TOWN OF TAZEWELL, VIRGINIA
2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

August 2026

GEM CITY GROWTH STRATEGIES Erie, Pennsylvania

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE



Credit: Susan Reeves

INTRODUCTION

Foreword

"...a way of life where day-before-yesterday and day-after-tomorrow exist in odd and fascinating harmony."

— Author Wilma Dykeman describing Appalachia

This document is a plan—a framework within which the residents and leaders of the Town of Tazewell can work together to guide the community's development. It takes a long-range view, looking from 2026 into 2031 and beyond, while always remaining grounded in the conditions Tazewell faces today. Its purpose is to identify the issues the community will confront in the years ahead and the opportunities it can act on for the common good, and to translate that understanding into goals and practical measures the Town can actually use.

This 2026 plan is an update of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2021. Much of that document was built on a framework and data baseline that predated the COVID-19 pandemic—and its planning horizon and natural life have now been reached.

Certainly, a great deal has changed in the intervening years—in the local and regional economy, in the community's demographic profile, in technology and connectivity, and in what Tazewell has learned about its own capacity and direction. Some elements of the prior plan remain sound and, with refinement, are carried forward—others required substantial rethinking to reflect the Town as it exists in 2026. This update was shaped throughout by the Town's Comprehensive Planning Committee, Town Manager and administrative staff. Their collective work on the community's most pressing questions forms its foundation.

A plan is a guide, not a guarantee. Because it rests on assumptions about the future—about population, housing, the economy, and the pace of change—some of what it anticipates may not come to fruition, and some recommended actions may be reshaped by circumstances no plan can foresee. For that reason, decisions about implementation should be made by the Town's leaders and residents in a timely and orderly manner, and the plan itself should be regularly revisited as conditions evolve.

Throughout, the intent is to preserve what makes Tazewell distinct—its historic character, its scenic vistas along the US 19/460 corridor, the Clinch River and the natural features that surround the Town, and the sense of place that defines life in this corner of Southwest Virginia.

The Town of Tazewell faces challenges that this plan does not minimize. The Town's housing stock is aging, and too much of it falls short of the condition and variety that current residents deserve and prospective residents expect. Poverty rates remain elevated above state and national benchmarks. Labor force participation lags, leaving productive capacity on the sidelines at precisely the moment the regional economy needs it. These are not abstractions—they are measurable conditions that constrain household prosperity and community growth, and the first obligation of this plan is to acknowledge and arrest them.

But Tazewell confronts these serious challenges from a position that most rural American communities would envy. The indicators above are common across small-town Appalachia; what is uncommon is the set of assets Tazewell brings to bear against them. The Town's downtown and Main Street district remain vibrant and occupied—anchored by locally owned businesses, civic institutions, and a walkable historic fabric that many peer communities lost decades ago and cannot recreate. Tazewell's commercial core is not a revitalization project; it is a functioning economic and civic engine.

The community sustains a genuine tourism economy. The Back of the Dragon, the Historic Crab Orchard Museum, and Pioneer Park, and a growing network of outdoor recreation destinations draw visitors from well beyond the region—spending that supports downtown merchants and hospitality businesses today and provides the foundation for trail-based and experience-based development tomorrow.

Tazewell's healthcare delivery system is notably robust for a town of its size. Where much of rural America contends with hospital closures and provider deserts, local hospital and clinical services anchor both community health and a significant employment base—and reduce the out-migration pressure that healthcare gaps impose on families and retirees. Broadband coverage in and around Tazewell is strong and improving—a decisive advantage at a moment when connectivity increasingly determines where rural growth occurs, and a platform for remote work, home-based enterprise, and technology-enabled entrepreneurship that most comparable communities cannot yet offer.

Finally—and most importantly for what follows—Tazewell possesses the institutional capacity to execute. The Town is served by a strong Local Development District in the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, a capable and engaged Town Manager and support staff, and a Town Council and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee that have, together, have demonstrated sustained dedication to this effort. Many citizen 'sparkplugs' who now sit in important seats are ex pats with life experiences in larger markets—bringing best practices, new ideas, and unbridled energy to the community.

Certainly, plans do not implement themselves—they succeed or fail on the strength of the people and institutions behind them, and Tazewell has both.

This is the essential logic of the Comprehensive Plan. Tazewell's challenges are real, but its strengths are the means by which they will be addressed. The plan proceeds along a deliberate trajectory: **stabilize** the conditions that constrain the community—housing stock, poverty, labor participation—while protecting the assets that must not be allowed to erode; **build** new capacity on that secured foundation, through connectivity, recreation infrastructure, and downtown investment; and **expand** the Town's economy and population by converting those investments into sustained growth. Every goal, initiative, and priority in the chapters that follow finds its place along this trajectory. The strengths described here are what make it achievable.

Legislative Authority

The authority and obligation to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan are established by the Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 3 (§§ 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2232). Under § 15.2-2223, the local planning commission is charged with preparing and recommending a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction, and the governing body—here, the Tazewell Town Council—is charged with adopting it.

The statute directs that the plan be made with the purpose of guiding a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the Town that, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promotes the health, safety, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of its inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Code further specifies content the plan must address, content it may include, and the process by which it is adopted. Among the requirements and provisions most relevant to Tazewell:

- **Transportation plan (§ 15.2-2223 B).** The plan must include a transportation element designating the system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations, addressing as appropriate roadways, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and related facilities, and differentiating among classes of roads. This element must be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Transportation and submitted to VDOT for review prior to adoption.
- **Affordable housing (§ 15.2-2223 D).** The plan must designate areas and measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of housing sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all income levels, considered in the context of the surrounding planning district.

- **Manufactured housing (§ 15.2-2223.5).** Because this plan is being amended after July 1, 2021, it must incorporate strategies promoting manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing—a provision of particular regional relevance, given the prevalence of manufactured housing in Tazewell County surrounding the Town.
- **Broadband (§ 15.2-2223 E).** The plan must consider strategies to provide broadband infrastructure sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses—the statutory basis for this plan's expanded treatment of connectivity.
- **Permitted elements (§ 15.2-2223 C) and resilience (§ 15.2-2223 F).** The plan may designate areas for residential, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreational, and public uses; community service facilities; historic areas; groundwater and surface-water measures; and a capital improvements program, among others. It is also encouraged to consider strategies to address community resilience.

In preparing the plan, § 15.2-2224 directs the planning commission to base its work on careful surveys and studies of existing conditions and trends—land use, natural and historic resources, population and employment, public facilities, transportation, broadband, housing need, and related factors—and to recommend methods of implementation accompanied by a current map of the planning area. The background analysis, asset inventory, and current-conditions assessments contained in this plan are responsive to that direction.

Adoption follows the process set out in §§ 15.2-2225 and 15.2-2226. The Planning Commission must post the draft plan, provide public notice in accordance with § 15.2-2204, and hold a public hearing, after which it may recommend the plan to Town Council by resolution. The Town Council must likewise post the certified plan, provide notice, and hold its own public hearing before acting to adopt, amend and adopt, or disapprove the plan, generally acting within ninety days of the Commission's recommendation. The two bodies may, for efficiency, hold a joint public hearing.

A living document. Section 15.2-2230 of the Code directs that the comprehensive plan be reviewed by the planning commission at least once every five years to determine whether amendment is advisable. This requirement reflects the principle underlying the entire plan: that it is a living instrument meant to be revisited and refreshed as the community changes, not a fixed document to be completed and set aside. This 2026 update is itself the product of that review cycle.

Note on statutory references. Citations in this section reflect the Code of Virginia as in effect in 2026. The comprehensive-plan statutes have been amended repeatedly in recent years.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

Before turning to data, goals, and recommendations, it is worth pausing on a basic question—***What is a comprehensive plan, and why does it matter for a community like Tazewell?*** That answer shapes how this document should be read and used. A comprehensive plan is not a budget, not a regulation, and not a list of promises. It is the Town's agreed-upon statement of where it wants to go and how it intends to get there—a long-range policy guide that gives coherence and direction to the many individual decisions the Town makes year after year.

What a Comprehensive Plan Is—and Is Not

A comprehensive plan is, first and foremost, a guide for decision-making. It looks out over a long horizon—here, from 2026 through 2031—and sets out the community's vision for land use, housing, the economy, transportation, public facilities, and quality of life. It is general in nature, describing the approximate character and direction of development rather than dictating the fate of any single parcel. And it is advisory...expressing what the community intends, and it provides the reasoned basis on which more specific tools are built.

The distinction between the plan and the tools that implement it is the single most important thing for residents and officials to understand.

> **The plan guides; zoning governs.** A comprehensive plan describes what the community wants to become. The zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital budget are the regulatory and financial tools that carry it out. When the Planning Commission and Town Council weigh a rezoning request, a new ordinance, or a public investment, the comprehensive plan is the reference point against which those decisions are measured for consistency.
>
> Under Virginia law, certain public facilities and improvements must even be reviewed for whether they are “substantially in accord” with the adopted plan. The plan, in other words, does not regulate property directly—but it is the foundation on which the Town's regulations and investments rest.

Why This Plan Matters for Tazewell

Every community benefits from a clear sense of direction, but for Tazewell the case is particularly pointed. As the background analysis documents, the Town faces real headwinds—a static and aging local population, older housing stock with little new construction, and the limited resource capacity that goes hand-in-hand with being a small town. These conditions are stated plainly throughout this plan, not as cause for discouragement, but because an honest accounting of them is the only sound starting point for a strategy that will actually work.

That strategy begins by stabilizing—stopping the losses before pursuing the gains. A town cannot draw new residents into neighborhoods it is allowing to deteriorate, cannot build a visitor economy on a downtown it is letting empty, and cannot reach for anything larger while its tax base and core institutions erode beneath it. The first task is to secure the foundation—to retain the residents, employers, housing units, and Main Street occupancy the Town already has, and to protect the fiscal and organizational capacity that funds everything else. This is the foundation on which all later progress rests.

But stabilization is the beginning of the trajectory, not its end. Tazewell holds genuine assets—its enduring role as a county seat and regional service center, its historic Main Street fabric, its scenic setting at the headwaters of the Clinch, and its access to multiple regional development frameworks and the funding that flows through them. Much of the work that secures the foundation is also the work that builds on it: a rehabilitated block both arrests blight and creates the storefront a new business will fill—a restored building both stops a loss and becomes a destination. As the floor steadies, the Town can turn from holding ground to gaining it—converting visitor traffic into investment, amenity into in-migration, and heritage into identity. The aim, in time, is not merely to survive as a smaller version of what it was, but for Tazewell to become fully the place its history and setting furnish it to be.

A comprehensive plan is the instrument that holds a community to that trajectory. It lets a small town with real constraints make deliberate use of real assets—to set priorities, to speak with one voice to funders and partners in Richmond and Washington, and to act intentionally rather than be acted upon.

The plan is meant to serve as Tazewell's community compass; not a document to be adopted and shelved, but a practical guide that keeps the Town oriented—stabilizing first, building next, and moving steadily toward the future it chooses for itself.

What This Plan Contains

A comprehensive plan follows a simple underlying logic: understand the present, define the desired future, and chart the path between them. This plan is organized to follow that progression, and a reader can approach it in three layers:

- **Where the Town stands today.** The background analysis—demographics, housing, the economy, natural features, community facilities, and current conditions in the downtown and commercial corridors—establishes a clear, data-grounded picture of Tazewell as it actually exists in 2026.
- **Where the Town wants to go.** The goals and objectives translate that understanding, together with community and stakeholder input, into a clear statement of the community's priorities across each major area of town life.
- **How the Town will get there.** The future land use and transportation plans, together with the implementation matrix, convert direction into action—assigning realistic timeframes, responsible parties, and funding strategies to the measures the Town intends to pursue.



Read together, this arc connects everyday decisions to long-range intent. That connection—from a single zoning question or budget line all the way up to the community's vision for itself—is what makes a comprehensive plan worth the effort of preparing, and worth the discipline of using once it is adopted.

The Relationship to Other Recent Plans and Studies

This Plan does not stand alone. In the years preceding this update, the Town and its partners commissioned a series of focused planning efforts—most notably the *North Tazewell Revitalization Plan* (Hill Studio with Arnett Muldrow & Associates, April 2026), prepared with support from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, and the *Downtown Inventory and Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy* (Place + Main Advisors, February 2026).

These initiatives and related documents represent substantial public investment in project-level planning, and they contain design concepts, parcel-level analysis, and community engagement findings that this Plan draws upon and does not repeat. They are incorporated into this Plan by reference and should be read as companion documents to it. Therefore, the relationship between these documents and this Plan is deliberate. The companion plans identify and illustrate individual projects—streetscape improvements, façade programs, catalyst sites, and gateway investments—at a level of design detail appropriate to grant applications and site-specific implementation.

Ultimately, this Comprehensive Plan performs a different and complementary function—it establishes the Town-wide strategic framework within which those projects are evaluated, prioritized, and sequenced. Projects identified in companion documents are carried forward into this Plan's Implementation Framework as sequenced by this Plan, consistent with its stabilize-first trajectory and the Town's fiscal and administrative capacity. Where a companion document and this Plan differ on timing, priority, or scope, this Plan governs. This relationship ensures that individual investments—however well-conceived in isolation—advance in an order that builds durable, synergistic momentum rather than competing for the Town's limited resources.

COMPANION PROJECT PLANS

The following synopses summarize the recent plans and studies most relevant to the 2026 Comprehensive Plan and its priority initiatives. Tier One covers the project-level companion plans that the Comprehensive Plan incorporates by reference; Tier Two covers the broader regional and prior plans that form its planning context.

1. North Tazewell Business District Revitalization Plan

Prepared by: Hill Studio, with Arnett Muldrow & Associates
Date: April 2026
Sponsors / support: Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD); Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission; Town of Tazewell

The North Tazewell plan grew out of a two-day design workshop held December 17–18, 2024 and was finalized in April 2026. It targets the North Tazewell business district—a former industrial area near the historic train station and the former bowling alley, along the Clinch River—with the stated aim of fostering sustainable growth in a district that has lost its original economic base. Its central tools are a facade improvement grant program for participating business and property owners, adaptive reuse of vacant warehouses and the historic train depot, and riverfront placemaking. An early, visible result is the conversion of a vacant lot into the Clinch River Pavilion and River Walk, which now hosts the Tazewell Farmer's Market and improves public access to the river.

The effort has been funded through a DHCD planning grant, with a DHCD implementation grant proposed to underwrite the facade program; two public hearings were held in late May and June 2026 in support of that application. Within the Comprehensive Plan, this document is incorporated by reference and drives the Goal 1 action to facilitate adaptive reuse of vacant North Tazewell warehouses and the historic train depot, and the Goal 7 action to redevelop underutilized North Tazewell industrial sites.

2. Downtown Inventory & Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy (the "Main Street" plan)

Prepared by: Place + Main Advisors, LLC
Date: February 2026 (presented February 26, 2026)
Sponsor / partners: Town of Tazewell with Tazewell Today, Inc. (Virginia Main Street organization); DHCD

This strategy is the downtown counterpart to the North Tazewell plan and is what local coverage referred to as Tazewell's Main Street revitalization plan. Place + Main Advisors built it on three inputs: community engagement through a Community Walking Visioning Tour, in which residents, business owners, and local leaders walked Main Street together and discussed vacant spaces, prospective businesses, and downtown's future; market research; and a building-by-building real-estate and property analysis. The work concentrates on the downtown/Main Street core—its vacant and underused storefronts and upper-story space—and on identifying catalyst sites and redevelopment opportunities, including strategies to convert Back-of-the-Dragon and Welcome Center visitor traffic into Main Street spending.

The Comprehensive Plan incorporates the strategy by reference and, in its Goal 1 implementation matrix, directs the Town to align its actions with the Place + Main Downtown Redevelopment Strategy (February 2026) and advance its priority sites. The Goal 3 urban-design actions—downtown lighting, brick sidewalks, and a downtown mini-park—are to be coordinated with it.

3. Ramey Lot / Tazewell Gateway Park Redevelopment Concept

Prepared by: With Architecture (Kevin Jones)
Status: Conceptual design—Round 2 presented July 6, 2026; Scheme C preferred
Convened by: Joint meeting of Town Council and the Industrial & Economic Development Authority (I/EDA)

The Ramey Lot is a vacant former commercial parcel that the Town is repositioning as a gateway park—identified in the Comprehensive Plan's "Plan at a Glance" as one of four Priority Initiatives under the name Tazewell Gateway Park (Ramey Lot). At a joint Town Council and I/EDA meeting on July 6, 2026, architect Kevin Jones presented a second round of concepts reflecting prior feedback, in two schemes; Scheme C emerged as the preferred option. Scheme C envisions soccer fields, T-ball, and pickleball courts, a walking path, and flexible space usable for community events.

The identified next steps are to secure grant funding for site abatement, complete engineering assessments, prepare construction documents, and proceed to phased construction. Within the Comprehensive Plan the project supports the Goal 3 gateway-and-wayfinding program and the Goal 6 community-facilities and recreation objectives.

Tier Two · Related Regional & Prior Plans and Studies

These documents are cited or relied upon by the Comprehensive Plan and provide its planning context. They are summarized more briefly; each can be expanded if you want a full standalone synopsis.

4. Town of Tazewell 2021 Comprehensive Plan

The plan adopted in 2021, built largely on a pre-COVID framework and data baseline. The 2026 plan is its scheduled update, carrying forward the elements that remain sound and rethinking those the intervening years overtook.

5. Town of Tazewell 2020 Transportation Plan & 2021 Initiatives Audit

The Town's standing transportation plan and a 2021 audit of Town initiatives. The Comprehensive Plan's Goal 5 directs the Town to coordinate priority Transportation System Management improvements under the 2020 Transportation Plan and the VDOT Six-Year Plan, and to advance the open intersection items the 2021 audit flagged—the Fairground Road/Riverside Drive intersection and the Tazewell Avenue/Riverside Drive turning radius.

6. VDOT Bristol District Intersection Safety Study (Cumberland Plateau PDC)

A systematic VDOT study identifying the region's most dangerous intersections—those with a documented record of three or more fatal or injury crashes over a five-year period—and producing individualized short-, mid-, and long-term safety recommendations where no programmed project already exists. Of 50 intersections studied district-wide, 19 fall within the Cumberland Plateau Planning District, 11 in Tazewell County, and three in the Town of Tazewell: VA 16 at Route 631 (Baptist Valley Road); VA 16/VA 61 at Riverside Drive and Tazewell Avenue; and US 19 at East Fincastle Turnpike and Ben Bolt Avenue.

7. VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program (FY27)—Route 16 Clinch River Bridges

Virginia's rolling six-year capital program. For Tazewell, the FY27 program carries two State of Good Repair projects on Route 16 over the Clinch River—the Fairground Road bridge and a Route 16 bridge rehabilitation—totaling roughly $11.3 million, of which about 61% is already allocated, 20% is programmed for FY28–32, and 19% (about $2.1 million on the Fairground Road bridge) remains unfunded.

8. Cumberland Plateau Regional Telehealth Feasibility Study

The regional telehealth strategy conducted during 2025 with the report released in early 2026, now moving toward implementation. The Comprehensive Plan's Goal 6 directs the Town to pursue broadband infrastructure and leverage the Cumberland Plateau Telehealth Strategy, sustaining the County library as a public-access point. Most important is that health care availability (conventional and virtual) is a ‘have vs. have not’ determinant of quality of place in rural areas of the United States.

9. VCEDA-Funded Regional Housing Study

A regional housing study funded by the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority. The Comprehensive Plan's Goal 4 builds on it in directing the Town to recruit a well-located LIHTC senior and/or workforce rental development.

10. Tazewell County 2023 Comprehensive Plan

The county-level comprehensive plan for Tazewell County, providing surrounding-jurisdiction context that Virginia Code asks a town plan to be read against. Useful for aligning the Town's land-use, housing, and economic strategies with the County's.

11. Regional Trails Network / "Mountain Biking Trail System" Initiative

The Comprehensive Plan names a Mountain Biking Trail System as one of its four Priority Initiatives, set within the region's growing outdoor-recreation economy and the Spearhead Trails system operating in Tazewell County. Internally, the plan advances its own trail spine—a bikeway along the historic Fincastle/Cumberland Gap Turnpike, the Clinch corridor Class I spine from River Jack to Riverside Drive, and the Lincolnshire Park loop—as the highest-ranked greenway and trail segments under Goal 7.

> **Here, a note on data is warranted.** Companion documents prepared by outside consultants may rely on proprietary demographic and market estimates whose methodologies differ from the federal data sources used in this Plan. This Plan's demographic, housing, and economic figures are anchored to the 2020 Decennial Census and American Community Survey 2020-2024 five-year estimates, for the reason stated in the Demographics and Population section of this document. Where figures in a companion document differ from those presented here, the figures in the Plan will supersede for purposes of plan interpretation, review of proposals under Virginia Code § 15.2-2232, and future amendments of the document.

PART TWO

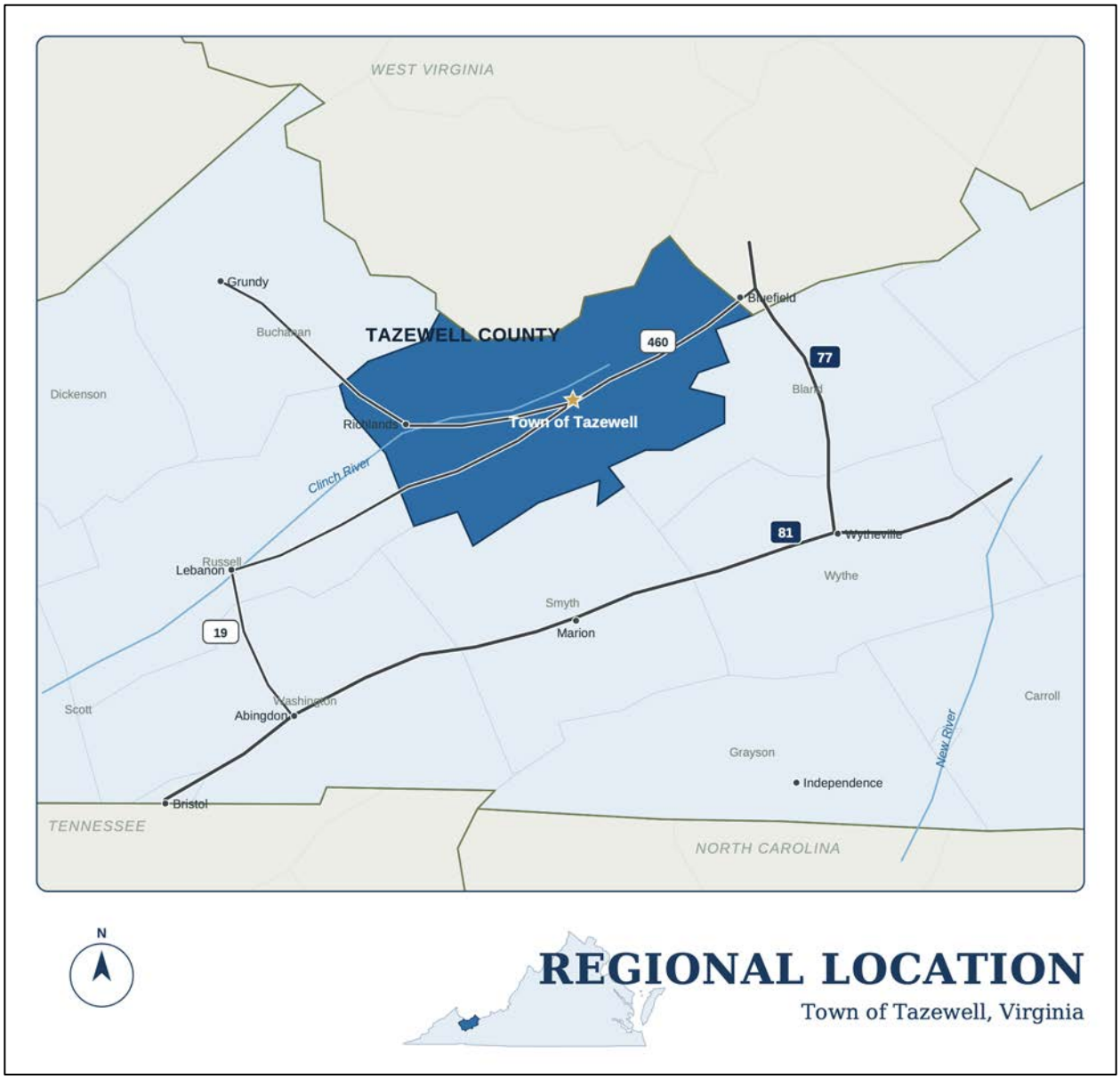
COMMUNITY CONTEXT



Credit: Susan Reeves

REGIONAL SETTING

The Town of Tazewell is the county seat of Tazewell County, situated in the central portion of the County in the mountainous southwestern corner of Virginia. It lies roughly 85 miles northeast of Bristol and 85 miles west of Roanoke—near the headwaters of the Clinch River in the heart of the Appalachian Plateau. Founded as Jeffersonville and renamed Tazewell in 1892, the Town developed during the late-nineteenth-century coal and iron boom that transformed the region, and it carries a distinctive heritage—among the smallest communities in the United States ever to have operated a streetcar system.



Map: Regional Location, Town of Tazewell.

Location & Connectivity

Tazewell sits at the convergence of the region's principal highway corridors. U.S. Routes 19 and 460 run together through the Town, linking it northeast toward Bluefield and the Interstate 77 interchange and southwest through Richlands toward Bristol and Interstate 81. State Route 16 runs north into West Virginia and south through Marion toward the I-81 corridor, while State Route 61 connects the Town eastward toward Rocky Gap and the I-77 corridor. These routes tie Tazewell into two interstate spines—I-77, which crosses the Appalachians to connect the Carolinas with the industrial Midwest, and I-81, the dominant freight and travel corridor of the Virginia mountains.

That highway access is the Town's strongest locational asset. At the same time, Tazewell's distance from the nearest interstate interchange and from metropolitan centers shapes its economic reality—the Town functions as a service, government, and retail hub for a dispersed rural population rather than as a node on a major through-corridor.

Understanding Tazewell's role within this regional geography—as a county seat anchoring a rural trade area—is essential context for the land use, economic, and transportation strategies developed later in this plan.

The Cumberland Plateau Planning District

Tazewell County is one of four counties—together with Buchanan, Dickenson, and Russell—that comprise the Cumberland Plateau Planning District (Planning District 2)—a region served by the aptly named Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC), headquartered in Lebanon.

Established in 1968 under the Virginia Area Development Act, the Commission is a federally recognized Local Development District (LDD) of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the regional body through which much state and federal community and economic development assistance flows. In that capacity, the CPPDC has functioned for more than five decades as the principal catalyst and instigator of regional progress, consistently operating ahead of the market and organizing partners and capital around infrastructure that individual localities could not have delivered alone.

The Commission's instigating role is most visible in broadband where it assembled federal and state funding through EDA and the Virginia Tobacco Commission and worked with private partners to build a fiber network now serving thousands of businesses, institutions, and governments. This was followed by a regional 4G wireless initiative completed in 2016 that made Southwest Virginia one of the few rural areas in the nation with that level of coverage—assets that have supported the location and expansion of information technology employers across the District.

The same convening model transformed basic public health infrastructure: working with counties, towns, and public service authorities, the Commission helped grow the share of households with safe, adequate public drinking water from roughly 20 percent in 1970 to well over 90 percent today.

The Commission's recent telehealth strategy extends this legacy, leveraging the region's broadband backbone to bring healthcare access within reach of residents in the District's most remote communities. Taken together, these initiatives illustrate the CPPDC's defining characteristic—it does not simply administer programs, it identifies the region's structural gaps and organizes the partnerships, funding, and political will required to close them.

The four-county District shares a common economic history rooted in coal, logging, and rail as well as a common contemporary challenge of sustained population loss. The 2020 Census recorded declines in every county in the District, and the region as a whole has continued to contract since. That said, Tazewell County (while declining) remains the District's most populous county and its largest economic center—a position that gives the Town of Tazewell, as the county seat, regional significance beyond its modest size.

Table: Cumberland Plateau Planning District Population, 2010–2020

County	2010	2020	Change	% Change
Buchanan	24,098	20,355	−3,743	−15.5%
Dickenson	15,903	14,124	−1,779	−11.2%
Russell	28,897	25,781	−3,116	−10.8%
Tazewell	45,078	40,429	−4,649	−10.3%
District Total	**113,976**	**100,689**	**−13,287**	**−11.7%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census. The CPPDC reports a further decline of approximately 4.1 percent District-wide between 2020 and 2025 (Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service estimates).

Within the District, Tazewell County's economy is comparatively diversified. Where Buchanan and Dickenson Counties remained heavily dependent on coal mining employment into the 2020s, Tazewell and Russell Counties developed broader bases in retail trade, health care, and education, leaving them somewhat less exposed to the coal sector's long decline. This relative diversity is a regional advantage for Tazewell, even as the broader contraction of the coalfield economy continues to exert downward pressure on population and employment across all four counties.

The Broader Southwest Virginia Region

Beyond the four-county planning district, Tazewell County is part of the Bluefield, WV–VA Micropolitan Statistical Area, which has a population of roughly 107,000 and links the County economically to the southern West Virginia coalfields immediately to the north. The County also participates in the broader Southwest Virginia "e-Region" recognized by the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA)—a seven-county, one-city economic region of approximately 200,000 residents, with a larger commuting-area population approaching 500,000. These overlapping regional frameworks matter for Tazewell because they define the geographies through which the Town can pursue collaborative economic development, shared infrastructure, and access to the specialized coalfield-transition funding administered by VCEDA, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, and related programs.

> **Why regional context is important for this plan.** Tazewell does not control the forces shaping its trajectory—the decline of the regional coal economy, out-migration across the Cumberland Plateau, and the funding priorities set in Richmond and Washington. But the Town's position as a county seat, its relative economic diversity within the District, and its access to multiple regional development frameworks give it real assets to work with.
>
> The strategies in this plan are framed accordingly—not as an attempt to reverse regional trends through local action alone, but as a deliberate effort to position Tazewell advantageously within the regional systems it belongs to.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Town of Tazewell carries more than two centuries of recorded history, and far longer as a place of human settlement. Its story is, in many ways, the story of Southwest Virginia itself—a frontier county seat that grew slowly through the nineteenth century, was swept up in the coal and railroad boom that transformed the Appalachian Plateau and now navigates the long aftermath of that industry's decline. Understanding the past is not merely a matter of civic pride. The patterns it reveals—the Town's role as a governmental and commercial anchor, its relationship to the surrounding coalfields, and the cycles of growth and contraction that have shaped its population—remain directly relevant to the choices this plan addresses.

Indigenous Presence and Frontier Settlement

Long before European settlement, the valleys and mountains of what is now Tazewell County were hunting grounds and homelands for Native American peoples. Petroglyphs near the summit of Paintlick Mountain bear witness to that deep history, and among the peoples present in historic times were the Lenape (Delaware) and the Iroquoian-speaking Cherokee and members of the Iroquois Confederacy. The fertile limestone valleys—particularly the Cove region around Maiden Spring and the bowl-shaped highland of Burke's Garden—drew the first permanent European-American settlers in the late eighteenth century.

In the spring of 1771, Thomas and John Witten established what is generally regarded as the first permanent settlement in the area, at Crab Orchard—a site that remains central to the County's heritage today through the Historic Crab Orchard Museum and Pioneer Park. As settlement spread through the surrounding coves and valleys over the following decades, the population grew sufficient to warrant a county of its own.

Founding of the County Seat

Tazewell County was created by act of the General Assembly on December 20, 1799, from portions of Wythe and Russell Counties, and was named for Henry Tazewell, a United States Senator from Virginia who had died earlier that year. The following year, in 1800, the county seat was laid off on land given by William Peery near the base of Rich Mountain, about a mile north of the headwaters of the Clinch River. The new community was named Jeffersonville in honor of Thomas Jefferson, elected the nation's third president that same year, though it was often referred to simply as Tazewell Court House.

Growth in the early decades was modest. By 1835 the village held only about 150 residents, with roughly twenty dwellings, a shared house of worship, a common school, several mercantile stores, and a handful of resident craftsmen clustered around the courthouse. The arrival of the Fincastle Turnpike in 1834 improved the town's connection to the wider region, and from that point through the Civil War, Jeffersonville grew more steadily, adding houses, churches, commercial establishments, and law and medical offices. Like much of Southwest Virginia, the town was touched by the Civil War—Union forces under General Averell passed through in May 1864 and the town was occupied in raids—but it survived intact and was formally incorporated in 1866, during the Reconstruction era.

The Coal and Railroad Boom

The transformation that most defines the region's modern history arrived in the 1880s. Engineers and Northern investors recognized that the Flat Top–Pocahontas coal seam, running from northern Tazewell County into West Virginia, held some of the finest coking and steam coal in the world. In 1883, the Norfolk and Western Railroad shipped its first coal from the Pocahontas Coalfield, and Pocahontas—in northern Tazewell County—became Virginia's first coalfield boom town. The original Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine, opened in 1882 and now on the National Register of Historic Places, would yield some forty-four million tons of coal before it closed in 1955.

The boom remade the County's economy and demography alike. Mining and railroad companies recruited labor on a scale the region had never seen, drawing African American workers from the Deep South and immigrants from Italy, Hungary, Poland, and beyond into dozens of company towns and coal camps. This influx brought together, often for the first time, people of many cultures and nationalities, and it shifted the County from a subsistence-agriculture economy to a cash economy tied to the boom-and-bust cycles of national and international energy markets.

The Town of Tazewell, as the county seat, prospered as the governmental, commercial, and professional center of this expanding economy rather than as a mining camp itself. The closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening ones of the twentieth saw the Town build out the Main Street of hotels, banks, and businesses whose historic fabric still defines its downtown. In 1892, town officials—weary of confusion between Jeffersonville and the County's name—voted to change the town's name to Tazewell. Modern infrastructure followed in quick succession: telephone service in 1896, electricity in 1899, and, in 1904, streetcar service running from the train depot in North Tazewell to Main Street—making Tazewell one of the smallest communities in the United States ever to operate a streetcar system.

A note on North Tazewell. The present-day Town reflects the history of two distinct communities: Tazewell, originally Jeffersonville, which grew up around the courthouse; and North Tazewell, originally known as Kelly or Kelly's Mills, which developed around the railroad depot. The streetcar that once connected them is a fitting emblem of how the governmental town and the rail town grew into a single community.

The Twentieth Century and the Long Transition

The coal economy that built modern Tazewell County proved cyclical from the start. The boom of the early 1900s faltered during the Great Depression, recovered strongly during World War II, and then entered a long, uneven decline through the second half of the twentieth century as mechanization reduced mining employment and national energy markets shifted away from coal. The company towns that had drawn thousands of workers gradually emptied, and the County's population—which had swelled during the boom—began the sustained contraction that continues today.

Through these cycles, the Town of Tazewell retained the role it had held since 1800: the stable governmental and service center of the County. While the surrounding coalfields rose and fell, the courthouse, the schools, the hospital, the professional offices, and the Main Street businesses gave the Town a measure of durability that the single-industry coal camps never possessed. That relative stability—rooted in its function as a county seat and regional service hub rather than a resource-extraction town—is among the Town's most important inherited assets, and it remains central to its prospects in the present century.

How history factors into the plan. Tazewell's past is not merely background. The Town's identity as a county seat and service center, the historic Main Street fabric that anchors its downtown, the regional coalfield economy whose decline shapes its demographics, and the heritage assets—Crab Orchard, the historic district, the streetcar legacy—that distinguish it from other communities are all live factors in the strategies this plan develops.

A community that understands where it came from is far better positioned to make deliberate choices about where it is going.

Sources: Town of Tazewell; Tazewell County Historical Society; Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Historic Architectural Survey of Tazewell County (2001); Library of Virginia; Virginia Department of Historic Resources historical markers; and Ross Weeks, Jr., Tazewell County: A Last Great Place (2000).

PART THREE

COMMUNITY PROFILE & PLAN ELEMENTS



Credit: Susan Reeves

DEMOGRAPHICS & POPULATION

This section establishes the demographic foundation for the 2026 Comprehensive Plan. It replaces the population analysis carried forward in the 2021 plan, which relied on data extending only through the mid-2010s and on forecasts that terminated in 2020. The figures here are drawn from the most current authoritative sources available: the 2020 Decennial Census for exact population and race counts, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates for age, household, and social characteristics, and the official decennial series for long-term trends. Where survey estimates are used, they are reported with their margins of error.

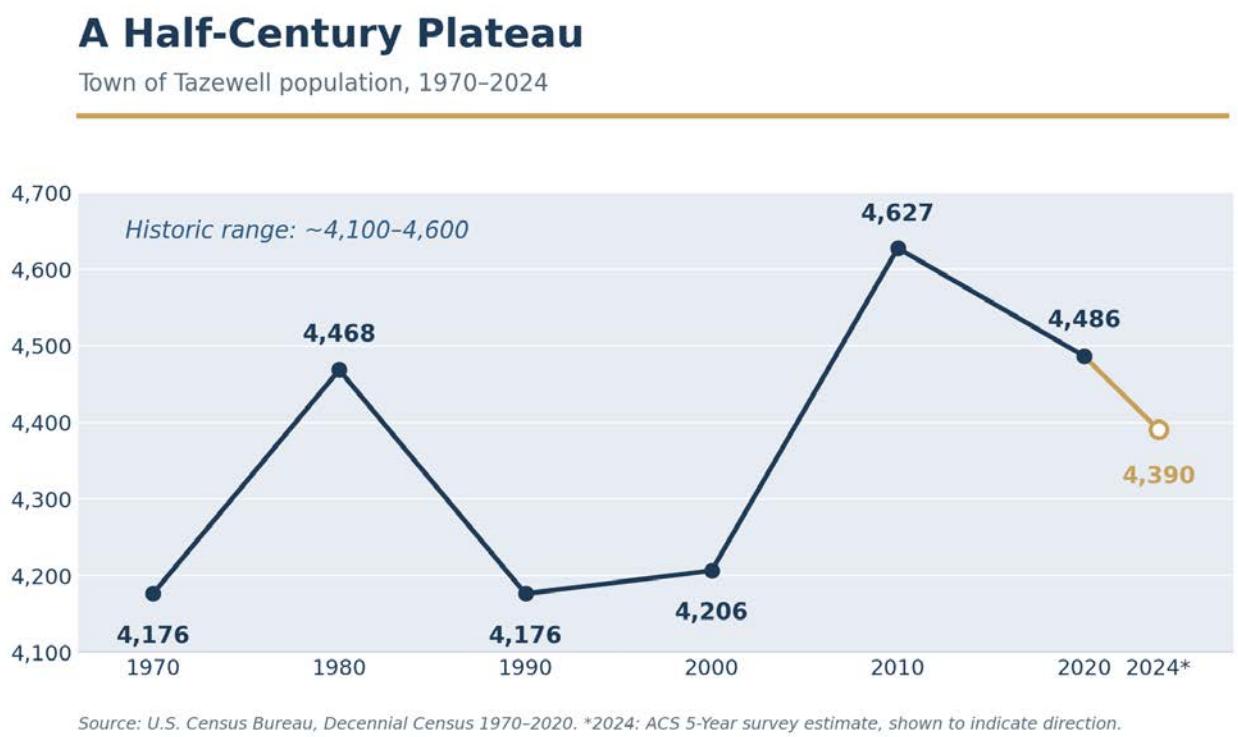
A note on data reliability. Tazewell is a small town—approximately 4,400 residents—and at that scale the ACS, which is a sample survey rather than a full count, produces wide margins of error on finer measures such as individual age bands and small population subgroups. This plan therefore anchors exact counts (total population, race) to the 2020 Decennial Census, uses the ACS for characteristics the Census does not measure, and relies on the more statistically stable county and state figures wherever a town-level estimate is too imprecise to stand on its own. This approach is deliberate: it keeps the plan's conclusions defensible.

Population Trends

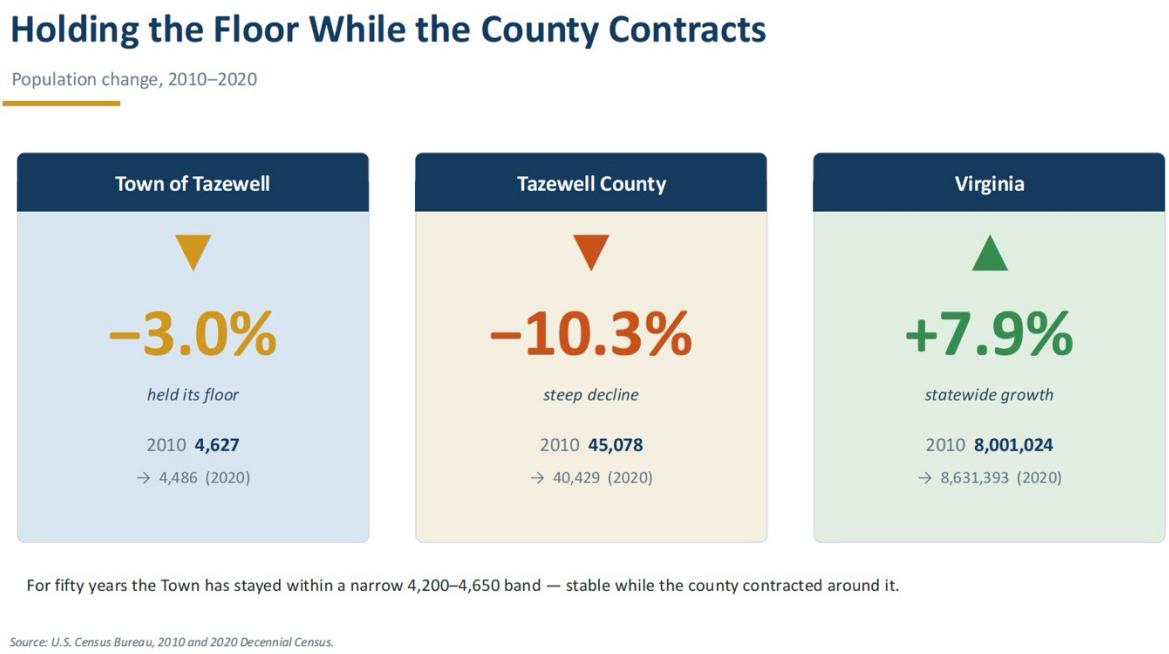
The Town of Tazewell's population has been essentially stable for half a century. From 1970 through 2020 the town has held within a narrow band between roughly 4,100 and 4,600 residents—never establishing sustained growth, but at the same time, never experiencing the collapse that has marked much of the coalfield region.

The 2020 Census recorded 4,486 residents, a loss of 141 people, or 3.0 percent, from the 2010 count of 4,627. That movement is within the range of fluctuation the town has exhibited across the full fifty-year record, and current estimates remain inside the historic band.

The trend that warrants attention is not the town's own count but the larger context—Tazewell County lost more than 10 percent of its population over the same decade. Therefore, the town has held its floor while the county contracted around it—a relative stability that is itself an asset, and one the plan's stabilize-first posture is designed to protect.

