on April 27, 2021;

**WHEREAS**, Zoning Ordinance § 1140 provides that the Planning Commission and Town Council shall continuously review and recommend updates to the Comprehensive Plan;

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 the Town Council adopted Resolution 2-F-19, which provided guidance regarding future student housing development requests, and generally outlined the parameters for locations of student-oriented housing in Town;

**WHEREAS**, the Town must consider the need for a mix of housing types in Town, to have a healthy economy and thriving community;

**WHEREAS**, the Adopted Comprehensive Plan includes a chapter on housing that details the need for affordable housing, senior housing, workforce housing, and housing for young professionals and it is equally important to have the Comprehensive Plan address student-oriented housing;

**WHEREAS**, the subject of student housing is an important topic that should be addressed in a college town’s comprehensive plan;

**WHEREAS**, the Adopted Comprehensive Plan encourages developers of new and infill residential development to consider the community as a whole, including the context of the community’s older and historic single family neighborhoods;

**WHEREAS**, the Adopted Comprehensive Plan also provides that new and infill residential development should help reduce disparities within the community and be compatible with the scale and massing of the surrounding area;

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Chapter of the Adopted Comprehensive Plan encourages Virginia Tech to provide student housing on campus to accommodate growth in undergraduate enrollment;

**WHEREAS**, approximately 3,500 new bedrooms of student-oriented housing were approved by Town Council between 2017 and 2021, to address Virginia Tech growth; and


**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments will also address changes such as updates to the Land Use chapter text and a new map as part of the Land Use Map Series regarding the preferred location of high density student housing; and

**WHEREAS**, this is an opportunity to make minor housekeeping corrections, such as correcting mapping issues and omitted items.

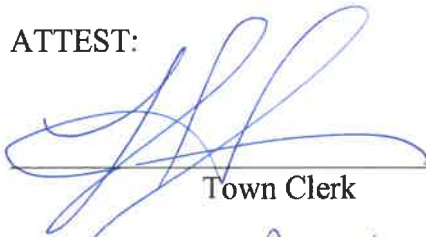
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Town of Blacksburg:

That the Planning Commission is hereby requested to review text and map amendments to the Adopted Comprehensive Plan as summarized below:

1. A new section of text in the Land Use chapter and a new map as part of the Land Use Map series regarding preferred locations for high density student housing and mixed use with student housing in the Town.
2. Minor housekeeping items to update and correct the Adopted Comprehensive Plan.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk

Date of Adoption: August 23, 2022

# Preferred High Density Student Housing Locations Text Amendment

## **Background**

In order to have a healthy economy and thriving community, there is a need for a mix of housing types in Town. Over time in Blacksburg, pent up demand for new high-end, purpose-built undergraduate housing has impacted all other segments of the housing market. This was first identified in the Downtown Blacksburg Housing Market Study conducted by Development Strategies in 2015. To respond to this need, between 2017 and 2021, roughly 3,500 additional bedrooms of student-oriented multifamily housing were approved by Town Council. In 2019, Town Council adopted a resolution that outlined the parameters for locations of student-oriented housing. The resolution is intended to provide guidance regarding future student housing requests. It includes existing bedrooms of multi-family housing in Town, additional bedrooms of multifamily housing approved but not yet constructed, and 2017 information from Virginia Tech regarding enrollment expansion. As follow up to the resolution, the Preferred Locations for High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing Map (Map E) was created as part of the Land Use Map Series and identifies areas throughout Blacksburg that are most appropriate for undergraduate student housing now and in the future.

The Preferred Locations for High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing Map designations do not affect existing zoning. Designations on the map do not prevent rezoning for high density multifamily residential development outside these areas, nor obligate the Town to approve development proposals within them. In addition, the designations do not mandate a specific type or style of development on a property. This section includes redevelopment criteria which should be evaluated for any development proposals. Both categories of student housing shown on the map are located in proximity to the Blacksburg Historic District and the historic St. Luke and Odd Fellows Hall. Any redevelopment that occurs in these areas should be very carefully considered and sensitive to their unique character.

Designating preferred areas of student-oriented housing will support the development of other much needed types of housing, such as senior housing, workforce housing, and housing for young professionals. More detail about the housing challenges and needs for these and other segments of the community can be found in the [Housing](#) chapter.

## **Preferred Locations for High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing Map**

Purpose-built student housing can range from large-scale multifamily apartment buildings to duplex and townhome developments. The map has two designations: High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing. The High Density Student Housing area designates where high-intensity, purpose-built student housing exists today and should be located in the future. These are areas with infrastructure necessary to support higher density development and where other services, such as transit, exist. Minimizing the interface with other residential non-student neighborhoods is important. The core of the High Density Student Housing area is the

Patrick Henry Drive Corridor and University City Boulevard area. These areas contain older developments such as Chasewood Downs Apartments and newer developments such as Park 37 and The Hub.

There are also two Mixed Use with Student Housing areas designated on the map: Downtown Northwest and The Fork. These two areas were identified in studies conducted for the Town by consulting firm Development Strategies as appropriate for consideration of a mix of student multi-family residential and commercial projects. Site design and integration into the existing fabric of the Downtown area are key for any redevelopment that occurs in these areas.