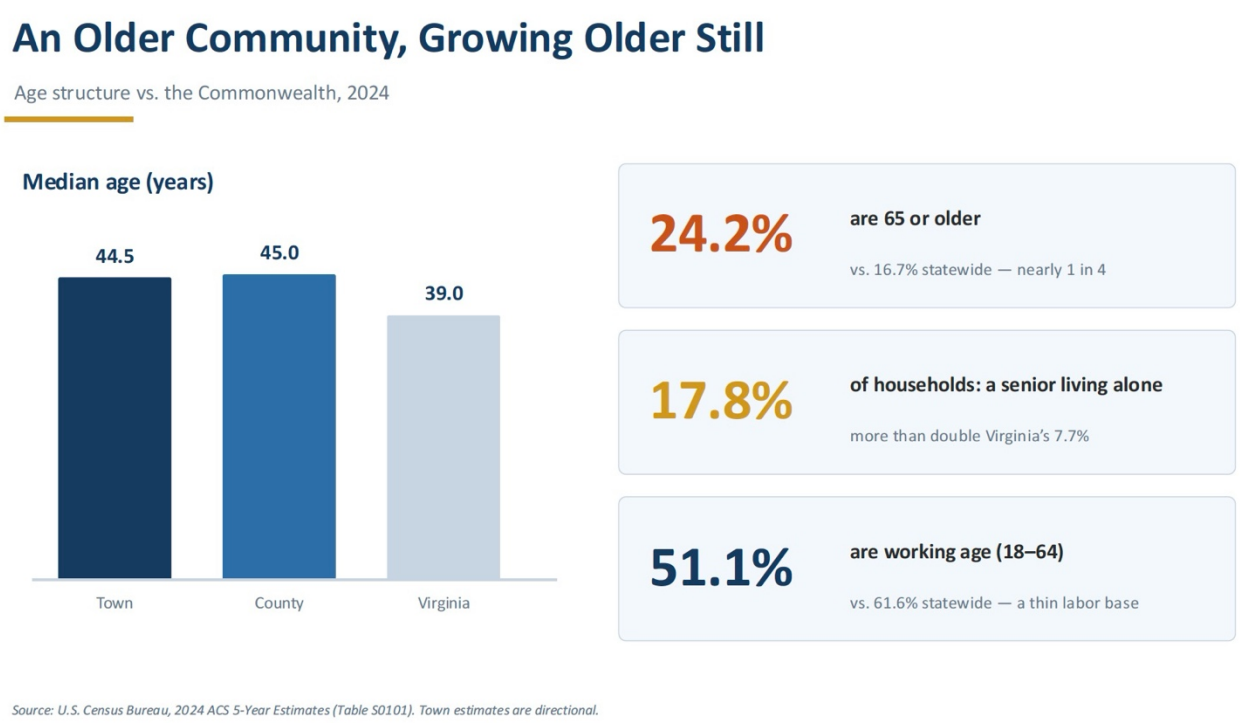


The town's recent trajectory mirrors a broader and more pronounced county trend. Tazewell County fell from 45,078 residents in 2010 to 40,429 in 2020—a loss of roughly 10 percent in a single decade—and county estimates for 2024 sit near 39,600 and falling. This is the demographic signature of the Cumberland Plateau coalfield region: sustained out-migration as the extractive economy that built these communities has receded. Framing Tazewell's position within this regional pattern matters for strategy. The town is not failing in isolation; it is part of a structural regional shift, which argues for regional partnership rather than the assumption that the town can reverse the trend through local action alone.



Age & Sex

Tazewell is an older community that is growing older still. The median age in both the town (44.5 years) and the county (45.0 years) runs roughly five to six years above the statewide median of 39.0. Nearly one in four town residents—24.2 percent—is age 65 or older, well above Virginia's 16.7 percent. At the same time, the town's working-age population (18 to 64) is comparatively thin in relation to the county and Commonwealth—leaving a community weighted toward both ends of the age spectrum and lighter in the prime-working and family-forming years that drive local economic vitality. These patterns carry direct implications for housing (accessible and aging-in-place options), for health services (addressed later in this plan and reinforced by the region's documented telehealth needs), and for workforce strategy—where a tight working-age base is a structural constraint on growth.



Race & Ethnicity

Tazewell is predominantly white—which is consistent with the county and the broader region. The 2020 Census recorded the town as 89.5 percent White, 4.7 percent Black or African American, and 4.6 percent two or more races, with small numbers of residents in other categories. Hispanic or Latino residents—an ethnicity the Census tracks separately from race—make up well under one percent of the town's population. The race figures below are drawn from the 2020 Decennial Census, which is an exact enumeration rather than a sample estimate.

Table: Race & Ethnicity, Town of Tazewell, 2020

Group	Count	Percent
Total population	**4,486**	**100.0%**
White alone	4,015	89.5%
Black or African American alone	212	4.7%
Asian alone	26	0.6%
American Indian / Alaska Native alone	8	0.2%
Some other race alone	19	0.4%
Two or more races	206	4.6%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)*	17	0.4%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census (Table P1). *Hispanic or Latino origin is reported separately from race; the figure shown is the 2024 ACS 5-Year estimate, as the P1 table does not capture ethnicity. Hispanic residents may be of any race.*

Why this plan uses Census counts rather than survey estimates for race. The ACS sample survey reports substantially higher minority populations for the town than the 2020 Census actually enumerated—roughly double for the Black-alone population (an estimated 425 versus the actual count of 212) and meaningfully higher for the multiracial population as well. This gap is a function of sampling error in a very small community, not a real demographic shift, and it illustrates precisely why this plan anchors race and total-population figures to the exact decennial count. Readers comparing this plan to ACS-based profiles of Tazewell should expect the survey estimates to run higher; the figures used here are the more reliable actual counts.

Households & Educational Attainment

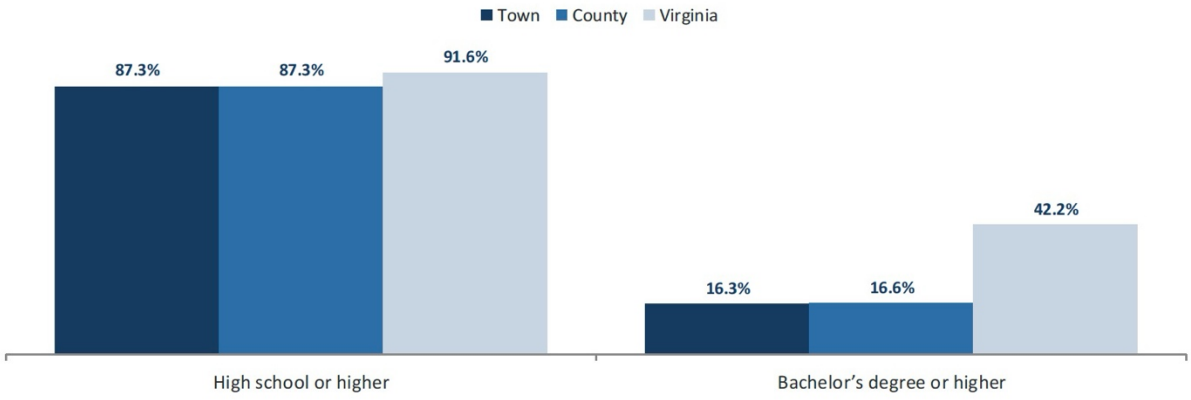
The town contains approximately 1,789 households, and they are small—averaging 2.29 persons, below both the county (2.33) and the state (2.52). The most consequential household finding reinforces the aging narrative: 30.2 percent of town households consist of a single person living alone, well above the county (17.8 percent) and state (16.1 percent) rates, and 17.8 percent of all town households are a senior living alone—more than double Virginia's 7.7 percent. A community with this many older residents living by themselves has distinct and predictable needs in housing accessibility, transportation, in-home services, and social connection.

Educational attainment is the other defining household characteristic, and it bears directly on the economic-development sections that follow. While the town matches the county on high-school completion (87.3 percent), only 16.3 percent of town adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher—less than half the statewide rate of 42.2 percent. This gap is among the most strategically important figures in this plan—it shapes the labor pool available to employers, the kinds of industries the town can realistically attract, and the case for workforce and post-secondary investment.

The Education Gap

Adults 25 and over by attainment, 2024

The bachelor's-degree gap is the strategic story: 16.3% of town adults hold one, vs. 42.2% statewide — barely a third of the state rate.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table DP02).

Table: Selected Household & Social Characteristics, 2024

Measure	Town	County	Virginia
Total households	**1,789**	**16,290**	**3,365,732**
Average household size	2.29	2.33	2.52
One-person households	30.2%	17.8%	16.1%
Senior living alone (65+)	17.8%	10.7%	7.7%
High school graduate or higher	87.3%	87.3%	91.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	16.3%	16.6%	42.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table DP02). Educational attainment is for the population 25 years and over. Town-level estimates carry margins of error appropriate to the population size.

Summary of Demographic Implications

- Three findings define Tazewell's demographic position and should inform the goals, objectives, and strategies that follow.

- First, the town has held population within a finite range for fifty years against the backdrop of regional contraction—a pattern that calls for regional collaboration as much as local effort.

- Second, the population is markedly older than the state, with a large and growing share of seniors, many of them living alone, which reshapes the town's housing, health, and service priorities.

- Third, the working-age and college-educated population is comparatively thin—a structural constraint that the plan's economic-development and workforce strategies must confront directly rather than assume away.

That said, these are not reasons for pessimism. They are the real conditions the plan must address if it is to function as a practical guide for the next five years rather than an aspirational document disconnected from the community it serves.

ECONOMIC BASE

This section assesses the economic foundation on which the Town of Tazewell stands—its labor force, its industry composition, the incomes its households earn, and the role the Town plays in the daily economy of the county and region. It is a new element of this Plan; the 2021 plan carried no standalone economic analysis, and the strategic posture adopted in this update—retention before attraction—requires that the economic conditions it responds to be documented rather than assumed. Consistent with the approach used throughout this Plan, exact and statistically stable figures are anchored at the county level, where the federal employment series are reliable, and town-level survey estimates are presented alongside county and state benchmarks with their limitations noted.

> **A note on geography and data.** Most federal employment statistics—the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, the Local Area Unemployment Statistics series, and employer-level data—are published for counties, not towns. Although Tazewell is an incorporated town, it is not a separate reporting unit in these series: its residents are counted in county labor force figures, and its employers in county payrolls. This section therefore reads the county data as the Town's labor market and uses the American Community Survey for the town-specific measures—income, poverty, and resident employment—that the county series cannot supply. Town-level ACS estimates at this population size carry wide margins of error and are presented as directional.

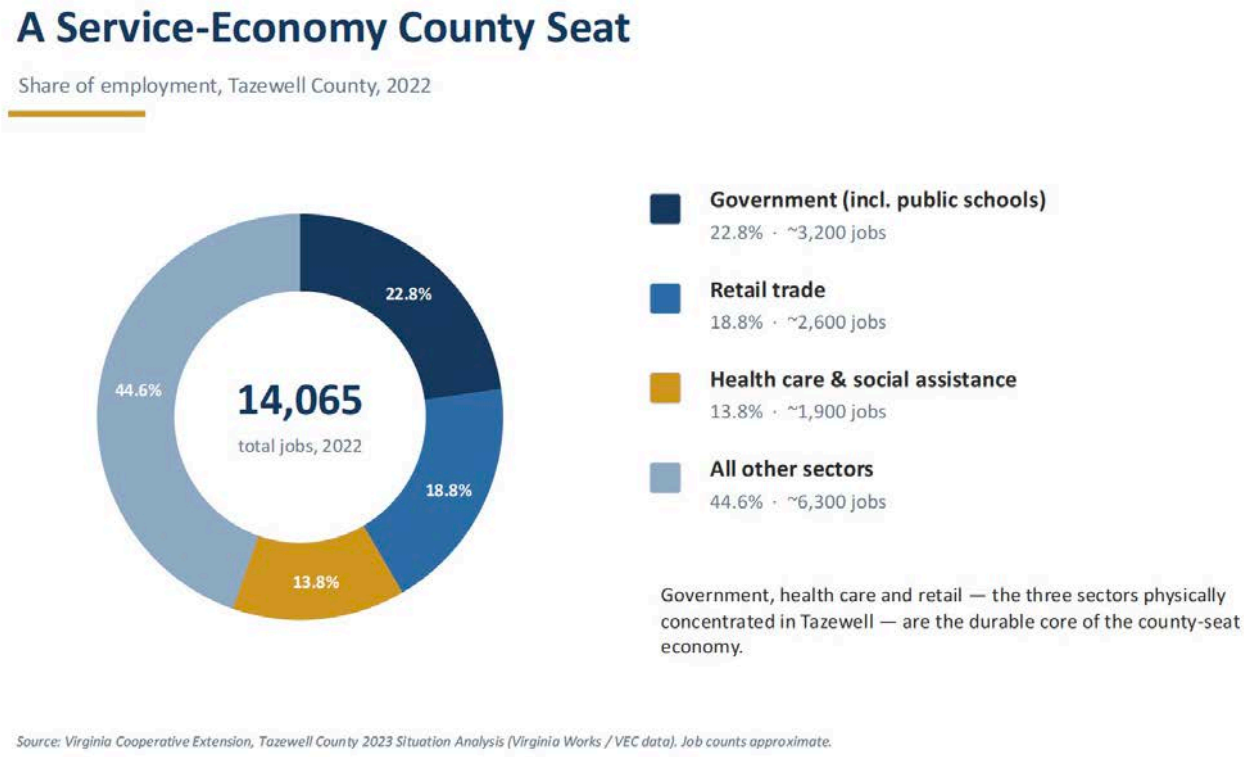
Labor Force and Employment

Tazewell County's unemployment rate has run persistently above the statewide rate for decades, and that pattern continues. Through the winter of 2025–2026 the county rate ranged between roughly 5 and 6 percent, easing to 4.8 percent in April 2026, against a statewide rate near 3.8 percent over the same period. The gap itself is the finding: it is the labor-market signature of a region where job losses in the extractive economy have outpaced the growth of replacement employment, and it has persisted through national expansions and contractions alike.

The deeper constraint, however, is not unemployment but participation. As documented in the Demographics element, the town's working-age population (18 to 64) is just 51.1 percent of residents, against 61.6 percent statewide—and labor force participation rates across the Cumberland Plateau region rank among the lowest in the Commonwealth, with some neighboring counties recording participation below 40 percent. A community in which barely half the population is of working age, and in which a meaningful share of that group is outside the labor force entirely, cannot staff significant employment growth from its own residents alone. This is the structural fact beneath the Plan's retention-first posture—a significant binding constraint on the Town's economy is the supply of workers.

Industry Composition

The county economy that surrounds and employs the Town is anchored in government, retail trade, and health care—the classic profile of a rural county-seat trade area. In 2022, approximately 14,065 county residents were employed, with government accounting for nearly a quarter of all jobs, retail trade nearly a fifth, and health care and social assistance a seventh. Direct coal-mining employment, once the county's economic engine, is now a small share of the base—though the industry's long contraction continues to shape the county's population, incomes, and fiscal capacity, as documented in the Regional Setting element.

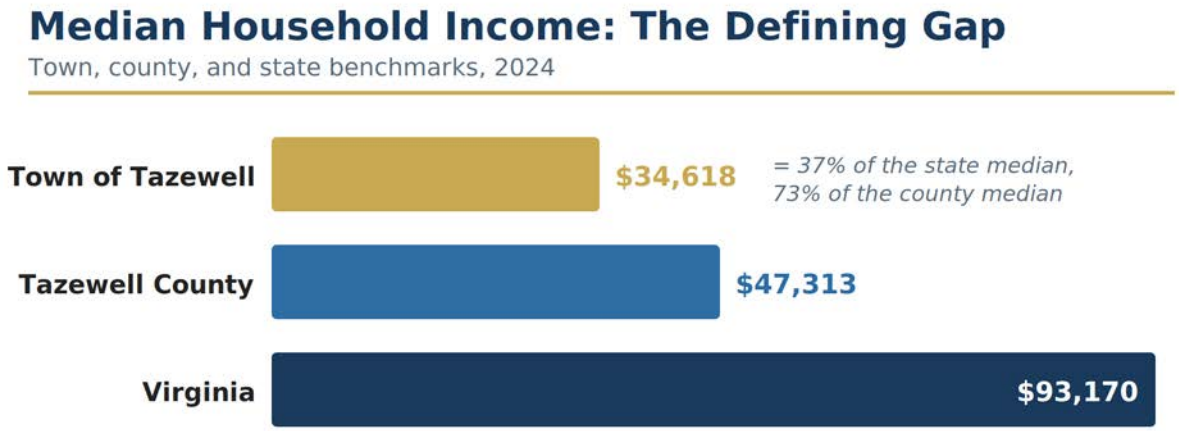


Source: Virginia Cooperative Extension, Tazewell County 2023 Situation Analysis (Virginia Works / VEC data). Job counts approximate.

For the Town itself, this composition is favorable. The three dominant sectors—government, health care, and retail—are precisely the sectors physically concentrated in and around Tazewell: the courthouse and county administrative complex, the public schools serving the Tazewell attendance zone, Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital, and the retail and professional services of Main Street and the U.S. 19/460 corridor. The county's largest employers—Tazewell County Public Schools, Walmart, and Clinch Valley Health in Richlands—are likewise institutions of the service economy rather than the extractive one. The Town's economic identity, in short, is the durable identity it has held since 1800: the place where the county's government, education, health care, and commerce concentrate. That stability is an asset; its limitation is that these sectors generate steady employment but modest wage growth, which the income data below make plain.

Income and Poverty

Income is where Tazewell's economic position is most starkly visible. The town's median household income of $34,618 is roughly 37 percent of the statewide median of $93,170—and, more tellingly, only about 73 percent of the median in its own county. The town is not merely a low-income community within a high-income state; it is a lower-income community within a lower-income county. Per capita income follows the same gradient. An estimated 25.1 percent of town residents—roughly one in four—live below the poverty line, against 18.5 percent countywide and 9.9 percent statewide.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table S1901). Town estimate carries a margin of error of ±$8,299.

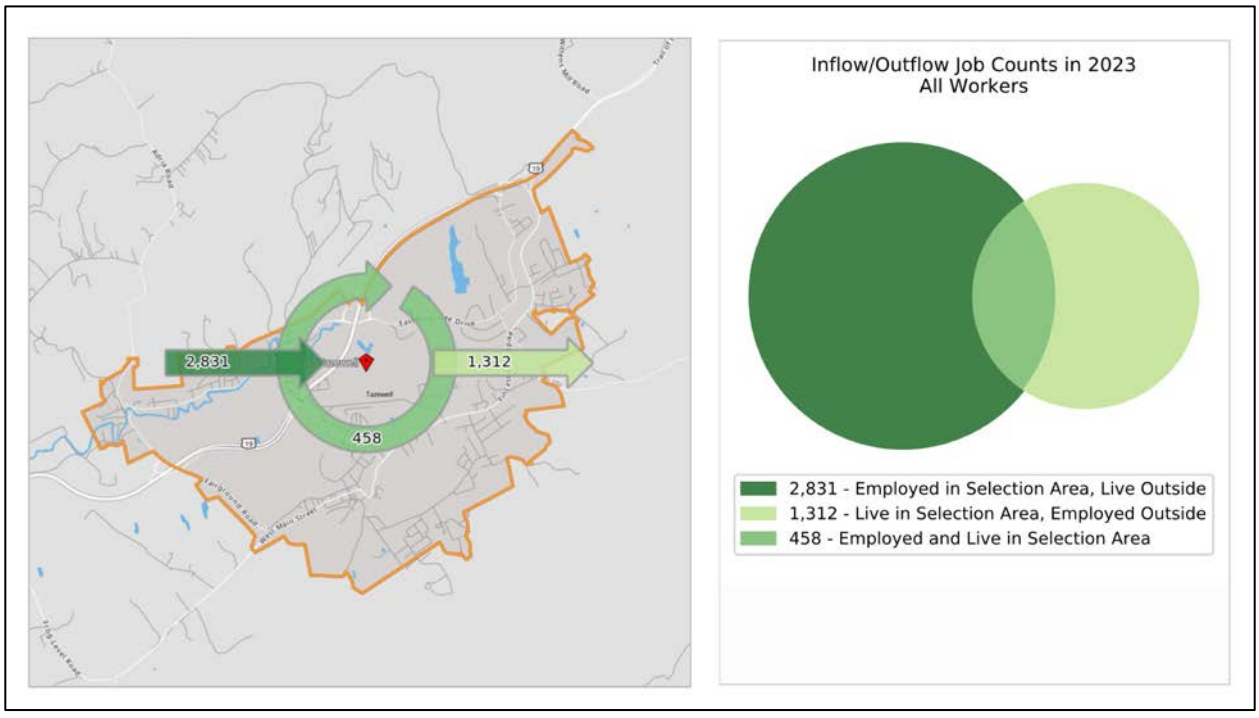
Several threads from earlier elements converge here. The town's elevated renter share (41.6 percent), its high share of seniors living alone on fixed incomes (17.8 percent of all households), and its thin college-educated population (16.3 percent with a bachelor's degree) are all income-suppressing characteristics—and they explain how a community with a median home value of $111,700 can nonetheless carry significant housing cost burden, as the Housing element documents. Affordability in Tazewell is an income problem at least as much as a housing-price problem. This finding also supplies the basis for the poverty figure cited in the SWOT analysis, and it strengthens the Town's competitive position for the income-qualified funding programs—CDBG, USDA Rural Development, ARC distressed-area programs—on which the Implementation Framework relies.

Commuting and the Daytime Economy

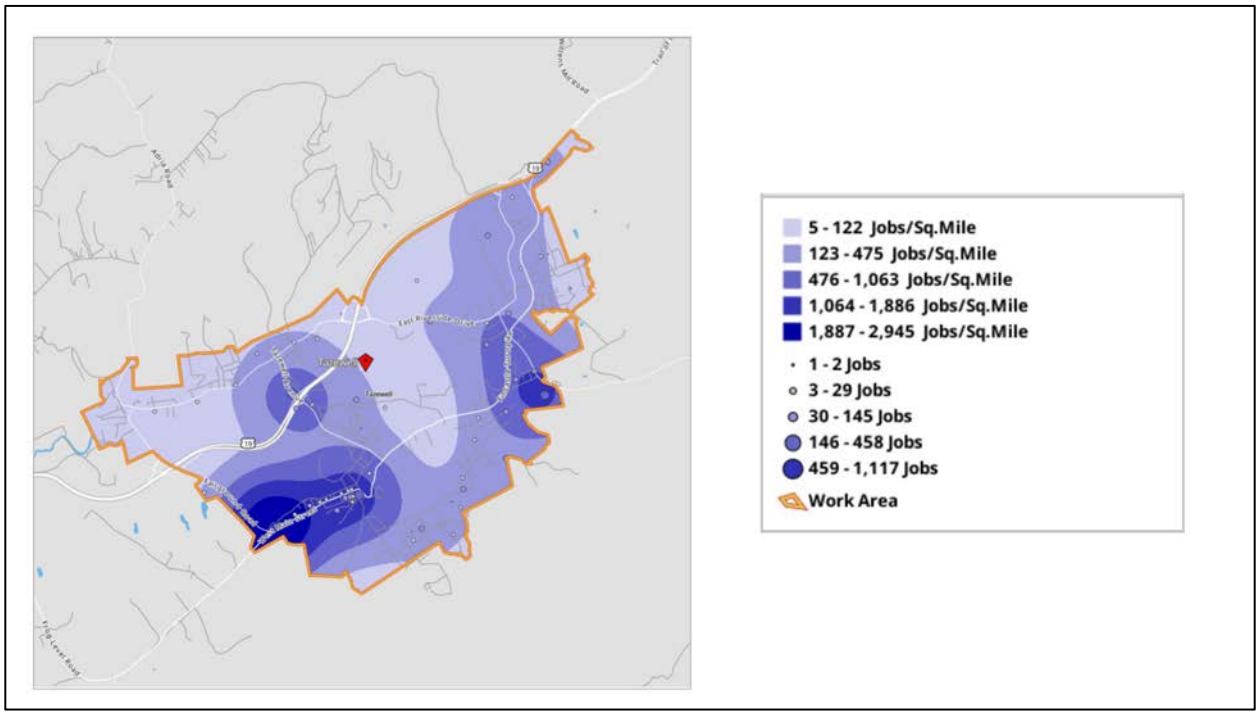
Tazewell's economic significance is larger than its resident population, because the Town functions as the county's daytime hub. The courthouse, the county administrative offices, the schools, the hospital, and the Main Street professional and retail establishments draw a daily inflow of workers, customers, and visitors from across a dispersed rural trade area—a role the Regional Setting element identifies as the Town's defining economic function. Countywide, the mean travel time to work is 27.1 minutes, reflecting a labor market in which long commutes across the county and into the Bluefield micropolitan area and the southern West Virginia coalfields are routine.

This daytime economy is the Town's most leverageable economic asset, and it is underexploited. Every weekday, the county-seat function delivers to Main Street's doorstep a population of workers and visitors substantially larger than the Town's resident base—before counting the through-traffic generated by the Back of the Dragon terminus. The strategic task, carried forward in Goal 1 and the Implementation Framework, is conversion: turning daytime presence into storefront spending, storefront spending into occupancy, and occupancy into reinvestment.

2023 data from the US Census Bureau's LEHD On The Map service illustrates the movement of workers in and out of the Town of Tazewell. In commuting outpaces out commuting by over 1,500 workers per day. This data corroborates this priority focus within the Implementation Framework.



Here is employment concentration within the Town of Tazewell—again from the 2023 US Census Bureau's LEHD On The Map service. Not surprisingly, jobs are anchored in the most developed, commerce-centric areas of the community.



Regional Economic Context

The Town's economic prospects are bound to a region in long transition. The contraction of the coalfield economy continues to exert downward pressure on population, labor force, and local revenues across the Cumberland Plateau, as the Regional Setting element documents. At the same time, Tazewell County's comparative diversification—its broader base in retail, health care, and education relative to the mining-dependent counties to its west—has left it the District's largest and most resilient economy, and the county continues to pursue industrial and large-load investment that, if landed, would alter the demand picture for housing and services in and around the Town.

Equally important is the funding geography. The Town's membership in the VCEDA e-Region, the Cumberland Plateau Planning District, the Appalachian Regional Commission's distressed-county framework, and GO Virginia's Region One gives it access to a coalfield-transition funding toolkit—VCEDA, the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, ARC, and GO Virginia—that few Virginia communities outside Southwest Virginia can reach. The economic strategy of this Plan is framed accordingly: not to out-recruit larger regional hubs, but to position Tazewell to capture its proportionate share of regional investment while securing the service-economy base it already holds.

Summary of Issues and Implications

Four findings define the Town's economic base and ultimately inform the goals, objectives, and strategies within this Plan.

- First, the Town's economy rests on government, health care, and retail—sectors that are stable, locally concentrated, and durable, but that generate modest incomes; this composition is the economic case for retention, since the institutions that anchor it are far easier to keep than to replace.

- Second, incomes run well below state and even county benchmarks, with roughly one in four residents in poverty—conditions that shape every housing, service, and revenue assumption in this Plan, and that qualify the Town for the funding programs on which its implementation strategy depends.

- Third, the labor market's binding constraint is the supply of working-age people, not the absence of opportunity—which argues for workforce development, housing that retains and attracts workers, and realism about the scale of employment growth the Town can staff.

- Fourth, the Town's 'county-seat economy' is its most leverageable and least exploited asset—people are already coming to Tazewell every day, and the strategic work is converting that presence into Main Street spending, occupancy, and reinvestment.

These are not reasons for pessimism. They are the real conditions a credible economic strategy must address. They establish the priorities carried into Goal 1 of this Plan and its Implementation Framework—sustaining the Main Street program, capturing visitor and daytime traffic, supporting existing employers, building workforce partnerships, and maintaining an active posture toward the regional funding toolkit.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Tazewell County series, retrieved June 2026); U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates and 2020 Decennial Census; Virginia Works / Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Labor Force Participation reports; Virginia Cooperative Extension, Tazewell County 2023 Situation Analysis Report; Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority; Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission.

HOUSING

This section assesses the Town of Tazewell's housing stock—its supply, tenure, type, age, value, and affordability. It replaces the housing material that the 2021 plan folded into its population analysis and is built on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Consistent with the approach used throughout this plan, town-level figures are reported alongside county and state benchmarks, and the wider margins of error inherent in a small community are noted where they bear on interpretation.

Housing Supply, Tenure & Vacancy

The town contains approximately 2,159 housing units, of which 1,789 (82.9 percent) are occupied and 370 (17.1 percent) are vacant. That vacancy rate is roughly double the statewide figure of 8.7 percent and closely tracks the county's 17.6 percent—a signal of soft housing demand consistent with the local stagnation and regional contraction of population documented in the demographics section. Tenure also distinguishes the town from its surroundings: 41.6 percent of occupied units are renter-occupied, well above the county (25.6 percent) and notably above the state (32.7 percent). In tenure terms Tazewell is more of a renter community than either its county or the Commonwealth as a whole—a characteristic with implications for housing stability, code enforcement, and neighborhood reinvestment.

Table: Housing Supply, Tenure & Vacancy, 2024

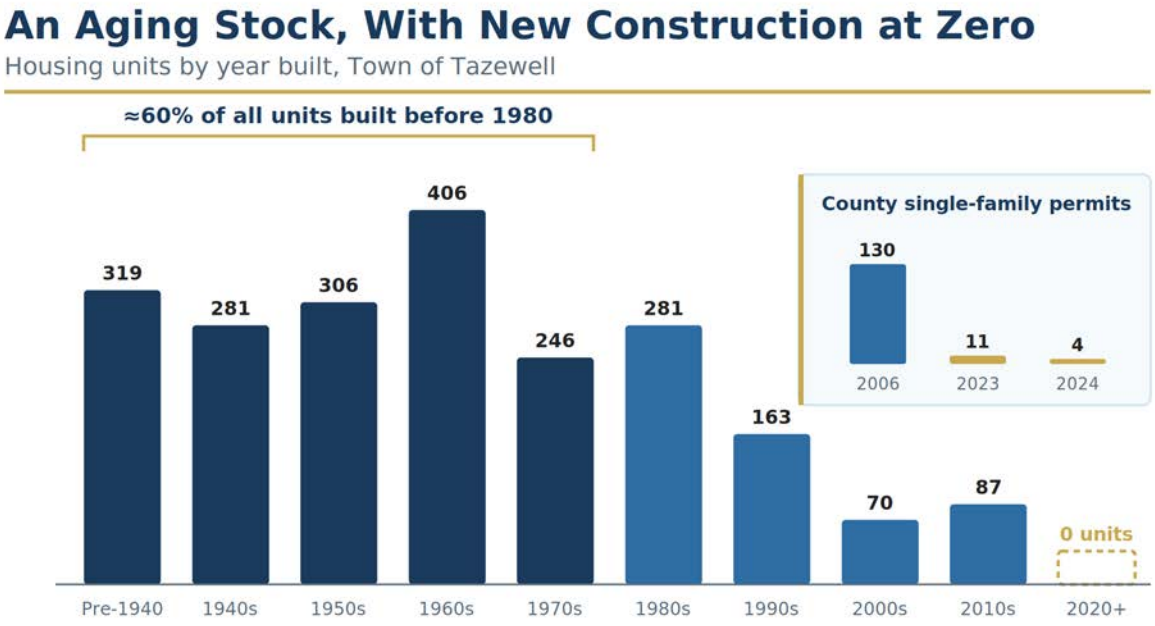
Variable	Town	County	Virginia
Total housing units	2,159	19,768	3,684,756
Occupied	82.9%	82.4%	91.3%
Vacant	17.1%	17.6%	8.7%
Owner-occupied	58.4%	74.4%	67.3%
Renter-occupied	41.6%	25.6%	32.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table DP04). Tenure percentages are of occupied units.

Housing Type & Age of Stock

The town's housing is overwhelmingly conventional single-family detached—78.4 percent of all units, well above the county (68.8 percent) and the state (61.3 percent). Manufactured (mobile) homes, which account for 21.7 percent of the county's housing, make up just 1.5 percent within the town. In effect, Tazewell is the conventional-housing core of a county where manufactured housing is far more prevalent across the surrounding rural areas.

The defining characteristic of the town's stock is its age. Roughly 60 percent of all housing units were built before 1980, and nearly 28 percent predate 1950. New construction is effectively absent—no units were recorded as built in 2020 or later, and only 4.0 percent of the stock dates to the 2010s.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table DP04); U.S. Census Building Permits Survey, Tazewell County.

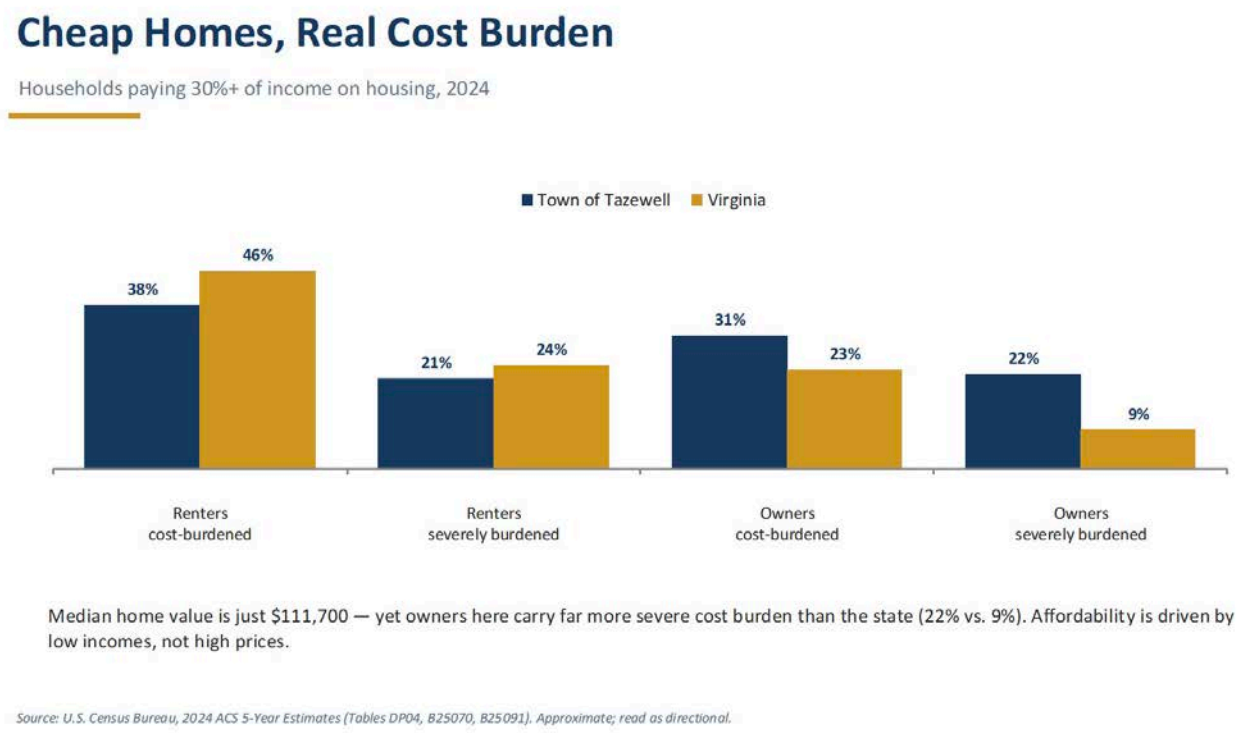
Age compounds into condition. A meaningful share of the town's units lack complete plumbing (approximately 5.4 percent) or complete kitchen facilities (approximately 7.0 percent)—many times the national norm of well under one percent, and a direct indicator of substandard conditions concentrated among lower-income owners and renters who cannot finance major repairs. Together with the age profile, these deficiencies frame the central housing challenge: maintenance and rehabilitation, energy efficiency, legacy materials such as lead, and accessibility for an aging population.

New construction has effectively stalled countywide.
Single-family building permits in Tazewell County fell from a range of 70 to 130 per year in the late 1990s and 2000s (peaking at 130 in 2006) to single digits and low teens in recent years—11 in 2023 and just 4 in 2024. According to Census data, the private market is adding almost no new homes anywhere in the county, which reinforces preservation and rehabilitation of the existing stock as the realistic path forward.

Housing Value & Cost Burden

Housing in Tazewell is inexpensive by Virginia standards. The median value of owner-occupied homes is $111,700, below the county's $118,300 and far below the statewide median of $383,700. Low nominal values are characteristic of the region and reflect both the age of the stock and broader market conditions.

At the same time, a meaningful share of households face housing cost burden—the standard measure being housing costs that consume 30 percent or more of household income, with severe burden defined at 50 percent or more. Among town renters, roughly 38 percent are cost-burdened and approximately 21 percent are severely burdened. Among homeowners, roughly 31 percent are cost-burdened and about 22 percent severely burdened. These two facts—low housing values alongside significant cost burden—coexist in Tazewell, and together they indicate that affordability here is shaped by more than housing prices alone. Cost burden among older homeowners on fixed incomes, many of whom live alone as noted in the demographics section, is a particular consideration for the plan's housing and human-services priorities.



A note on the affordability figures. The cost-burden rates above are drawn from small subgroups—the town's renter universe is fewer than 800 households—and therefore carry substantial sampling error. They are presented as approximate and directional. Where a precise local figure is needed for grant applications or program design, these rates should be confirmed against the most current ACS release at the time of use (ACS Tables B25070 and B25091).

Manufactured Housing

Because this Plan is being amended after July 1, 2021, the Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-2223.5) directs that it incorporate strategies promoting manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing. This requirement is of particular regional relevance. As the Housing element documents, manufactured (mobile) homes account for 21.7 percent of Tazewell County's housing stock but just 1.5 percent within the Town—Tazewell is the conventional-housing core of a county where manufactured housing is the predominant affordable form across the surrounding rural areas. The strategies below are framed accordingly—not to remake the Town's housing character, but to ensure that modern, code-compliant manufactured and modular housing is a permitted, financeable, and well-regulated option inside the corporate limits, consistent with the Plan's emphasis on preservation, infill, and expanded housing choice.

A threshold distinction governs this section. Today's HUD-code manufactured housing and modular (industrialized) housing—built to federal or state construction standards, sited on permanent foundations, and increasingly indistinguishable from site-built homes—are a different product from the aging mobile-home stock the term once implied. The Town's strategy is to treat that modern product as a legitimate affordable-homeownership and rental option, while applying neutral, generally applicable standards that protect neighborhood character and resident safety.

Related Strategies

- **Permit modern manufactured and modular housing by right in appropriate districts.** Through the zoning-ordinance update, allow HUD-code manufactured and modular homes on permanent foundations by right in the residential districts where single-family homes are permitted, subject to the same neutral dimensional, foundation, and placement standards applied to site-built dwellings. The aim is to remove de facto regulatory exclusion without lowering health-and-safety standards—the lowest-cost way a small town can broaden affordable homeownership.

- **Use manufactured and modular units as replacement and infill stock.** Pair this option with the vacant- and derelict-property program and the possible land bank to return cleared and vacant residential lots to productive use, and to replace the small share of substandard units lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities documented earlier in this element. Modern units placed on existing serviced lots advance both blight abatement and affordable supply at once.

- **Unlock real-property financing.** Encourage placement of manufactured units on permanent foundations and titling as real property, so that owners can access conventional mortgage financing and affordable-housing loan products rather than higher-cost personal-property (chattel) lending. Connect prospective buyers to Virginia Housing manufactured-housing loan products, USDA Rural Development Section 502/504, and CDBG-supported programs.

- **Adopt fair, health-and-safety-based community standards.** For existing and any future manufactured-home placements and communities, maintain standards for foundations, anchoring, skirting, utility connection, and infrastructure that protect residents without functioning as a prohibition, and support the stability of existing manufactured-home residents.

- **Coordinate regionally.** Align with Tazewell County and the Cumberland Plateau Planning District—where manufactured housing carries a far larger share of the affordable inventory—and with the VCEDA-funded regional housing study, so that Town and County approaches are complementary rather than at cross-purposes.

These measures are carried forward in the Implementation Framework under Goal 4 and are coordinated explicitly with the comprehensive zoning-ordinance update, where the by-right permitting standards are enacted. Together they satisfy the directive of § 15.2-2223.5 while keeping manufactured and modular housing in service of the Plan's broader goal: expanding affordable, accessible housing choice for residents of all income levels.

Summary of Housing Conditions

Tazewell's housing profile reflects the community it serves: an older, largely single-family stock with little new construction, elevated vacancy, a comparatively high share of renters, and low values that nonetheless coexist with meaningful cost burden for a portion of both renters and owners. These conditions point toward a housing strategy centered less on new market-rate construction—for which demand is weak—and more on preserving and rehabilitating existing stock, supporting cost-burdened and fixed-income households, and improving the accessibility and energy performance of an aging inventory.

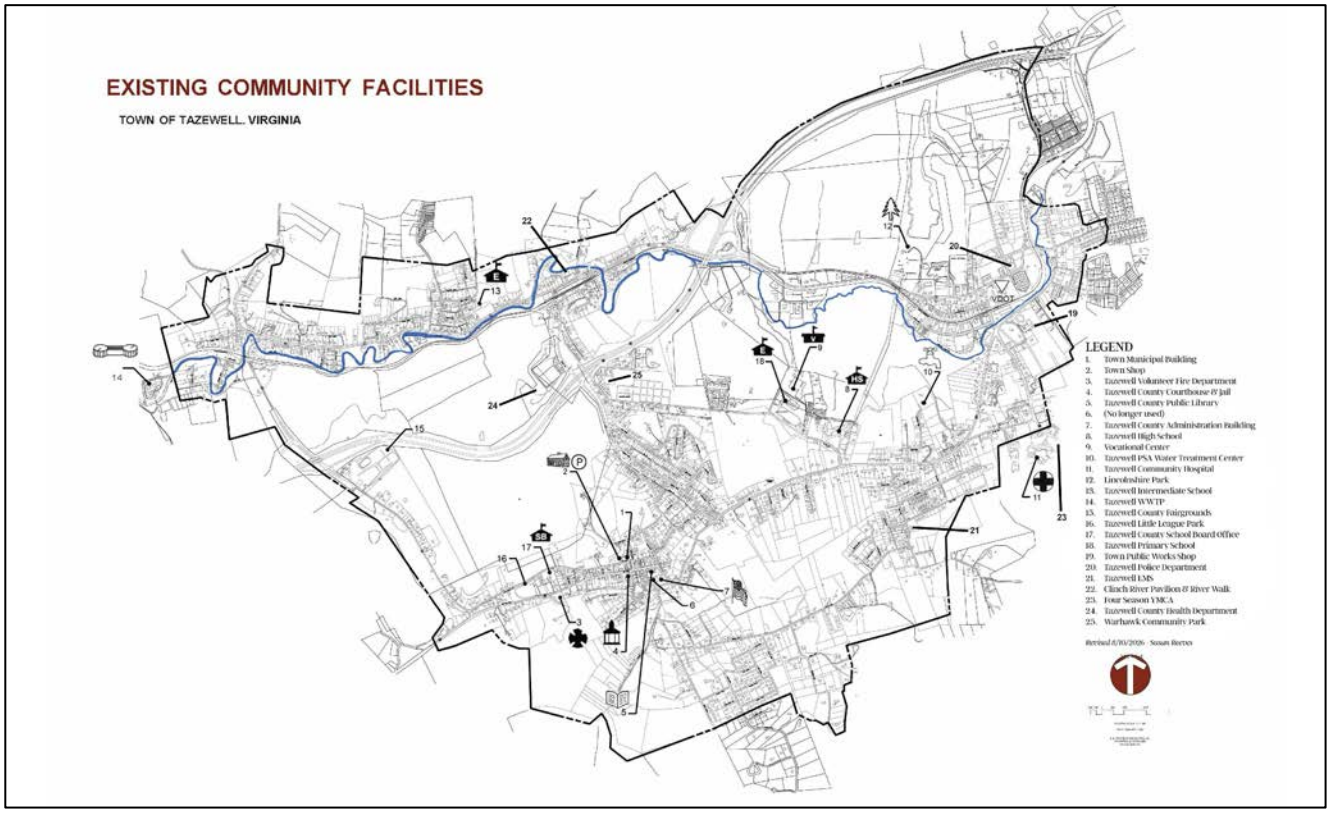
Strategic Directions

The conditions above point to a clear set of strategic directions. Each is matched to tools available to a Virginia town of this size and is carried forward in detail through the plan's goals, objectives, and implementation program.