### **High Density Student Housing Designation**

The High Density Student Housing areas designate those most appropriate for undergraduate student housing in the long-term. These types of housing are often characterized by structured parking, large building mass, and rentals by the bedroom rather than by the unit. They also typically provide student-oriented amenities such as study rooms, gyms, and bed-bath parity. Clustering student housing developments in the same area allows for similar uses to be located together with complementary infrastructure and amenities, while minimizing lifestyle conflicts. Map E reflects areas where this type of development exists today, is under construction, or is appropriate to be located in the future.

Several portions of the High Density Student Housing area redeveloped between 2019 and 2022, resulting in a significantly increased residential density. It is expected that the recently redeveloped areas will remain at the current level of residential density for the foreseeable future. However, student-oriented redevelopment of older existing housing may be expected in the future.

When redevelopment at a much higher density occurs, attention should be given to how the more intense student housing interfaces with other nearby residential uses. The transition and mitigation measures should be provided within the High Density Student Housing area. Additionally, redevelopment areas should include some small commercial uses that fit the surrounding context, such as small coffee shops, co-working spaces, and neighborhood corner stores.

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, with safe, accessible, and convenient routes to the Virginia Tech campus and Downtown, are important. The Patrick Henry Drive and University City Boulevard core area has access to transit and some bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Improvements to the existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is anticipated through redevelopment and Town initiated efforts. While further from the Virginia Tech campus, a portion of Foxridge is designated on the map partially due to the extensive trail system and bus service to connect student residents to campus. The Edge, while not in the High Density Student Housing core, abuts the Virginia Tech campus, allowing people walking and biking to conveniently reach campus and Downtown.

Also designated on the Preferred Locations for High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing Map is the Virginia Tech main campus. High density student housing on the

Virginia Tech campus is the optimal location to meet the University's need for housing with any future growth in enrollment. On-campus housing should be located in the core campus area, close to academic buildings and other campus hubs. The University owns the lands most suitable for new undergraduate housing, with proximate locations to student centers, existing infrastructure, and other services such as sidewalks, trails, and transit. Redevelopment on campus should not reduce the amount of student housing provided, but rather, the University should retain on-campus housing to serve at least one-third (1/3) of undergraduate students. One new residential building, the Creativity and Innovation District Living Learning Community, has been constructed on Kent Street but more are needed. The University has indicated that other residential facilities are planned in the future west of the Duck Pond on campus.

### ***Redevelopment Criteria***

Expansion or redevelopment of older existing multifamily housing should be evaluated based on the criteria listed below which are key to quality design. Development should also meet the Residential Infill Development Guidelines detailed in the Design Considerations section of this chapter.

#### Key Criteria for High Density Student Housing:

- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the Town's transportation network (sidewalk, trails, bicycle infrastructure)
- Long-term, secure, and sheltered bicycle parking
- Transit access and quality of amenities at transit stops
- Meaningful open space
- Structured parking to minimize impervious area
- Designated convenient drop off/pick-up areas for ridesharing and deliveries
- Consideration of future trends and needs, such as electric vehicle charging stations
- Attention to neighborhood context with setbacks, height, buffering, and location of outdoor amenities
- Building designs that are original, context sensitive, and specific to Blacksburg
- High quality sustainable building practices, including durable building materials
- Sustainable site design and development methods, such as graywater recycling systems or bio-retention areas/rain gardens
- Convenient locations throughout a development for trash and recycling
- Strong property management

### **Mixed Use with Student Housing Designation**

There are two Mixed Use with Student Housing areas shown on the map. These two areas are designated for meaningful commercial and retail uses with residential above, including residential for undergraduate or graduate students. Both locations are adjacent to the Virginia Tech campus, as well as commercial areas on North Main Street or Prices Fork Road, and the Mixed Use with Student Housing designation is site-specific based on these conditions. The residential density of these areas

is not defined but would be determined through zoning or project review. Development design should also take into account the principles in the Residential Infill Development Guidelines detailed in the Design Considerations section of this chapter.