- **Make rehabilitation and preservation the centerpiece.** Pursue and package housing-rehabilitation funding—Virginia DHCD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing rehab, Virginia Housing loan products, USDA Rural Development Section 502/504 loans and grants, and weatherization assistance—targeted to priority neighborhoods.
- **Establish a vacant- and derelict-property program.** Use Virginia's spot blight abatement and derelict/vacant building authorities (Va. Code §§ 36-49.1:1 and 15.2-907.1), a registration program, and a possible land bank to return vacant units to productive use and arrest blight.
- **Broaden housing choice through land use.** Permit accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small-lot and infill housing by right in appropriate areas—the lowest-cost way to expand options for seniors and small households—coordinated explicitly with the Land Use element.
- **Recruit targeted subsidized development.** Partner with Virginia Housing and experienced Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developers on a well-located senior and/or workforce rental project to add modern, accessible units the private market will not build alone.
- **Set general targets.** Adopt broad goals so progress can be monitored across the life of the plan.
- **Treat housing as economic-development infrastructure.** Frame housing condition and choice as part of the Town's competitiveness in retaining and attracting workers, particularly as the county pursues industrial and large-load investment.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

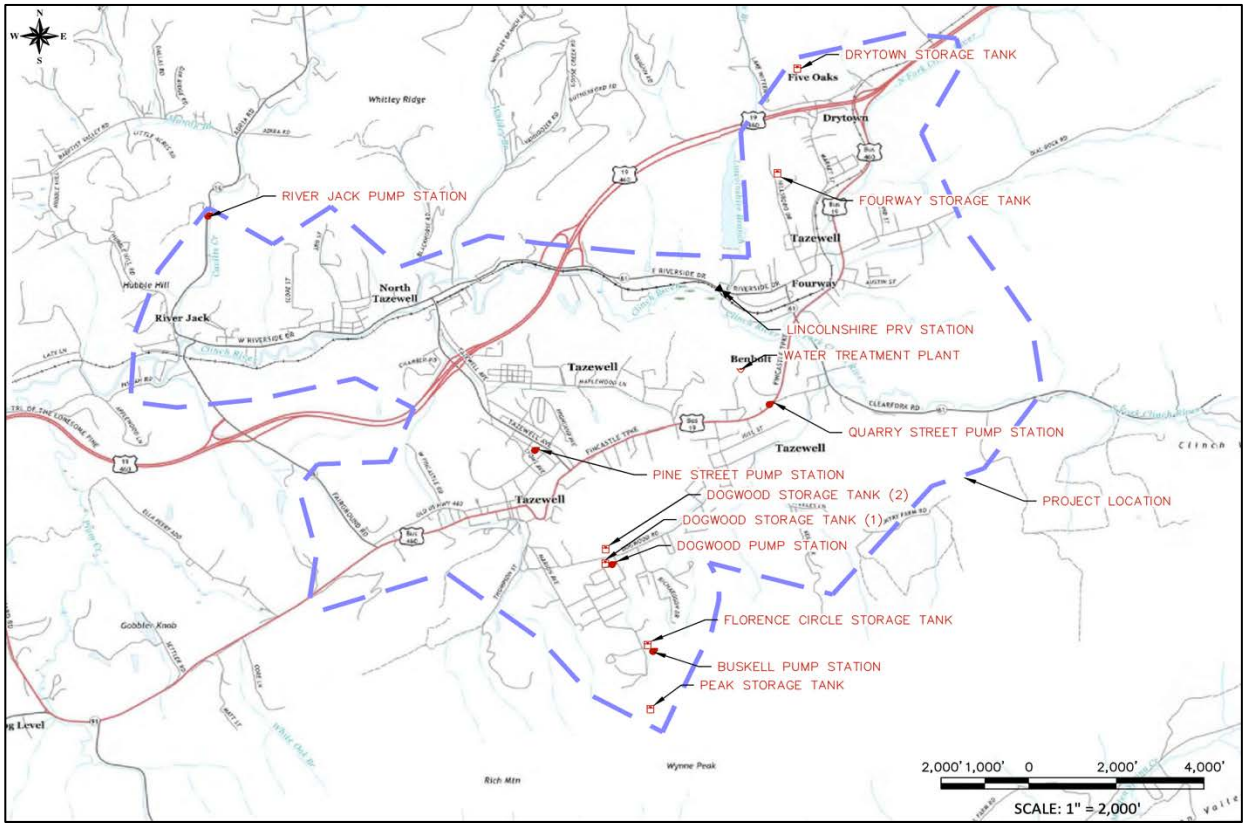
The facilities and services described in this chapter form the physical and institutional foundation on which daily life in Tazewell depends. Together they determine whether the Town can sustain its existing neighborhoods, support new investment, and deliver the level of service residents and businesses expect. This section inventories the Town's principal public facilities and services, summarizes their current condition and capacity, and identifies the issues that the goals, objectives, and implementation framework later in this Plan are intended to address. The Town of Tazewell provides several of these services directly, coordinates others with Tazewell County and the Tazewell County Public Service Authority and relies on independent and volunteer organizations for the balance.



Map: Existing Community Facilities-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell

Water Supply and Distribution

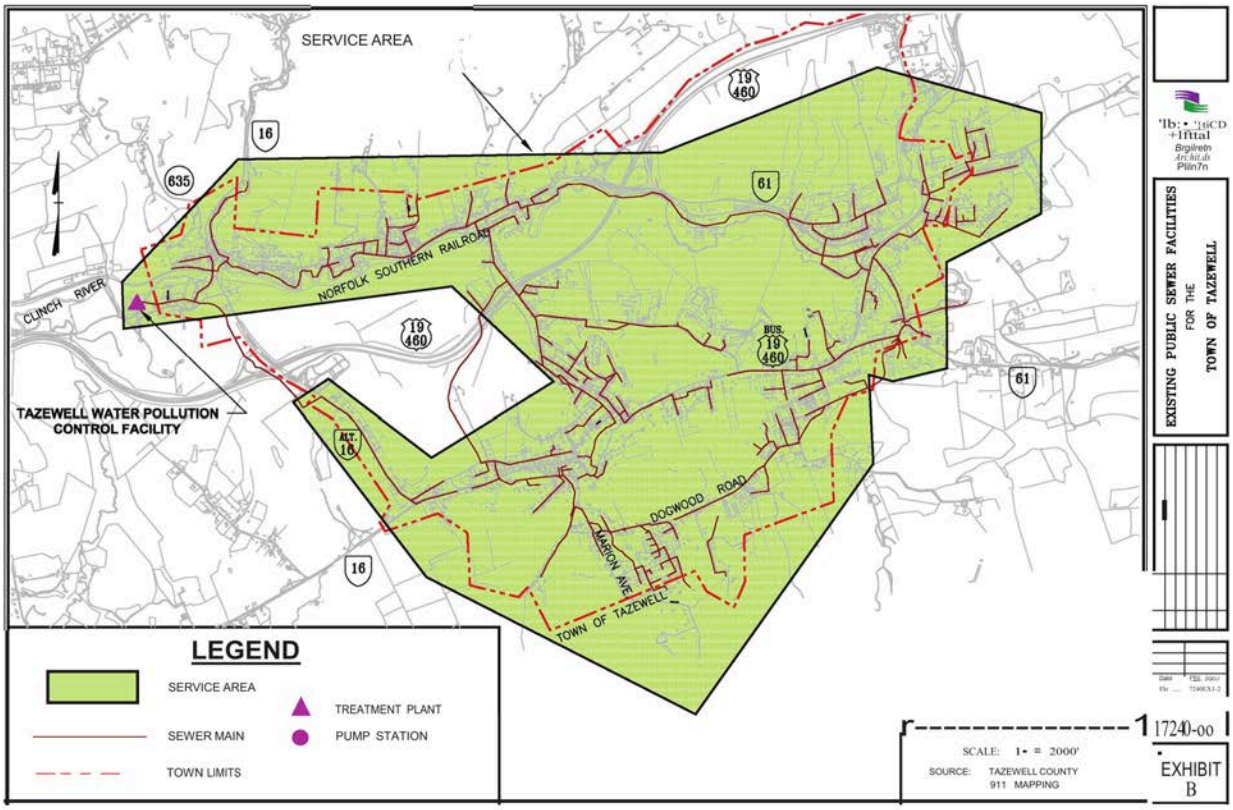
Public water service within the Town is provided through the Town of Tazewell Water Department in coordination with the Tazewell County Public Service Authority (PSA), which owns and operates the Greater Tazewell Water Treatment Plant on Thorn Street, serving the Town and surrounding area. The system draws on three raw water sources—Lake Witten, the Clinch River, and Cox Branch—and serves 2,200 connections with an average daily demand of 636,339 gallons, delivered through roughly 41 miles (216,480 feet) of distribution main. Treated water is distributed through the Town's network of mains and storage, including tanks on Dogwood Road that maintain pressure and fire flow for the North Tazewell service area; total finished water storage capacity across the system is 2,120,570 gallons. In recent years the Town and its partners have invested in treatment improvements to control the leaching of lead from older plumbing, and the Town is completing a Lead Service Line Inventory in accordance with the EPA Lead and Copper Rule Revisions and the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water. That inventory has identified 842 customer-owned service lines likely requiring replacement, at an estimated cost of $1.3 million, while a parallel assessment of town-owned lines is underway to scope their replacement cost; together, the inventory and the service-line replacement that follows represent a significant near-term capital and compliance obligation. The Town is also carrying out the Route 460 water line replacement project, funded at $2.5 million through the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water.



Map: Public Water Facilities-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Thompson & Litton.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The Town operates a sanitary sewer collection system that conveys wastewater for treatment in coordination with the Tazewell County Public Service Authority (PSA) at the Town of Tazewell Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has a permitted capacity of 2 million gallons per day and currently processes an average daily flow of 769,493 gallons. The system has no dedicated storage tanks. As with many systems of its age, inflow and infiltration during wet weather and the condition of older collection lines—rated fair—remain the principal factors affecting available capacity and long-term cost. Regional treatment capacity is the subject of ongoing investment: the plant is currently undergoing a $19 million upgrade, funded in part through the Virginia Water Supply Revolving Fund and related state programs. The Town is also developing a plan to extend sewer service into areas of Town not currently served. Adequate, reliable sewer capacity remains a precondition for the commercial and residential development contemplated elsewhere in this Plan.



Map: Public Sewer Facilities-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Thompson & Litton.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater in Tazewell is managed through the Town's system of streets, inlets, culverts, and natural drainageways feeding the local tributaries of the Clinch River watershed. The Town's compact valley setting and steep surrounding terrain concentrate runoff, and localized drainage and flooding in older sections of Town are a recurring maintenance concern. Stormwater management is handled by Public Works as part of street and infrastructure maintenance rather than through a separate regulated utility. The Town is not subject to MS4 or other state stormwater permitting. Recurring drainage and flooding problems are concentrated on Mitchell Street and Texas Street, and while the majority of the Town's culverts and channels are in good condition, several are rated fair. The Town is currently working with engineering consultants to scope stormwater capital needs and studies to address these conditions.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Town of Tazewell Public Works Department provides residential refuse collection, brush and bulk pickup, and related services. Residents secure refuse in containers for regular collection; special and bulk pickups are arranged in advance through the Town office, and brush collection is available for a per-load fee. Disposal is handled in coordination with Tazewell County's solid-waste arrangements. Residential collection occurs at least weekly, with more frequent service in some locations, and the Town replaces its garbage truck on a five-year cycle. Disposal is handled through the Tazewell County Landfill at no cost to the Town. Residents have access to a recycling center accepting cardboard and other materials. The roll-off truck used to service the recycling center's dumpsters will need replacement within the next two years.

Law Enforcement

The Town of Tazewell Police Department provides primary law-enforcement service within the corporate limits, supported by the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police, and currently employs 15 sworn officers and 2 civilian staff covering a 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. shift. The Department emphasizes a community-first approach, providing security for the Town's road races, parades, and festivals and sponsoring community programs such as Shop with a Cop, the Kids Fish Day, and a community dinner. In 2024 the Town purchased and renovated a new facility for the Department after it outgrew its space within Town Hall; the relocated department has been described as having one of the nicest police facilities in the area. The Department began leasing its vehicle fleet through the Enterprise Fleet Management program in 2025 and replaces an average of three vehicles per year. In keeping with the Code of Virginia, the Department makes crime statistics available to the public, and call volume has increased over the past year. Sustaining adequate staffing, competitive compensation, equipment, and training is the central long-term issue for the Department, as it is for small-town departments across the region—recruiting and retaining officers amid competing compensation from other localities remains an ongoing challenge. The Department is an accredited agency.

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Fire protection is provided by the volunteer Town of Tazewell Fire Department, operating 18 volunteer firefighters from its station on West Main Street, which is in good condition, with automatic and mutual aid from neighboring volunteer companies including the North Tazewell and Thompson Valley departments. The Department's apparatus fleet includes five trucks, with a new pumper under contract for delivery in 2028 at a cost of $999,787.37 and holds an ISO Public Protection Classification of Class 5. Emergency medical service and patient transport are provided through Tazewell EMS, which maintains 16 full-time employees, operates seven ambulances—including two purchased new in 2025—and maintains a separate mutual aid agreement with Tazewell County; the Town's budget reflects a substantial commitment to rescue-squad operations. EMS staffing, transport capability, and response times are currently adequate, though the EMS building needs expansion, a need being addressed in part through a $354,000 Congressional Directed Spending Grant matched with $300,000 in Town funds. In 2025, the Fire Department responded to 179 fire calls, while Tazewell EMS responded to 3,326 EMS calls, underscoring a trend seen throughout Southwest Virginia: as with volunteer fire and EMS organizations across the region, the recruitment and retention of volunteers, the rising cost of apparatus and equipment, and the increasing share of EMS calls relative to fire calls are the defining challenges over the planning horizon, with direct implications for the Town's fire-insurance rating and response times.

Parks and Recreation

The Town provides recreational programming and maintains its recreation facilities through Public Works and a Town Recreation Director, with youth athletics forming a core of community programming; the Town's spring 2026 recreation soccer league—the first season run directly by the Town rather than an outside organization—enrolled 183 children. The Town's recreation system includes Lincolnshire Park, a 21-acre lake facility with an Aqua Park, boat launch, kayak and paddleboard rentals, tennis courts, picnic shelters, softball and soccer fields, the Kidzown playground, a Junior Olympic swimming pool, a splash pad, and two walking trails—the 1.9-mile Patriot Trail loop and the 1.5-mile Barnes Trail, named for the late George F. "Frank" Barnes, Jr., a veteran and longtime community member on whose former land the trail was built. Dunford Park offers a rentable shelter with restrooms adjacent to the Town's dog park, while the newest facility, War Hawk Park, was developed with the Thompson Charitable Foundation and Each One Teach One and offers a rentable shelter, two pickleball courts, and a basketball court. The Town also operates the Old Junior High Gym, a full-size basketball court with stadium seating available for rental, and the Tazewell Little League Fields, which serve youth baseball and softball. Overall facility condition is good, though restroom facilities need updating and a drainage issue at Lincolnshire Park's back field requires attention. Parks and recreation contribute directly to quality of life, public health, and the Town's appeal to families and prospective residents, and the Town's parks and trail assets—including the Patriot and Barnes Trails—connect to the broader Trails, Greenways, and Gateways framework described elsewhere in this Plan.

Public Schools

Public education in Tazewell is provided by Tazewell County Public Schools, a county-operated division of roughly fourteen schools serving the County under the direction of the Division Superintendent. Students in the Town are served by the Tazewell attendance-zone schools—Tazewell Primary, Tazewell Intermediate (in adjacent North Tazewell), Tazewell Middle, and Tazewell High School—together with the County's career and technical center. As of June 2026, enrollment across the four Tazewell-zone schools totaled 1,549 students: 344 at Tazewell Primary, 360 at Tazewell Intermediate, 372 at Tazewell Middle, and 473 at Tazewell High School. Elementary enrollment has been in decline countywide, averaging a loss of roughly 100 students per year over the past decade, a trend with long-term implications for facility utilization and staffing across the division.

The Tazewell-area schools are in good condition and, based on past enrollment levels, operate well under design capacity—Tazewell High School can support 1,200 students, Tazewell Middle 1,000, and Tazewell Primary and Tazewell Intermediate 600 each—leaving room to absorb growth without near-term capital expansion. Planned facility improvements are concentrated at Tazewell High School, where repairs to the gym and cafeteria walls began July 20, 2026, with bathroom renovations to follow beginning in September.

On the workforce side, Tazewell High School offers agriculture and business CTE programs, and the Tazewell County Career and Technical Center offers additional trade programs in construction, automotive technology, criminal justice, and CNA/nursing assistant training—programs that cross-reference directly with the workforce-development priorities described in the Economic Development chapter. Although the schools are a County rather than a Town responsibility, the quality, condition, and enrollment trajectory of the local schools remain central to Tazewell's attractiveness to families and employers, and the Town has a clear interest in supporting and coordinating with the division.

Library and Cultural Services

Town residents are served by the Tazewell County Library at 129 Main Street, open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (closed Sunday). The branch closed in April 2023 for renovation and reopened in December 2024 with new LED lighting, flooring, and a new circulation desk. Programming includes Mother Goose Story Time, book clubs for various ages, and a chess club, among other offerings; during the Town's Main Street Moments event on July 24–25, 2026, the library recorded more than 1,000 visitors over the two days. The library provides public computer access and free Wi-Fi, and, having recently completed renovations that addressed its structural issues, has no further capital needs identified at this time.

Healthcare and Medical Services

Healthcare in Tazewell reflects the realities of rural Southwest Virginia: routine and some specialty care is available locally, while higher-acuity hospital and specialist services draw residents to regional facilities beyond the Town. The Town of Tazewell is home to Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital, Southwest Community Health System, and a newly opened Carilion Clinic, supplemented by behavioral health services through Cumberland Mountain Community Services, Southwest Community Health System, and Addair Behavioral Services, and by dental care through Lutz Family Dentistry, Tazewell Dental Group, Dr. Ronald Householder, DDS, and Southwest Community Health System; EMS transport calls originating in Town most often terminate at Carilion Roanoke Memorial, Wake Forest Baptist Hospital, Pikeville Medical Center, and VCU Medical Center. Access is shaped by travel distance, provider availability, and, critically, the strength of digital infrastructure that enables telehealth.

Within the four-county Cumberland Plateau trading area—Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell—the 2026 Telehealth Feasibility Study prepared for the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission found that Tazewell County consistently outperforms its regional neighbors on the measures that most directly affect resident access to care.

Tazewell's population-to-primary-care-physician ratio has run roughly half that of Buchanan, Russell, and Dickenson Counties in every year measured between 2010 and 2021, and its population-to-dentist ratio is the strongest in the region by a wide margin. The County also posts the lowest or tied-lowest cancer mortality rate among the four counties for both men and women, a comparatively low teen birth rate, and the highest broadband access score in the region—a meaningful advantage given broadband's role as the precursor to telehealth adoption. Much of this advantage traces to Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital's affiliation with the broader Carilion Health System, which operates in 20 counties across Virginia and West Virginia and serves nearly a million patients; the Tazewell facility not only anchors care locally but also draws patients from Russell County and from Mercer and McDowell Counties, West Virginia, underscoring the Town's position as a regional health care hub rather than merely a recipient of outside care.

These findings reinforce that healthcare access is both a community-services issue and, given the sector's role as a regional employer, an economic-development and workforce catalyst for the Town. The Telehealth Feasibility Study's findings and recommendations provide a current foundation for how continued investment in telehealth and broadband can extend Tazewell's existing advantages further into the surrounding region, reinforcing the Town's role as a health care anchor for Southwest Virginia.

Government and Administrative Facilities

Town Hall, located at 211 Central Avenue, houses the Town's administrative offices—including the town manager, treasurer, and zoning and property maintenance functions—and remains in good condition. The Public Works facility, recently relocated to 2430 Fincastle Turnpike, requires a new roof on its mechanic and street department building. Since 2019, the Town has used Southern Software FMS to manage utility billing, property tax, business license, and accounts payable functions.

Who Provides What

Community facilities and services at a glance

Service	Town of Tazewell	County / PSA	Volunteer / Independent
Drinking water	●	●	
Wastewater / sewer	●	●	
Stormwater	●		
Solid waste & recycling	●	●	
Police	●	●	
Fire protection			●
Emergency medical / rescue			●
Parks & recreation	●		
Public schools		●	
Library & digital access		●	
Healthcare			●
Town government / admin	●		

Police is also supported by the County Sheriff and Virginia State Police; fire and EMS rely on mutual aid across neighboring volunteer companies.

Source: Town of Tazewell 2026 Comprehensive Plan, Community Facilities & Services element.

Summary of Issues and Implications

Taken together, Tazewell's community facilities and services are functional and, in several areas, recently improved—but they carry the familiar pressures of a small Appalachian town: aging water and sewer infrastructure with significant compliance obligations, including an estimated $1.3 million in lead service line replacement and a $19 million wastewater treatment plant upgrade already underway; volunteer-dependent emergency services facing recruitment and cost challenges even as EMS call volume (3,326 calls in 2025) far outpaces fire calls (179); healthcare access constrained by geography; and the steady fiscal demands of maintaining facilities on a modest revenue base, reflected in near-term commitments such as the $999,787.37 fire apparatus purchase and the $354,000/$300,000 EMS facility expansion.

BROADBAND & CONNECTIVITY

For most communities, broadband is one infrastructure among many. For Tazewell, it is something more fundamental. The geography that defines this community—the mountain valleys of the Appalachian Plateau, eighty-five miles from the nearest metropolitan centers and well removed from the interstate corridors that carry the modern economy—has always imposed a tax on distance. Every market reached, every specialist consulted, every credential earned, and every customer served has historically required residents of this valley to travel farther, wait longer, and choose from less than their counterparts elsewhere in the Commonwealth or Nation.

Broadband is the first infrastructure in the Town's two-century history that neutralizes that geography rather than merely mitigating it. A viable internet connection carries a Tazewell student into any classroom, a Tazewell patient into a specialist's office, a Tazewell business into a national market, and a remote worker's salary into a Main Street household—without anyone driving a mountain road to get there. For a community whose physical isolation has shaped its economic fortunes since the coal era, the availability of modern connectivity, and the community's capacity to actually adopt and use it, are not technology questions. They are the contemporary form of the access questions—the turnpike, the railroad, the highway—on which Tazewell's prospects have always turned.

This section assesses broadband availability, deployment, and adoption in the Town of Tazewell and the surrounding county. It is a new element of this Plan, responsive to § 15.2-2223 E of the Code of Virginia, which directs that the comprehensive plan consider strategies to provide broadband infrastructure sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses. Connectivity also runs through nearly every other element of this Plan—the telehealth opportunity identified in Community Facilities, the remote-work in-migration opportunity identified in the SWOT analysis, and the competitiveness of the Town's housing and Main Street commercial space.

The central finding of this section is one of genuine and recent change. For most of the past two decades, inadequate broadband was an accurate and defining weakness of the Cumberland Plateau region. As of 2026, that is no longer the right description of the Town of Tazewell. Through a sustained sequence of state and federal investment—executed regionally through the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission—the Town and its county have moved from broadband scarcity to a funded path toward universal availability. The strategic question this Plan must address has therefore shifted: from how to get infrastructure built, to how to ensure residents can afford and use it, and how to convert connectivity into economic advantage.

Current Coverage and Providers

The Town proper is the best-served geography in Tazewell County. Point Broadband operates a fiber-to-the-premises network offering symmetrical speeds up to one gigabit, with coverage spanning the majority of the town footprint and approximately 84 percent of county residents, and with construction continuing in additional areas of the county. Spectrum provides cable service to roughly two-thirds of the town at download speeds of a gigabit or more. GigaBeam Networks operates a fixed wireless network serving portions of the county, small incumbent providers—Burke's Garden Telephone and Citizens Telephone Cooperative—serve limited pockets, and satellite service is universally available. In practical terms, a household or business within the corporate limits has access to modern broadband from at least one terrestrial provider, and in much of the town from two competing wireline networks—a level of choice uncommon in rural Southwest Virginia.

Table: Broadband Providers Serving the Tazewell Area, 2026

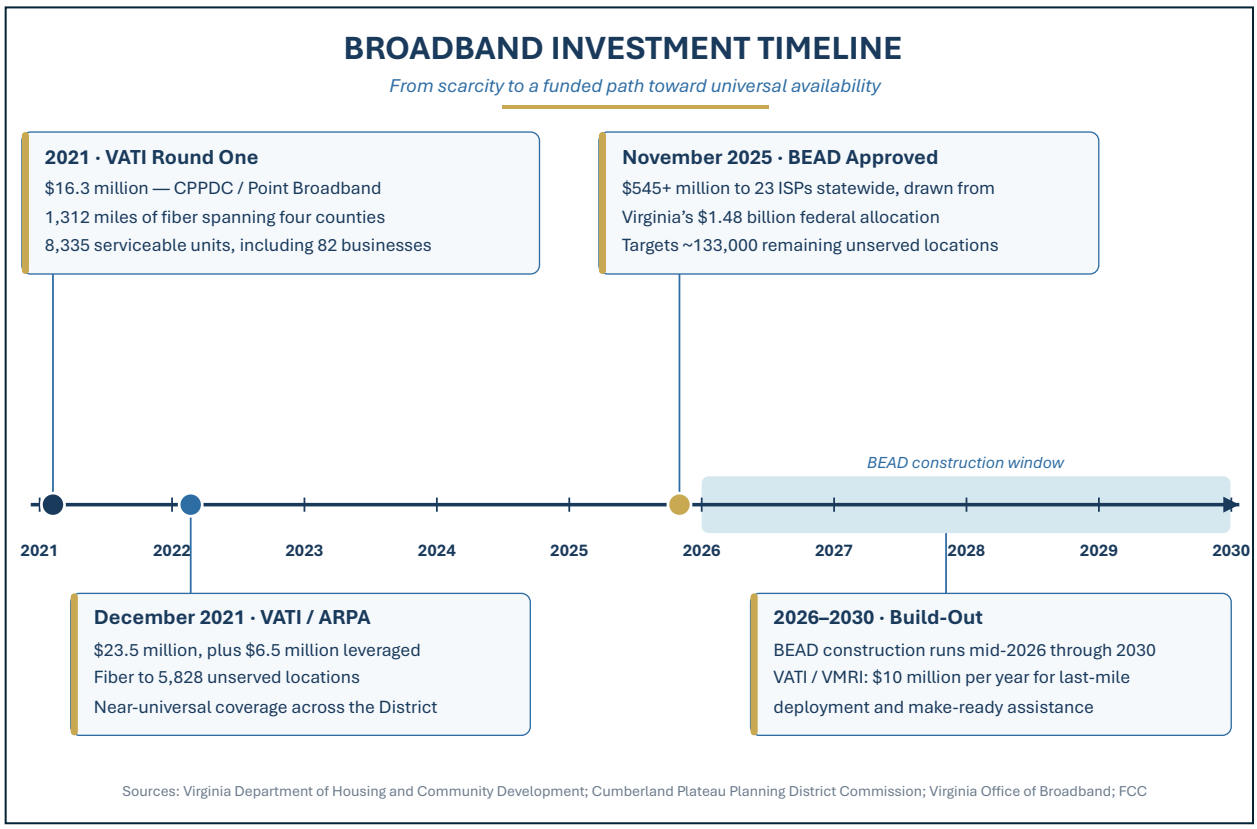
Provider	Technology	Approximate Availability
Point Broadband	Fiber (FTTP)	Majority of town footprint and ~84% of county; symmetrical speeds to 1 Gbps; network still expanding
Spectrum (Charter)	Cable (DOCSIS)	Roughly two-thirds of the town; download speeds to 1 Gbps+
GigaBeam Networks	Fixed wireless / fiber	Fixed wireless network across portions of Tazewell County
Burke's Garden Telephone / Citizens Telephone Cooperative	Fiber / DSL	Small service pockets within and adjacent to the town
Satellite (Starlink, Viasat, HughesNet)	LEO / GEO satellite	Effectively 100% of the town and county

Sources: FCC Broadband Data Collection as reported by third-party aggregators (BroadbandNow, BestNeighborhood); provider service maps (Point Broadband, GigaBeam Networks). Availability percentages are approximations and vary among data sources; see the note below.

The VATI Buildout

The transformation of the area's broadband picture is the product of deliberate, regionally executed investment—and the Town's own planning district carried it. In the 2021 round of the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI), the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission and Point Broadband received $16.3 million to construct 1,312 miles of fiber across Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell Counties, reaching 8,335 serviceable units including 82 businesses. In December 2021, a second award of $23.5 million—leveraging $6.5 million in additional investment—funded fiber to 5,828 remaining unserved locations with the stated goal of achieving universal coverage across the four-county District. In total, CPPDC has secured more than $53 million in VATI awards toward universal coverage in the District.

Execution matters as much as the award, and here the regional record is strong. In a 2024 statewide review in which Virginia deemed roughly two-thirds of recently funded broadband projects behind schedule, the Cumberland Plateau project was specifically identified as not at risk of missing the federal deadline for expending its American Rescue Plan Act funds. Point Broadband's construction program in Tazewell County remains active in 2026, extending the fiber network into additional areas as the buildout proceeds toward completion.



BEAD and the Path to Universal Service

The federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is the finish-the-job layer above the VATI work. In November 2025, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration approved Virginia's BEAD Final Proposal, authorizing more than $545 million in awards to 23 internet service providers—drawn from the Commonwealth's $1.48 billion allocation and leveraging nearly $430 million in private investment—to extend broadband to the roughly 133,000 locations statewide that remained unserved. By early 2026, funded projects were underway for the remaining unserved locations, positioning Virginia to be among the first states to achieve universal connectivity.

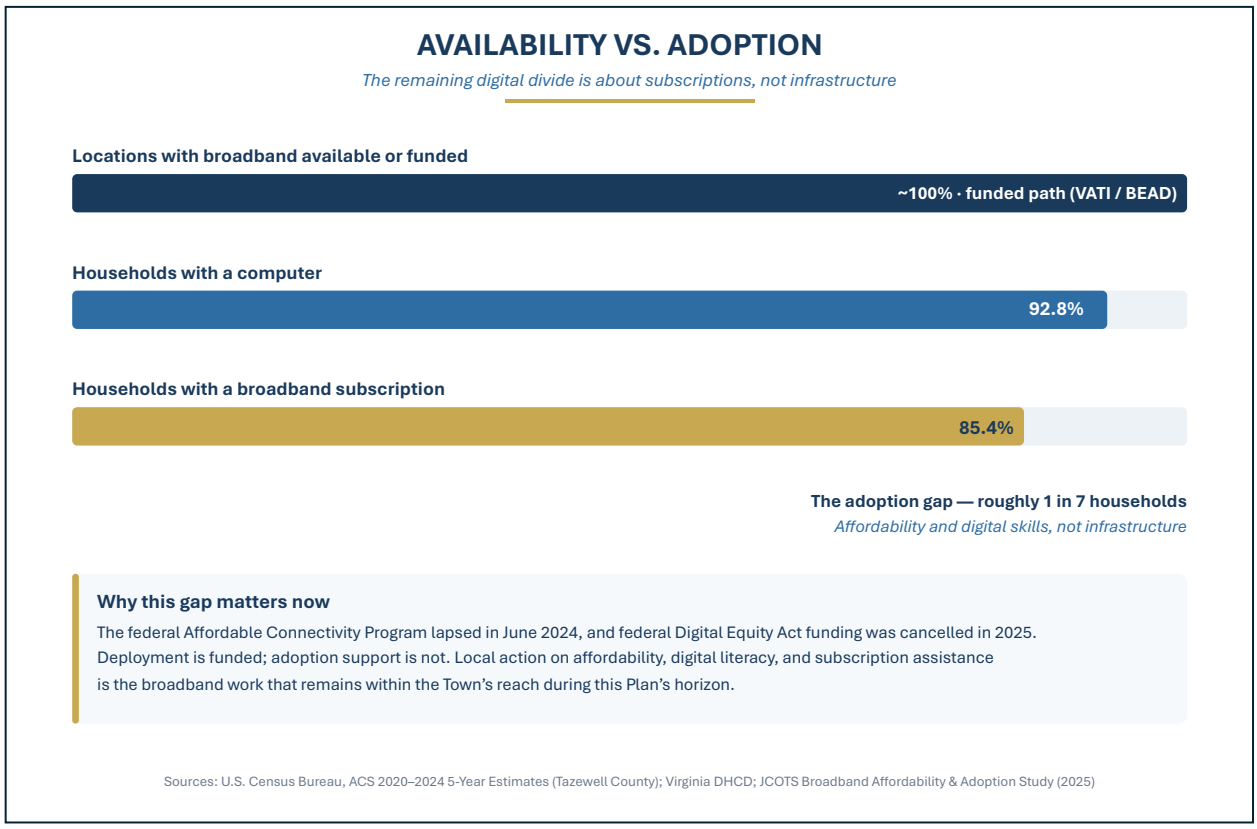
Two qualifications belong in the Town's planning assumptions. First, timing: the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission expects BEAD-funded construction to begin in mid-2026 and run through 2030 or later, and cautions that some locations may remain unserved due to provider performance and gaps in the underlying coverage maps. Second, and favorably: Tazewell County is not among the Virginia counties with the largest remaining unserved inventories—a direct consequence of the VATI work already completed or in progress. For the Town itself, which sits at the well-served core of its county, BEAD's significance is less about new construction within the corporate limits than about completing the rural county and regional market the Town serves as a hub. The state pipeline also remains open beyond BEAD, with continuing VATI appropriations of $10 million per year in the current biennium and a Make Ready Initiative addressing pole-attachment costs—the obstacle most often responsible for rural deployment delays.

From Availability to Adoption

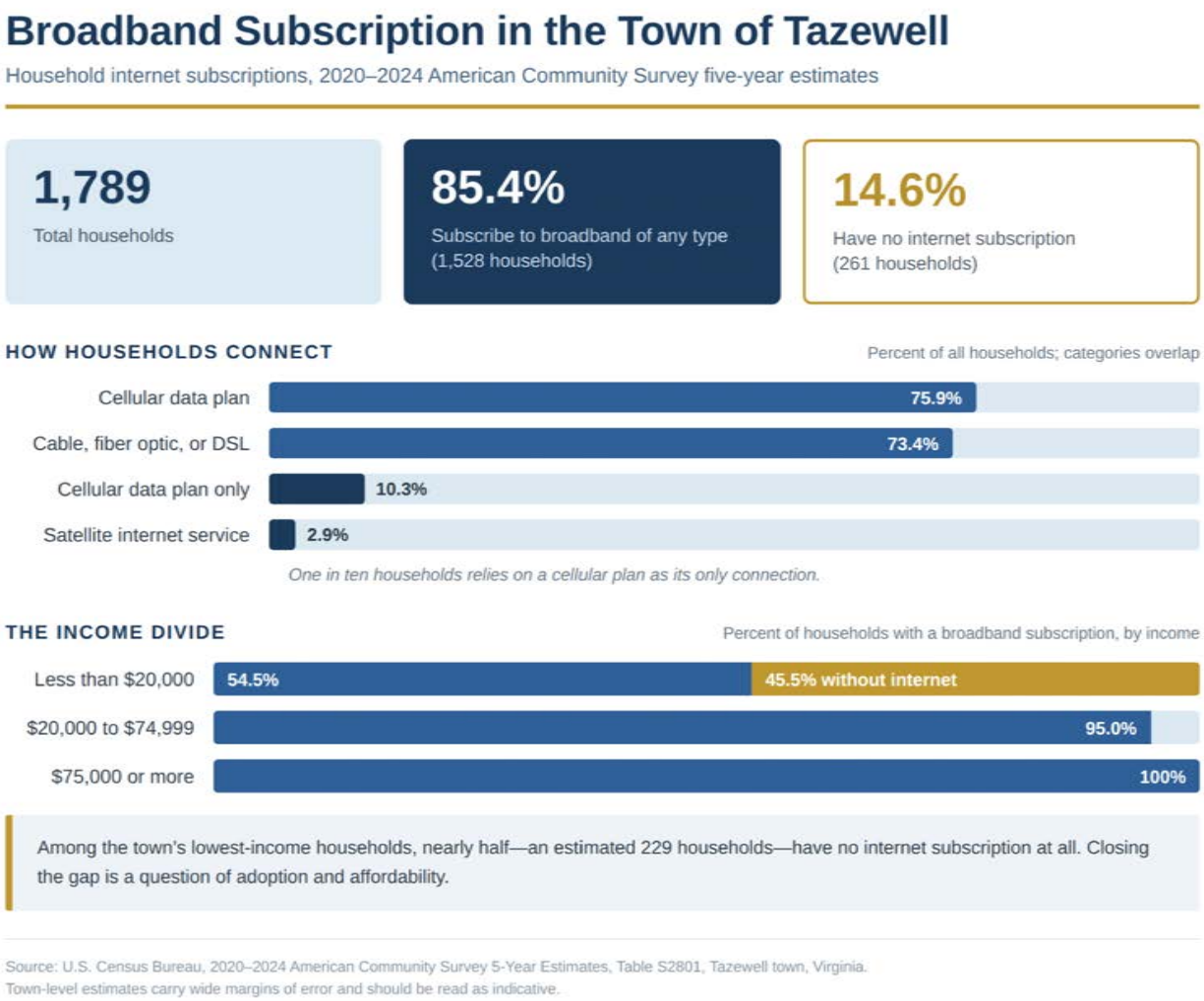
As regional internet infrastructure approaches completion, the focus shifts to adoption—whether households actually subscribe to and use the service available to them—and in Tazewell a major obstacle is certainly affordability.

As the Economic Base element illustrates, the town's median household income is $34,618, roughly 37 percent of the statewide median, and approximately one in four residents lives below the poverty line. A $59-per-month fiber subscription is a materially different proposition at that income than at the state median—and the principal federal affordability support, the Affordable Connectivity Program, ended in mid-2024 when Congress declined to renew its funding, removing a $30-per-month subsidy on which low-income rural households disproportionately relied. It should be noted that other programs—such as The Lifeline Program at the federal level and various provider initiatives can help to alleviate broadband costs but not to the extent of the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Tazewell's demographics compound the broadband adoption challenge. Nearly one in four town residents is 65 or older, and 17.8 percent of all town households are a senior living alone—populations with lower rates of subscription and digital confidence, and precisely the populations for whom connectivity now carries the highest stakes, as telehealth becomes a primary channel for the healthcare access documented in the Community Facilities element and the Cumberland Plateau Telehealth Strategy. The county library's role as the Town's point of free public internet access and digital assistance, noted in Community Facilities, takes on added weight in this context.



Connectivity is now an asset to be marketed, not a deficit to be remedied. Symmetrical gigabit fiber overlaying a median home value of $111,700 is a combination few communities in Virginia—or the nation—can offer a remote worker. Paired with the Town's scenic setting, historic Main Street, and outdoor-recreation identity, modern connectivity converts the SWOT analysis's "remote-work and amenity-driven in-migration" opportunity from aspiration into a credible, marketable proposition—and it strengthens every retention argument this Plan makes for existing employers, Main Street businesses, and institutions.



Summary of Issues and Implications

Three findings define the Town's connectivity position and should inform the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan.

First, the infrastructure problem that defined the region for two decades is, for all intents and purposes, funded and solved. The Town sits at the well-served core of a county where fiber availability now reaches a majority of residents, with VATI construction continuing and BEAD funding the final unserved locations on a 2026–2030 horizon. The Plan's assessment of broadband has been updated accordingly—availability is among the Town's strengths, while the residual weakness is adoption and affordability.

Second, with a median household income near $34,600, the loss of the federal Affordable Connectivity Program, and a large population of seniors living alone, the gap between what is available and what households actually subscribe to is the live policy problem—one the Town can address through digital-literacy partnerships, sustained support for the library's public-access role, and advocacy for state and federal affordability programs.

Third, connectivity has become one of the Town's most marketable assets: gigabit symmetrical service at small-town housing costs directly supports the remote-work in-migration, telehealth, and business-retention strategies carried in Goal 1 and the Implementation Framework. The Town's task over this Plan's horizon is not to build the network—that work is funded and underway—but to make sure its residents are on it, and that its economic development story takes full credit for it.

Sources: Code of Virginia § 15.2-2223 E; Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, VATI and BEAD program materials and award announcements (2021–2025); NTIA approval of Virginia's BEAD Final Proposal (November 2025); Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, Broadband Deployment in Virginia (2024); Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission; FCC Broadband Data Collection as reported by third-party aggregators; provider service information (Point Broadband, GigaBeam Networks, Charter/Spectrum); U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

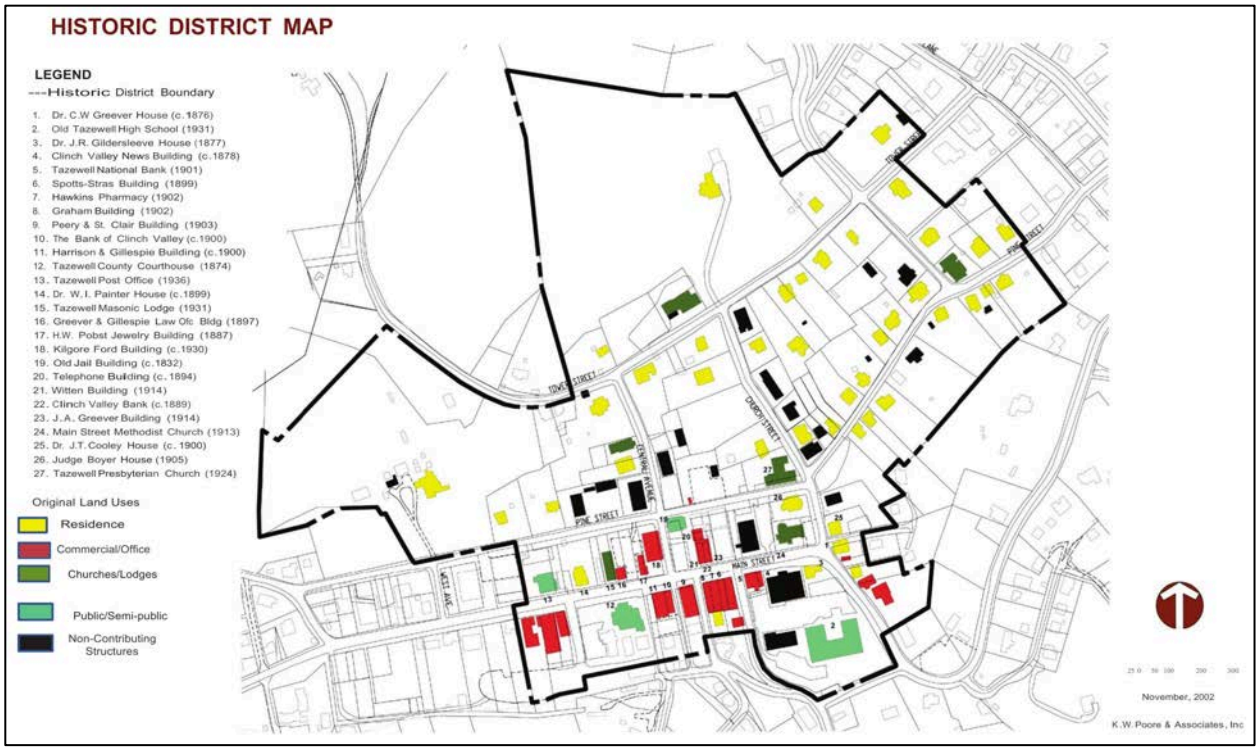
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Community preservation and development is where a town's identity and its economic future meet. For Tazewell, the two are inseparable: the historic Main Street fabric, the scenic and natural setting, and the heritage assets that give the Town its character are also the foundation of its strategy for attracting visitors, investment, and new residents. Relative to its size, Tazewell is unusually well-positioned in this area. It holds a National Register historic district, an accredited Main Street program, a nationally recognized tourism asset anchored on Main Street, completed adaptive-reuse successes, and several active funding initiatives. This section inventories those assets and efforts and frames how they support the goals developed later in this plan.

Historic Preservation Framework

The Town's preservation framework rests on the Tazewell Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002 and expanded through a boundary increase in 2016, and also carried on the Virginia Landmarks Register. The district encompasses the core of the Town's historic commercial and institutional fabric along Main Street, Church Street, Tower Street, Pine Street, Central Avenue, and the historic Fincastle Turnpike. This designation is more than honorary. It establishes eligibility for state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, strengthens the Town's competitiveness for preservation and downtown grant funding, and provides the formal basis for protecting the architectural character that distinguishes Tazewell's downtown.

Preserving and actively leveraging this district is among the Town's most durable development assets.



Map: Historic District-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell.

The Main Street Program

Tazewell's preservation-based economic development is organized through its participation in the Virginia Main Street program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Town was designated a Virginia Main Street community in 2020 and has maintained accreditation since. The work is carried day to day by Tazewell Today, Inc., a nonprofit Main Street organization governed by a volunteer board and led by an executive director, operating within the nationally recognized Main Street Approach and its four points of focus: economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization.

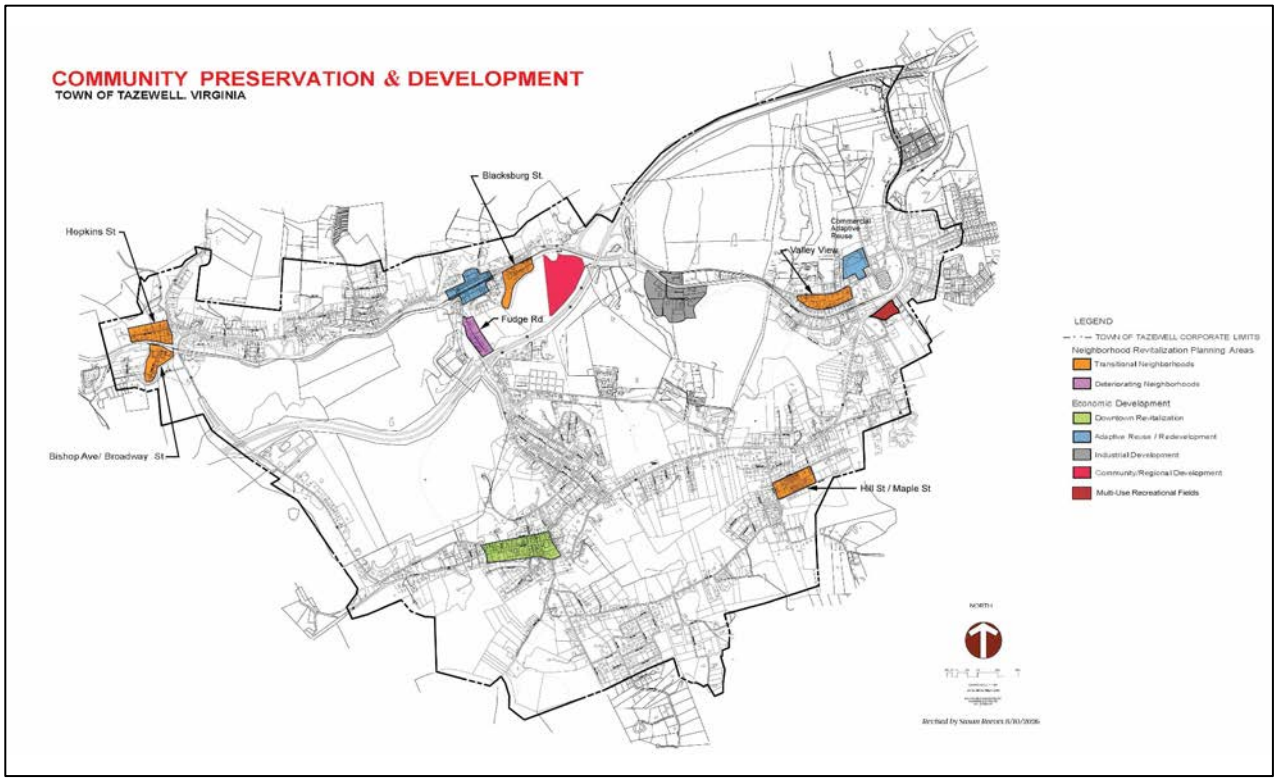
Accreditation matters in concrete financial terms. It positions the Town and Tazewell Today to compete for Virginia Main Street grant funding, and the organization has already secured competitive awards through the program, including a Financial Feasibility Grant in the 2023 Virginia Main Street award cycle. Maintaining accreditation requires sustained organizational discipline—a paid executive director, an active board, regular reporting to the state and national Main Street programs, and an ongoing historic-preservation ethic—which in turn keeps the Town connected to a statewide network of technical assistance and funding intelligence. Tazewell Today functions, in effect, as the Town's dedicated downtown-development capacity, supplementing a lean municipal staff.

> **Why the Main Street designation is a strategic asset.** For a small town with limited staff, an accredited Main Street organization provides something the Town could not easily build on its own: a focused, grant-eligible, volunteer-driven engine for downtown revitalization, backed by state technical assistance. Protecting and resourcing this designation—and the partnership between the Town and Tazewell Today—should be treated as a core community-development priority in this plan.

Downtown Revitalization Strategy

The Town's downtown-development thinking advanced significantly in early 2026 with the completion of a Downtown Inventory and Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy, prepared by Place + Main Advisors, LLC and presented to Town Council in February 2026. The strategy combines community input, market research, and property-level analysis to chart a direction for downtown Tazewell, and it was informed by a community walking and visioning tour in which residents, business owners, and local leaders walked Main Street together to identify vacant spaces, prospective businesses, and opportunities for the district's future.

This strategy is the Town's most current and detailed statement of downtown direction, and this Comprehensive Plan is intended to align with and reinforce it rather than duplicate it. The land use, economic, and goals sections of this plan should incorporate the strategy's findings and recommendations directly, so that the two documents function as a coordinated whole—the Comprehensive Plan setting the long-range community framework and the redevelopment strategy supplying the parcel-level, market-grounded detail for the downtown core.



Map: Community Preservation & Development-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell

Heritage, Tourism & Recreation Assets

Tazewell's development strategy is built on an unusually strong base of heritage, tourism, and recreation assets—several of them directly anchored in or adjacent to the Town:

- **Back of the Dragon.** The 32-mile stretch of State Route 16 between Tazewell and Marion—known for its hundreds of curves and recognized as Virginia's only state-designated motorcycle route—received official tourism designation in 2012 and has become a nationally known draw for motorcycle and sports-car enthusiasts. Regional officials have credited it with substantial tourism-related business formation and private investment across the two-county area. Importantly for the Town, the asset has a Main Street anchor: a Back of the Dragon Welcome Center on Main Street (Route 16), developed with state coalfield and tobacco-region financing, bringing visitor traffic directly into the downtown.

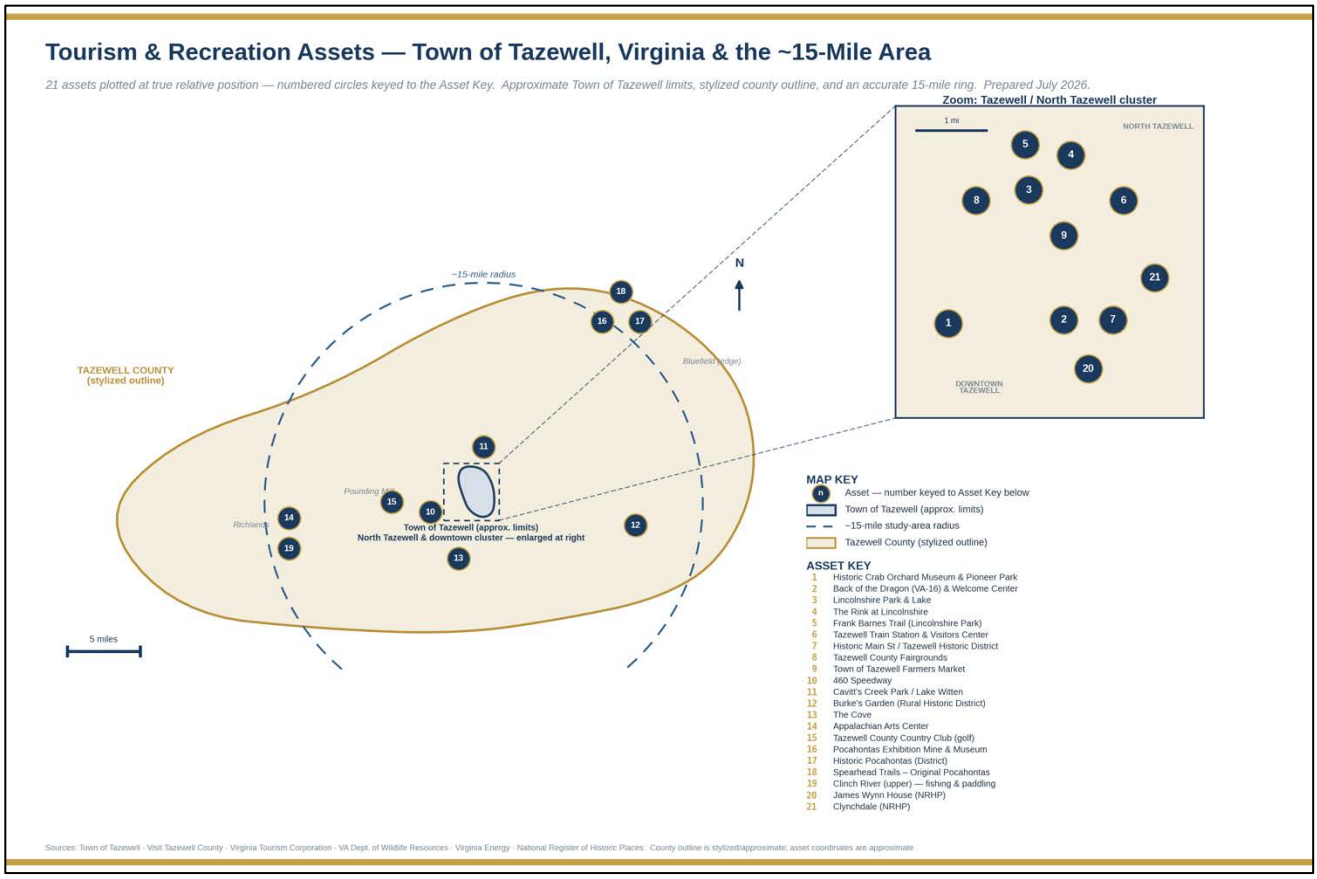
- **Tazewell Train Station & Visitors Center.** One of only two remaining depots along the historic Clinch Valley rail line, restored and reopened between 2014 and 2019 through a partnership between the Town and the Tazewell County Historical Society. Located in North Tazewell with free admission, it serves as a visitor gateway and exhibit space—and stands as a completed model of the kind of adaptive reuse the Town can pursue elsewhere.

- **Historic Crab Orchard Museum & Pioneer Park.** A regional cultural-heritage center interpreting Appalachian history from prehistoric times forward, and one of the County's signature heritage attractions.

- **Parks and the Clinch River.** Lincolnshire Park and the nearby Cavitt's Creek Park and Lake Witten provide the area's principal outdoor-recreation anchors. The Clinch River—among the most biologically diverse freshwater systems in North America and a longstanding Nature Conservancy conservation priority—gained a new anchor in 2021 with the establishment of Clinch River State Park, envisioned as a connected series of access points stretching from Tazewell County toward Tennessee.

Taken together, these assets give Tazewell a heritage-and-outdoor-tourism identity that many communities of its size lack. The strategic opportunity—developed further in this plan's goals—is to convert visitor traffic, particularly the through-traffic the Back of the Dragon generates, into sustained downtown spending, business formation, and reinvestment in the historic core.

The following map depicts and locates 21 of the trading area’s mainstay tourism and recreation assets.



Active Community-Development Initiatives

Beyond its standing assets, the Town is engaged in several current initiatives that bear directly on community development and should be reflected and coordinated within this plan:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).** The Town is actively pursuing CDBG funding through the Virginia DHCD program, holding public hearings in 2026 to solicit community input on local community-development and housing needs tied to a prospective project. CDBG remains a primary funding pathway for the kind of infrastructure, housing, and downtown improvements this plan contemplates.

- **Regional housing development study.** In 2026, the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA) committed grant funding toward a preliminary engineering and environmental study for a potential new housing development on a sizable tract in the Tazewell area—part of a broader regional recognition that the lack of modern housing stock is a constraint on growth. This effort connects directly to the housing element of this plan and to the statutory requirement that the plan address housing for residents of all income levels.

These initiatives, together with the downtown redevelopment strategy, represent real and current momentum. A central task of this Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that such efforts are not pursued in isolation but are aligned to a shared set of community goals—so that each grant, study, and project reinforces a coherent direction rather than advancing in parallel.

Summary

Tazewell's community-preservation-and-development position is genuinely strong for a town of its size: a National Register historic district, an accredited Main Street program with dedicated organizational capacity, a marquee tourism asset anchored on Main Street, proven adaptive-reuse successes, and active funding pipelines for downtown, housing, and infrastructure. These strengths coexist with the challenges documented elsewhere in this plan—stagnant population, an aging housing stock, and downtown vacancy that the new redevelopment strategy is expressly intended to address. The opportunity this section points toward is not to manufacture assets the Town lacks, but to align and leverage the considerable assets it already holds. The goals and implementation measures that follow are framed to do exactly that.

Sources: Town of Tazewell; Tazewell Today, Inc.; Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (Virginia Main Street program); National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register; Place + Main Advisors Downtown Inventory and Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy (2026); Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority; Virginia Tourism Corporation; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; Tazewell County Historical Society; and regional news reporting.

TRAILS, GREENWAYS, AND GATEWAYS

This element inventories the Town's trails, greenways, and gateways and assesses the framework carried forward from the prior Comprehensive Plan against conditions on the ground in 2026. The framework concerns three related systems: the multi-use trails that move people on foot and by bicycle, the greenway corridors that conserve the Clinch River and its tributaries, and the gateways that mark the approaches into Town and guide visitors to its historic core. Because most of the prior framework was adopted but not built, this chapter is as much an inventory of intentions as of constructed facilities—and that gap between plan and ground shapes much of the assessment that follows. Three regional developments since the last plan also bear materially on the picture and are described below.

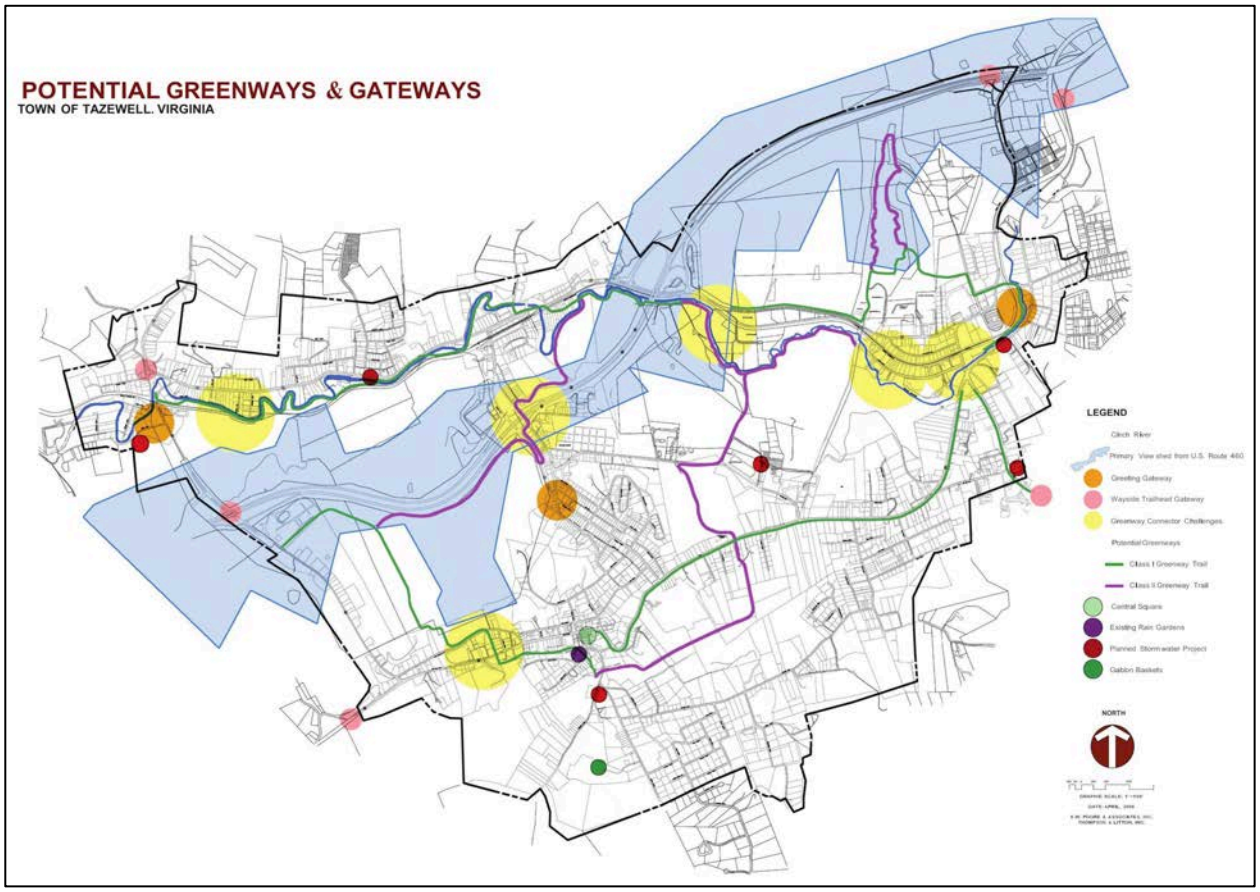
The Existing System

At the time of the prior plan the Town had no designated multi-use trails, and the element set out to create the area's first connected system, organized around the Clinch River and the four U.S. 19/460 interchanges. Its principal components are inventoried below.

Table: Components of the Trails, Greenways and Gateways Framework

Component	What the Prior Plan Established
Multi-use trail network	Approximately 13 miles of combined Class I (paved, 7.9 mi) and Class II (unpaved, 5.8 mi) trails, largely along the Clinch River, Fincastle Turnpike, Riverside Drive, and Route 61, at a planning-level cost near $4.1 million.
Lincolnshire Park fitness loop	A hiking and fitness loop around Lincolnshire Park Lake, tied into the regional Mountain Heritage Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.
Greenway corridors	Open-space corridors along the Clinch and its tributaries, conserved primarily through easements, proffers, and donations rather than fee-simple purchase, paired with rain-garden and stormwater measures.
Interchange gateways	Gateway treatment at the Market Street, Tazewell Avenue, Riverside Drive, and Fairground Road interchanges—the Town's "front door"—with a wayfinding signage program and monument-style sign standards.
Parkway Overlay District	A scenic overlay along U.S. 19/460 protecting the corridor's foreground, middle ground, and back ground viewsheds, with ridgeline protection.

On the ground, most of this network remains unbuilt. The Lincolnshire Park loop and segments of in-town sidewalk are the principal pieces realized; the Parkway Overlay District and the trail and greenway system remain on paper. The practical effect is that the prior vision survives largely intact and available to carry forward, rather than requiring reconstruction from a built but outdated baseline.



Map: Potential Greenways & Gateways-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell.

Regional Context Since the Last Plan

Three developments postdate the prior plan and were not reflected in its trails-and-gateways thinking. Each bears on how the Town's framework should be understood today.

Clinch River State Park—Virginia's first Blueway. Designated in 2021, the Clinch has become the spine of a "string of pearls" state park spanning Tazewell, Russell, Wise, and Scott Counties. The river originates in Tazewell County, yet every developed access point and boat launch lies downstream. The prior plan treated the Clinch as a conservation corridor and biodiversity asset and had no way to anticipate that it would become a marketed state-park system; the consequence is that the headwaters community holds the least-developed access along the new system.

The Back of the Dragon—a marquee corridor terminating downtown. Route 16 between Tazewell and Marion is a state-designated scenic driving and motorcycling route credited regionally with dozens of new businesses, hundreds of jobs, and roughly $10 million in private tourism investment. Its northern terminus and a dedicated Welcome Center sit on Main Street in Tazewell. The prior gateway framework was built around the four U.S. 19/460 interchanges and did not address Route 16, with the result that the Town's strongest tourism approach lies outside its formal gateway plan.

Advancing Virginia Main Street designation. The prior plan recommended pursuing a Main Street program; the Town has since achieved Advancing Virginia Main Street status, which provides an organizational structure and funding pathway for downtown-anchored gateway and wayfinding work that the earlier plan could only anticipate. Lincolnshire Park has likewise been upgraded with an aqua park and kayak and paddleboard rentals, reinforcing its role as a recreation hub.

Condition and Outlook by Component

Trails. The trail concept set out in the prior plan remains sound, and because little was constructed, it can be advanced largely as drawn. The Lincolnshire Park loop is the most readily achievable component: it lies on public land, carries a modest cost, and connects to the Mountain Heritage Loop. The Class I segment along the Clinch corridor, from the River Jack area to Riverside Drive, carries weight beyond its length, since it would function as the spine linking the in-town network to a future river access. Read against current conditions, the network increasingly reads less as standalone recreation than as connective tissue among downtown, Lincolnshire Park, the river, and the Route 16 terminus.

Greenways. The corridor-conservation approach—protecting the Clinch and its tributaries through easements, proffers, and donations rather than fee-simple purchase—remains fiscally prudent and well-matched to the river's biodiversity value. What has changed is the river's status: the blueway designation reframes the Clinch from a conservation corridor into the recreational and tourism spine of a marketed state-park system. Tazewell's circumstance is distinctive in that the river originates in the County while developed access lies downstream, leaving the headwaters community with the least-developed access along the system—a condition that, together with the "where the Clinch begins" identity it supports, stands out as the element's clearest opportunity.

Gateways. The four-interchange treatment along U.S. 19/460 remains valid, as does the Parkway Overlay District conceived to protect the scenic approach—though, as noted above, the overlay was never adopted and is carried forward here for adoption rather than as a measure already in force; it is treated in detail in the subsection that follows. The notable gap is Route 16. The Back of the Dragon has matured into the Town's strongest tourism gateway, with its northern terminus and Welcome Center on Main Street, yet it sits outside a framework organized around the U.S. 19/460 interchanges. The Main Street designation now offers a ready vehicle for the downtown-anchored wayfinding that would connect the several gateways to the historic core.

Sequencing and funding. The sequencing logic of the prior plan—beginning on publicly owned land and rights-of-way, building resident support, and addressing the more difficult railroad, roadway, and river crossings later—remains appropriate. The funding picture requires only modest updating: the plan's reliance on the former TEA-21 program is obsolete, its role now filled by the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside under the federal infrastructure law and administered through VDOT. A range of active programs remains well-suited to this work, including the Recreational Trails Program, the Virginia Outdoors Fund, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for acquisition and trail development; the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside for bicycle, pedestrian, and gateway improvements; and tourism-oriented sources such as the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, several of which have already supported regional assets including the Back of the Dragon Welcome Center.

The Parkway Overlay District

The scenery along the U.S. 19/460 corridor is among Tazewell's most valuable and least replaceable assets. The open pasture of the foreground, the rolling hills that rise behind it, and the mountain ridgelines that frame the Town's principal approach together form the scenic gateway through which most visitors first experience Tazewell. That landscape is a source of local pride and a direct contributor to the heritage-and-outdoor-tourism identity on which much of this Plan's economic strategy depends. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan proposed a Parkway Overlay District to protect the scenic integrity of this corridor as it passes through Town and recommended its adoption as a discrete zoning instrument. The district was carried in concept but never enacted, and it is brought forward here essentially intact—because the asset it was written to protect remains intact, and because the developments of the intervening years have only strengthened the case for protecting it.

> **Why this matters now.** The same scenic corridor that the overlay was written to guard is now the approach to a Town positioning itself as a heritage and outdoor-recreation destination. Protecting the U.S. 19/460 viewshed is no longer a purely aesthetic concern; it is part of safeguarding the first impression on which downtown spending, in-migration, and reinvestment increasingly turn. Adopting the overlay would also advance the entrance-corridor objectives set out in the Urban Design goal of this Plan.

Purpose. The Parkway Overlay District is intended to preserve the scenic rural landscape of the U.S. 19/460 corridor without arresting appropriate development along it. Its purposes are to encourage complementary development that fits the corridor's established character, to preserve the gateway experience a visitor forms on the approach into Town, to protect the agricultural land and scenic vistas that define the corridor's foreground, and to establish a framework of "green infrastructure" within which the corridor can be maintained as a community asset over the long term. Taken together, these aims serve the broader purpose of enhancing quality of life across the Tazewell region.

To accomplish this, the district would establish five core protections. First, it provides hillside development standards that minimize the visual impact of man-made structures and grading on views of existing landforms, geologic features, landscape features, and open space as seen from designated public roads. Second, it protects and preserves views of major and minor ridgelines from those same roads. Third, it creates a development-review process that allows administrative, staff-level approval of projects meeting the district's standards while routing projects that fall short to the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission for review. Fourth, it minimizes cut and fill, earthmoving, and grading so that finished slopes remain compatible with existing land character. And fifth, it promotes architecture and site design suited to hillside terrain in order to minimize visual intrusion.

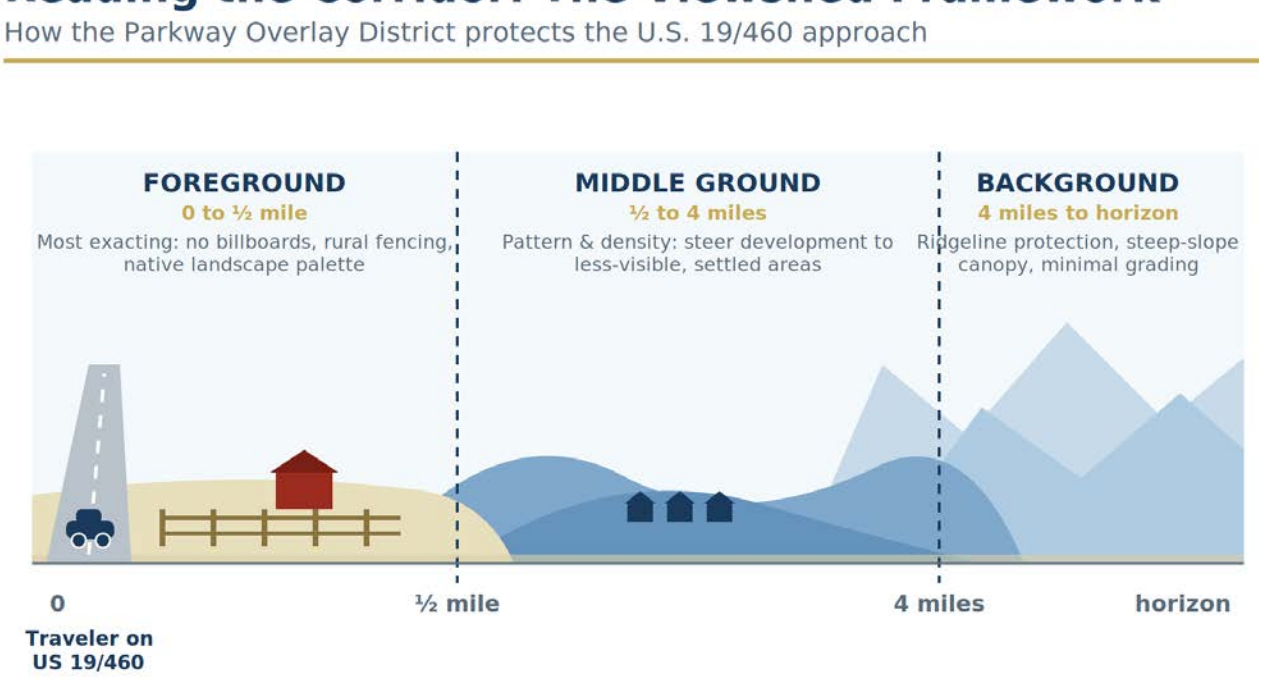
The Viewshed Framework. The district organizes its standards around the concept of the viewshed—the field of view available to a traveler along the corridor. A viewshed comprises three zones defined by distance from the viewer. The foreground extends from the viewing location to roughly one-half mile; the middle ground from one-half mile to about four miles; and the background from four miles to the horizon. Each zone reads differently along U.S. 19/460 and calls for a different protective emphasis.

In Tazewell, the foreground is characterized by green pasture in active farming, with farm buildings and houses sparsely scattered across it. The middle ground is rolling hills, broken by occasional views of urbanized areas, houses, and retail development. The background consists of mountain peak and ridge views, with some areas of mined land visible on the higher slopes. The design standards described below are organized by these three zones.

Foreground Standards (0 to ½ Mile). Because the foreground is the most immediate and intimately seen portion of the corridor, its standards are the most exacting. Commercial advertising signs and billboards would be prohibited within this zone, though signs identifying property locations and destinations would remain permitted. Chain-link fencing would not be allowed; district guidelines would instead direct landowners toward fencing consistent with the area's agricultural character, constructed of traditional or natural materials such as wood or hedgerows. A landscape palette would be adopted to maintain and expand native plant life within the district and to provide screening to future development beyond the corridor. Suggested species include Red Oak, White Oak, Red Maple, Red Cedar, Hickory, Sycamore, River Birch, Rhododendron, ferns, and, at higher elevations, Mountain Laurel. The district would also provide a local match for the maintenance and preservation of features in which the Town holds a distinct public interest and would work to preserve the rustic "barn-roof" character and architectural features of the buildings and homes throughout the area through development standards keyed to that local character.

Middle Ground Standards (½ to 4 Miles). In the middle ground, the emphasis shifts from the appearance of individual sites to the broader pattern of development across the rolling hills. The district would provide a mechanism to shift the density of proposed development toward the less-visible areas within this zone, and would encourage development to locate within existing settlement areas rather than spreading across open valleys—preventing the kind of scattered sprawl that erodes the corridor's rural reading.

Background Standards (4 Miles to the Horizon). The background is defined by the mountains that ring the Town, and its protections are correspondingly focused on the integrity of those slopes and ridgelines. Cut and fill, earthmoving, grading, and other man-made alterations of the natural terrain would be restricted so that finished slopes remain compatible with existing land character. Tree canopy would be maintained on steep slopes to protect them and to prevent erosion. A ridgeline-protection component would address the mountain ridges surrounding the Town directly, moving power lines, cellular towers, and similar infrastructure out of view wherever practicable.



Design Standards and Implementation. It is recommended that the Town establish a set of design standards that protect the unique scenic quality of the corridor. Such standards would set in place measures for the preservation of agricultural and forestal lands and other lands of significance and would assist in protecting buildings and structures of scenic, historic, architectural, or cultural interest. Districts and standards of this kind are authorized under state enabling legislation and may be adopted by the Town.

The Parkway Overlay District should be implemented through preparation of a local ordinance that designates the district boundary and sets forth the specific design guidelines needed to ensure compatible development and viewshed protection. In tandem, the landscape palette should be put in place to maintain and expand native plant life within the district and to screen future development beyond the corridor. Because the overlay was proposed but never adopted under the prior Plan, the immediate next step is to initiate the adoption process—drawing the boundary, drafting the guidelines, and coordinating the instrument with the Town's broader zoning-ordinance update.

Summary of Issues and Implications

Taken together, Tazewell's trails, greenways, and gateways framework is largely intact, largely unbuilt, and—owing to developments the prior plan could not foresee—better positioned than when it was written. The trail and greenway network remains available to carry forward essentially as conceived; the Clinch River's emergence as Virginia's first blueway, the arrival of the Back of the Dragon as a marquee tourism corridor terminating downtown, and the Town's Main Street designation each strengthen the case for a connected system and supply tools to build it.

These conditions establish the priorities carried forward into the Goals and Objectives and the Implementation Framework: connecting the trail system to the Blueway and the Route 16 terminus, securing a headwaters river-access point on the Clinch, extending gateway and wayfinding treatment to the Back of the Dragon corridor, and protecting the U.S. 19/460 scenic approach through adoption of the long-proposed Parkway Overlay District—each pursued in phases the Town can realistically fund and sustain.

PART FOUR

ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC DIRECTION



Credit: Susan Reeves

SWOT ANALYSIS

This element distills the preceding analysis into a concise assessment of the Town's position—its internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats that, ultimately, determine its future.

SWOT Analysis serves as the bridge between the background chapters and the Goals and Objectives that follow. The factors below are drawn from the plan's data analysis and regional context and are offered as a starting point for validation and refinement by the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Strengths INTERNAL · HELPFUL	***Weaknesses*** INTERNAL · HARMFUL
• County seat and civic service hub • Walkable historic downtown district • Back of the Dragon trailhead in town • Crab Orchard Museum heritage tourism • Carilion Tazewell hospital anchor • Scenic Clinch River valley setting • Town-run police, water, and public works • Broadband availability	• Static population for fifty years • Aging population and ongoing out-migration • Low incomes and high poverty (about 25%) • Eroding, coal-tied employment base • Aging utilities and rising compliance costs • Persistent downtown vacancies • Limited economic-development prospects • Broadband adoption
Opportunities EXTERNAL · HELPFUL	***Threats*** EXTERNAL · HARMFUL
• Recreation and heritage tourism growth • Downtown and Main Street revitalization • Broadband paired with telehealth • ARC, GO Virginia, and Tobacco Commission funding • Remote-work and amenity-driven in-migration • Healthcare-sector growth and jobs • Retention and expansion of existing manufacturers	• Continued regional out-migration • Ongoing coal-economy contraction • Workforce and skilled-labor shortages • Shrinking tax base against rising costs • Competition from larger regional hubs • Dependence on external grant cycles • Valley flood risk and aging infrastructure

Sources: 2021 Tazewell Comprehensive Plan; U.S. Census and American Community Survey; Data USA; Tazewell County tourism and service-provider data.

2021 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INITIATIVES UPDATE

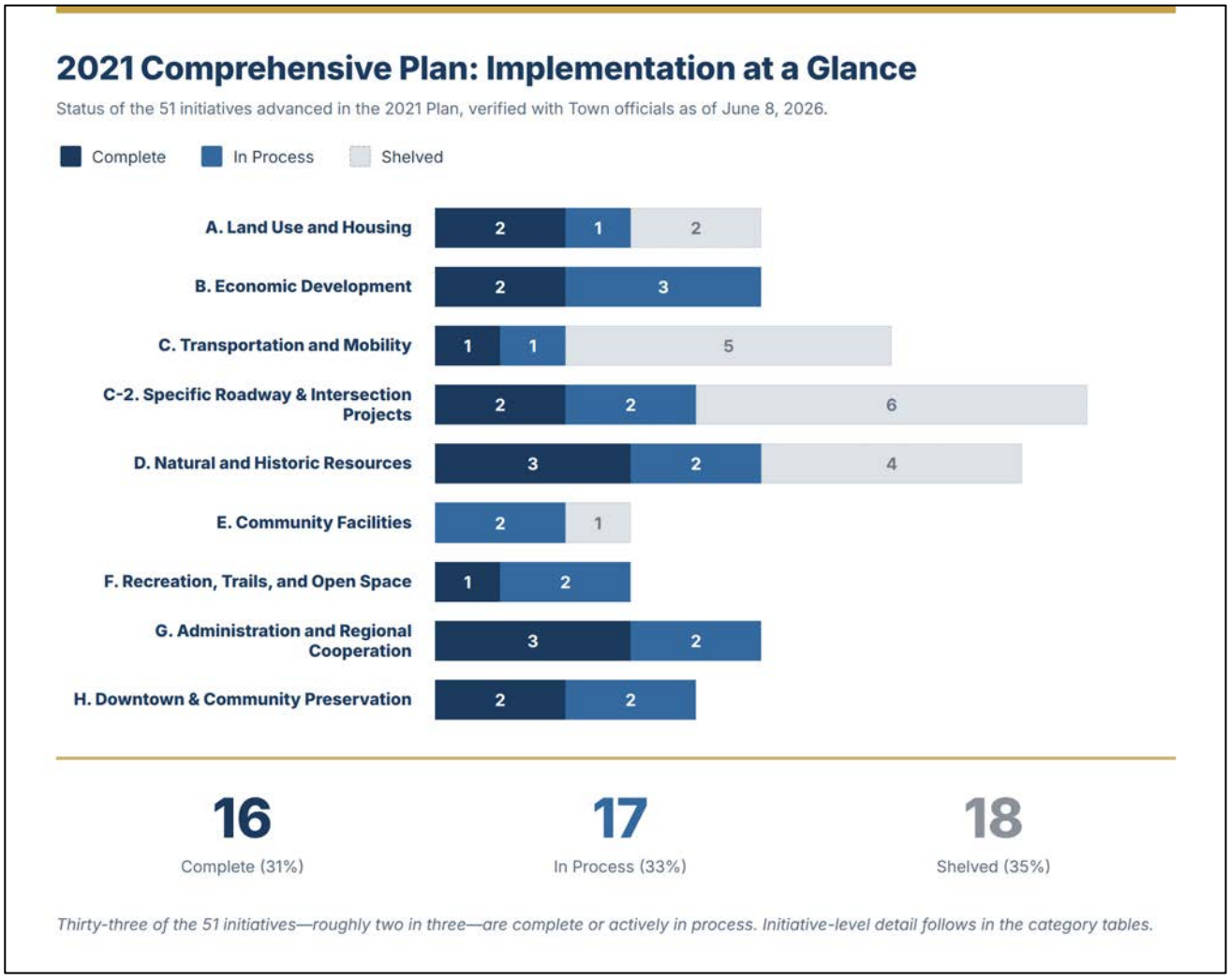
Planning is not a single event but a continuous process, and each comprehensive plan is best understood as the next chapter in an ongoing story rather than a fresh start. Every plan builds on the one before it—carrying forward the goals that still matter, learning from the efforts that stalled, and adjusting to new conditions the community faces. As the starting point for this update, the planning team took stock of where the last chapter left off: it mapped an inventory of the principal initiatives advanced in the Town's 2021 Comprehensive Plan and reviewed the progress of each, in a present-day context, with Town officials who know—firsthand—what has moved and what has not.

Each initiative is denoted as *Complete*, *In Process*, or *Shelved*. *Complete* initiatives are those where the work has been finished and absorbed into the everyday life of the Town; *In Process* initiatives are those where implementation is underway and continuing; and *Shelved* initiatives are those that have been placed on hold or set aside altogether as conditions and priorities have changed. These designations are less a report card than a snapshot of a living plan at a single moment in time, and they reflect the natural rhythm of a planning cycle: some efforts conclude quickly, others unfold steadily over many years, and still others sit dormant until the right circumstances—funding, partners, or political will—finally align to carry them forward.

Hindsight, of course, is 20/20, and our candid assessment of the prior plan is offered in that constructive spirit. The 2021 Plan was, in a word, ambitious. It advanced a large and wide-ranging slate of initiatives—many of them worthy on their own terms, but collectively far more than a small, rural community could realistically resource and deliver within a single planning horizon. A number carried goals that would have strained the budget, staff capacity, and timeline of a locality many times Tazewell's size. Taken together, the sheer volume and breadth of these disparate initiatives set an implicit bar that was difficult to clear, establishing performance expectations the community was unlikely ever to fully meet—not for any lack of effort or commitment, but because the plan simply asked for more than the resources at hand could support. That is a common and understandable failing of ambitious plans, and it is precisely the kind of lesson a continuous planning process exists to absorb.

Even measured against that overreach, the record is genuinely encouraging. Within real constraints, the Town still managed to complete or make active progress on initiatives across a number of priority areas—evidence of steady, capable follow-through even when the overall agenda outpaced the means available to pursue it. This update takes that record as both a foundation and a lesson: it aims to carry forward what is working, honor the goals that remain relevant, and concentrate the Town's finite time and resources on a tighter, more attainable set of priorities—so that the next assessment measures progress against expectations the community can realistically achieve.

Here is a synopsis of the 51 main initiatives contained in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.



What follows is a more granular, line-item assessment of these initiatives. *Note: Some items will be denoted as Complete & Continuing if they have been achieved and are also ongoing.*

2021 Plan Progress: A. Land Use and Housing

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process ◌ Shelved

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Revise the Town zoning ordinance to add overlay districts—Parkway Overlay, Floodplain Overlay, and Entrance Corridor Overlay.	*Proposed*	◌	
2	Revise zoning district boundaries to reflect the Future Land Use Map.	*Proposed*	●	Partially completed.
3	Place limits on the amount of residential development permitted in the Agriculture (A-1) and Business (B-2) districts.	*Proposed*	●	
4	Seek CDBG, VHDA, and Rural Development funding to rehabilitate housing in neighborhoods identified as Transitional or Deteriorating.	*Proposed*	◌	Town has invested more in tourism than in housing.
5	Proceed with a comprehensive update / revision of the Tazewell zoning ordinance and zoning map to conform with the Plan and state enabling legislation.	*Proposed*	◑	

Category roll-up: ● 2 Complete ◑ 1 In Process ◌ 2 Shelved

2021 Plan Progress: B. Economic Development

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process ◉ Complete & Continuing

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Encourage redevelopment of commercially zoned areas in North Tazewell.	*Proposed*	◑	
2	Continue to support festivals and community events that promote tourism.	*Partial*	◑	
3	Apply for Affiliate Status as a Virginia "Main Street" community.	—	●	
4	Establish a façade improvement loan / grant program for commercial structures in the downtown historic district.	*Proposed*	◑	The focus was on North Tazewell.
5	Apply for CDBG, ARC, Rural Development, Tobacco Commission, VCEDA, and other economic-development grants / loans.	*Proposed*	◉	

Category roll-up: ● 1 Complete ◉ 1 Complete & Continuing ◑ 3 In Process

2021 Plan Progress: C. Transportation and Mobility

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process ◌ Shelved

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Implement sidewalk, curb-and-gutter, and drainage improvements along Maplewood Lane from Carline Avenue to Bull Dog Lane.	*Partial*	●	
2	Implement Fairground Road improvements identified in the Tazewell 2020 Transportation Plan.	*Proposed*	◌	
3	Where feasible, widen urban roads within existing rights-of-way to include a 6–8 ft. shoulder for pedestrian / bicycle use.	*Proposed*	◑	Focus is more on pedestrian than bicycle.
4	Create a master road plan identifying locations of future local and access roads to reduce traffic on main roads.	*Proposed*	◌	
5	Establish bikeways on minor arterial roads.	*Proposed*	◌	
6	Pursue transportation alternatives, and associated funding, for residents who are disabled, elderly, or otherwise limited.	*Proposed*	◌	
7	Explore with the County the possibility of adding parking lots in the downtown area.	*Proposed*	◌	

Category roll-up: ● 1 Complete ◑ 1 In Process ◌ 5 Shelved

2021 Plan Progress: C-2. Specific Roadway & Intersection Projects

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◐ In Process ◌ Shelved

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Provide left-turn lanes where Riverside Drive branches south from Market Street.	—	◌	
2	Realign the Market Street / Riverside Drive intersection to allow the signal to operate in all four directions.	—	◌	
3	Widen Riverside Drive to a three-lane cross-section (with continuous turning lane) from Market Street south to Fincastle Turnpike.	—	◌	
4	Fincastle Turnpike / Bulldog Lane area TSM improvements—signal at the high-school entrance and turning lanes / signal at Steeles Lane.	—	◐	
5	Reconstruct portions of Fairground Road to a two-lane section with paved shoulders, curb, and gutter.	—	◌	
6	Widen Riverside Drive to four lanes from the old corporate limit east of the US 460/19 bypass.	—	●	Added a turn lane instead.
7	Reconstruct Tazewell Avenue between Riverside Drive and Fincastle Turnpike.	—	◌	
8	Widen the turning radius at Tazewell Avenue and Riverside Drive.	—	◌	Held conversations with VDOT but no viable plan.
9	Construct a Park-and-Ride lot on Fairground Road at the interchange.	—	●	The County did this, not the Town.
10	Add curb, gutter, sidewalks, and drainage along Fincastle Turnpike from Market Street north to the corporate limits.	—	◐	Proposed.