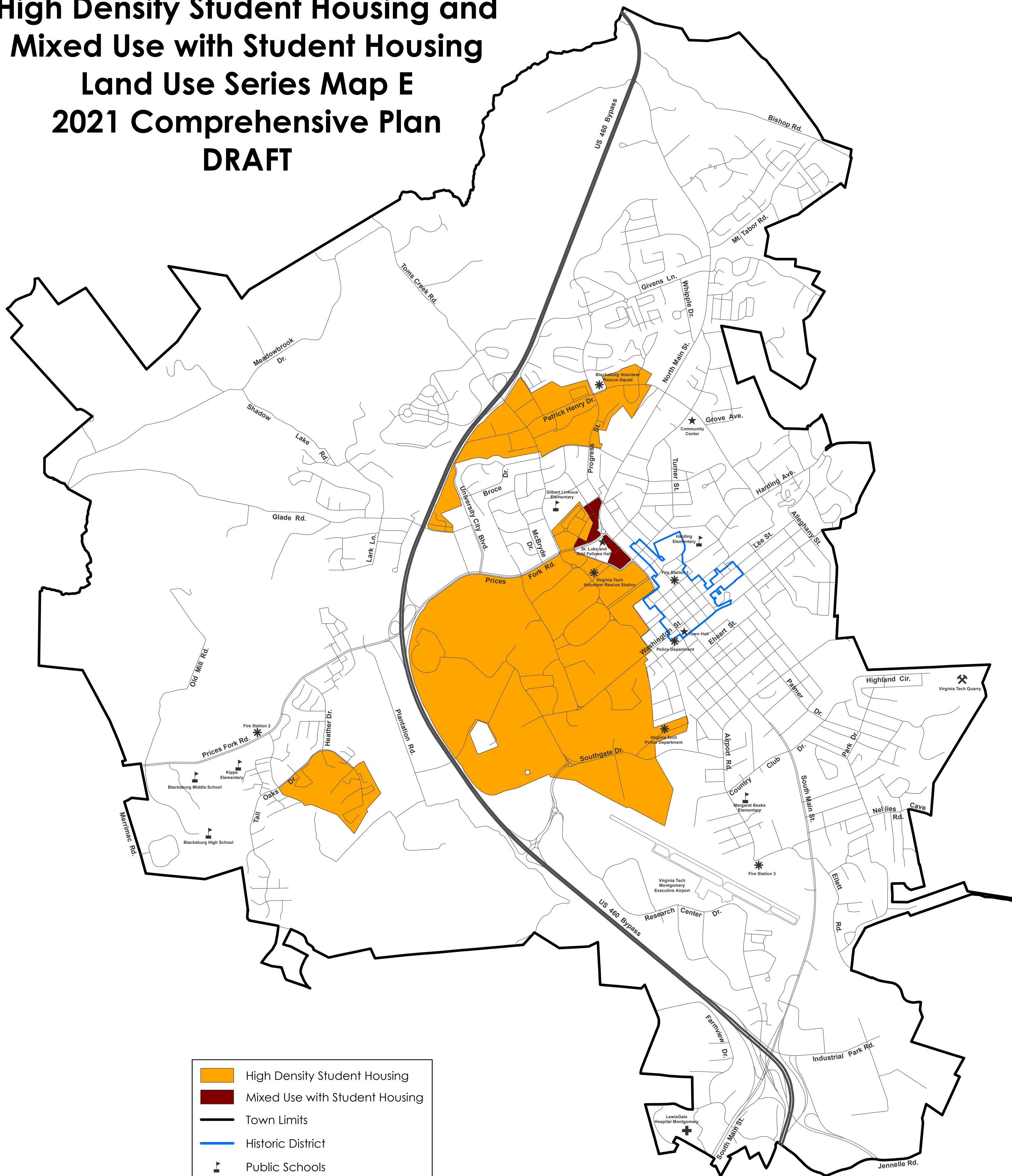
The two Mixed Use with Student Housing areas on Map E were designated in studies conducted for the Town by Development Strategies. The Downtown Northwest area is the triangle of North Main Street, Turner Street NW, and Prices Fork Road, and was identified in the Downtown Strategic Plan completed in 2019. In the study, the vision for this area is described as mixed in use, walkable, urban, and the only residential area in downtown targeted for students. The Fork district was identified in the North Main Street Study completed in 2020, and is comprised of the North Main Street, Progress Street NW, and Kabrich Street areas. The study describes this area as having potential for mixed use, with high quality retail space close to campus and student-oriented housing.

Redevelopment in these areas should include commercial and retail spaces, such as restaurants and shops, to support all types of residential uses and not only students. The value of the student housing portion should enable high quality design and materials for the mixed use redevelopment as a whole. It should also consider the Non-Residential Development Design principles detailed in the Design Considerations section of this chapter. Mixed use development may occur in other areas of Town, however, the Mixed Use with Student Housing designation indicates the areas most appropriate for a mix of uses that includes student-oriented residential.

# Preferred Locations for High Density Student Housing and Mixed Use with Student Housing

## Land Use Series Map E

### 2021 Comprehensive Plan DRAFT



- High Density Student Housing
- Mixed Use with Student Housing
- Town Limits
- Historic District
- Public Schools
- Emergency Services
- Public Buildings
- Hospital
- Quarry

# Town Street Classifications

## Draft



- Arterial
- Collector
- ... Future Arterial
- ... Future Collector
- Local
- Corporate Limits
- Campus Core



# Street Classifications Text Amendment

## Blacksburg Street Classification System

As of 2024, the Town maintained street network consists of approximately 2920 lane miles of local, collector, and arterial streets. This network does not include roads in the VDOT system such as the U.S. Route 460 Bypass and streets on the Virginia Tech campus. Lane mileage is determined by the linear mileage of a roadway segment multiplied by the number of vehicular travel lanes but does not include turning lanes. All streets within the Town of Blacksburg are assigned a speed limit of 25 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. Streets are classified into one of the following functional classifications based on ~~the 2014~~ FHWA standards and vehicular volume data: arterial ~~which includes principal and minor arterials~~, collector ~~which includes major and minor collectors~~, and local. The Town Street Classifications map may be updated administratively by staff as volume data becomes available.