Category roll-up: ● 2 Complete ◐ 2 In Process ◌ 6 Shelved

2021 Plan Progress: D. Natural and Historic Resources

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process ◌ Shelved

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Establish a priority-ranking system for the greenways and trails in the Greenways Plan and begin developing the highest-ranked, with a dedicated greenways / trails budget line and outside funding.	*Proposed*	◌	
2	Initiate the process of adopting the Parkway Overlay Zoning District.	*Proposed*	◌	
3	Establish a committee or board responsible for natural-resource oversight, and prepare an open-space plan.	*Proposed*	◌	
4	Revise zoning and subdivision regulations so development on steeper slopes near the Clinch River follows Best Management Practices.	*Proposed*	◌	
5	Expand inter-governmental cooperation to protect the Clinch River and its associated waters across municipal boundaries.	*Proposed*	◑	
6	Develop, with the County, regulatory standards for adequate treatment of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.	*Proposed*	◑	
7	Initiate the process of defining additional historic district(s), including an inventory and documentation of historic structures.	*Proposed*	●	
8	Establish an Architectural Review Board and develop design guidelines for the Historic District.	*Proposed*	●	
9	Apply for Department of Historic Resources (DHR) funding to survey historic structures.	*Proposed*	●	

Category roll-up: ● 3 Complete ◑ 2 In Process ◌ 4 Shelved

2021 Plan Progress: E. Community Facilities

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

◑ In Process ◌ Shelved

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Use intergovernmental collaboration for municipal services—including exploring transfer of the wastewater treatment facility to the County Public Service Authority.	*Proposed*	◌	
2	Adopt and implement a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP): Public Works garage upgrade; renovation / reuse of the old County Administration / Social Services building; Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrade; capital-funding rotation for firefighting equipment; police patrol-car equipment; and 2020 Transportation / Six-Year Plan improvements.	*Proposed*	◑	
3	Prepare Town staffing projections for three, five, and ten years.	*Proposed*	◑	

Category roll-up: ◑ 2 In Process ◌ 1 Shelved

2021 Plan Progress: F. Recreation, Trails, and Open Space

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Survey residents every three years to identify recreational interests, including a regional inventory of facilities and services.	*Proposed*	◑	
2	Evaluate the potential for an indoor sports facility in a vacant or underutilized building near Lincolnshire Park.	*Proposed*	●	Project will not be pursued.
3	Acquire / reserve land for future neighborhood parks or playgrounds (via subdivision approval and / or a capital reserve fund).	*Proposed*	◑	

Category roll-up: ● 1 Complete ◑ 2 In Process

2021 Plan Progress: G. Administration and Regional Cooperation

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process ◉ Complete & Continuing

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to monitor progress, issue progress reports, hold public meetings, and advise the Planning Commission.	*Proposed*	●	
2	Develop specific annual work plans for each Town board, committee, and commission, and develop volunteer projects tied to the Plan.	*Proposed*	◑	
3	Use regional collaborations—including cooperative purchasing agreements—for cost-effective municipal services.	*Proposed*	●	
4	Meet with the County to review proposed zoning changes along municipal boundaries for compatibility.	*Proposed*	◑	
5	Continue to expand working relationships with the County on shared concerns (transportation, services, economic development, natural-resource protection).	*Proposed*	◉	

Category roll-up: ● 2 Complete ◉ 1 Complete & Continuing ◑ 2 In Process

2021 Plan Progress: H. Downtown & Community Preservation

Status verified with Town officials as of June 8, 2026. "2021 Claimed" shows the status asserted in the 2021 Plan.

● Complete ◑ In Process

No.	Initiative	2021 Claimed	Status	Note
1	Adopt Downtown / Historic District Design Review Guidelines as the principal means of safeguarding the character of the Historic District.	*Proposed*	●	
2	Establish a Historic Preservation Overlay district to incentivize preservation of historic downtown structures.	*Proposed*	●	
3	Implement the adopted Downtown Master Plan improvements—lighting, landscaping, brick sidewalks, and a downtown mini-park.	—	◑	
4	Pursue Virginia CDBG planning and construction funds to supplement the Town-funded façade program.	—	◑	

Category roll-up: ● 2 Complete ◑ 2 In Process

2026 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

If the Comprehensive Plan is to be useful, its stated goals must be known, understood, and supported by the people of Tazewell. The design of the Plan and its tools for implementation should be based upon these goals. If Tazewell's goals and objectives substantially change, the Plan and its implementation strategies should, accordingly, change in response. The sections that follow set out the goals, objectives, and strategies for each functional area of the Plan. These have been developed through a consensus building process by the Steering Committee, Town Manager, and support staff who are most intimately involved in the Town's operations.

How to Read This Section

Goals — general policy statements of what the Town of Tazewell, as a community, would like to achieve over the next five years.

Objectives — more specific benchmarks of progress that support a respective goal.

Strategies — specific actions to consider if Tazewell is to take positive steps toward its desired future.

GOAL 1 · Economic Development

To continually improve the economic well-being of Tazewell and the region.

Objective 1: *Maintain and expand the commercial and business base*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to promote the Tazewell area as a destination for commercial, retail, manufacturing, and recreation activity.
- Promote innovative partnerships between area centers of learning, training, and the business community.
- Work with local merchant and business groups to identify strengths and reduce obstacles to their success and growth potential.
- Continue to diversify the local economic base by attracting new retail stores and manufacturing firms, while encouraging and facilitating the expansion of existing firms in the community.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant warehouses in North Tazewell and the historic train depot.
- Encourage the retention, expansion, and new development of professional and governmental offices in the Tazewell area.

Objective 2: *Promote tourism, cultural, and historical development*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Expand year-round tourism and develop new opportunities and access to recreation on public lands.
- Develop a five-year strategic marketing campaign to promote tourism and recreation opportunities in Tazewell.
- Continue to improve Tazewell's downtown area and gateways in order to enhance their character and attractiveness to visitors.
- Encourage development of conference and lodging facilities in the Tazewell area.
- Continue to preserve and enhance the cultural resources of Tazewell and encourage opportunities for cultural expression and experience.
- Continue restoration and adaptive reuse efforts in the historic district, the North Tazewell area, and the Virginia Enterprise Zone within Tazewell.

Objective 3: *Promote sustainable forms of economic development*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Encourage development of a highly skilled and trained local workforce, which will offer its employers a competitive edge in technology-dependent businesses.
- Target sectors of Tazewell's tourism industry for enhanced development, promoting those that reflect the area's exceptional historic and scenic setting such as heritage tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and guided travel.
- Promote locally owned and operated, small-scale business development including traditional cottage industry, home-based businesses, and internet-based retailing and services.
- Encourage and cultivate diverse forms of small business and industry, targeting sectors suitable for the area such as arts and crafts, organic produce and meats, and specialty wood products.
- Link local efforts to establish a sustainable community with regional efforts in the Cumberland Plateau Planning District.
- Encourage the recycling of area manufacturing by-products to increase productivity and stimulate new business opportunities.

GOAL 2 · Historical and Cultural Development

To promote the historical and cultural heritage of Tazewell and the surrounding areas.

Objective 1: *Maintain and empower the historical review board to monitor, review, and maintain the architectural features in the Historic District*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Develop, implement, and periodically update, as necessary, the Comprehensive Design Review Guidelines to be adopted by the Tazewell Board of Historic and Architectural Review.
- Continue to maintain and enlarge as necessary the designation of the Tazewell Historic District.

Objective 2: *Promote public awareness and support for historic preservation and encourage cultural activities in the Tazewell area*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to support the facilities, activities, and programs for all arts organizations in Tazewell and increase public awareness of the arts through enhanced marketing and communication efforts.
- Continue to promote cultural education partnerships with local and regional institutions of higher learning, linking resources and participants to enhance effectiveness.
- Coordinate actions of government, the private sector, and non-profit organizations to achieve preservation goals by making information available regarding federal and state tax incentives for preservation and designation procedures.

GOAL 3 · Urban Design

Protect and enhance visual quality, design excellence, and the distinctive image of Tazewell.

Objective 1: *Communicate a clear, succinct image of downtown Tazewell while maintaining a humane, pedestrian-scaled environment*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Evaluate and implement where feasible the urban design concepts contained in the plan for Tazewell's downtown area.
- Develop detailed design plans for a coherent and complete downtown community.
- Evaluate and implement where feasible the pedestrian mobility measures contained in the plan.

Objective 2: *Coordinate and influence the physical and visual aspects of development in growth areas of Tazewell*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Encourage developers and builders to create identity and focus for the residential communities in and around Tazewell.
- Encourage public amenities and place-making elements in outlying commercial and residential areas, such as water features, seating areas, and other appropriate measures.
- Encourage private developers to incorporate sidewalks and walking trails in major subdivision developments and link housing with nearby recreation, retail, and community facilities.

Objective 3: *Design and develop entrance corridors that project a clear, positive image of Tazewell and reinforce its community identity*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Exercise those powers enabled under the Virginia Code to establish design controls along road corridors leading to historically significant areas.
- Establish and implement where feasible “entrance corridor guidelines” based on the urban design principles of the plan.
- Improve the appearance and function of both existing and newly developing commercial areas, including attention to landscaping, setbacks, lighting, signage, circulation, and parking-lot design.
- Promote streetscapes that reduce visual clutter and provide order, developed in stages and extended into public spaces by the private sector.
- Encourage the relocation of utilities underground along the Town’s entrance corridors where economically feasible.

GOAL 4 · Housing and Neighborhood Development

Improve the quality, quantity, and availability of housing for all socio-economic segments of the population.

Objective 1: *Maintain and improve the physical condition of the housing stock*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to actively enforce building construction and reconstruction standards.
- Continue to promote rehabilitation and maintenance of older housing units through building-code enforcement and continuing use of Community Development Block Grant funds.
- Continue to demolish and clear abandoned, blighted structures that constitute a public-safety hazard through redevelopment actions, code enforcement, and other means provided by law.

Objective 2: *Ensure and promote healthy, self-sufficient neighborhoods*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Preserve and revitalize existing residential neighborhoods and improve opportunities for home ownership.
- Encourage the strengthening of neighborhood capacity and organization; promote self-sufficiency and interaction among neighborhood groups.
- Identify and target for special action “priority neighborhoods” that are experiencing decline, development pressures, or other threats to their stability.

Objective 3: *Increase the availability of diverse, affordable forms of housing development*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Promote residential development within and around the downtown district, including where feasible the adaptive reuse of upper-story storefronts, institutional buildings, and related structures for apartments, elderly housing, live-work space, and other specialty residential and mixed uses.
- Partner with the Cumberland Plateau Planning District and Tazewell County leadership to provide a diversity of housing types, including apartments, townhouses, duplexes and triplexes, and small- and large-lot single-family homes.
- Encourage infill and higher densities of housing where it will not have harmful effects upon the surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective 4: *Expand housing opportunities for low-income, disabled, and elderly residents through public financing and non-profit partnerships*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Encourage the Town to seek state and federal financing to expand housing opportunities for low-income, disabled, and elderly residents, and encourage private non-profit groups to participate in the provision of affordable housing in town.
- Continue to support the activities of the Town and the Tazewell County Department of Social Services to provide safe, decent, and affordable assisted living.
- Encourage the construction of retirement housing, assisted-living centers, and other housing to meet the needs of the growing elderly and special-needs population.
- Support efforts to provide coordinated home-care services for persons with a disability and their families.

GOAL 5 · Transportation

Provide a safe, effective, and efficient transportation system serving automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic, while respecting the environment and scale of the historic areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective 1: *Improve the flow of traffic through the Town*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Work with VDOT under the 2020 Transportation Plan to develop priority Transportation System Management improvements for Tazewell's most congested areas.
- Evaluate and implement, where feasible, recommendations shown on the Transportation Plan that improve circulation through the widening of roads and turning radii at various intersections.

Objective 2: *Eliminate hazardous traffic and street conditions and improve parking availability*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Restrict ingress and egress at major shopping centers to limited points of access, including a signalized, controlled entrance wherever feasible.
- Upgrade substandard street sections in older areas of town in coordination with other utility and infrastructure improvements.
- Participate in evaluating the need for off-street parking facilities in the downtown area.

Objective 3: *Promote alternative types of transportation facilities*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Work with developers and landowners to develop a safe and complete network of neighborhood sidewalks for access to schools, Lincolnshire Park, and community facilities.
- Undertake a pedestrian safety study of the downtown area addressing crosswalk location, access for the disabled, pedestrian signals at intersections, reconstruction needs, obstructions, adequate lighting, and other pedestrian issues.

Objective 4: *Improve private and public transit services*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Promote the use of park-and-ride lots to encourage continued car-pooling and ride-sharing while supporting the potential growth and expansion of infrastructure to serve more citizens.

GOAL 6 · Community Facilities

Provide an appropriate level and variety of community facilities and services to enhance the quality of life for Tazewell-area residents.

Objective 1: *Continue to improve and expand the Tazewell sewer system to meet present and future needs*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Complete improvements to the sanitary sewer collection system, including infiltration and inflow reduction in sewer sheds, and service extensions to sewer problem areas in and around Tazewell.
- In response to the Environmental Protection Agency mandate, replace lead and copper lines by approving a replacement plan in 2027 and working to fully implement the plan by 2037.

Objective 2: *Continue to provide an adequate, cost-effective range of municipal services in conjunction with other service providers and volunteer organizations*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to provide cost-effective solid-waste collection and recycling services to all town residents.
- Insist on orderly improvement and expansion of the water system by the Tazewell County Public Service Authority to meet present and future needs, including adequate fire protection.
- Ensure the public safety of town residents by continuing to provide an adequately sized, well-trained police force.
- Continue to support the Tazewell Fire Department and encourage the local emergency rescue services.

Objective 3: *Continue to provide special service amenities and programs commensurate with Tazewell's role as a municipal leader*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to maintain a high standard for all the Town's municipal buildings and grounds.
- Partner with regional stakeholders to grow existing recreation infrastructure with a wide variety of facilities for use by area residents and visitors.
- Continue to preserve, enhance, and maintain certain natural features, historic qualities, and natural terrain in the Town's park and open-space system.
- Provide new opportunities for neighborhood parks, greenways, and multi-use trails.

Objective 4: *Provide storm-drainage improvements and control future development in identified flood-hazard areas*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Continue to provide public storm-drainage improvements in priority problem areas.
- Consider establishing a neighborhood drainage program to address smaller problems, assessing equitable user fees to recover program costs.
- Limit development adjacent to the Clinch River and avoid closed channelization of Tazewell's lesser creeks and tributaries.
- Encourage on private property, and implement on public property, the use of permeable paving, perforated paving blocks, rain gardens, and other innovative mechanisms to reduce run-off from impervious surfaces.
- Evaluate the utility of the existing North Tazewell dams and their impact on localized flooding.

GOAL 7 · Land Use and Environment

Achieve a balanced land use pattern that retains Tazewell's small-town character while accommodating quality growth in a planned manner.

Objective 1: *Provide and maintain adequate land areas for orderly, compatible, and efficient land use development*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Update and implement a land use plan defining the areas best suited to accommodate future needs for residential, institutional, commercial, industrial, and open-space activities.
- Ensure that future business and employment centers do not adversely affect or overburden the public facilities, environment, or existing town character of Tazewell.
- Review, update, and enforce the zoning ordinance in conjunction with revisions to the Comprehensive Plan to ensure harmonious and orderly development of land within the town.
- Strengthen cooperation between the Town and County in sharing land use information and staff expertise, and in coordinating site-plan review of projects impacting both jurisdictions.

Objective 2: *Reduce and avoid conflicting land uses*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Employ multifamily or office uses as transitional areas between single-family neighborhoods and more intensive land uses.
- Concentrate and cluster highway-oriented commercial activities to minimize traffic hazards and adverse visual impacts, restricting highway development to limited points of access.
- Address objectionable aspects of an industrial use through buffering and setback regulations and realistic, equitably applied performance standards.
- Promote redevelopment of vacant or underutilized industrial properties in North Tazewell and direct new manufacturing to the area's professionally planned industrial parks.

Objective 3: *Protect the natural environment from inappropriate development and use the natural setting to enhance the man-made environment*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Preserve the Clinch River and its tributary drainage ways, plus adjacent areas of steep terrain, as an open-space network.
- Retain trees, hillsides, and ridgelines for screening and to preserve visual character.
- Incorporate significant landscape features, both natural and man-made, into new site designs.
- Avoid development or expansion of natural-resource extraction areas where incompatible with existing or proposed development.
- Protect vistas to and from historical buildings and areas when development occurs.

Objective 4: *Ensure environmentally sound construction practices*

RELATED STRATEGIES

- Adapt development to the topography and natural setting rather than modifying them to accommodate development; discourage excessive grading, cutting, and filling while encouraging imaginative and sensitive design.
- Develop and implement best management practices for urban streams in Tazewell.
- Enforce, review, and periodically update the subdivision ordinance to ensure that new development is soundly engineered regarding street construction, lot layout, drainage control, and buffering.
- Ensure submission of and compliance with all erosion- and sedimentation-control plans required under building permits for excavation work.
- Ensure submission of and compliance with all drainage plans required for handling of on- and off-site drainage.

PART FIVE

PRIORITY INITIATIVES



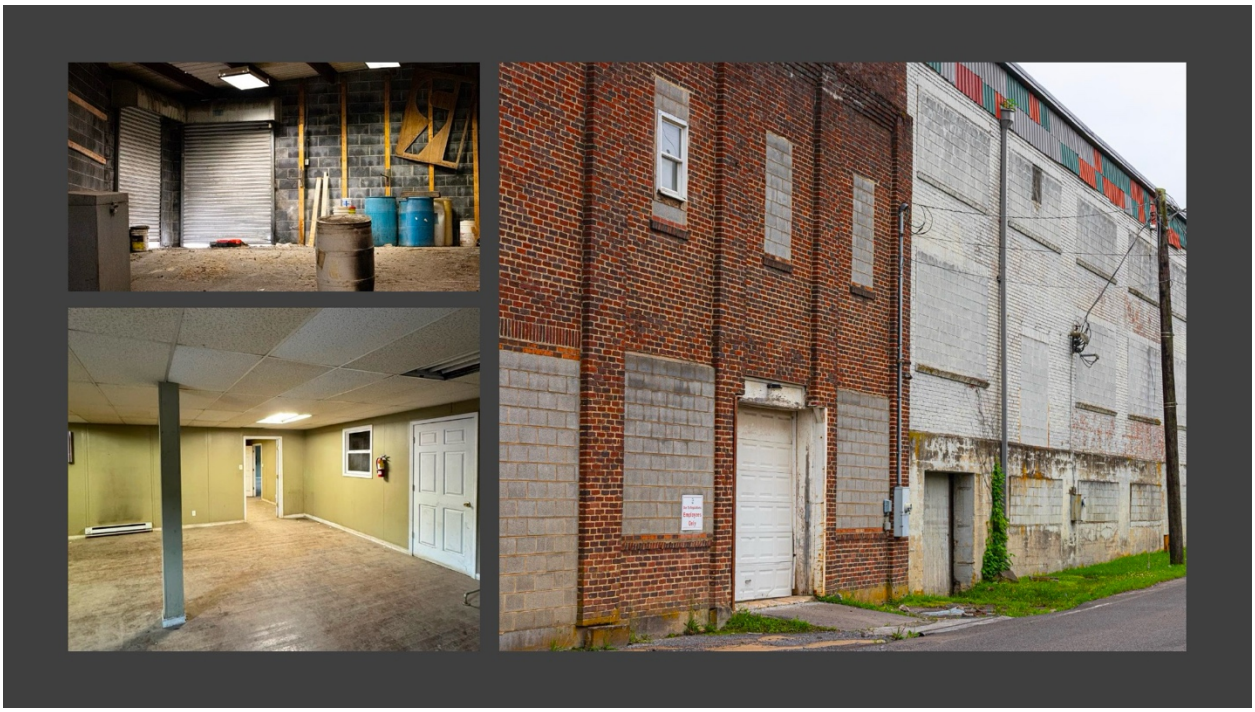
Credit: Susan Reeves

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

The elements of this Plan set policy—general direction meant to guide decisions over the coming five years. This section is fundamentally different. It documents four discrete initiatives—the Rural Trades & Ag Fab Lab, Tazewell Gateway Park at Ramey Lot, the Downtown Sidewalk and Streetscape Program, and the Mountain Biking Trail Project—that the Town is advancing alongside the Plan rather than as products of it.

Each arose from its own opportunity, and each will proceed on its own feasibility, funding, and approvals, independent of the others. They are recorded here because a comprehensive plan should reflect the Town's actual working agenda as well as its long-range intentions, and because inclusion in the adopted Plan strengthens each project's standing with funding programs that weight plan consistency in scoring.

#1—Rural Trades & Ag Fab Lab



The Rural Trades & Ag Fab Lab is one of four discrete initiatives the Town of Tazewell is advancing alongside the policies and actions of this Comprehensive Plan. The project proposes the redevelopment of a vacant manufacturing facility at 1616 Riverside Drive in North Tazewell into a two-level fabrication laboratory. The ground floor is organized around agriculture and food science, anchored by a shared cannery and commercial kitchen, while the upper floor operates as a co-creator maker's space outfitted for machinery, technology, and the rural trades. The facility sits directly across from the Town's newly constructed Clinch River Farmers Market and Pavilion—a location that allows a string of adjacent public investments to function as a single, working food and enterprise hub rather than a set of unconnected assets.

The opportunity rests on a simple observation. Tazewell holds an underused industrial building, a brand-new farmers market across the street, an active downtown revitalization effort, and a county Industrial Development Authority actively searching for a cannery site. No one of these closes the loop on its own. The Fab Lab is the connecting piece that turns four nearby investments into one local food-production, processing, and small-business ecosystem.

Site and Concept

The project repurposes existing industrial floorspace rather than building new, holding down cost and shortening the path to occupancy. The two levels are designed to reinforce one another, with shared building systems and a common front door. The ground level gives local farmers and food entrepreneurs affordable access to processing infrastructure—a shared cannery and commercial kitchen—that does not currently exist in the immediate area. The upper level provides a fabrication setting for prototyping, skills training, and small-scale production in machinery, technology, and the rural trades.

Two further connections complete the concept. The facility's direct tie to the Clinch River Farmers Market and Pavilion across the street links production, processing, and sales into one continuous local-food chain. Flexible commercial and trades space within the building offers room to incubate small businesses and support job creation in a community historically dependent on the coal economy.

Need and Demand

Tazewell County sits in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, where the long decline of coal and timber has driven population loss, an aging demographic profile, and persistent economic distress. The county's population stands at roughly 39,600, skews heavily toward residents age 65 and over, and carries a poverty rate near 19 percent; the Appalachian Regional Commission classifies the area as "At-Risk." These conditions translate into limited private investment, underused infrastructure, and real barriers to entrepreneurial growth—particularly in value-added agriculture, where producers lack affordable, shared processing capacity.

The demand signal is concrete rather than speculative. The Tazewell County IDA has been actively seeking a cannery location, and Town leadership has opened conversations with the school division, the Career and Technical Center, and Southwest Virginia Community College about food-science and trades programming tied to the facility. The Fab Lab gives that latent demand a physical home, and does so on a site the Town can plausibly bring into productive use.

Regional and Plan Alignment

The project advances the Town's own planning trajectory and the regional strategy set by the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission. It supports the ongoing North Tazewell downtown revitalization effort funded through a DHCD block grant, complements the new farmers market, and carries forward the direction of this Comprehensive Plan. Measured against the CPPDC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Fab Lab speaks to four of the district's strategic goals. It strengthens the regional economy through quality-of-life infrastructure that supports job creation and retention. It builds a regional talent pipeline through workforce partnerships with the K–12 schools, the Career and Technical Center, and Southwest Virginia Community College. It supplies the shared infrastructure and downtown-adjacent space that small producers and food entrepreneurs need to start and grow. And it extends the district's pattern of regional collaboration, drawing in the Tazewell County IDA, the Town I/EDA, and VCEDA across the coalfields region.

Phase 1: Planning, Design, and Engineering

The work described here constitutes Phase 1 of the initiative—the planning and design effort that must precede any construction. The Town is pursuing Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development (Non-Construction) funds to procure the architectural and engineering services, environmental review, and preliminary engineering report needed to convert the concept into a shovel-ready project. Procurement will follow 2 CFR 200.320, the Virginia Public Procurement Act, and the Town's adopted purchasing procedures, with professional services selected competitively through a request for proposals.
Phase 1 carries a total planning budget of $180,000, with $150,000 requested from the ARC Area Development Program and $30,000 in local and other funds. The allocation concentrates resources on the architectural and engineering design work that defines the redevelopment.

Cost / Activity Category	ARC Request	Other Funding	Total
Architectural & engineering fees	$140,000	$0	$140,000
Consulting & design fees	$0	$30,000	$30,000
Administration	$10,000	$0	$10,000
Total	**$150,000**	**$30,000**	**$180,000**

Because Phase 1 is a planning effort, its performance measures center on the pre-development deliverables that ready the project for construction. On completion, the Town will hold a feasibility study confirming market demand, operational structure, and the financial viability of the cannery and commercial space; preliminary engineering and site assessments defining infrastructure needs, site constraints, and cost estimates; final site design and architectural plans suitable for permitting and construction bidding; an implementation-ready redevelopment plan with timeline, phasing, and identified funding sources; and formalized regional partnerships with an identified set of target users—farmers, food entrepreneurs, and small businesses—demonstrating demand.

Summary of Issues and Implications

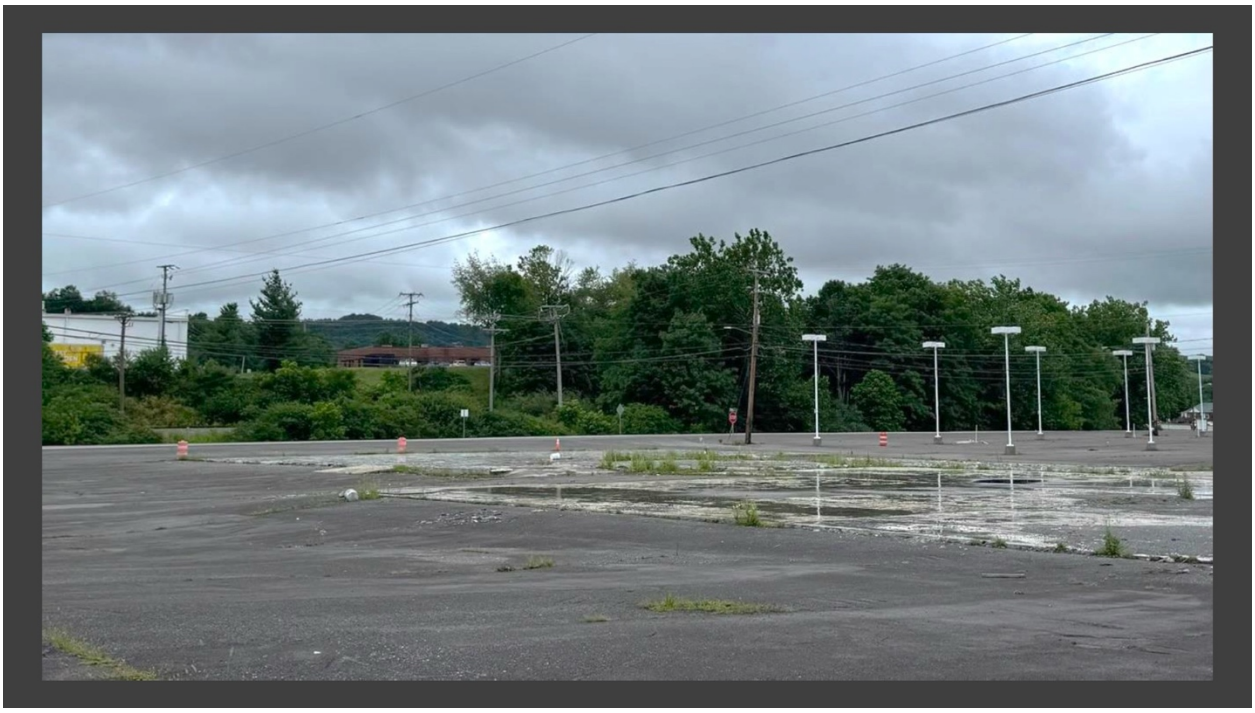
The significance of the Rural Trades & Ag Fab Lab lies less in any single component than in adjacency. Individually, an underused industrial building, a new farmers market, a downtown revitalization grant, and a county cannery search are unremarkable; stitched together along that stretch of Riverside Drive, they become a self-reinforcing platform for value-added agriculture, trades training, and small-business formation. The project is consistent with the stabilization-first posture of this Plan—it builds from assets the Town already holds and demand that already exists, rather than depending on outside attraction. Phase 1 is the gating step. Until the feasibility analysis, site design, and cost estimating are complete, the Town cannot responsibly define operations, leverage construction capital, or commit partners, and the project should be evaluated on those planning deliverables rather than on construction outcomes. The principal risks are the ordinary ones of a pre-development project: demand assumed must be demand confirmed, and the partnership network—the County IDA, the school division, the Career and Technical Center, Southwest Virginia Community College, CPPDC, and VCEDA—must be formalized rather than conversational. If Phase 1 validates the concept, the Fab Lab positions Tazewell to convert a vacant industrial property into a working economic asset whose returns compound well past the initial ARC investment.

Here is a rendering of the facility that was developed as part of the recently conducted North Tazewell Revitalization Plan developed by Hill Studio of Roanoke, Virginia, and Arnett Muldrow of Greenville, SC.



Rendering of Proposed Façade Improvements: 1616 Riverside Drive

#2—Tazewell Gateway Park at Ramey Lot



The Town has commenced design of a new community park—Tazewell Gateway Park—on the assemblage known locally as the Ramey Lot. The site occupies one of the most visible positions in Town, fronting East Fincastle Turnpike between English Street and Harman Street and bisected by River Drive, with the North Fork of the Clinch River directly across the Turnpike and the Tazewell Shops commercial properties immediately to the south. The park will be among the first impressions Tazewell makes on arriving visitors, and its name reflects that gateway role. Equally important, the current state of this expansive property stands in stark contrast to the Town's visually appealing, cohesive, and welcoming Mainstreet corridor.

Project Status

The Town retained With Architecture, LLC, which delivered their initial designs on May 13, 2026. The submission presented two alternative visions built on a shared core program. One is organized around berm-protected raised lawns and a connected series of round landscape rooms. The other is organized around a network of primary and secondary paths anchored by entry towers whose forms reference the region's agricultural and mining structures; its central pavilion is described by the designers as inspired by the three-part story of Tazewell—an echo of the arc that organizes this Plan. Both approaches deliver the common core program, and a preferred direction will be selected through subsequent design rounds.

Program Element	Description
Flexible recreation lawns	Open lawns striped for youth soccer in configurations from small (20 × 30 yd) to large (60 × 100 yd), adjustable to league needs.
Central pavilion and service buildings	A shade pavilion and support service buildings at the center of the park, serving field play and everyday visitors alike.
Walking loops	Dedicated loops of approximately 0.30 to 0.35 mile, providing measured-distance walking independent of field activity.*
Play, fitness, and passive areas	Playground, outdoor fitness area, and court games, with passive elements including hammock groves, meadows, and lounge seating.
Parking	Approximately 84 to 140 spaces depending on scheme, including parallel parking within the VDOT right-of-way on East Fincastle Turnpike.*
Stormwater as landscape	Recessed detention “wetlands” built from reclaimed rubble and plantings—stormwater managed as a designed park feature rather than a utility.
Gateway elements	New Town signage at both ends of the site; One variation adds entry towers at the principal entrances. Another variation protectives berms along the Turnpike.

*Note: * data updated to reflect most current 2.0 design of the park.*

Strategic Rationale and Sequencing

Gateway Park is a stabilization-tier project, appropriate to Years 1–2 of this Plan. Its program is retention-oriented: free, daily-use recreation—walking loops, playgrounds, open fields—serves the young families the Town most needs to keep, and the project delivers a visible early win at the Town’s front door. Design is funded and underway, which strengthens the Town’s funding posture: the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Appalachian Regional Commission, VCEDA, and similar reviewers weight plan consistency and project readiness in scoring, and this project now satisfies both tests.

The attraction upside—youth tournament play drawing visiting teams and their spending into Town—builds on that retention foundation in the Plan's later phases rather than substituting for it. One difference between the general renderings deserves conscious weighing during design selection: the lawn-organized scheme can accommodate one full large field (60 × 100 yd), while the path-and-tower scheme's largest configuration is a medium field—a distinction that bears directly on the scale of tournament hosting the park can support.

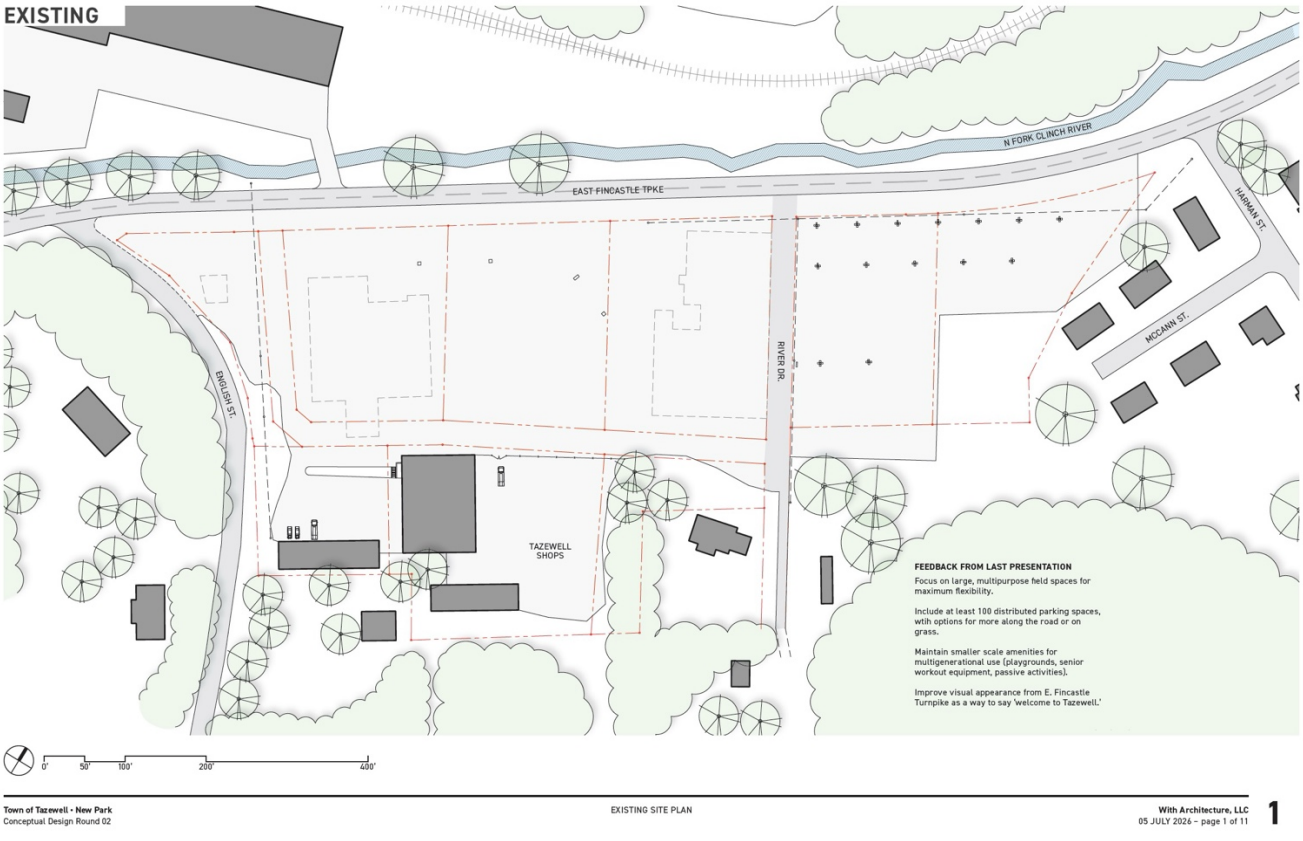
Relationship to Other Plan Elements

The project reinforces several elements of this Plan simultaneously. As a gateway investment on East Fincastle Turnpike, it advances the corridor and entrance objectives of the Trails, Greenways, and Gateways chapter and complements the Parkway Overlay District. As a recreation facility, it extends the Community Facilities inventory and supports the Plan's health and wellness objectives. Its detention wetlands and attention to the flood elevation align with the natural resources element's emphasis on floodplain management. Its adjacency to the Tazewell Shops properties places new daily foot traffic beside existing commercial space, and the North Fork of the Clinch River across the Turnpike preserves the long-term possibility of a river-corridor connection.

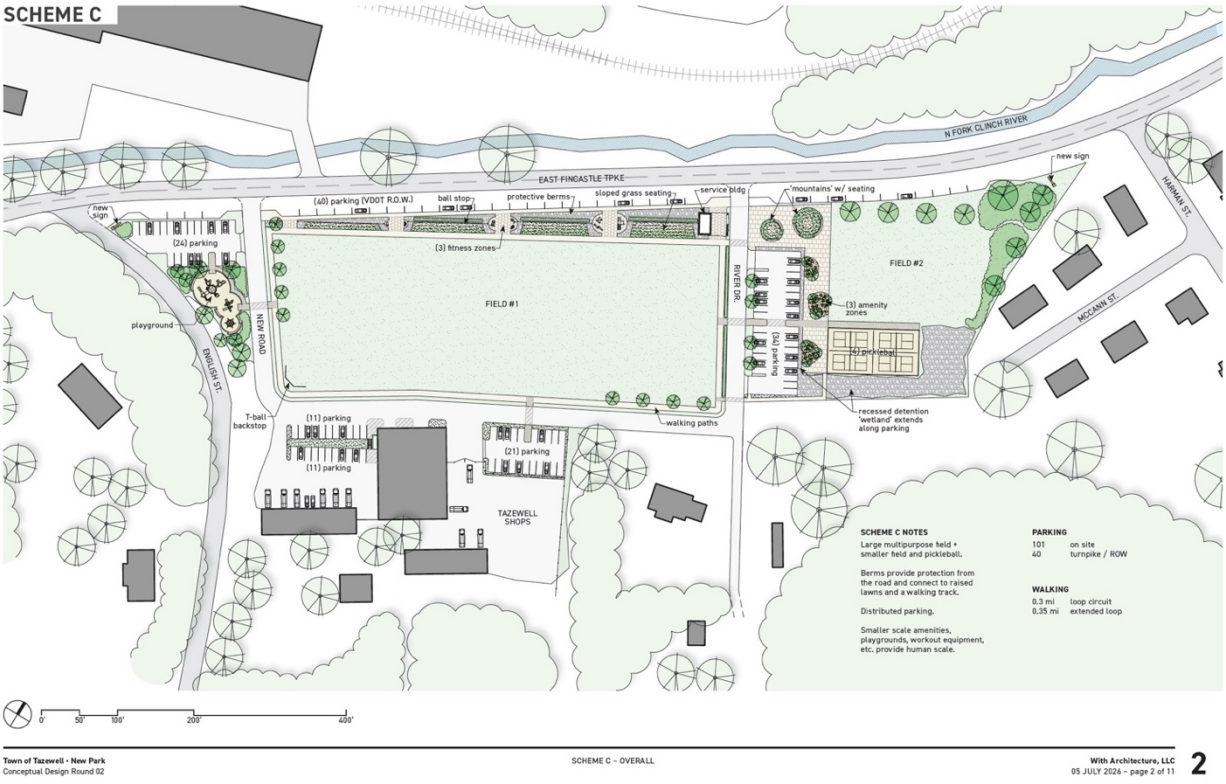
Implementation Reference

This project is carried in the Plan Implementation Matrix under the Recreation and Community Facilities actions, where lead responsibility, timeframes, and funding sources are assigned.

Here is a rendering of the existing area as developed by With Architecture, LLC.



For reference, here is the most recent integration of the development rendering under consideration—again provided by With Architecture, LLC. on July 5th, 2026—depicting future use of this essential gateway property into the Town of Tazewell.



This ‘Scheme C’ update from Conceptual Design Round 02 reads less as a third alternative than as a ‘best of both worlds’ mashup of the first two initial integrations under the Project Status heading. This rendering carries forward the berm-protected raised-lawn character while committing to a full-scale athletic field, thereby answering the field-scale tradeoff that separated the earlier schemes and landing on the larger, tournament-capable footprint. The organizing move is a large multipurpose Field #1 buffered from East Fincastle Turnpike by protective berms that double as raised lawns, a walking track, and sloped grass seating; a smaller Field #2 and pickleball/amenity courts sit to the east toward the North Fork Clinch River, whose frontage is picked up by a river walk. The rest of the program is deliberately distributed for human scale—three fitness zones along the field edge, a playground and T-ball backstop, a service building, and "mountain" seating mounds—rather than concentrated in one place. Parking is broken into several small lots totaling roughly 141 spaces (101 on-site plus 40 in the VDOT turnpike right-of-way), a recessed detention "wetland" runs along the parking to manage stormwater, and two walking loops (a 0.3-mile circuit and a 0.35-mile extended loop) tie it together while stitching in the existing Tazewell Shops.

#3—Downtown Sidewalk and Streetscape Program



Credit: Susan Reeves

Sidewalks are among the most modest line items in any capital program and among the most consequential. In a community of Tazewell's scale, they are the connective tissue that ties a historic downtown to its parks, its river, its schools, and its neighborhoods, and they are increasingly the first thing that residents, visitors, and prospective employers notice about a place. The Town's pedestrian network is therefore treated in this plan not as a maintenance afterthought but as an economic-development and quality-of-life asset in its own right.

Tazewell enters this planning cycle with unusual momentum. The **Clinch River Pavilion** has established a signature gathering place along one of the most biologically diverse rivers in North America; **Lincolnshire Park** anchors the Town's outdoor recreation offering; a revitalized **Main Street** historic district continues to attract independent entrepreneurs; and the **Back of the Dragon** has put Tazewell on the map as a regional tourism destination. What these assets increasingly share is a need to be safely and comfortably linked on foot. Closing the gaps between them is the central purpose of the sidewalk program described below.

The national evidence for this investment is well established. Walkable places command measurably higher property values, capture a larger share of local spending, and support the small, independent storefronts that give a downtown its character; studies consistently find that the highest concentrations of active storefronts correspond to the highest walkability. Well-designed pedestrian infrastructure also reduces long-term public costs, moving far more people per foot of right-of-way than roadway widening can, while advancing public health and accessibility goals. For a town positioning itself around heritage tourism and outdoor recreation, a continuous and accessible sidewalk network is not a cost center but a competitive advantage that facilitates these larger ambitions.

Existing Network and Recent Investments

The Town has continued to invest in its pedestrian network between comprehensive plan cycles, and several improvements identified in prior planning have since been completed. The **Maplewood** improvements—programmed through the Six-Year Improvement Program as a combined sidewalk and drainage project, together with associated curb-and-gutter work—have been finished and are reflected as complete on the Town's transportation mapping. These serve as a useful reference point: they demonstrate the Town's capacity to carry a pedestrian project from plan to pavement, and they should be depicted as completed rather than proposed in the updated plan.

Other segments exist only in part. A sidewalk connection between the Clinch River Pavilion and Lincolnshire Park, for example, is partially in place today but comprises only limited, discontinuous components. Elsewhere, a priority corridor advanced by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has been striped on the roadway but not yet constructed as a finished walkway, and it remains subject to grant approval.

Priority Sidewalk Improvement Projects

Through the plan-update subcommittee process, sidewalk improvements were identified as one of the Town's four flagship initiatives for this planning cycle. Within the sidewalk initiative, four specific segments were prioritized. Together they form a deliberate strategy: connect the corridors that carry the most people, link the Town's premier public spaces, and make the historic core fully accessible to all.

Priority Segment	Location & Extent	Current Status	Lead
Fincastle–Ben Bolt corridor	From the Cargo site to the Ben Bolt traffic signal, along the Fincastle Turnpike corridor (referenced in review as the Fincastle-to-Ben Bolt segment)	Striped on roadway; VDOT-identified; grant application pending — not yet approved	VDOT / Town
Clinch River Pavilion sidewalk	Pedestrian access serving the Clinch River Pavilion	Proposed	Town

Priority Segment	Location & Extent	Current Status	Lead
Pavilion-to-Lincolnshire connector	Clinch River Pavilion to Lincolnshire Park	Partially built; limited existing segments — completion proposed	Town
Main Street accessibility	Downtown Main Street historic district	Proposed ADA accessibility upgrades	Town

The Fincastle–Ben Bolt Corridor

The corridor running from the Cargo site to the Ben Bolt traffic signal is the Town's highest-visibility sidewalk priority and the one most closely tied to state programming. VDOT has identified this improvement, and the roadway is currently striped for it, but the finished sidewalk has not been constructed, and the funding application remains pending. Its value lies in continuity: rather than adding an isolated fragment, it would provide an unbroken, point-to-point pedestrian connection along a corridor residents already travel.

Linking the Clinch River Pavilion and Lincolnshire Park

Two of the four priorities work in tandem to knit together the Town's premier public spaces along the Clinch River. A dedicated sidewalk serving the Clinch River Pavilion would give the Town's signature venue the safe, walkable frontage a destination of its caliber warrants. Extending that connection onward to Lincolnshire Park—where only limited, disconnected segments exist today—would complete a continuous riverside pedestrian route linking gathering space to parkland. Completed together, these segments transform two separate amenities into a single, cohesive recreational corridor, reinforcing the riverfront as the heart of the Town's outdoor identity and complementing longer-term greenway aspirations along the Clinch.

Main Street Accessibility

The fourth priority turns inward, to the historic core. Main Street accessibility improvements would ensure that the revitalized downtown—the engine of the Town's small-business and heritage-tourism economy—is fully usable by residents and visitors of every ability, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accessible curb ramps, crossings, and continuous walkways are both a civil-rights obligation and a commercial asset: they widen the customer base for every storefront and signal that the district is built for everyone. Because Main Street already draws steady foot traffic on court days, market days, and during festivals, incremental accessibility investments here yield outsized everyday benefit.

Downtown Parking, Transit, and Pedestrian Access

Sidewalk planning also intersects with the Town's ongoing conversation about the Cox lot and downtown parking on Main Street, across from the Wayfarer. The plan should carry forward two specific pedestrian-related additions in this area: the addition of **new sidewalk** serving the section, and the identification of **transit bus stops** served by Four County Transit.

Whatever the ultimate use of the Cox lot—seasonal event parking, flexible open space, or another civic purpose — pedestrian connectivity and transit access should be designed in from the outset, so that the space functions as a walkable extension of Main Street rather than an isolated pocket.

Funding and Implementation Strategy

The Town is well positioned to pursue outside funding for these priorities, and their inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan is itself a strategic act: it demonstrates to funding agencies that each project reflects a considered, adopted community commitment rather than an ad-hoc request. Several programs are directly applicable:

- **VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).** TAP is the primary federal-through-state channel for sidewalk and pedestrian construction, reimbursing eligible project costs on an 80/20 basis (a local match on the order of twenty percent). It is well suited to the Fincastle–Ben Bolt corridor and the riverside connectors.

- **Ready, Set, Go! (RSG).** VDOT's companion program provides consultant-led assistance — at no cost to the locality — to help smaller, non-MPO communities under 50,000 population prepare competitive TAP applications. Tazewell fits these criteria squarely, and RSG offers a low-risk path to strengthening the Town's grant submissions.

- **SMART SCALE.** For higher-cost segments tied to roadway or intersection work, Virginia's SMART SCALE prioritization process scores bicycle and pedestrian improvements alongside other transportation investments and can fund pedestrian elements as part of larger corridor projects.

Implementation should remain anchored in the subcommittee structure that produced these priorities, with Town staff serving as the consistent point of coordination across grant cycles. Like every aspect of this plan, consistency of leadership is itself a determinant of delivery: projects advance when a stable team carries them from application through construction, and stall when direction changes hands between cycles. The plan should therefore identify sidewalk delivery as an ongoing staff-led responsibility, supported—but not redirected—by the Town's elected leadership.

Relationship to the Plan's Broader Goals

The sidewalk program does not stand alone. It directly supports the Town's downtown revitalization and historic-district objectives by making the commercial core more accessible; it advances the recreation and tourism goals embodied by the Clinch River Pavilion, Lincolnshire Park, and the Back of the Dragon by linking those assets on foot; and it lays groundwork for the longer-term greenway and gateway concepts the Town has expressed along the Clinch River corridor.

Each completed segment compounds the value of the others, and each strengthens the case — in the Town's own funding applications and in the daily experience of its residents—that Tazewell is a place designed to be walked.

In sum, the Town's sidewalk priorities are focused, achievable, and mutually reinforcing: complete the Fincastle–Ben Bolt corridor, connect the Pavilion to Lincolnshire Park, make Main Street fully accessible, and weave pedestrian and transit access into the downtown parking picture. Pursued together and funded through the programs available to a community of Tazewell's size, they represent one of the highest-return investments the Comprehensive Plan can advance.

#4—Mountain Biking Trail System Initiative



Gratton is a small community in Tazewell County lying a few miles east of downtown Tazewell along the State Route 61 corridor, in the high, wooded uplands that rise above the valley floor at roughly 2,790 feet in elevation. Its relevance to this Plan is one of ownership: the Town of Tazewell holds a substantial block of mountain land in the Gratton area—approximately 550 acres proposed for the trail system, part of a larger Town holding that exceeds 1,000 acres. In a region where the surrounding mountains are beautiful but overwhelmingly private, that publicly owned acreage within a short drive of the historic core is a rare civic asset.

Of the four initiatives advancing alongside this Plan, the Gratton trail system is the one with the longest reach. It proposes to turn a genuinely rare asset—550 acres of Town-owned mountain land—into a purpose-built, year-round outdoor destination, and in doing so to do for Tazewell what trail networks have already done for a string of small Appalachian towns: convert landscape into livelihood. The idea is not to add an amenity at the edge of Town, but to give the Town a signature reason to visit, to stay overnight, and to come back.

The vision fits a positioning the Town is already growing into—the distinctive, “quirky mountain town” that trades on scenery, character, and outdoor experience rather than on scale. A serious trail system is how that identity becomes a product: something a rider in Knoxville, Roanoke, or the Tri-Cities plans a weekend around, and something a Tazewell entrepreneur can build a shop, a shuttle, or a short-term rental against.

The Opportunity

The decisive advantage here is ownership. Most rural trail projects stall at the very first step—assembling land—and never recover. Tazewell begins past that barrier. The Town already owns the ground: a primary trail parcel of roughly 550 acres along the Route 61 corridor southeast of the core, part of a larger Town holding that exceeds 1,000 acres. In a region where the mountain landscape is beautiful but overwhelmingly private, that publicly owned acreage is a rare civic asset—one of the few places the surrounding scenery can actually be opened to residents and visitors alike.
Removing land cost from the equation changes the whole risk profile. It lets the Town concentrate its investment on design, access, and stewardship rather than acquisition, and it means the dollars the Town does commit go directly into the asset itself.

The Concept

The concept is a professionally designed, purpose-built trail network—potentially multi-use, with room for uses such as horseback riding—routed sensitively through the Gratton terrain. Mountain biking is a year-round, event-capable sport: beyond everyday riders, a well-built system can host competitions that fill lodging and restaurants on their strongest weekends.
The design principle that matters most is stewardship. The primary parcel contains a source-water reservoir near its southern boundary, and the system should be designed around the watershed it protects—with source-water protection treated as a non-negotiable design standard, not an afterthought. Specialized trail-design firms handle water-adjacent sites routinely, and the reservoir's distance from the developable terrain makes a protective layout entirely achievable.

The other design imperative is connection. The system earns its full economic return only if it is tied—physically and programmatically—back to downtown, so that riders finish their day on Main Street rather than driving straight home. Linked that way, Gratton stops being a trailhead in the woods and becomes the top of a funnel that feeds the Clinch River Pavilion, the Farmers Market, and the historic core.

The Economic Case

The case rests on a simple pattern that has repeated across the region: a modest, well-built trail destination generates visitation far out of proportion to its acreage, and that visitation lands almost entirely in small, locally owned businesses. The comparables that anchored the concept make the point plainly.

Destination	Scale	What it shows
Knoxville Urban Wilderness (TN)	Baker's Creek preserve ~100 acres within a larger network	~111,000 visitors a year at Baker's Creek alone, ~304,000 systemwide, and a University of Tennessee study crediting ~$25 million in revenue to Knox County — with breweries, food trucks, and restaurants following along the corridor.
Berm Park, Canton (NC)	Small mountain town of comparable population	A purpose-built bike park anchoring a peer downtown—the closest one-to-one model for what Tazewell is contemplating.
Virginia Creeper / Damascus & Spearhead Trails (SW VA)	Regional, in the coalfields	Nearby proof that trail networks remake small Appalachian economies—Damascus built a whole trail-town identity, and Spearhead has become part of the coalfield's diversification story.

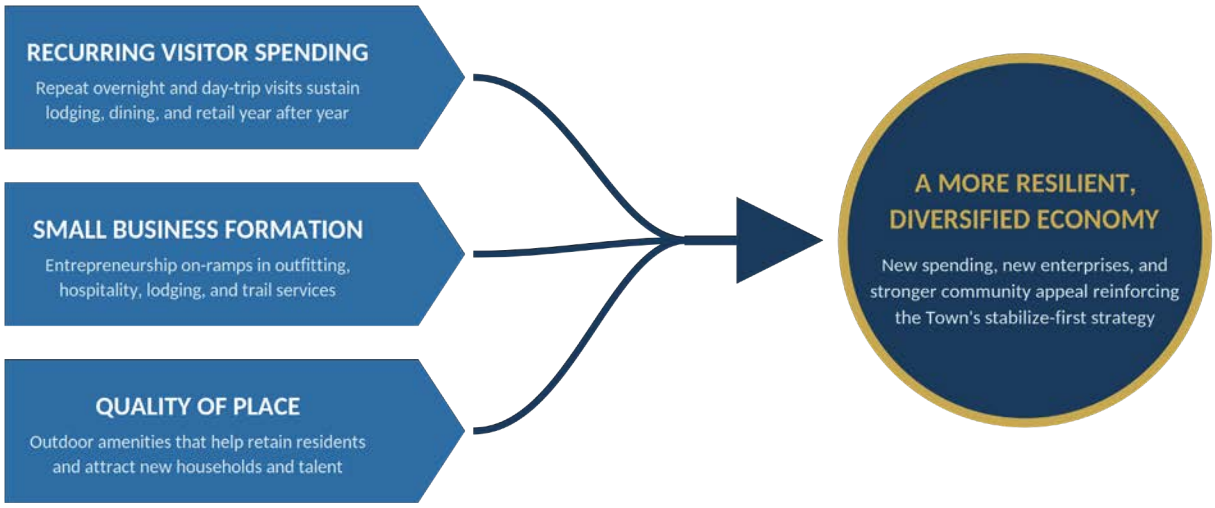
The per-acre lesson is the striking one: Baker's Creek draws six-figure annual visitation on a footprint a fraction of Gratton's size. And the pattern already has a foothold here. Tazewell's own Meals and Transient Occupancy (Hotel) tax receipts are rising, evidence that tourism is a growing revenue stream, and the Back of the Dragon already delivers a motorsports-and-outdoor visitor base. A trail destination adds to that base exactly what it lacks today—an overnight-stay, repeat-visit product that brings the same riders back season after season.

Three Drivers, One Outcome

Recurring visitor spending. Riders return to a destination repeatedly as a network grows, and their spending flows to lodging, dining, outfitters, and shuttle services.
Small-business formation. A trail network creates entrepreneurial on-ramps at modest capital thresholds — bike shops, guide services, food, and short-term rentals residents can launch without institutional financing.
Quality of place. Most important for Tazewell, a serious trail system signals to current residents, returning natives, and remote workers that the community is investing in itself — strengthening retention before it ever drives attraction.

Mountain Biking Trail System Initiative

Three Economic Drivers, One Outcome



Strategic Rationale and Sequencing

Gratton is not an aspiration on a wish list—it is funded, Council-endorsed, and already in active land assembly, which places it in an early implementation tier and lets it span both the stabilize and realize phases of this Plan. The Town has committed a dedicated local set-aside of roughly $350,000 as a deliberate signal of intent, held in reserve to strengthen county partnership discussions and competitive grant applications rather than spent ahead of a plan. The near-term work program follows directly: an economic feasibility study, topography and cost analysis, and a definitive design returned for approval before construction dollars move.

The path to a fully funded project runs through partnership, and the agenda is already taking shape—access easements with adjoining landowners now largely in hand, state easement assistance such as the Virginia Outdoor Trust, collaboration with Tazewell County, a working relationship with the Berm Park program in Canton, and specialized trail-design expertise. Like the Town's other outdoor assets, the returns build over years rather than quarters, and the project will need a durable stewardship structure for maintenance and liability. But few investments in this Plan serve both tiers of the strategy at once the way this one does: it lifts quality of life for current residents on day one while building the visitor economy and in-migration appeal that fuel long-term growth.

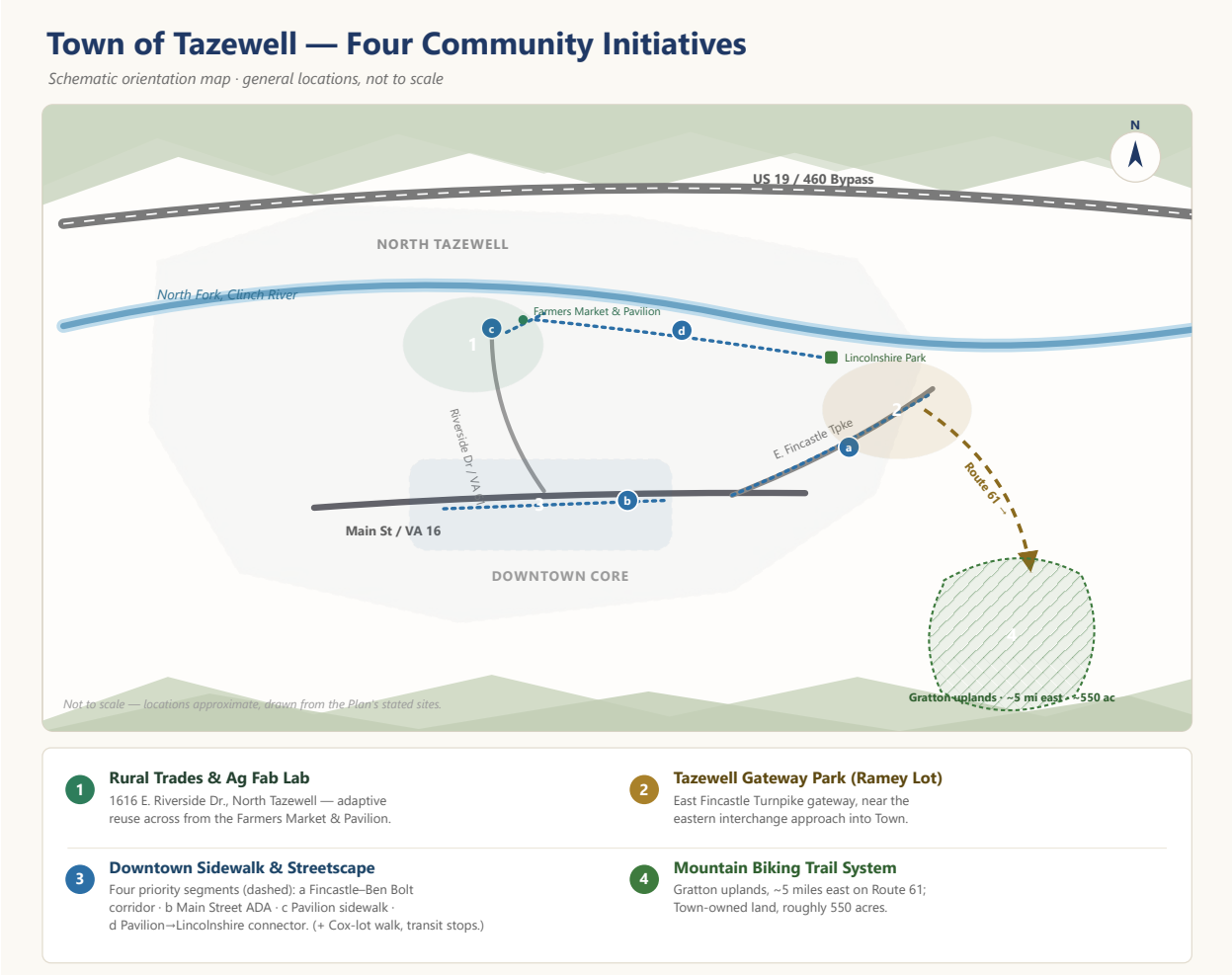
Relationship to Other Plan Elements

The trail system reinforces several elements of this Plan at once. It extends the Trails, Greenways, and Gateways framework and the Town's broader outdoor-recreation identity; it complements the Back of the Dragon, the Clinch River Pavilion and Farmers Market, and downtown revitalization by adding a year-round, event-capable destination to the portfolio; and its source-water design standard advances the natural-resource and environmental-protection goals expressed elsewhere in the Plan. Connected to downtown, it becomes part of the same visitor-capture strategy that runs through Goal 1.

Implementation Reference

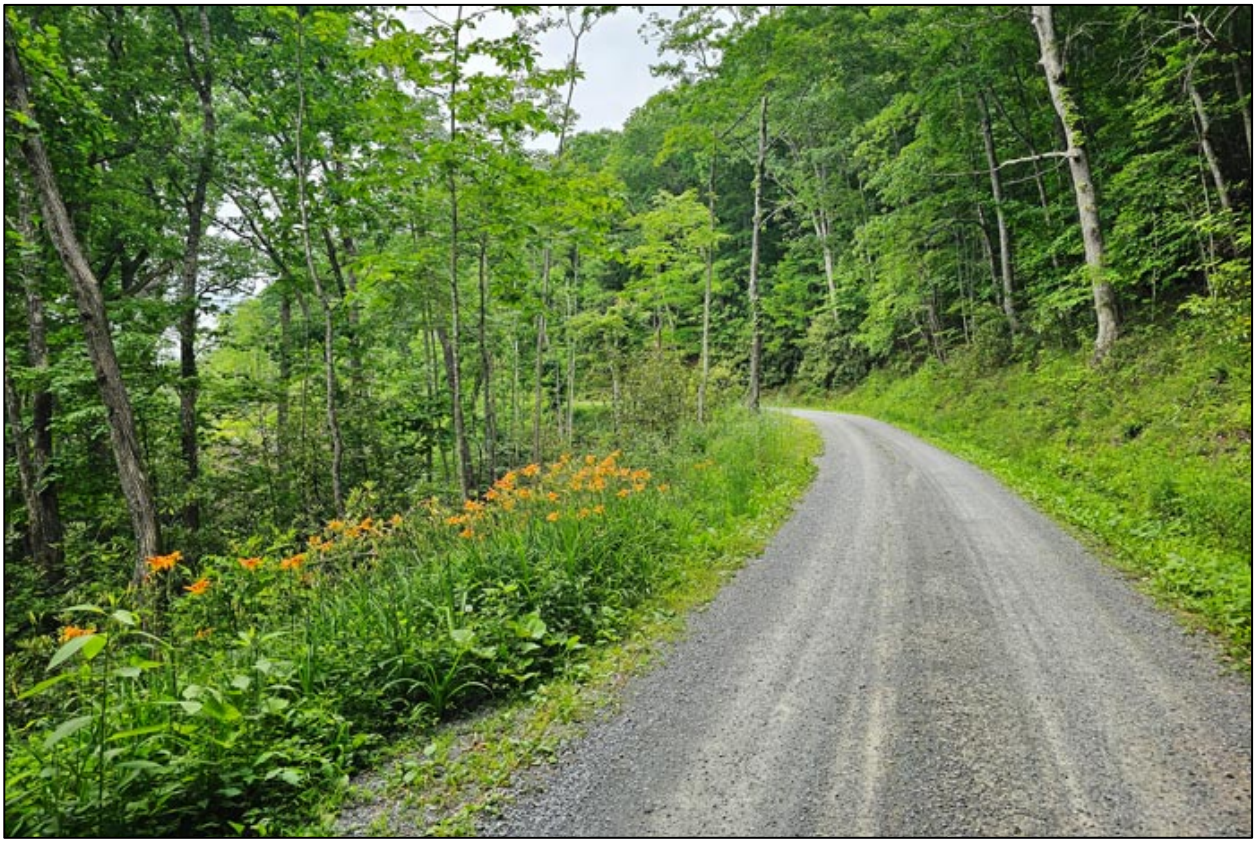
This project is carried in the Plan Implementation Matrix under the Economic Development and Recreation actions, where lead responsibility, timeframes, and funding sources—including the local set-aside, state easement assistance, and county collaboration — are assigned.

Mapping Summary



PART SIX

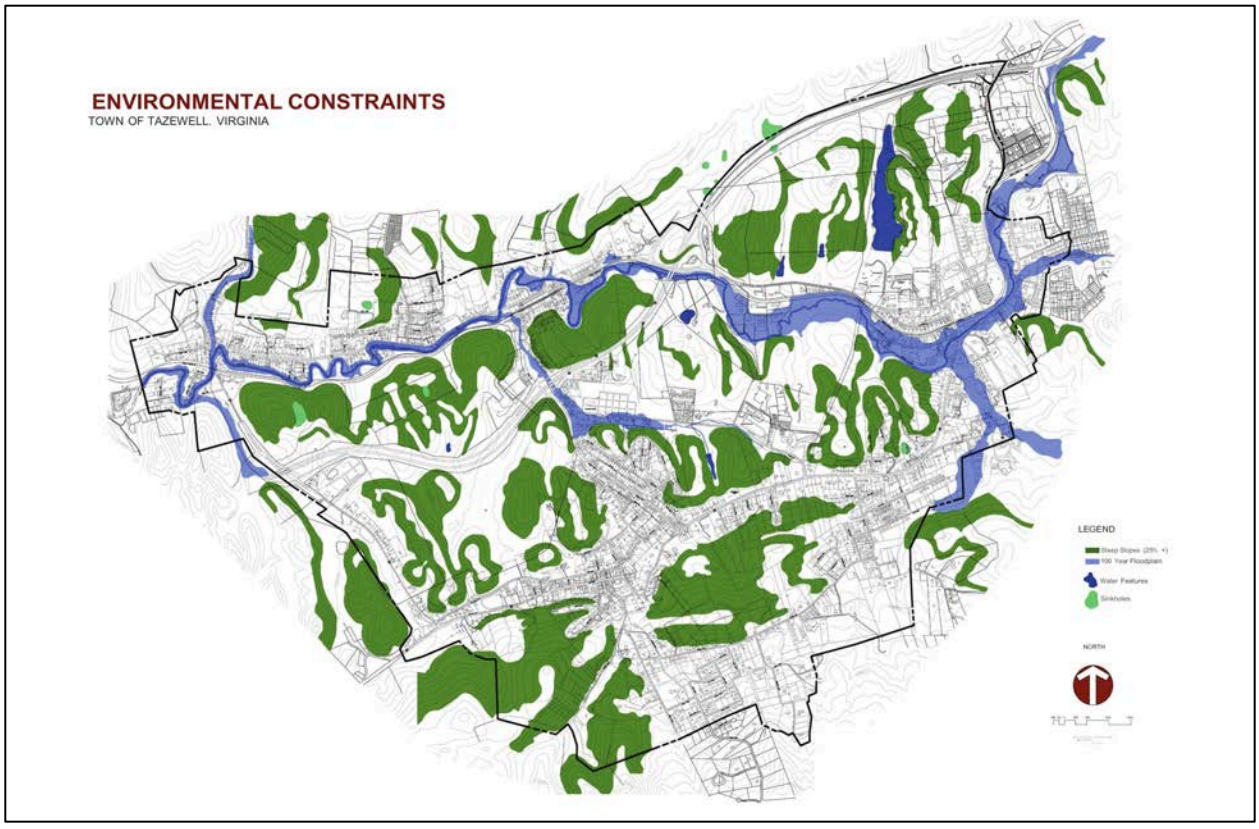
FUTURE LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION & IMPLEMENTATION



FUTURE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

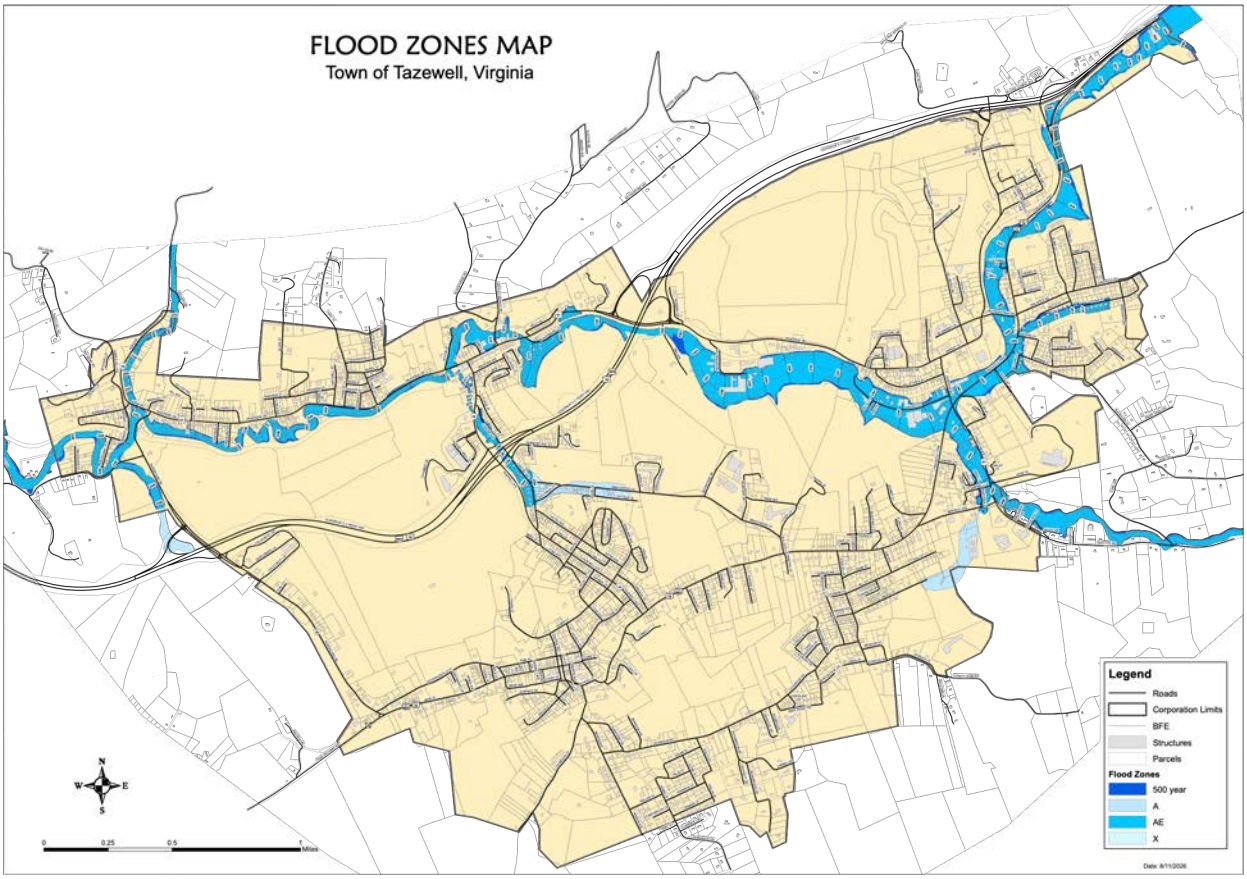
The preceding elements describe where the Town stands today and the goals it has set for the years ahead. This element translates that direction into spatial form. It sets out, in general terms, the pattern of land use the Town intends to encourage, and the system of transportation improvements needed to support it. Together with the Implementation Framework that follows, it is the part of the Plan that converts policy into a map a reader can hold against any single rezoning, subdivision, or capital decision.

Two distinctions should be kept in mind throughout. First, the maps in this element are general and advisory: they describe the approximate character and direction of development, not the fate of any single parcel, and they are not zoning maps. Second, this element responds directly to the Code of Virginia. Section 15.2-2223 B requires that the transportation element be coordinated with and submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation for review prior to adoption, and § 15.2-2224 requires that the Plan be accompanied by a current map of the planning area. The exhibits assembled here are responsive to both requirements.



Map: Environmental Constraints, Town of Tazewell. Source: 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Environmental Constraints is staged here at the front of this element as the development-suitability base—steep slopes over 25 percent, the 100-year floodplain, and the area's karst and sinkhole features—that informs the Future Land Use Plan that follows.

Here is the most current iteration of the Town's flood map zones in isolation for clarity purposes.

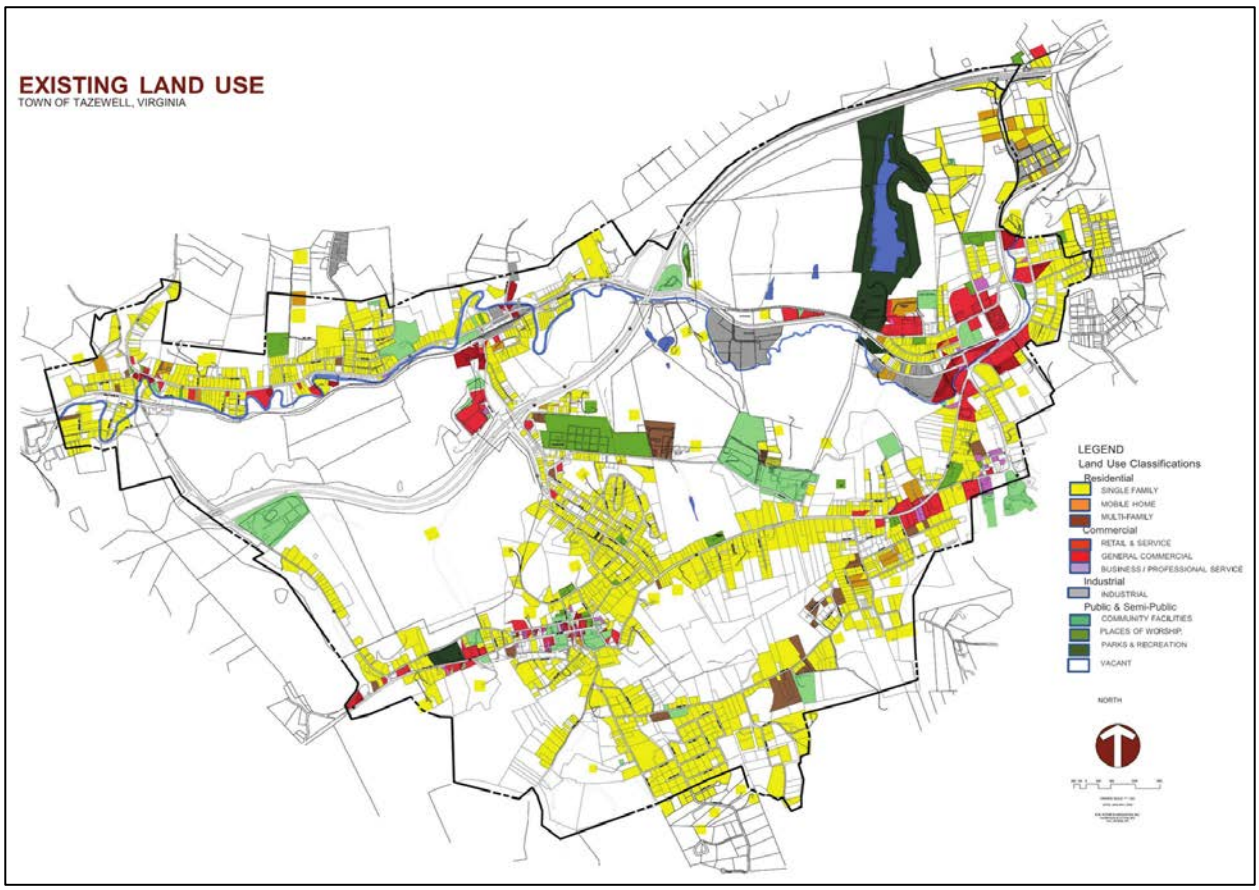


Map: Flood Zones-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell.

The Existing Land Use Pattern

Any picture of the Town's future begins with an honest reading of its present. Tazewell's developed land remains concentrated along the historic Main Street spine and the older residential blocks that surround it, with commercial activity drawn toward the US 19/460 corridor and the interchange approaches, and with agricultural and open land occupying the valley floor and the steeper ground at the Town's edges.

The Existing Land Use map records this pattern as the inventory baseline against which the Future Land Use Plan is measured.

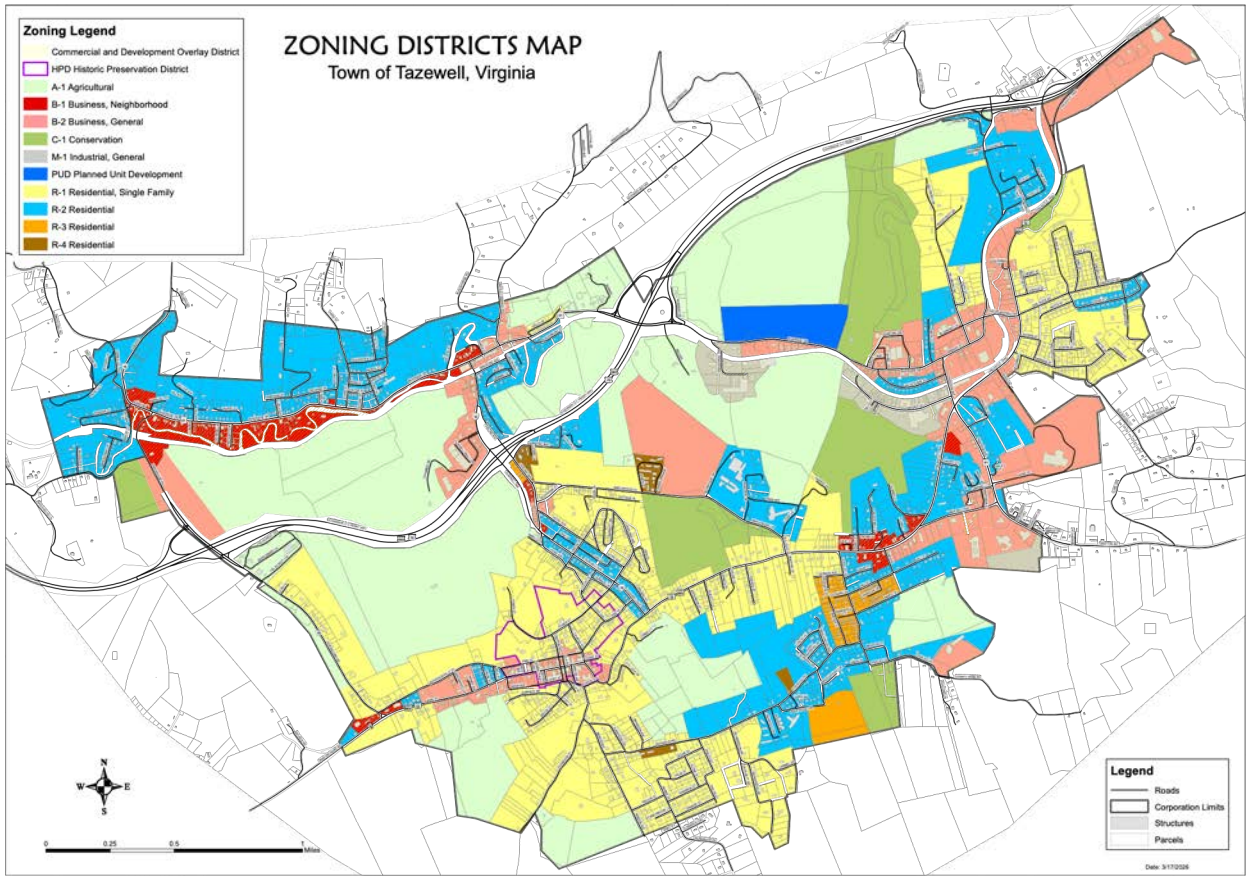


Map: Existing Land Use-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell.

The Current Zoning Framework

Where the comprehensive plan guides, the zoning ordinance governs. The Town's adopted zoning districts—agricultural, residential, business, conservation, industrial, planned-unit, and the Historic Preservation district—are the regulatory instrument through which the land use vision is carried out, and the Zoning Districts map records their current boundaries.

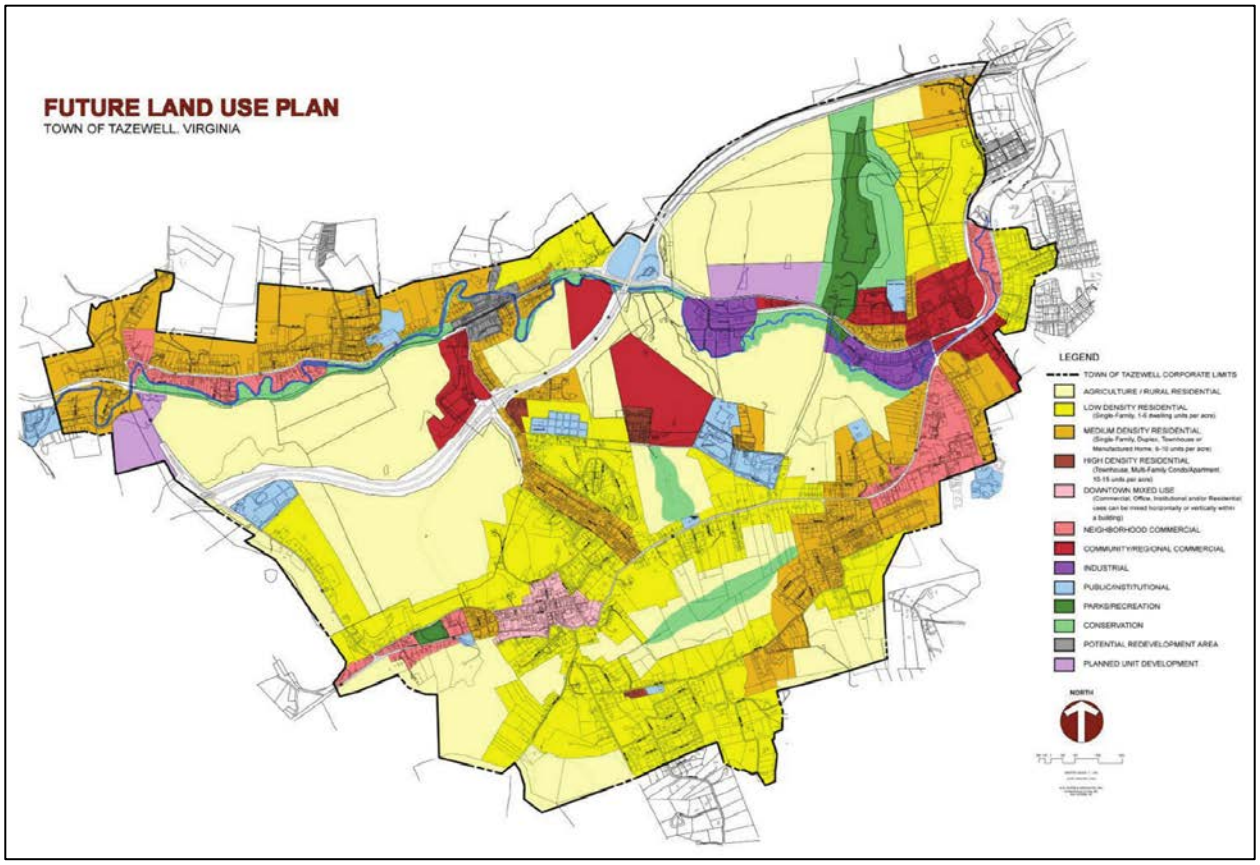
This map also serves as the current map of the planning area contemplated by § 15.2-2224, and it is the surface against which the "substantially in accord" reviews described later in this Plan are conducted.



Map: Zoning Districts-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell GIS.

The Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan expresses, in map form, the development pattern the Town intends to encourage over the life of this Plan. It organizes the planning area into broad land use categories—agriculture and rural residential, low-, medium-, and high-density residential, downtown mixed use, neighborhood and community/regional commercial, industrial, public and institutional, parks and recreation, conservation, planned-unit development, and potential redevelopment areas—each describing the general character intended for the land it covers rather than dictating the use of any individual parcel.