- **Local streets** serve primarily residential and neighborhood traffic and provide direct access to individual properties. These make up approximately 66.75% (or 217.194 lane miles) of the total street mileage, while carrying a relatively small proportion of the vehicle miles traveled. Speed limits on these streets in the Town are 25 miles per hour and may be posted as low as 15 miles per hour in areas with high pedestrian activity or hazardous terrain. Palmer Park Drive and McBryde Drive are examples of local streets.
- **Collector roads** ~~include major and minor collector roads. Minor collector roads are typically characterized by lower speeds and fewer signalized intersections than major collectors. Collector roads~~ connect the local street system to the arterial roads and, thus, carry a higher level of traffic than local streets. These roads comprise approximately 17.4% (or 41.50 lane miles) of the Town's total street mileage. Collector roads ~~havemay~~ provided direct access to individual properties; however, it is preferred that they primarily route traffic from neighborhoods to major employment and commercial centers. Speed limits on these roads range from 25 to 40 miles per hour. Patrick Henry Drive and Airport Road are examples of collector roads.
- **Arterial roads** include ~~principal arterials defined as~~ interstates, freeways, ~~and expressways, and business routes as well as minor arterials~~. These are major routes for traffic movement within and between urban areas, as well as linking towns and providing inter-county service. One ~~principal~~ arterial, the U.S. Route 460 Bypass, runs through Town but is not included in the Town's street network since it is regulated and maintained by VDOT. ~~Minor Town maintained~~ arterials make up approximately 16.1% (or 32.248 lane miles) of the ~~Town's~~ total street mileage. Speed limits on these roads range from 25 to 65 miles per hour in Town. Main Street and Prices Fork Road are Blacksburg's arterial streets. No primary north-south alternative to Main Street exists, nor is there currently an east-west alternative to Prices Fork Road.

## Transportation Project Priorities Table Amendment

### **Transportation Projects – Funding in Place/In Progress**

1. **Clay Street Sidewalk** from Church Street to Jefferson Street to include sidewalk and roadway improvements. *\$1.3 million*
2. **Draper Road Improvements** from College Avenue to Miller Street to include streetscape improvements. Schematic Design is underway. *\$5 million*
3. **Harding Avenue Improvements** between Progress Street and the corporate limits to focus on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as well as storm drainage. *\$3 million*
4. **Prices Fork Road/Toms Creek Road/Stanger Street Intersection Improvements** to include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Construction currently underway.
5. **Research Center Drive Improvements** from S. Knollwood to VT Campus line. *\$1.4 million*
6. **South Main Street Improvements** from Roanoke Street to Washington Street streetscape improvements to include widened brick sidewalks, streetlights, signals and streetscape to match Downtown. *\$780,000*

### **High Priority Projects**

7. **Cross County Connector Extension** - Connecting with Southgate Interchange as 4-lane boulevard with median, bicycle routes/trails, sidewalks and grade-separated interchanges with the Huckleberry Trail crossings; extending to Prices Fork Road to improve access to Hethwood, Merrimac, and Warm Hearth areas. Detailed Routing Study is needed as the first step towards this regional project with Montgomery County. *\$114 million*
8. **Eheart Street Improvements** from Main Street to the Huckleberry trail to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *Interim \$30,000; Final \$750,000*
9. **Meadowbrook Drive Trail** from Heritage Park parking area to Glade Road. *\$1.9 million*
10. **North Main Street Road Diet** from Progress Street to Red Maple Drive to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *Paint only \$80,000; Full rebuild \$25 million*
11. **North Main Street Trail** from Vinyard Avenue to U.S. 460/Bishop Road connection. Final phase. *\$750,000*
12. **North Main Street/US Route 460 Grade-Separated Interchange** – Specific project location to be determined. *\$45 million*
13. **Prices Fork Road Pedestrian Improvements** from Turner Street to N. Main Street. *\$2 million*
14. **Prices Fork Road/US Route 460 Bypass Interchange Modification** to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$20 million*

### **Medium Priority Projects**

15. **\*16 Squares Infill Sidewalk** - Specific projects to be determined. No cost estimate.
16. **Ellett Road Improvements** from South Main to Town limits with safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$5.9 million*
17. **Glade Road Improvements** from Boxwood Drive to Meadowbrook Drive to include safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$1.7 million*
18. **\*Industrial Park Trail** – Design and construction of an interconnected trail system for the Blacksburg Industrial Park to accommodate recreational and commuter bicycle and pedestrian travel. *\$609,000*
19. **Meadowbrook Drive Improvements** from Toms Creek Road to Glade Road to include safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$3.9 million*

20. **Mount Tabor Road Improvements** from Main Street to the Town limits to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$4 million*

21. **Mount Tabor Realignment to Mountain Breeze Road, to align across North Main Street with Givens Lane. May include intersection improvements. \$4 million**

~~21-22.~~ **Old Glade Road Realignment** from Glade Road to Prices Fork Road to align with proposed Western Perimeter Road spur and coordinated with Virginia Tech development. *\$1.4 million*

~~22-23.~~ **Park Drive Sidewalk** from Palmer Drive to Grissom Lane. *\$500,000*

~~23-24.~~ **Patrick Henry Drive Road Diet** from N. Main Street to Toms Creek Road to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *Paint only \$100,000; Full rebuild \$11.3 million*

~~24-25.~~ **\*Prices Fork Road Safety and Mobility Study** – Specific projects to be determined. No cost estimate.

~~25-26.~~ **Progress Street Extension** through Northside Park from Givens Lane to North Main Street as collector road with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$4 million*

~~26-27.~~ **Progress Street Improvements** from Jackson Street to N. Main Street to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and streetscape improvements. Further study needed prior to providing cost estimate.

~~27-28.~~ **South Main Street Improvements** from ~~Miller Street~~~~Heart Street~~ to Country Club Drive to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and streetscape improvements. May include intersection improvements, for example at Country Club Drive. Further study needed prior to providing cost estimate.

~~28-29.~~ **South Main Street/US Route 460 Business Improvements** from Industrial Park Road to Peppers Ferry Road to include transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. Regional project with Montgomery County and the Town of Christiansburg. *\$6.5 million*

~~29-30.~~ **Toms Creek Road Improvements** from Route 460 to Meadowbrook Drive to include safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$2.1 million*

~~30-31.~~ **University City Boulevard Improvements** from Prices Fork Road to Broce Drive to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Further study needed prior to providing cost estimate.

### Low Priority Projects

~~31-32.~~ **Commerce Street Extension** from the Industrial Park to Jennelle Road. *\$1.6 million*

~~32-33.~~ **Downtown Pedestrian Improvements** from Wilson Avenue to N. Main Street/College Avenue intersection to include a car-free pedestrian area. Further study needed prior to providing cost estimate.

~~33-34.~~ **Heather Drive/Hethwood Drive Extensions** from Prices Fork Road to Glade Road. Collector roads with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. *\$6.5 million*

~~34-35.~~ **Huckleberry Trail Bridge** across Prices Fork Road at Sheffield Drive to provide grade-separated trail crossing. *\$4.4 million*

~~35-36.~~ **Huckleberry Trail Extension** from the existing trail at Hightop Road to the park at South Point. *\$882,000*

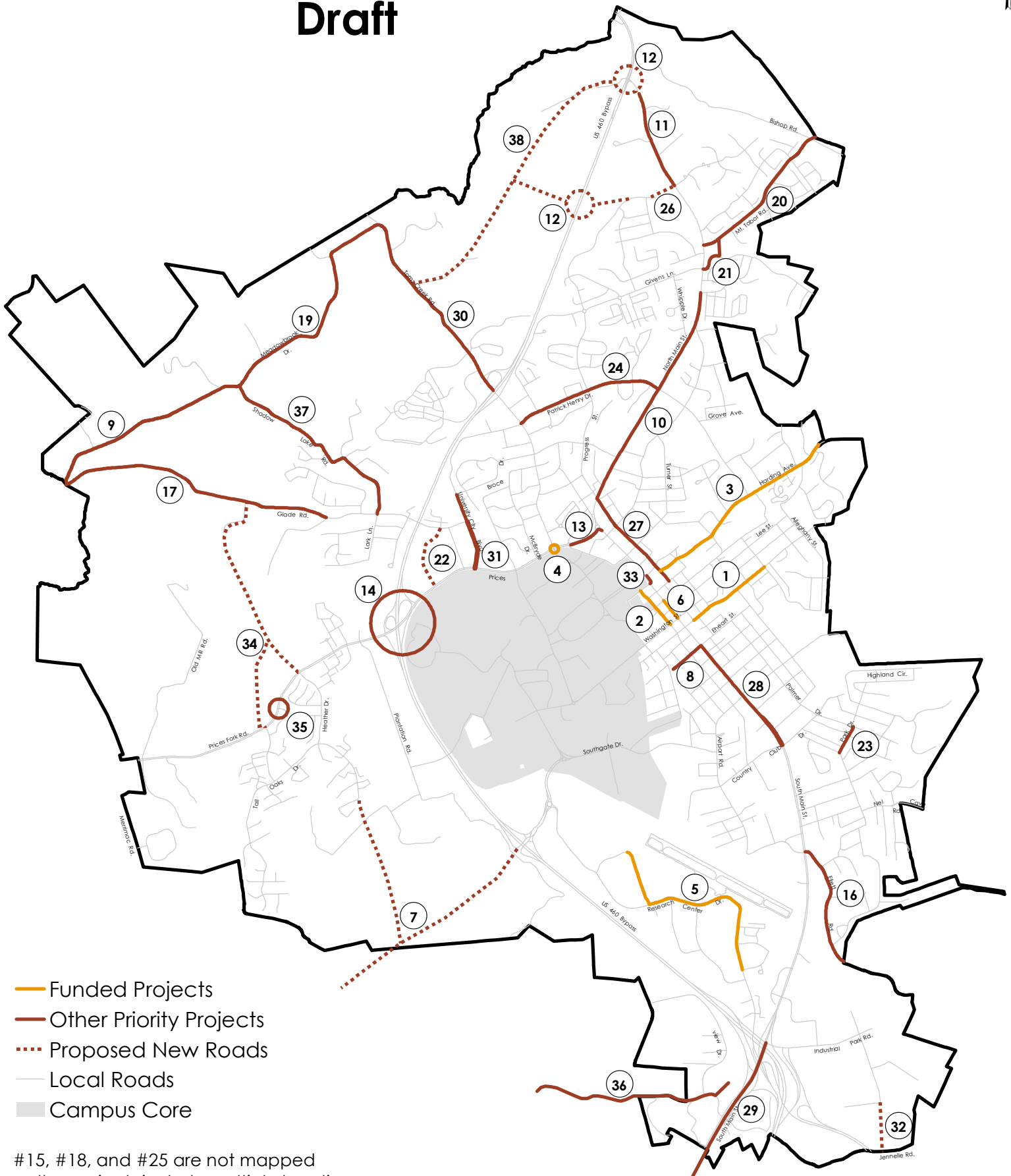
~~36-37.~~ **Shadow Lake Road Improvements** from Glade Road to Meadowbrook Drive to include safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and realignment from Basil Lane to Lakewood Street. *\$2.2 million*