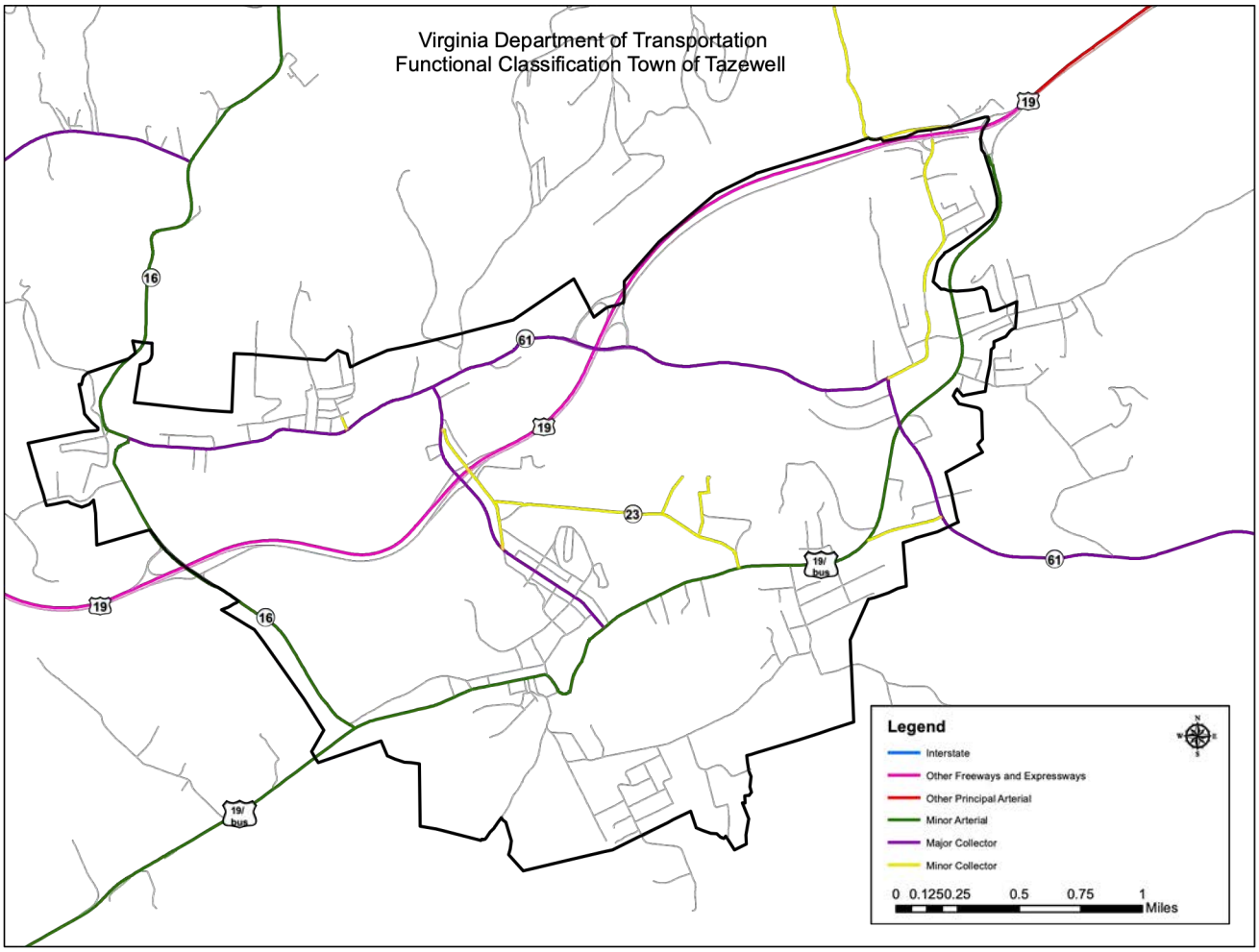


Map: Future Land Use Plan-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Town of Tazewell

The Transportation Element

An adequate, safe, and efficient transportation system in and around the Town of Tazewell ultimately influences every other element of this Plan.

Here is an illustration of main arterials serving the Town of Tazewell and a breakdown of these into roadway classifications.



Map: Functional Classification of Roadways-2026. Source: Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC)

The next infographic illustrates average daily traffic volume on these main routes. The Town's network is organized around the US 19/460 corridor and its interchanges, with Main Street, Riverside Drive, the Fincastle Turnpike, and Fairground Road carrying the bulk of in-town circulation.



VDOT's Bristol District Intersection Safety Study is a systematic effort to pinpoint and improve the region's most dangerous intersections—those with a documented record of three or more fatal or injury crashes over a five-year period. Of the 50 intersections studied district-wide, 19 fall within the Cumberland Plateau Planning District and 11 are located in Tazewell County. Wherever one of these high-crash sites is not already covered by a programmed project, the study produces an individualized report of short-, mid-, and long-term safety recommendations, which VDOT shares with local governments to help guide funding decisions.

The map and list below identify the 11 Tazewell County locations, organized by corridor: five along US 460 (Gov. G. C. Peery Highway), three in the Richlands–Cedar Bluff area, and—most importantly for this Plan, three in the Town of Tazewell.

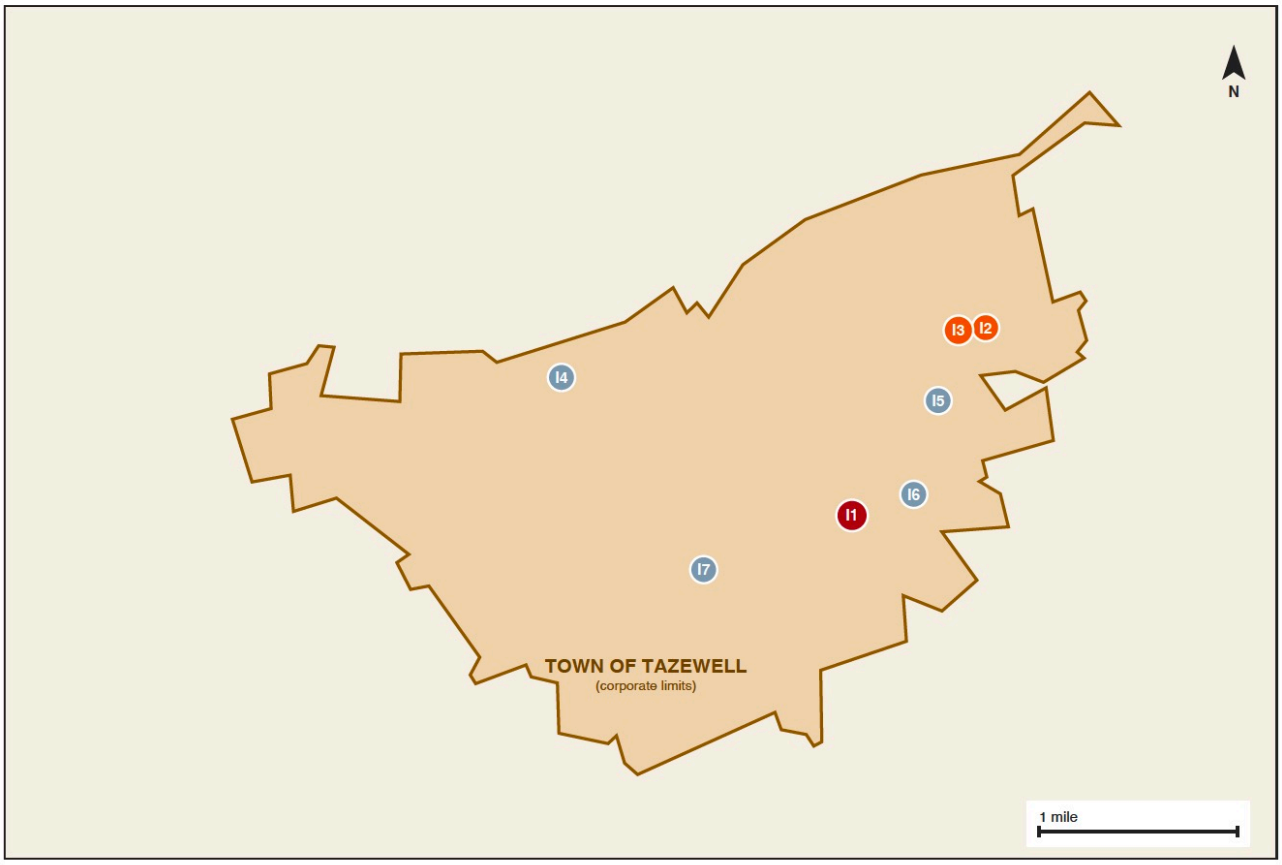
One of these three flagged locations, US 19 (Business) at East Fincastle Turnpike and Ben Bolt Avenue, is already the subject of Town action. The Town has submitted a SMART SCALE 2026 application—BUS 19 at Ben Bolt Avenue Pedestrian Improvements—that would construct roughly a third of a mile of new sidewalk along northbound BUS 19 between Ben Bolt Avenue and Steeles Lane, upgrade three area crossings (one signalized, one stop-controlled, and one currently unsignalized) to high-visibility, ADA-compliant standards, relocate the signalized crossing at Ben Bolt Avenue to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance, and redefine roughly twenty driveways along the corridor to improve access management.

The application, estimated at $10.7 million and requiring both permanent right-of-way and temporary construction easements, cleared VDOT's eligibility, readiness, and District and Central Office screening and has advanced to scoring. Its initial SMART SCALE score was low, reflecting minimal measured benefit in the Safety and Economic Development factors that carry the greatest weight in the program's methodology—a result the Town should weigh in deciding how to prioritize, phase, or re-package the project in future funding cycles, even as the underlying safety need VDOT's own study identified remains valid.



Town of Tazewell: PSI Intersections and Segments

VDOT Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) locations within the Town limits, crash years 2020-2024. Details on page 2.



LEGEND Intersection (I#) fill = Bristol District PSI rank (1 = highest); size = crashes 2020-24: 1-100 101-150 151 and lower
Town of Tazewell limits Tazewell County line PSI Segments: none recorded within the Town limits in the P4P layer (see notes).

Source: VDOT Pathways for Planning, PSI Intersections and PSI Segments layers (updated 02/26/2026; crashes 2020-2024). Town limits: US Census 2020. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

PSI Intersections in the Town of Tazewell

All 7 intersections in the P4P PSI Intersections layer with Jurisdiction = 158. Town of Tazewell (Bristol District, none VDOT-maintained). Crashes 2020-2024.

#	Intersection	Route / mile point	Node	2020 / 21 / 22 / 23 / 24	Total crashes	Fatal + injured	Bristol Dist. rank
I1	Bus. US 19 (Main St) & Steeles Ln	US 19 Bus MP 5.65	1020195	3 / 3 / 4 / 1 / 2	13	6	85
I2	Bus. US 19 & Dial Rock Rd / Professional Dr	US 19 Bus MP 6.95	1074483	0 / 3 / 1 / 0 / 3	7	3	109
I3	Market St & Professional Dr	Market St MP 0.25	1020308	1 / 0 / 1 / 8 / 0	10	5	122
I4	SR 16 & SR 61	SR 16 NB MP 67.93	636682	2 / 2 / 0 / 1 / 2	7	5	153
I5	SR 61 & Bus. US 19	SR 61 EB MP 2.15	636710	0 / 0 / 4 / 1 / 1	6	3	155
I6	Bus. US 19 & Ben Bolt Ave	US 19 Bus MP 5.99	1020207	1 / 0 / 1 / 1 / 2	5	4	175
I7	SR 16 & Bus. US 19	SR 16 NB MP 66.65	636811	0 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 2	5	4	181

Rank = Total Rank in the P4P table (all roads, Bristol District). The VDOT-maintained-intersection rank field is blank for all seven. Total crashes sum 2020-2024: 53; fatal and injured: 30.

Major transportation assets take years to fund and build, which is why Virginia plans its capital work through a rolling Six-Year Improvement Program rather than a single annual budget—sequencing big projects across fiscal years and holding commitments steady between cycles. Tazewell County's FY27 program shows why that long view matters on the ground: its two State of Good Repair projects on the Route 16 bridges over the Clinch River total $11.3M, with 61% already allocated, 20% programmed for FY28–32, and 19% still unfunded.

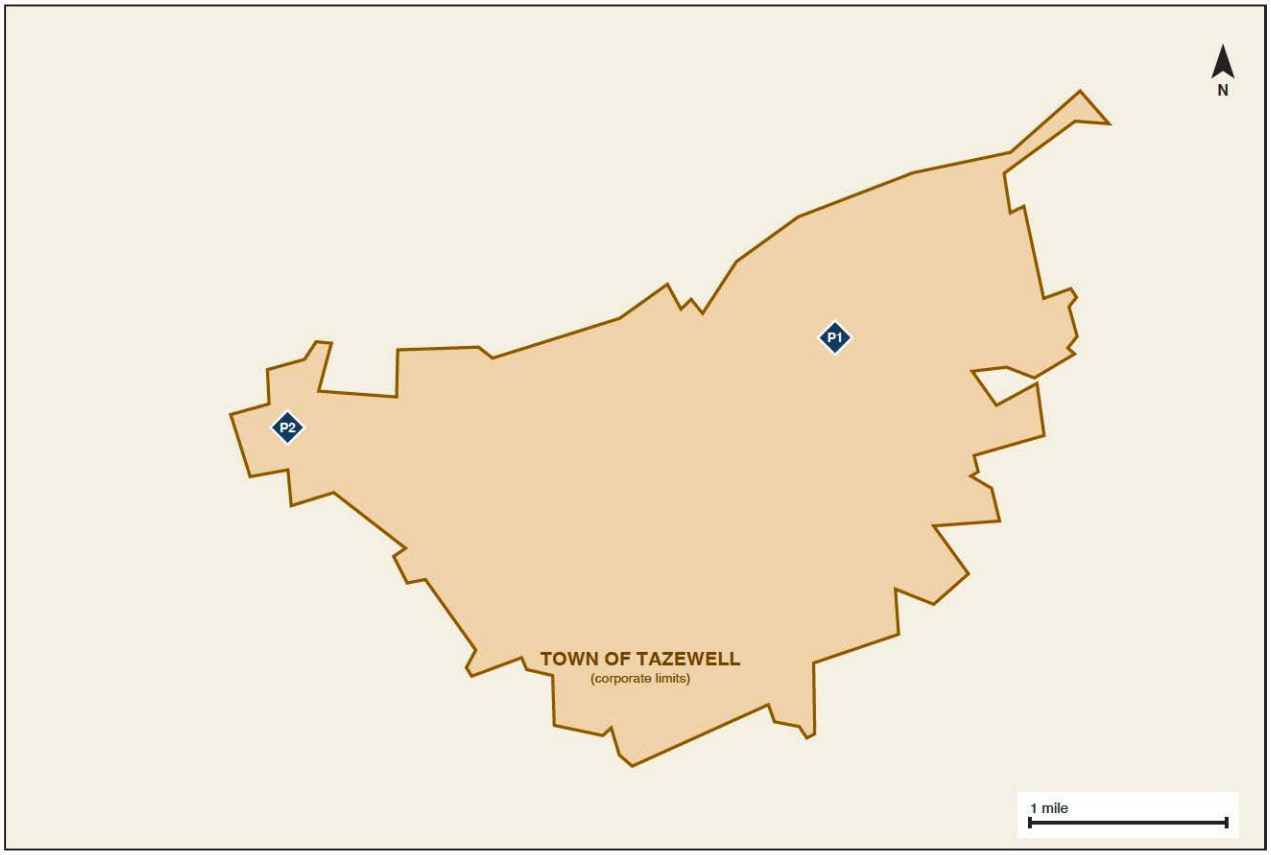
These are everyday connections that move freight, commuters, and emergency services and keep local employers linked to their markets—and letting them slip toward weight restrictions or closure would raise costs and cut access for the very businesses the region is working to attract and retain. Keeping them in good repair and fully funded is therefore as much an economic development priority as a maintenance one, and it depends on planning and advocacy sustained well beyond any single budget year.

Beyond the bridge program, the Town also has an active FY2027 application in VDOT's State of Good Repair paving category, requesting $196,852 to mill, overlay, and restripe 0.232 miles of Riverside Drive. Unlike the discretionary, competitively scored SMART SCALE program, State of Good Repair paving selections are driven by measurable pavement condition—Riverside Drive's Critical Condition Index of 45 qualifies it under the program's 60-point threshold—rather than a scored benefit-cost comparison. The application has already cleared both District and Central Office validation and moved into scoring, making it a comparatively lower-risk, near-term addition to the Town's maintained-roadway program.



Town of Tazewell: Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Projects

VDOT SYIP projects within the Town limits (P4P SYIP Project Lines and Clusterpoints). Marker positions are approximate.



Source: VDOT Pathways for Planning, SYIP Project Lines and Clusterpoints layers, accessed October 9, 2026. Town limits: US Census 2020. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

SYIP Projects in the Town of Tazewell

VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program projects (P4P SYIP Project Lines / Clusterpoints) falling within the Town limits.

#	UPC	Location	Project	Status	Admin. by	Est. total cost	Construction
P1	91446	E. Riverside Dr (Rt 61): US 19/460 EB exit ramp to Valley View Rd	Turn lanes, vertical curve and box culvert; capacity and safety	Waiting Financial Closure	Locally	$3,915,067	Start 2015-09; end 2017-06 (as listed)
P2	113876	Fairground Rd (Rt 16) over Clinch River, Structure 1802	Bridge replacement (SGR)	Activity Dates Set	VDOT	$8,440,390	2028-07 to 2030-06

P1: Rt 61 widening is federally eligible, locally administered, NHS, minor arterial; has PE, RW and construction flags; costs per P4P estimates. P2: federally eligible, Primary system, 2 structures.
The P4P jurisdiction field reads 'Tazewell' (county) for both; they were placed in the Town by location. Marker positions on page 1 are read from the P4P map and are approximate.

Virginia's VTrans Mid-term Needs are the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) statewide inventory of transportation problems expected over the next ten years, updated every two years ahead of SMART SCALE. Under Virginia Code § 33.2-353, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) identifies needs, not solutions, in four categories: Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS), Regional Networks, Urban Development Areas (including access to Industrial and Economic Development Areas), and Safety.

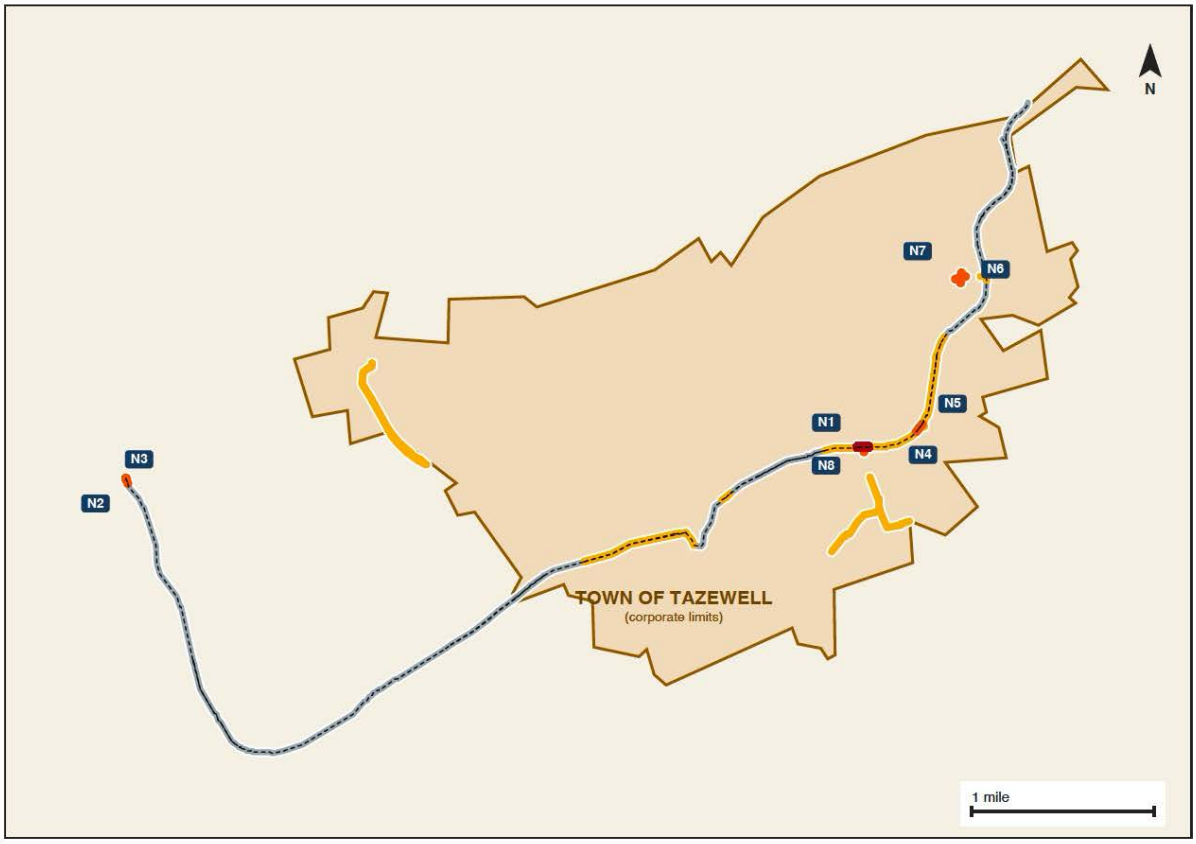
In the 2025 update, each need is ranked by severity and by magnitude, meaning how many users it affects. Those rankings are weighted by category in line with SMART SCALE, and then adjusted for co-located bridge and pavement needs, flood and sea-level exposure, and Economically Distressed Communities.

The result is a set of Statewide and Construction District priority locations, ranked from Priority 1 through Priority 4. Priority 1 locations are those that would benefit most from a transportation solution. The ranking steers state funding. Projects that address a need are screened into SMART SCALE, the CTB directs the Project Pipeline study program to Priority 1 and 2 locations, and VDOT and DRPT capacity-expansion planning must focus on Priority 1 locations. For the Town of Tazewell, this means that projects on the Route 19/US 460 corridor are strongest when they address a documented Mid-term Need.

The following map is derived from data from the VDOT Pathways for Planning Program and depicts updated V-Trans needs.

Town of Tazewell: 2025 VTrans Prioritized Mid-term Needs

Road segments in the VTrans 2025 Mid-term Needs layer within the Town (VDOT jurisdiction 'Town of Tazewell'), colored by District Priority. Details on pages 2-4.



LEGEND District Priority 2 District Priority 3 District Priority 4 No district priority
Also Statewide Priority 4 N# District Priority 2-3 segment (page 2); all 76 in appendix Town of Tazewell limits (Census 2020)

Source: VDOT Pathways for Planning / VTrans 2025 Prioritized Mid-term Needs layer (Town of Tazewell segments). Town limits: US Census 2020. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

The following grids show line level detail of projects based on priority level.

Segments with District Priority 2 or 3

VTrans 2025 Prioritized Mid-term Needs, Town of Tazewell segments. Priority 1 is highest; none of the Town's segments reach Priority 1 at the district or statewide level.

#	Route / street	Dir.	Mile marker	AADT 2023	Safety (district)	Safety (statewide)	Statewide priority	District priority
N1	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.538 - 5.596	5,000	High	Medium	Priority 4	Priority 2
N2	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	0 - 0.001	1,502	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
N3	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	0.001 - 0.03	1,502	Medium	Low	Priority 4	Priority 3
N4	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.942 - 5.975	5,000	Medium	Medium	Priority 4	Priority 3
N5	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.975 - 6.007	5,000	Medium	Low	Priority 4	Priority 3
N6	Market St	-	0.222 - 0.278	1,782	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
N7	Professional Dr	-	0.112 - 0.172	5,300	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
N8	Steeles Ln	-	0 - 0.028	5,300	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3

All Town segments by route (directional duplicates with identical geometry removed)

Route / street	Segments	District P2	District P3	District P4	Statewide P4
Bus. US 19	52	1	4	18	51
Alt. SR 16	15	0	0	15	0
Professional Dr	2	0	1	1	0
Steeles Ln	2	0	1	1	0
Ben Bolt Ave	1	0	0	1	0
Dial Rock Rd	1	0	0	1	0
Dogwood Rd	1	0	0	1	0
Market St	1	0	1	0	0
Bus. US 19 Ramp 8A	1	0	0	0	1
Total	**76**	**1**	**7**	**38**	**52**

Appendix: All 76 Town Segments

Sorted by route, direction and mile marker. Tag = page 1 label for District Priority 2-3 segments. Dir. WB/NB or EB/SB is the direction of the record drawn.

Tag	Route / street	Dir.	Mile marker	AADT 2023	CoSS	Safety (district)	Safety (statewide)	Statewide priority	District priority
	Alt. SR 16	EB/SB	0.9 - 0.949	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	EB/SB	0.949 - 0.996	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	EB/SB	1.011 - 1.176	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	EB/SB	1.176 - 1.33	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	EB/SB	1.33 - 1.609	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	0.9 - 0.947	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	0.947 - 0.993	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.009 - 1.176	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.176 - 1.18	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.18 - 1.33	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.33 - 1.556	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.557 - 1.575	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.575 - 1.578	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.578 - 1.609	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Alt. SR 16	WB/NB	1.609 - 1.61	2,455	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Ben Bolt Ave	-	0 - 0.031	13,800	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
N2	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	0 - 0.001	1,502	-	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	1.087 - 1.088	1,502	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	1.088 - 1.1	1,502	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	1.1 - 1.58	1,502	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	1.58 - 1.612	1,525	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	1.621 - 1.85	1,525	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	2.96 - 3.4	1,954	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	3.4 - 3.6	1,954	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	3.837 - 4.353	2,937	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	4.353 - 4.41	2,937	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	4.41 - 4.494	3,452	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	4.494 - 4.819	3,452	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	4.85 - 4.869	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	4.869 - 5.351	5,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.007 - 6.35	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.35 - 6.395	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.408 - 6.41	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.41 - 6.469	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.469 - 6.5	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.528 - 6.957	6,811	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	6.957 - 7.013	6,811	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.013 - 7.15	6,811	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority

Appendix: All 76 Town Segments (continued)

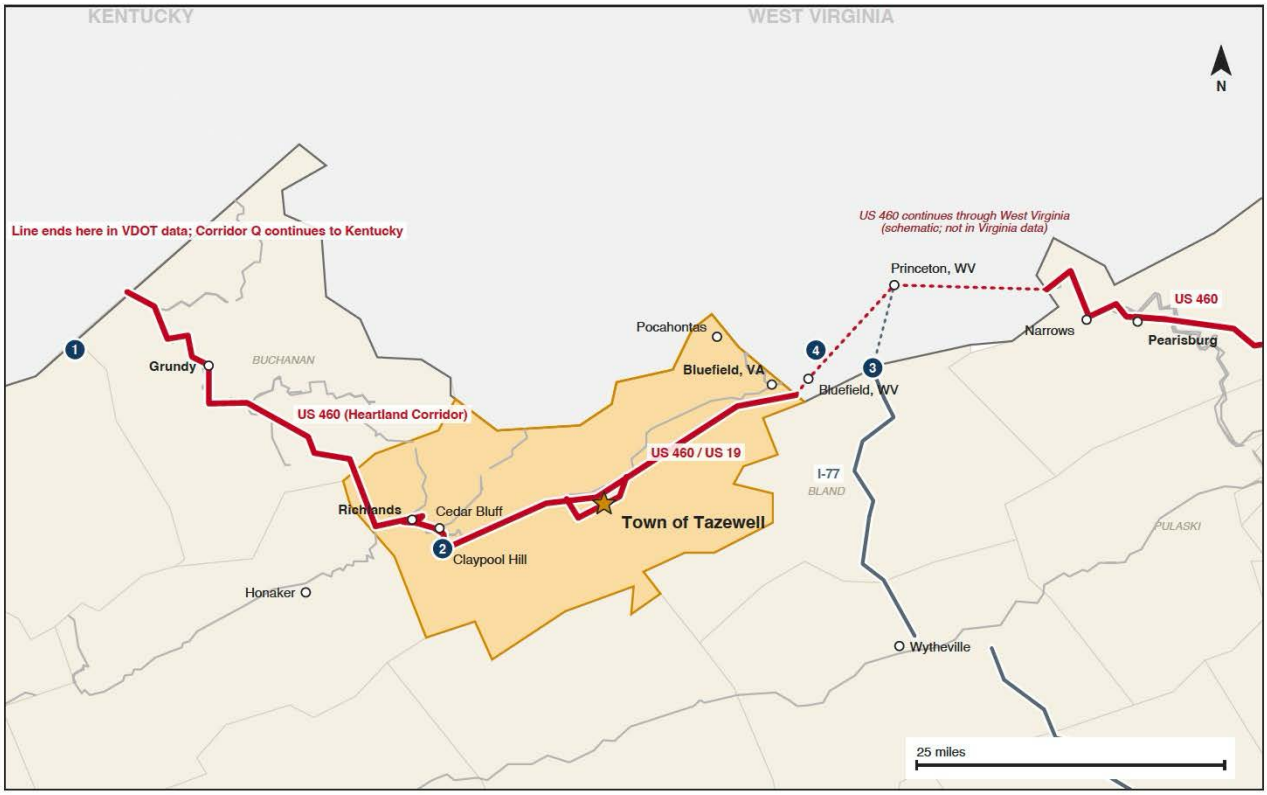
Sorted by route, direction and mile marker. Tag = page 1 label for District Priority 2-3 segments. Dir. WB/NB or EB/SB is the direction of the record drawn.

Tag	Route / street	Dir.	Mile marker	AADT 2023	CoSS	Safety (district)	Safety (statewide)	Statewide priority	District priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.15 - 7.297	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.297 - 7.31	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.315 - 7.528	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.528 - 7.732	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.732 - 7.737	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	EB/SB	7.737 - 7.78	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
N3	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	0.001 - 0.03	1,502	Heartland	Medium	Low	Priority 4	Priority 3
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	0.03 - 1.087	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	1.088 - 1.58	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	1.612 - 1.62	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	1.85 - 2.922	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	2.924 - 2.96	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	2.96 - 3.6	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	3.6 - 3.837	1,839	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	3.837 - 4.41	2,937	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	4.819 - 4.85	3,452	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	4.869 - 5.01	5,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.01 - 5.351	5,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.351 - 5.538	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
N1	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.538 - 5.596	5,000	Heartland	High	Medium	Priority 4	Priority 2
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.596 - 5.942	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
N4	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.942 - 5.975	5,000	Heartland	Medium	Medium	Priority 4	Priority 3
N5	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	5.975 - 6.007	5,000	Heartland	Medium	Low	Priority 4	Priority 3
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	6.007 - 6.395	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	6.395 - 6.396	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	6.396 - 6.408	5,000	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	6.5 - 6.528	6,811	Heartland	Low	Low	Priority 4	Priority 4
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	7.31 - 7.315	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	7.315 - 7.737	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19	WB/NB	7.737 - 7.78	3,000	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Bus. US 19 Ramp 8A	-	0 - 0.22	1,636	Heartland	No Need	No Need	Priority 4	No Priority
	Dial Rock Rd	-	0 - 0.031	5,300	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
	Dogwood Rd	-	0.786 - 1.137	5,300	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
N6	Market St	-	0.222 - 0.278	1,782	-	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
	Professional Dr	-	0 - 0.028	5,300	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4
N7	Professional Dr	-	0.112 - 0.172	5,300	-	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
N8	Steeles Ln	-	0 - 0.028	5,300	-	Medium	No Need	No Priority	Priority 3
	Steeles Ln	-	0.16 - 0.61	5,300	-	Low	No Need	No Priority	Priority 4

Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS) are the multimodal backbone of Virginia's transportation system, designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board through VTrans, the state's long-range transportation plan. A CoSS is more than a single highway—it can include the main road, parallel routes, freight and passenger rail, transit, ports and airports, and it must be multimodal, connect regions or states, carry high volumes, and serve a unique statewide function such as freight, defense or evacuation. The designation matters locally because CoSS routes fall under VDOT's access-management standards, are the subject of long-range Corridor Master Plans, and compete well for state funding through SMART SCALE. Virginia has designated twelve corridors, and two serve the Tazewell area: US 460, the Heartland Corridor, an east-west truck and rail route linking Hampton Roads and the Port of Virginia to West Virginia and the Midwest, and I-77, the Western Mountain Corridor, which carries multistate freight and tourism traffic through the East River Mountain Tunnel at the Bluefield line. The graphics that follow show these corridors in relation to the Town of Tazewell.

Route 460: Heartland Corridor of Statewide Significance

VTrans Corridor E (US 460) through the Tazewell County region, with I-77 and active rail for context.



LEGEND US 460 (CoSS Heartland) | Not in VA data | I-77 (CoSS) | Active rail | # Feature (page 2) | Tazewell County

1 Breaks Interstate Park 2 US 19 joins US 460, Claypool Hill 3 East River Mountain Tunnel, I-77/US 52 4 Mercer County Airport (BLF), Bluefield, WV

Corridors: VDOT Corridors of Statewide Significance layer, simplified to about 1 mile. Rail: Virginia DRPT. Boundaries: US Census. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

Route 460 Corridor: Features and Notes

Corridor definition from the VTrans2040 Heartland Corridor (Corridor E) profile; features as numbered on the map.

Item	What it is
Corridor	VTrans Corridor of Statewide Significance E, the Heartland Corridor, "defined primarily by US 460." The VTrans2040 profile runs it from Hampton Roads to the West Virginia line near Bluefield, with the western Segment E1 serving Buchanan and Tazewell Counties and the towns of Richlands, Tazewell and Bluefield. In VDOT's layer it is coded RT460.
Road character (2015 profile)	Two lanes from the Kentucky line to Grundy, four lanes from there to the West Virginia line.
US 19 (feature 2)	US 19 meets US 460 at Claypool Hill and runs with it toward Bluefield. The route then crosses into West Virginia, runs with US 52 through Bluefield, WV, and meets I-77 east-southeast of Princeton, WV. Back in Virginia it meets US 219 at Rich Creek.
I-77 / East River Mountain Tunnel (feature 3)	I-77 is a separate CoSS (Western Mountain Corridor). The 5,412-foot tunnel carries I-77 and US 52 under East River Mountain between Bluefield, WV and Rocky Gap, VA; about 49% of it lies in Virginia.
Mercer County Airport (feature 4)	BLF, Bluefield, WV, at the northern edge of the Tazewell County area. General aviation only; no scheduled airline service.
Breaks Interstate Park (feature 1)	Reached by VA 80 and KY 80 at the Kentucky line. It is off US 460 and shown for orientation near the western end of Corridor Q.
Corridor Q / Coalfields Expressway	Appalachian Development Highway System Corridor Q follows US 460 from the Kentucky line near Breaks to I-81 near Christiansburg, about 127.5 miles. It is being built as a four-lane road that is to carry US 460 and the future US 121 in Buchanan County. As of a November 2023 report: an 8.7-mile Breaks Park Road to Southern Gap section opened, Poplar Creek Phase A (2.74 mi) was scheduled for late 2025 and Phase B (2.07 mi) for late 2027. Confirm current status with VDOT; these segments are not drawn separately.
Freight (whole corridor, 2012)	About 81 million tons of freight by truck ($89 billion) and 62 million tons by rail ($47 billion), per the VTrans2040 profile. The Norfolk Southern Heartland Corridor rail line parallels much of the route (gray lines on the map).

Where the mapped line stops. VDOT's layer ends in Buchanan County northeast of Grundy and does not extend to the Kentucky line, so the Corridor Q approach to Breaks is not drawn. The layer also covers Virginia only, which is why the West Virginia stretch is a dotted schematic through Bluefield, WV and Princeton, WV.

Tazewell. The layer includes a short extra corridor segment through the Town of Tazewell besides the main alignment north of town.

Precision. Geometry is simplified to about 1 mile, which is fine for a regional view but not for engineering or right-of-way work.

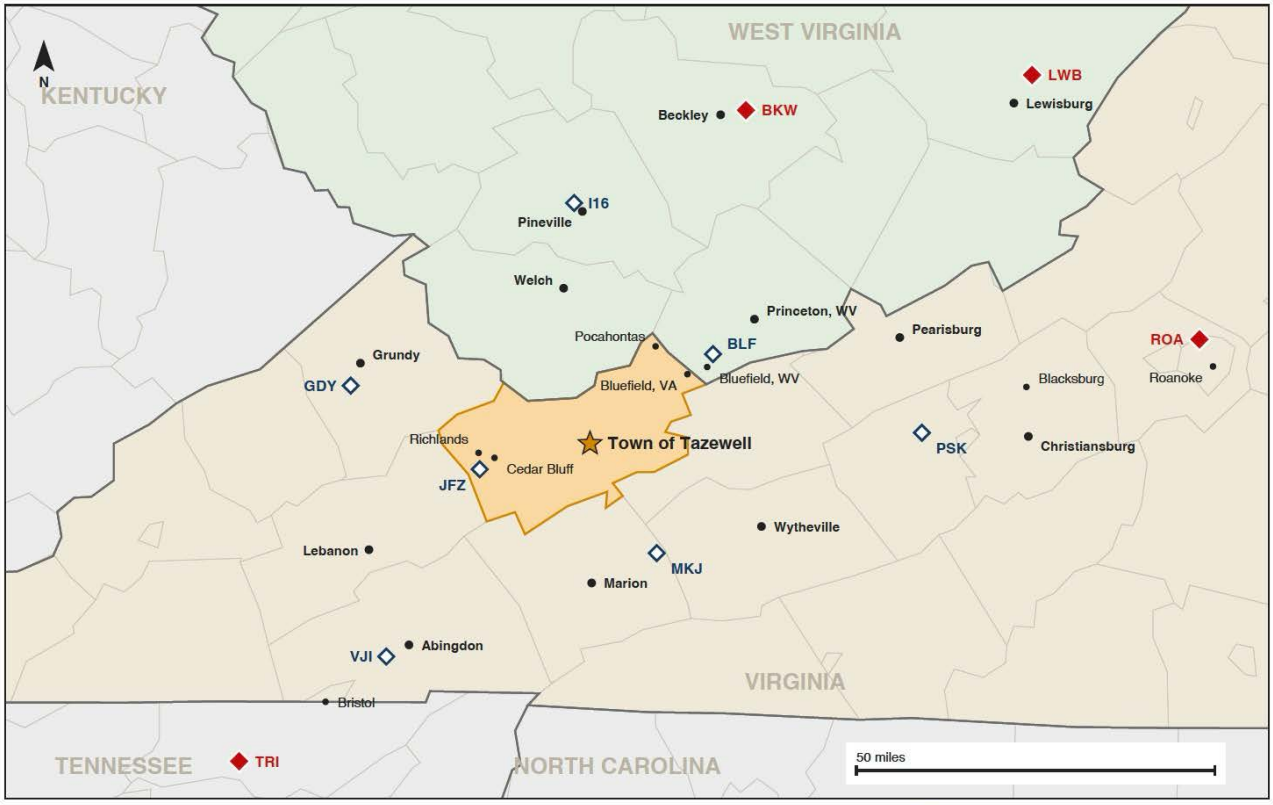
Sources

VDOT, Corridors of Statewide Significance feature layer (services.arcgis.com, Corridors_of_Statewide_Significance_VDOT2), accessed October 2026.
VTrans2040 CoSS Profile E, Heartland (vtrans.virginia.gov, 2015). Cardinal News, "Ribbon cut on first miles of Coalfields Expressway in Virginia" (Nov 10, 2023).
Wikipedia: U.S. Route 460; East River Mountain Tunnel. Virginia DRPT rail layer; US Census boundaries via us-atlas.

The following map and corroborating grid outline airports serving the Tazewell community. Understandably, because of the rural nature of the community, most of these assets are located elsewhere in the Commonwealth or even in bordering states like West Virginia.

Town of Tazewell Region: Airports & Key Towns

Southwest Virginia, southern West Virginia, and the Kentucky / Tennessee / North Carolina edges



LEGEND ◆ Airport with scheduled airline service ◇ General aviation airport ● County seat (bold) • Other town ▭ Tazewell County, VA

Boundaries: US Census (via us-atlas). Airport positions: FAA data. Towns plotted at approximate center. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

Airports Serving the Tazewell Region

Straight-line distance is from central Tazewell, VA. Sorted by airline service, then distance.

ID	Airport	Location	Longest runway	Service	Straight-line to Tazewell
BKW	Raleigh County Memorial	Beaver (Beckley), WV	6,750 ft	Contour Airlines to Charlotte	51 mi
TRI	Tri-Cities Regional	Blountville, TN	8,000 ft	American, Delta, Allegiant, United	66 mi
LWB	Greenbrier Valley	Lewisburg, WV	7,003 ft	Contour Airlines to Charlotte	80 mi
ROA	Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional	Roanoke, VA	6,800 ft	American, Delta, United, Allegiant	86 mi
JFZ	Tazewell County	Richlands, VA	4,299 ft	General aviation	16 mi
MKJ	Mountain Empire	Rural Retreat, VA	5,252 ft	General aviation	18 mi
BLF	Mercer County	Bluefield, WV	4,743 ft	General aviation (no airline service)	21 mi
I16	Kee Field	Pineville, WV	3,701 ft	General aviation	34 mi
GDY	Grundy Municipal	Grundy, VA	2,256 ft	General aviation	34 mi
VJI	Virginia Highlands	Abingdon, VA	5,500 ft	General aviation	41 mi
PSK	New River Valley	Dublin, VA	6,201 ft	General aviation	46 mi

Drive times to Tazewell. Raleigh County Memorial (BKW): about 73 miles, 1 hr 16 min. Tri-Cities Regional (TRI): about 91 miles, 1 hr 31 min.

Closest airports. Tazewell County (JFZ), Mountain Empire (MKJ) and Mercer County (BLF) are all within about 21 miles, but none has scheduled airline service. BLF lost its Essential Air Service flights in the mid-2000s and now handles private and charter traffic.

Tazewell County Airport (JFZ) sits about 2 nautical miles south of Richlands and is owned by the Tazewell County Airport Authority. It sells 100LL and Jet A+.

Airline service changes often. Status reflects airport and carrier sources reviewed in October 2026; confirm schedules with the airlines before relying on a route.