**37.38. Toms Creek Road/Farmingdale Lane Connector** – new road network to connect area between Toms Creek Road and Farmingdale Lane. Further study needed for routing and cost estimation.

***Projects with an asterisk (\*) are not shown on the accompanying map.  
All road projects should include bicycle lanes, trails, sidewalks and other amenities as called for in the Comprehensive Plan and Town Zoning Ordinance.***

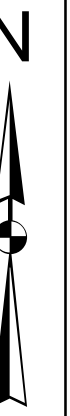
# Transportation Project Priorities

## Draft

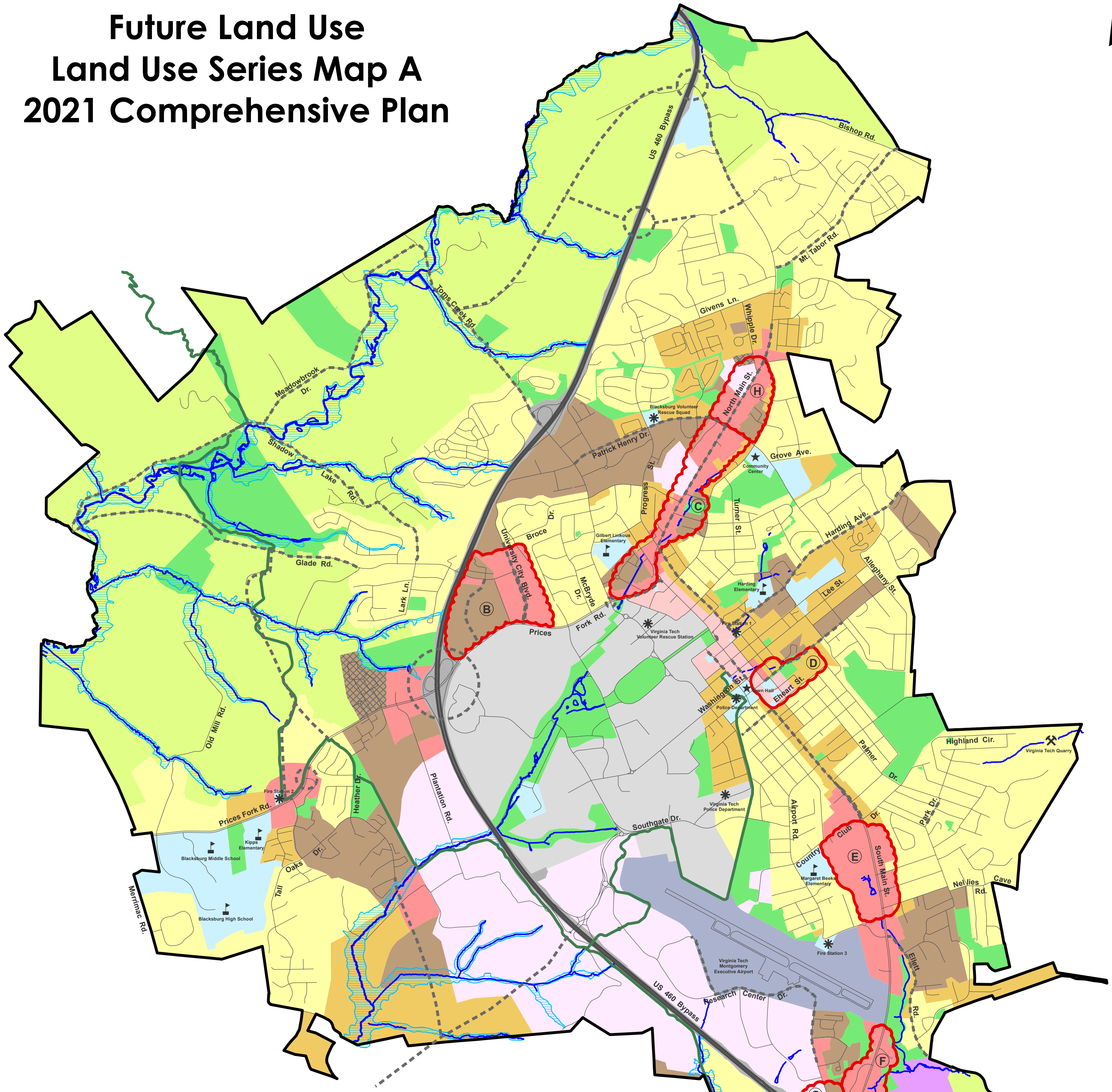


- Funded Projects
- Other Priority Projects
- ⋯ Proposed New Roads
- Local Roads
- Campus Core

#15, #18, and #25 are not mapped as the projects include multiple locations or the location is not known.



# Draft Amendment Future Land Use Land Use Series Map A 2021 Comprehensive Plan



	Very Low Density Residential		Creek Valley Overlay
	Low Density Residential		Town Limits
	Medium Density Residential		Proposed Transportation Projects (See Project Priorities table and map in the Transportation Chapter)
	Limited High Density Residential Development		Huckleberry Trail
	High Density Residential		Approximate Location of Natural Water
	Park Land / Open Space / Resource Protection		Mixed Use Areas
	Civic		Public Schools
	Commercial		Emergency Services
	Downtown Commercial		Public Buildings
	Research / Development		Hospital
	Industrial		Quarry
	University		
	Airport		
	US 460 Corridor		

## Paths to the Future Text Amendment

### **MAP D: PATHS TO THE FUTURE**

Map D: Paths to the Future Map illustrates connectivity in the Town of Blacksburg for non-motorized modes of transportation. The map shows on-street and off-street infrastructure that create a more walkable and bikeable community.

The Paths to the Future Map depicts the link between transportation and land use. Land use decisions impact transportation networks and, at the same time, transportation systems can influence nearby land use patterns. It is very important that these elements are coordinated to create an environment where people are able to choose any mode of travel to access goods, services, and amenities.

The map illustrates desired future connectivity for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. While most proposed infrastructure is shown in specific locations, some areas of Town show proposed infrastructure such as trails in a more general location to represent broad connectivity through a less developed area. Specific locations should be identified for these areas as part of planning studies, Town construction projects, and the development review process.

The Paths to the Future Map is used during the development process to achieve desired connectivity. Development projects are evaluated with respect to the map by staff during administrative review and by staff, the Corridor Committee, Planning Commission, and Town Council during the public hearing process. [The Paths to the Future Map may be updated by staff as needed.](#) More information about this map can be found in the [Transportation](#) chapter.

## Tiny Homes Text Amendment

### **Tiny Homes**

Tiny houses are typically defined as any single-family dwelling with 400 square feet or less of floor area. According to the APA's QuickNotes Making Space for Tiny Houses, while many localities have regulations that present obstacles for tiny homes, advocates note the relative benefits related to housing affordability and environmental sustainability when compared with standard housing sizes. Within the Town, tiny homes that are not built upon a permanent foundation are categorized and regulated as recreational vehicles (RVs), which cannot be used as a residence ~~within Town~~. Currently, to use a tiny home as a residence in Town requires placement on a permanent foundation with access to utilities.



**Long Range Planning Committee  
Summary Notes  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022**

**I. Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:00 pm in the Blacksburg Motor Company conference room.

***Long Range Members Present***

Joel Herbein  
Janine Kniola  
Paul Lancaster  
Mike Lawless  
Latanya Walker

***Staff Present***

Maeve Gould  
Anne McClung

Absent: Mel Jones and Liam Watson

**II. Introduction & General Information about the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process**

**III. Discussion of 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

**A. Preferred High Density Student Housing Locations Text & Map**

Maeve Gould provided background about this portion of the amendment, and an overview of what the proposed text and map entail. The Committee asked questions about and discussed Virginia Tech enrollment numbers as well as the number of student housing bedrooms that are constructed vs. approved, and in Town vs. on campus. The Committee also discussed student housing areas that are within the proposed high density student housing designation, and outside of it. The Committee suggested adding accessibility as an important part of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the proposed text. The Committee also recommended clarifying the redevelopment criteria related to building designs that are context sensitive and specific to Blacksburg. The Historic District is identified on the map, as well as public buildings, and it was suggested that the St. Luke and Odd Fellows Hall be added to the map because it is located adjacent to the designated student housing areas.

**B. Housekeeping Items**

**1. Town Street Classifications Text and Map**

The Committee suggested some slight wording changes for the street classifications text to indicate that collectors historically may have provided access to individual properties, but it is not desired for future collectors.

**2. Transportation Projects Table and Map**

For the project description for number 28 in the table, the Committee recommended adding a sentence that this may include intersection improvements, for example at Country Club Drive.

3. Future Land Use Map

The Committee did not have any recommended changes to this housekeeping item.

4. Other Small Housekeeping Items

Maeve Gould went over two additional housekeeping items. The first was adding a sentence to the Paths to the Future text in the Land Use Chapter. The sentence notes that staff may update this map administratively as needed. The Committee noted that the use of both “staff” and “administratively” is redundant, and that “administratively” should be removed. The other small housekeeping item was a typo in the Tiny Homes section of the Housing Chapter. The Committee did not have any comments about this item.

**IV. Adjourn: 5:25 pm.**

**Public Information & Input Meeting**  
**2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

**October 6, 2022**

**6:00 pm – 7:45 pm**

Maeve Gould, Comprehensive Planner with the Town of Blacksburg, provided an overview of the proposed amendments. Gould provided background information on the high density student housing text and map amendment. Gould explained what high density student housing is, noted that The Hub and The Union are examples of this type of housing, and noted that the amendment does not impact zoning. Gould also explained each of the housekeeping items. Gould noted that the Long Range Planning Committee has reviewed the proposed language and provided feedback, and provided the remainder of the schedule for the amendment process. Anne McClung, Director of the Planning & Building Department, was also in attendance.

- An attendee asked if the preferred locations for high density student housing map includes graduate students or families, like in part of Foxridge.
- A member of the public asked if there is a specific density in mind for high density student housing. They also asked about student housing areas within the proposed high density student housing designation, and those outside of it.
- An attendee asked for clarification about the redevelopment criteria pertaining to building designs specific to Blacksburg. They asked whether there were any rules or restrictions about building architecture and exterior aesthetics currently.
- A community member asked for clarification about the strong property management redevelopment criteria.
- An attendee asked if the Town has residential occupancy guidelines.
- A member of the public asked if the information in the proposed high density student housing text is required, or guidance. They commented that most high density student housing is implemented by Planned Residential rezonings, and projects get approved even when they are not in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- An attendee noted that the proposed high density student housing map and text gives guidance to developers about Planning Commission and Town Council redevelopment expectations.
- A community member asked what incentives are there for developers to follow the proposed redevelopment criteria. They noted that for example, using sustainable building practices and many of the other criteria can be expensive. They commented that anything that shows that developments have met these guidelines, such as a sticker on the door or certification of some kind, helps with motivation.
- An attendee asked how staff, Planning Commission and Town Council know during the rezoning process that a proposal is going to be student housing.

- A member of the public asked if additional mixed use with student housing areas will be added at a later point. They noted they live in the Whipple Drive area and are concerned about more student housing areas being added in the future.
- An attendee asked for clarification about where on campus high density student housing is appropriate. They commented that text should be added to note that on campus student housing should only be built in the core campus area, near academic buildings and other campus hubs.
- A community member commented that the Virginia Tech campus should not be shown on the high density student housing map at all, as the Town does not have jurisdiction over the campus and Virginia Tech has its own master plan. Another community member suggested that hatching be added to the campus on the map to differentiate this area.
- An attendee commented that Virginia Tech increased its enrollment by 5,000 students in 2017 and then expected developers to build more housing in Town rather than on campus. Another attendee noted that Virginia Tech did not consult the Town when the decision to expand enrollment was made. Another attendee noted that Virginia Tech should coordinate with the Town to avoid this happening again in the future.
- A member of the public commented that a specific density is needed for guidance.
- An attendee suggested adding a redevelopment criteria about a long term strategy for traffic safety. They noted concern about the area north of Giles Road and the Mt. Tabor area for pedestrian safety, and a need for a bigger picture traffic safety study outside of those done for rezonings.
- A community member asked for more clarification about the mixed use with student housing designation.
- An attendee asked for clarification about how this amendment supports the development of other types of housing that are needed. They also asked how this text and map is different than other guidance we already have in the Comprehensive Plan. They also asked if lower density student housing can still be proposed.
- Regarding the 3,500 bedrooms that Town Council approved and the idea that the demand for student housing has been met, a community member asked if this means that no new proposals for high density student housing in these areas will be approved in the near future. They asked how the concept that the demand for student housing has been met will be part of the conversation for rezonings for student housing that file in the months right after this amendment is approved, if it is approved. They asked if the conversation will be that these areas are being designated for high density student housing, but at the same time Town Council has already approved all the student housing that is needed.
- A member of the public noted that there are challenges for young professionals to afford housing in Town. They noted that young professionals do not always qualify for affordable housing, but there is still a need for lower cost housing for young professionals.
- Regarding the housekeeping item (typo) for the tiny homes section in the Housing chapter, an attendee asked where the 400 square foot limit comes from.

- An attendee asked how tiny homes are different than manufactured homes.

Thursday, October 6, 2022 6:00 PM

Name	Address	Email
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**From:** [Javad Torabinejad](#)  
**To:** [Anne McClung](#)  
**Cc:** [Maeve Gould](#); [Marc Verniel](#); [Town Council](#)  
**Subject:** Virginia Tech enrollment up by over 800  
**Date:** Sunday, October 9, 2022 1:22:26 PM

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Dear Ms. McClung,

Hello; I hope you are doing well. It was great attending the recent high density student housing redevelopment public input meeting. There, I mentioned my concerns and would not repeat them here. I'm sure by now, you have seen the following article ([https://roanoke.com/news/local/education/virginia-tech-enrollment-up-by-over-800/article\\_a6230e80-44d3-11ed-8104-f70d75a4641f.html](https://roanoke.com/news/local/education/virginia-tech-enrollment-up-by-over-800/article_a6230e80-44d3-11ed-8104-f70d75a4641f.html)) and perhaps knew about it from other sources. As predicted and rumored the student population increases will continue even further. It will have both positive and negative consequences for the Blacksburg community.

I'm all for higher density student housing closer to the campus and even much more for the university itself to provide higher student housing opportunities on campus (including married student housing and those for non-student staff). Unfortunately, while the university can easily do that, it seems that they are not willing to do their share and that we do not have any say in the university business (in spite of certain claims). See you on Wednesday.

Regards,

Javad