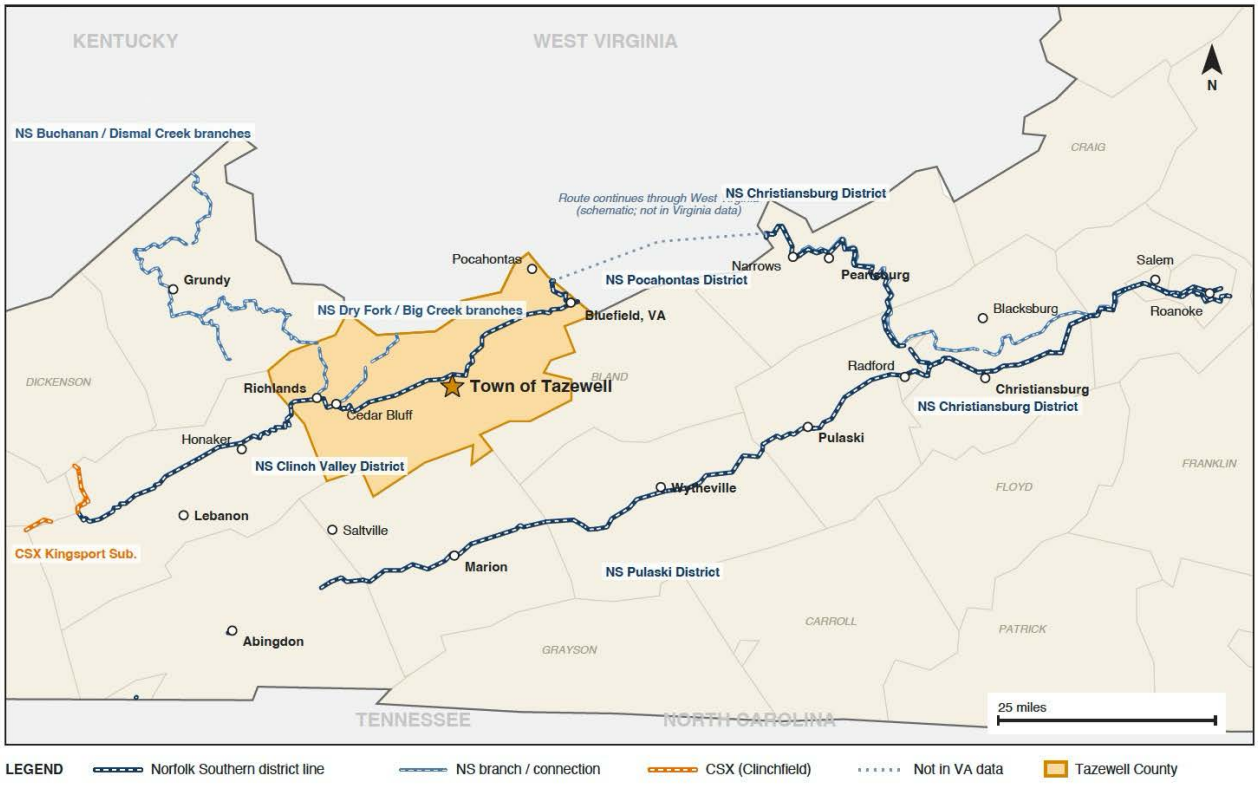
Sources

FAA airport data via airport-data.com (BKW, TRI, VJI, MKJ, PSK, GDY, I16, JFZ, BLF, ROA, LWB)
Raleigh County Memorial Airport (flybeckley.com, Business View Magazine, Mar 2026); Greenbrier Valley Airport (gvairport.com)
Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport (flyroa.com); WJHL (United at TRI, June 2026); Tri-Cities Airport member profiles
Mercer County Airport service history (Wikipedia); drive distances from airport.guide

The following map and corroborating grid outline active rail lines serving the Tazewell community.

Tazewell Region of Virginia: Active Rail Lines

Main lines, branches and industrial leads from the Virginia DRPT statewide rail layer. Yards, sidings and spurs are not shown.



Rail: Virginia DRPT Statewide Rail layer (last updated May 2020), simplified to about 1/4 mile. Boundaries: US Census. Prepared by Gem City Growth Strategies.

Active Rail Lines in the Tazewell Region

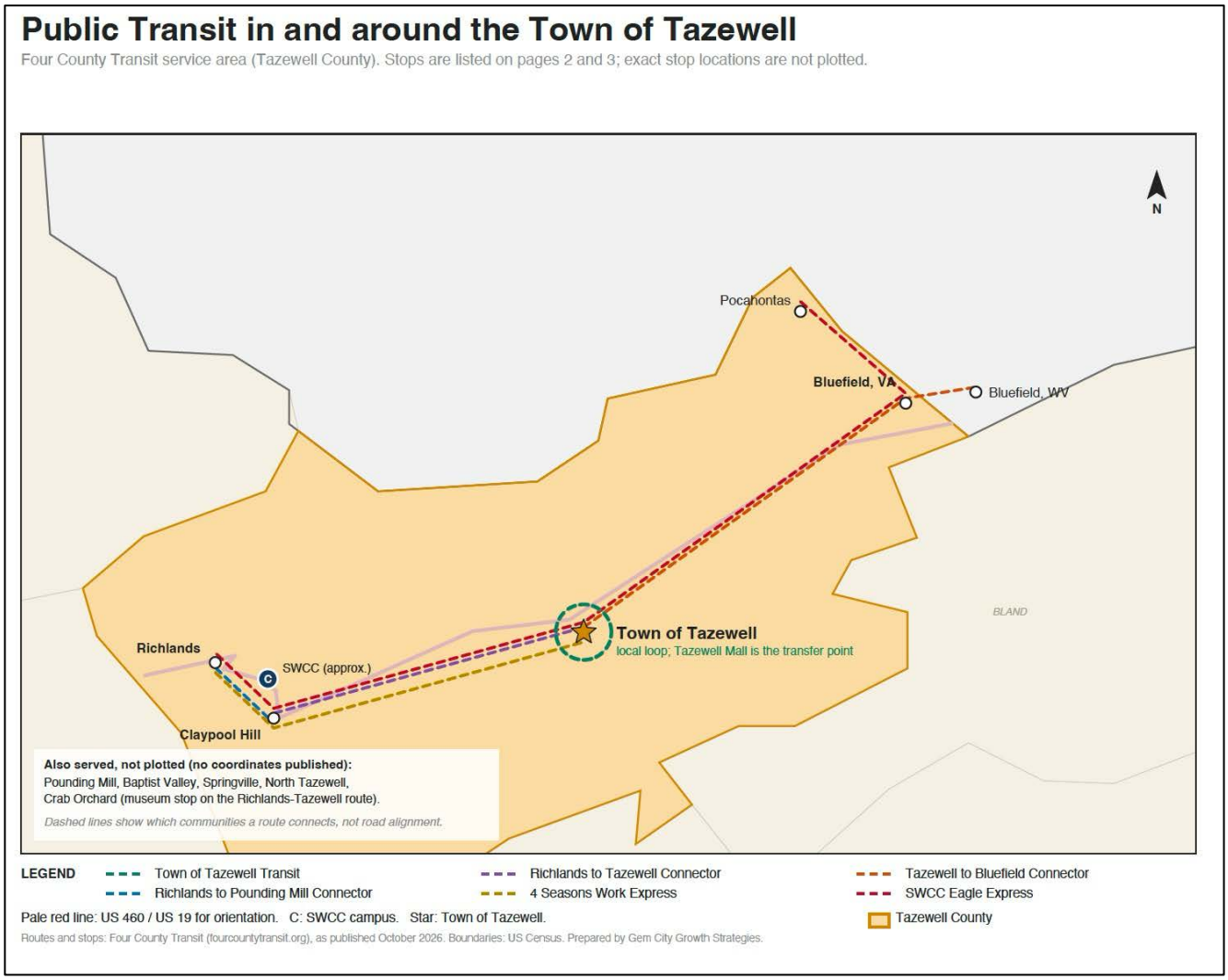
Line names are the subdivision names in the DRPT layer. Descriptions cover only what is mapped in Virginia.

Operator	Line (DRPT name)	Where it runs in this map
Norfolk Southern	Christiansburg District (West Roanoke to Bluefield)	Roanoke and Salem west through Montgomery County (Christiansburg), Radford and Pulaski County, then Giles County (Narrows, Pearisburg area) to the West Virginia line at Glen Lyn. Resumes at Bluefield, VA.
Norfolk Southern	Pocahontas District	Bluefield and Pocahontas, VA area in Tazewell County, where the line crosses into West Virginia.
Norfolk Southern	Clinch Valley District	From Bluefield through Tazewell County (Tazewell, Cedar Bluff, Richlands) and Russell County (Honaker) toward Castlewood and Kingsport, TN.
Norfolk Southern	Pulaski District (Walton to Ford)	Radford and Pulaski southwest through Wytheville and Marion (Smyth County) to Glade Spring.
Norfolk Southern	Dry Fork Branch, Big Creek Branch	Short branches off the Clinch Valley line in Tazewell County between Cedar Bluff and Tazewell.
Norfolk Southern	Buchanan, Dismal Creek and Big Creek Branches	Branch network around Grundy in Buchanan County.
Norfolk Southern	Whitethorne District, Potts Valley Connection	Short district and connection lines in Giles, Montgomery and Roanoke Counties.
CSX Transportation	Kingsport Subdivision	Southwest corner of the map near Castlewood in Russell County (the former Clinchfield route).

Source

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Statewide Rail feature layer (services9.arcgis.com, Statewide_Rail), accessed October 2026.
County and state boundaries: US Census Bureau via us-atlas. Towns plotted at approximate center.

The following map depicts public transportation serving the Town of Tazewell and immediate surrounding area. We have also provided color-coded transit routes for the entire area that impact upon the community and its residents.



Tazewell County Transit Routes (1 of 2)

Stops in running order, as published by Four County Transit. Diagrams are not to scale. Star marks the Tazewell Mall transfer stop.

Town of Tazewell Transit

Local loop. Nine runs, first stop 8:00 AM to last stop 4:55 PM (hourly).



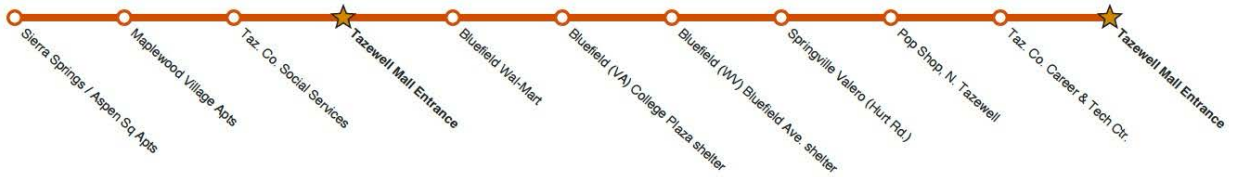
4 Seasons Richlands to Tazewell Connector

Four runs, first stop 8:35 AM. Run B skips the SWCC stops. Crab Orchard Museum is shown with an asterisk, not explained on the page.

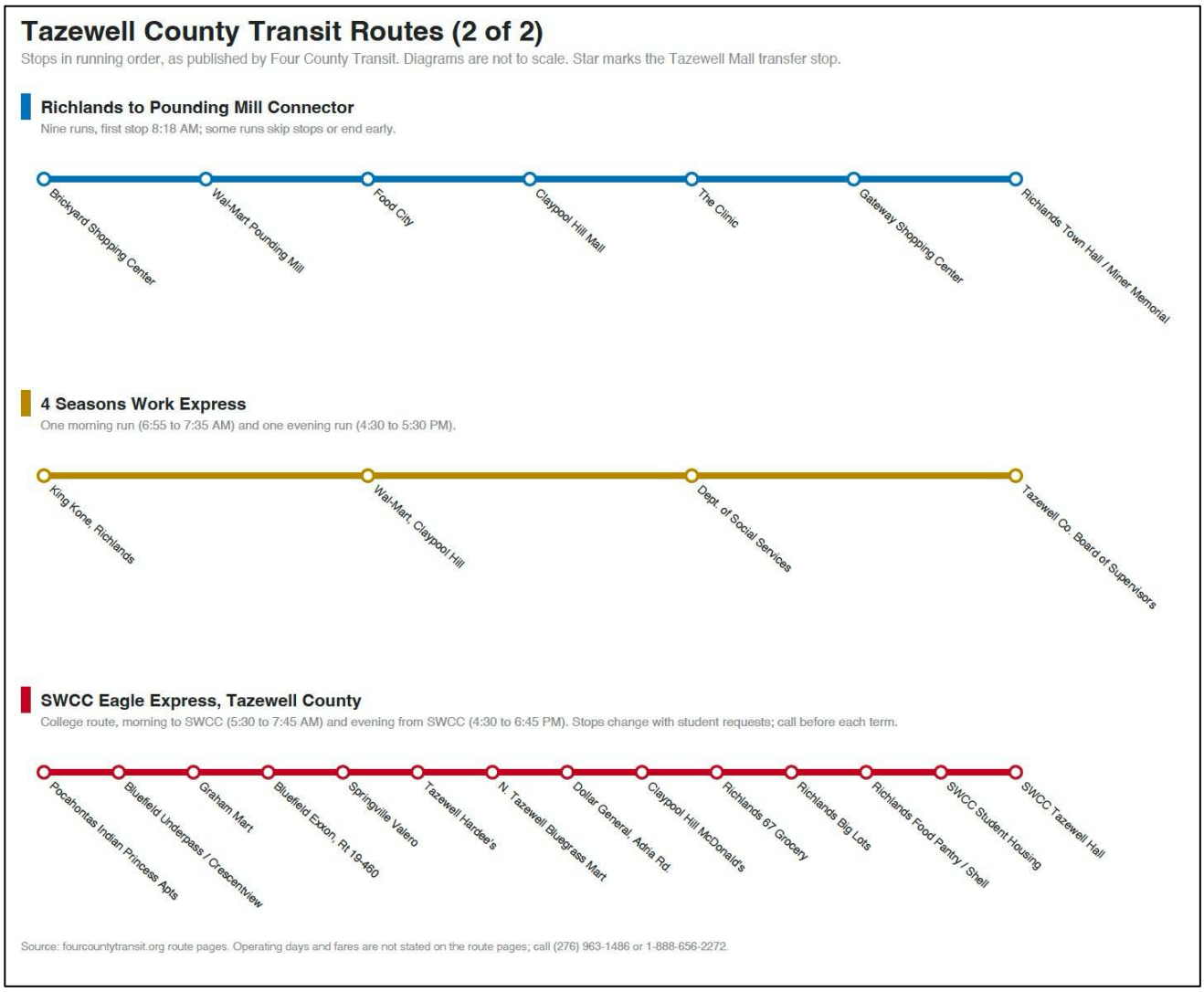


4 Seasons Tazewell to Bluefield Connector

Four runs, first stop 9:10 AM. Some runs skip stops (see schedule).

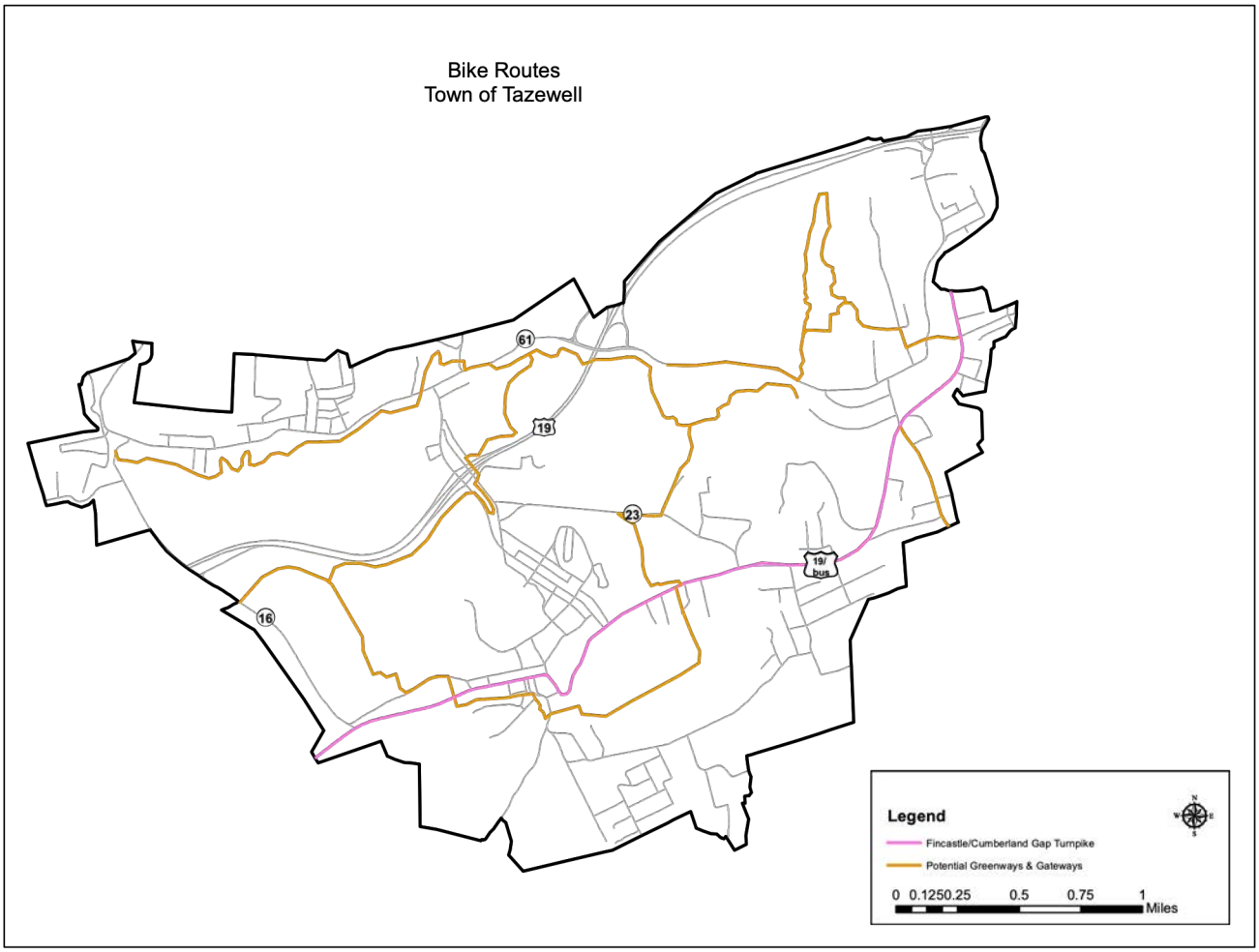


Source: fourcountytransit.org route pages. Operating days and fares are not stated on the route pages; call (276) 963-1486 or 1-888-656-2272.



The bike network shown on the following map advances two goals at once—strengthening the Town of Tazewell's quality of place while expanding affordable, everyday transportation for its residents. As a matter of placemaking, the plan pairs a signature spine—a bikeway along the historic Fincastle/Cumberland Gap Turnpike—running the length of town from southwest to northeast—with a broader web of potential greenways and gateways that would knit neighborhoods together and welcome riders in at the community's edges. Threading the US 19, Route 61, and Route 23 corridors, this connected system links downtown to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, parks, and the town's entry points, giving residents and visitors a safe, attractive way to move through Tazewell on two wheels.

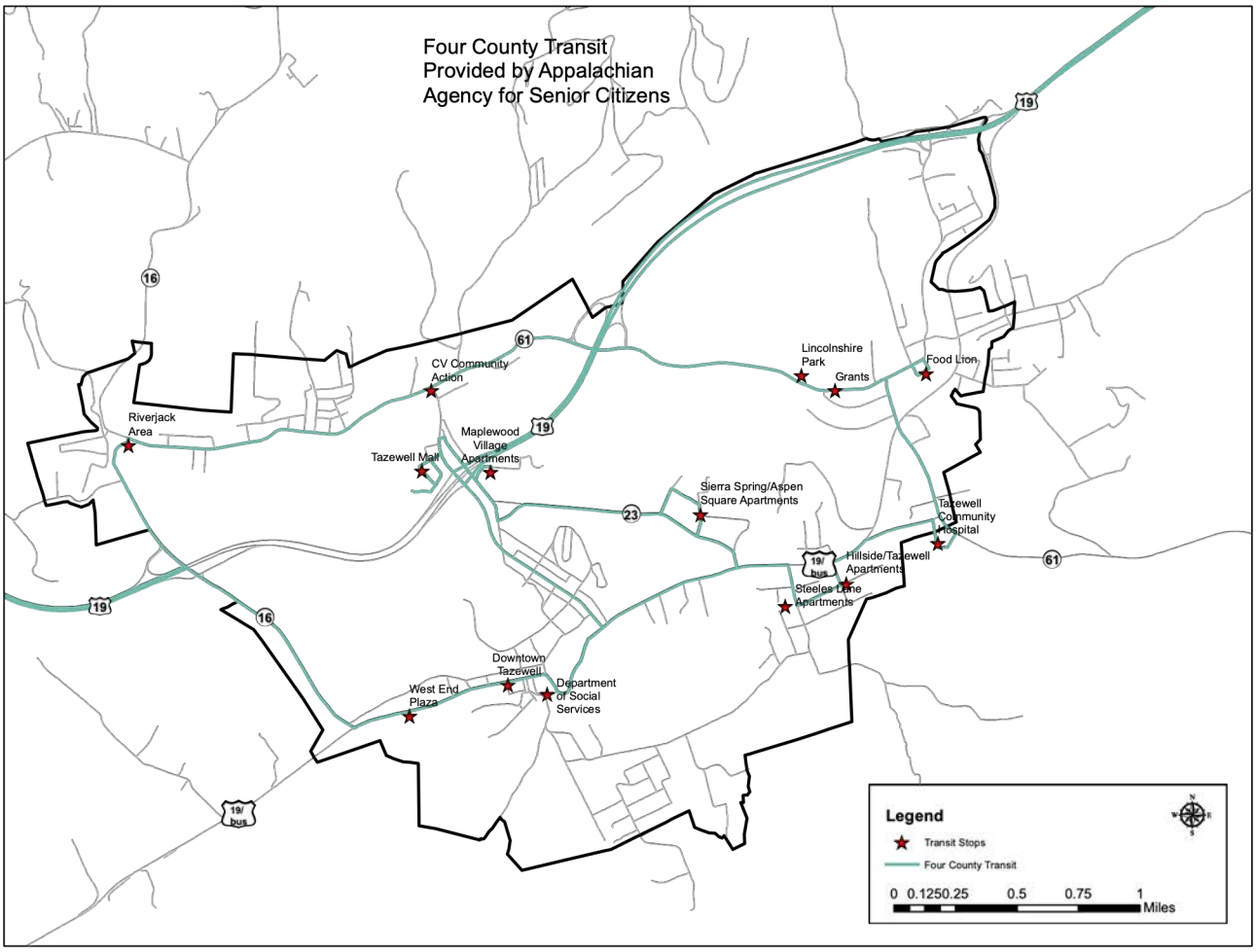
Reviving a historic turnpike corridor as an active-transportation route also reinforces the town's identity and its growing outdoor-recreation appeal, supporting downtown vitality, public health, and the kind of livable, connected environment that helps attract and retain both residents and employers. Just as importantly, bicycling is among the most affordable forms of transportation available: for households with only one vehicle (or none) the greenways-and-gateways network offers a dependable, low-cost way to reach jobs, school, groceries, and services, easing household transportation budgets and widening access for young people, older adults, and lower-income residents alike. Seen this way, the routes shown here are not merely a recreational amenity but a modest, high-return investment in both the town's attractiveness and the economic mobility of the people who live and work there.



Map: Bike Routes-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC)

Mobility is the quiet prerequisite for nearly everything else—reaching a doctor's appointment, a pharmacy, the grocery store, or a benefits office—and for a community like Tazewell, with an aging population and many households of limited means, public transit is less a convenience than a necessity. As residents grow older, driving becomes harder and eventually impossible, and for those living on fixed or modest incomes, the cost of owning, insuring, and maintaining a vehicle can be out of reach altogether. Without a dependable travel option, these residents risk being cut off from the very services that allow them to stay healthy, independent, and rooted in their own community.

The map below shows how the Town is served today by Four County Transit, operated by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens—a fixed route whose stops deliberately link the destinations that matter most to older and lower-income residents: apartment communities such as Maplewood Village, Sierra Spring/Aspen Square, Hillside/Tazewell, and Steeles Lane; Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital; grocery and retail anchors including Food Lion, Grants, and Tazewell Mall; downtown Tazewell; and essential offices such as the Department of Social Services and CV Community Action. Taken together, the route and its stops make plain both the need this service meets and the lifeline it represents.



Map: Four County Transit System-2026, Town of Tazewell. Source: Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC)

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

This framework translates the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies adopted by the Comprehensive Planning Committee into specific, fundable actions. The objectives stated in the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies element are the Town's policy direction and are reproduced here unchanged.

This following matrices connect these into implementation detail—the actions, timeframes, responsible parties, and funding strategies—drawn from the background analysis earlier in the Plan. In the language of § 15.2-2224, it is the Plan's statement of recommended methods of implementation.

This Plan and following content represent a living, fluid instrument. It should be reviewed annually by the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee, with progress reported to the Planning Commission, and refreshed as conditions, priorities, and funding programs change over the life of the Plan.

How to read the following pages

Supports — the Committee objective(s) the action advances; a note (e.g. “Trails finding”) points to the background analysis that informs it.

Timeframe — Ongoing · Short-Term (Years 1–2) · Mid-Term (Years 3–4) · Long-Term (5+ Years).

Lead & Partners — the party best positioned to carry the action, with likely collaborators.

Funding & Tools — the most probable funding sources and legal/programmatic tools; most actions will braid several.

1 GOAL 1 · Economic Development

To continually improve the economic well-being of Tazewell and the region.

Ongoing — Supports: Obj 1

Sustain Virginia Main Street accreditation and resource Tazewell Today, Inc. as the Town's dedicated downtown-development capacity.

Lead & Partners: Town Council · Tazewell Today, Inc.

Funding & Tools: Town operating budget · Virginia Main Street (DHCD)

Short — Supports: Obj 1, 2

Develop a downtown business-recruitment & visitor-capture program that converts Back-of-the-Dragon and Welcome Center traffic into Main Street spending.

Lead & Partners: Tazewell Today · IDA · Town

Funding & Tools: Virginia Main Street · Virginia Tourism Corp. · VCEDA

Short — Supports: Obj 1

Align Town actions with the Place + Main Downtown Redevelopment Strategy (Feb 2026) and advance its priority sites.

Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell Today

Funding & Tools: CDBG (DHCD) · historic rehab tax credits

Mid — Supports: Obj 1, 2

Facilitate adaptive reuse of vacant North Tazewell warehouses, the historic train depot, and upper-story downtown space.

Lead & Partners: IDA · Town · private owners

Funding & Tools: State/federal historic rehab tax credits · VCEDA · ARC

Short — Supports: Obj 2, 3

Prepare and execute a five-year tourism & recreation marketing campaign — heritage, eco-, and agritourism.

Lead & Partners: Town · County tourism · Tazewell Today

Funding & Tools: Virginia Tourism Corp. · Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

Ongoing — Supports: Obj 3

Build workforce & post-secondary partnerships addressing the bachelor's-degree gap (16.3% town vs. 42.2% statewide).

Lead & Partners: Town · County · Southwest Va. Community College

Funding & Tools: GO Virginia · ARC · VCEDA

Ongoing — Supports: Obj 1, 3

Maintain an active posture toward economic-development grants and loans across the full regional toolkit.

Lead & Partners: Town · CPPDC

Funding & Tools: CDBG · ARC · USDA RD · Tobacco Commission · VCEDA

2 GOAL 2 · Historical & Cultural Development

To promote the historical and cultural heritage of Tazewell and the surrounding areas.

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 1

Operationalize the Board of Historic & Architectural Review and keep the adopted Design Review Guidelines current for the Historic District.
Lead & Partners: Board of Historic & Architectural Review · Planning Commission
Funding & Tools: Town operating budget · DHR technical assistance

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 1

Maintain and, where warranted, expand the Tazewell Historic District to preserve rehabilitation-tax-credit eligibility.
Lead & Partners: Town · Va. Dept. of Historic Resources
Funding & Tools: DHR Cost-Share Survey · CLG grants

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 2

Make state and federal historic rehabilitation tax-credit information readily available to downtown property owners.
Lead & Partners: Tazewell Today, Inc. · Town
Funding & Tools: DHR · National Park Service (informational)

Mid
Supports: Obj 1, 2

Survey and document additional historic structures and evaluate new district(s) as funding allows.
Lead & Partners: Town · DHR
Funding & Tools: DHR Cost-Share Survey & Planning grants

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 2

Coordinate heritage programming with the Historic Crab Orchard Museum and the Tazewell Train Station & Visitors Center.
Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell County Historical Society
Funding & Tools: Local · Virginia Tourism Corp.

3 GOAL 3 · Urban Design

Protect and enhance visual quality, design excellence, and the distinctive image of Tazewell.

Mid
Supports: Obj 1

Implement adopted downtown improvements — lighting, landscaping, brick sidewalks, and a downtown mini-park — coordinated with the redevelopment strategy.
Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell Today, Inc.
Funding & Tools: CDBG · Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (VDOT) · Virginia Main Street

Mid
Supports: Obj 3

Establish a downtown-anchored wayfinding & gateway program connecting the four U.S. 19/460 interchanges and the Rt. 16 / Back-of-the-Dragon terminus to the historic core.
Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell Today · VDOT
Funding & Tools: Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside · Tobacco Commission · VCEDA

Short
Supports: Obj 3

Evaluate and, where feasible, adopt entrance-corridor design controls and the Parkway Overlay protecting the U.S. 19/460 scenic approach.
Lead & Partners: Planning Commission · Town Council
Funding & Tools: Town staff · CPPDC technical assistance

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 2

Encourage place-making & pedestrian-scaled amenities in outlying commercial and residential growth areas.
Lead & Partners: Planning Commission · private developers
Funding & Tools: Private investment · proffers

Long
Supports: Obj 3

Pursue underground utility relocation along entrance corridors opportunistically with VDOT and utility projects, where economically feasible.
Lead & Partners: Town · VDOT · utilities
Funding & Tools: Coordinated capital projects

4 GOAL 4 · Housing & Neighborhood Development

Improve the quality, quantity, and availability of housing for all socio-economic segments of the population.

Short→Ongoing
Supports: Obj 1, 2

Make rehabilitation & preservation the centerpiece of housing strategy — package CDBG housing rehab, Virginia Housing loan products, USDA RD 502/504, and weatherization for priority neighborhoods.
Lead & Partners: Town · DHCD · CPPDC
Funding & Tools: CDBG (DHCD) · Virginia Housing · USDA Rural Development · weatherization

Short
Supports: Obj 1, 2

Establish a vacant- & derelict-property program (Va. Code §§ 36-49.1:1 and 15.2-907.1) with a registration program, and evaluate a land bank.
Lead & Partners: Town · Town Attorney · Planning Commission
Funding & Tools: Town operating · CDBG · DHCD Industrial Revitalization Fund

Short
Supports: Obj 3

Broaden housing choice through land use — permit ADUs, duplexes, and small-lot/infill by right, and incorporate a manufactured-housing strategy (Va. Code § 15.2-2223.5).
Lead & Partners: Planning Commission · Town Council
Funding & Tools: Town staff (coordinated with zoning update)

Mid
Supports: Obj 3, 4

Recruit a well-located LIHTC senior and/or workforce rental development, building on the VCEDA-funded regional housing study.
Lead & Partners: Town · Virginia Housing · VCEDA
Funding & Tools: Low-Income Housing Tax Credits · VCEDA · Virginia Housing

Short→Ongoing
Supports: Obj 1

Adopt measurable housing targets — units rehabilitated, vacant units returned to use, accessible units permitted — and report annually.
Lead & Partners: Town · Planning Commission · Implementation Committee
Funding & Tools: Town staff

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 4

Support retirement & assisted-living housing and coordinated home-care for the Town's high share of seniors living alone (17.8% of households).
Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell County Dept. of Social Services
Funding & Tools: Federal/state senior-housing programs · non-profit partners

5 GOAL 5 · Transportation

Provide a safe, effective, and efficient transportation system serving automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic, while respecting the environment and scale of the historic areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

Short
Supports: Obj 1

Prepare the Plan's Transportation element and submit it to VDOT for review prior to adoption (Va. Code § 15.2-2223 B).
Lead & Partners: Town · VDOT
Funding & Tools: VDOT (review) · Town staff

Mid
Supports: Obj 1

Coordinate priority Transportation System Management improvements under the Town 2020 Transportation Plan and the VDOT Six-Year Plan.
Lead & Partners: Town · VDOT
Funding & Tools: VDOT SmartScale · Six-Year Improvement Program

Mid
Supports: Obj 1, 2

Advance the open intersection items flagged in the 2021 initiatives audit (Fairground/Riverside; Tazewell Ave./Riverside turning radius) with VDOT.
Lead & Partners: Town · VDOT
Funding & Tools: VDOT SmartScale · Revenue Sharing

Short→Mid
Supports: Obj 3

Conduct a downtown pedestrian-safety study and build a neighborhood sidewalk network linking schools, Lincolnshire Park, and community facilities.
Lead & Partners: Town · VDOT
Funding & Tools: Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside · Safe Routes to School

Short
Supports: Obj 2

Evaluate downtown off-street parking needs in coordination with the County.
Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell County
Funding & Tools: Town · County

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 4

Support park-and-ride, ride-sharing, and coordinated transportation alternatives for elderly, disabled, and limited-mobility residents.
Lead & Partners: Town · County · regional transit
Funding & Tools: FTA 5310/5311 · ARC

6 GOAL 6 · Community Facilities

Provide an appropriate level and variety of community facilities and services to enhance the quality of life for Tazewell-area residents.

Short→Long — Supports: Obj 1

Complete the Lead Service Line Inventory and adopt a lead/copper replacement plan in 2027, working toward full implementation by 2037 (EPA Lead & Copper Rule Revisions).

Lead & Partners: Town · County PSA · VDH Office of Drinking Water

Funding & Tools: Drinking Water SRF · IIJA lead-line funds · VWSRF

Mid — Supports: Obj 1

Reduce sanitary-sewer inflow & infiltration, rehabilitate aging collection lines, and coordinate PSA wastewater-treatment upgrades.

Lead & Partners: Town · Tazewell County PSA

Funding & Tools: Virginia Water Supply Revolving Fund · Clean Water SRF

Short — Supports: Obj 2, 3

Adopt and fund a Capital Improvements Plan — Public Works garage, reuse of the former County Administration building, WWTP upgrade, and fire/police equipment rotation.

Lead & Partners: Town Council · Town Manager

Funding & Tools: Town capital budget · USDA RD Community Facilities

Mid — Supports: Obj 2 · Healthcare finding

Pursue broadband infrastructure (Va. Code § 15.2-2223 E) and leverage the Cumberland Plateau Telehealth Strategy; sustain the County library as a public-access point.

Lead & Partners: Town · CPPDC · County · providers

Funding & Tools: Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) · BEAD · ARC

Ongoing — Supports: Obj 2

Sustain volunteer fire & EMS capacity through recruitment, retention, and a capital-rotation schedule for apparatus and equipment.

Lead & Partners: Town · volunteer companies

Funding & Tools: Town budget · FEMA AFG/SAFER · rescue-squad assistance

Ongoing→Mid — Supports: Obj 4

Provide storm-drainage improvements in priority areas, evaluate the North Tazewell dams, limit Clinch River channelization, and encourage permeable surfaces & rain gardens.

Lead & Partners: Town Public Works · County

Funding & Tools: VDOT drainage · DCR · FEMA mitigation

7 GOAL 7 · Land Use & Environment

Achieve a balanced land use pattern that retains Tazewell's small-town character while accommodating quality growth in a planned manner.

Short
Supports: Obj 1

Adopt the Future Land Use Map as the basis for rezoning decisions and "substantially in accord" review.
Lead & Partners: Planning Commission · Town Council
Funding & Tools: Town staff · CPPDC technical assistance

Short→Mid
Supports: Obj 1

Complete the comprehensive zoning ordinance & map update to conform to the Future Land Use Map and state enabling legislation.
Lead & Partners: Planning Commission · Town Council
Funding & Tools: Town staff · DHCD planning grants

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 2

Direct new manufacturing to professionally planned industrial parks and promote redevelopment of underutilized North Tazewell industrial sites.
Lead & Partners: IDA · Town
Funding & Tools: VCEDA · Tobacco Commission · ARC

Ongoing
Supports: Obj 3

Conserve the Clinch River corridor & steep slopes as open space through easements, proffers, and donations, applying BMPs to steep-slope development.
Lead & Partners: Town · County · The Nature Conservancy · DCR
Funding & Tools: Virginia Outdoors Fund · private donation · easements

Mid
Supports: Obj 3 · Trails finding

Secure a headwaters river-access point on the Clinch and connect it to Clinch River State Park / the blueway — the "where the Clinch begins" opportunity.
Lead & Partners: Town · DCR · County
Funding & Tools: Land & Water Conservation Fund · Virginia Outdoors Fund · Recreational Trails Program

Mid
Supports: Obj 3 · Trails finding

Advance the highest-ranked greenway & trail segments — the Lincolnshire Park loop and the Clinch corridor Class I spine (River Jack to Riverside Drive).
Lead & Partners: Town · DCR
Funding & Tools: Recreational Trails Program · Virginia Outdoors Fund · Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside

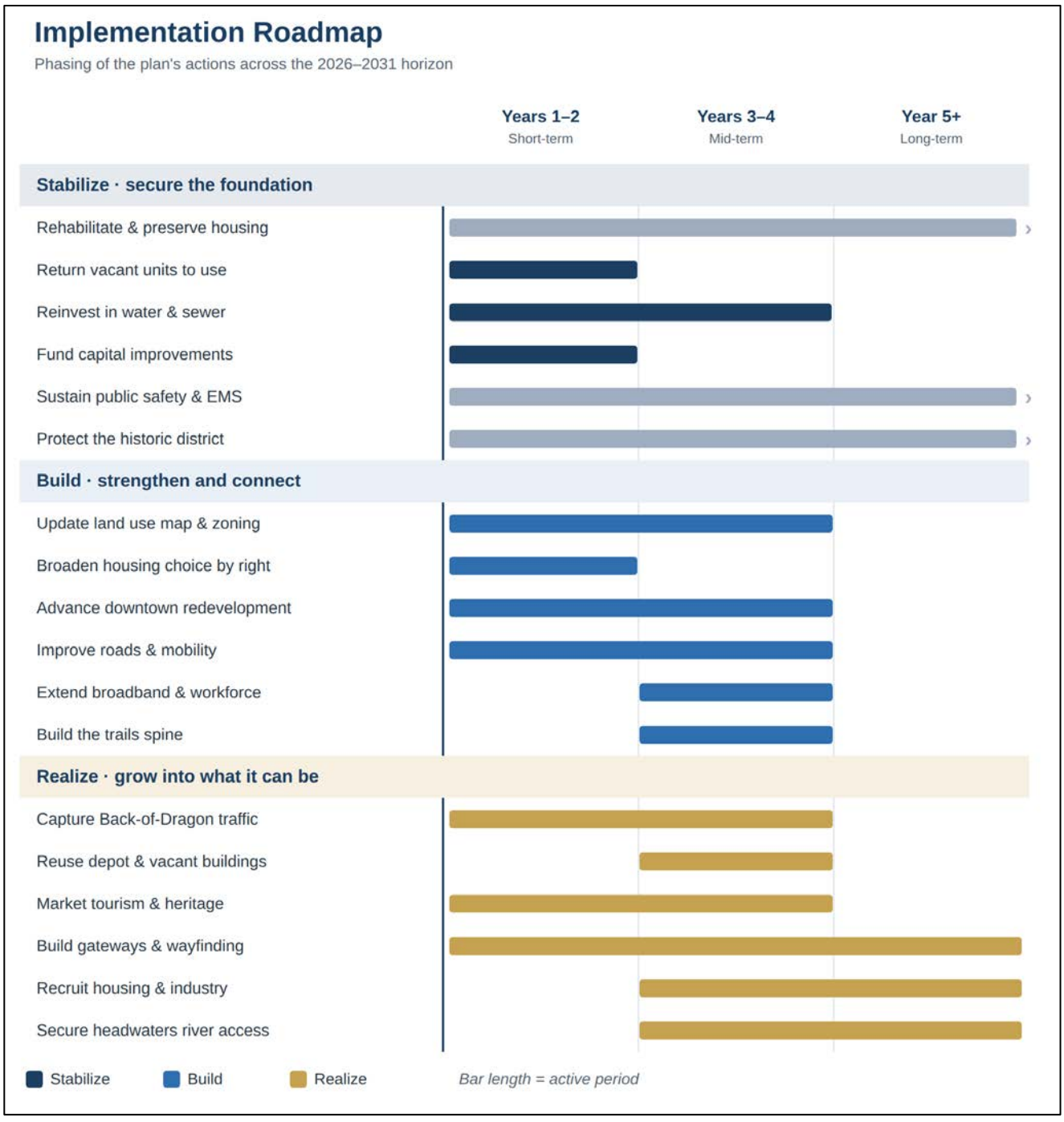
Ongoing
Supports: Obj 4

Maintain erosion/sediment-control and drainage-plan compliance and keep the subdivision ordinance current.
Lead & Partners: Town · Planning Commission
Funding & Tools: Town staff

GANTT CHART FOR IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The Goals, Objectives, and Strategies are derived from consensus building process by the Comprehensive Planning Committee, Town Manager, and support staff. Their framework is translated into implementation details in the preceding section. Here, a Gantt chart illustrates all these moving parts as a rational Implementation Roadmap arc.

Note: By design, some longer lead time initiatives carry beyond the five-year horizon of this Comprehensive Plan.



FROM STABILITY TO GROWTH

Tazewell's staged trajectory: retention before attraction



PHASE 1 · STABILIZE

Secure the foundation

SHORT–TERM · YEARS 1–2

- Retain residents and existing employers
- Hold housing stock and downtown occupancy
- Strengthen the Town's fiscal capacity
- Aggressively market heritage assets

PHASE 2 · BUILD

Strengthen and connect

MID–TERM · YEARS 3–4

- Bolster broadband adoption
- Connect trails, greenways, and gateways
- Advance downtown catalyst projects
- Align workforce and infrastructure

PHASE 3 · REALIZE

Grow into what it can be

LONG–TERM · YEARS 5+

- Attract new residents and investment
- Grow the tax and employment base
- Realize Tazewell's fuller identity
- Position for the next plan horizon

The floor must hold before the Town can build, and build before it can grow. Plan horizon 2026–2031.

FIRST HOLD STEADY. THEN GROW.

Where the Town of Tazewell stands today…and the direction this plan aims to move it by 2031.

These six focus areas set a baseline for the community. Some we need to **hold and lift**; others we need to **bring down**. The arrows show the direction of momentum we're aiming for over the next five years.

Keep our people

↑ **Grow population back toward 2020 levels**

Now: **~4,390 residents**

Population slipped from 4,486 in 2020 to about 4,390 today. Hold the line, then recover ground toward where we were.

Keep homes lived in

↓ **Bring down the number of empty homes**

Now: **about 1 in 6 homes sit empty**

Roughly 370 units are vacant. Return more of them to use so fewer homes sit empty year to year.

Get homes online

↑ **Move toward universal home internet**

Now: **about 6 in 7 households connected**

Service now reaches nearly every address; the gap is subscription. Close it so nearly all homes are online.

Lift local paychecks

↑ **Close the income gap with the county**

Now: **about 73¢ earned for every county $1**

Median household income (about $34,600) trails the county. Narrow that gap so local paychecks catch up.

Fewer families struggling

↓ **Bring the poverty rate down toward the county's**

Now: **about 1 in 4 residents below the poverty line**

Local poverty runs above the 18–19% seen countywide. Move toward that county rate over time.

Fix up old houses

↑ **Build a steady pace of home rehab**

Now: **almost none each year**

New construction is effectively zero and rehab is sporadic. Set a steady, rising pace of homes improved each year.

Figures are rounded guideposts drawn from the 2020 Census and recent American Community Survey estimates.

LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Town Council

Joseph R. "Joe" Beasley, *Mayor*
Jonathan E. Hankins, *Vice Mayor*
Zachary T. Cline, *Councilmember*
David H. Fox, *Councilmember*
Glen A. Keen, Jr., *Councilmember*
Elisabeth D. Takach, *Councilmember*
Danny C. Willis, *Councilmember*

Planning Commission

Larry Lutz, *Chair*
Jerry Cromer
Pete Davis
Gabrielle de Courcy
Benny Moore
Richard Taylor
Danny C. Willis, *Council representative*

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Zachary T. Cline, *Councilmember*
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Larry Lutz, *Planning Commission Chair*
Pete Davis, *Planning Commission Member*

Town Management Staff

Leeanne Regon, *Town Manager*
Susan Reeves, *Executive Assistant*

PUBLIC MEETINGS TIMELINE

Here is a visual chronology of public meetings that directly or indirectly focused on the Comprehensive Plan or relevant initiatives that fall under it.



PART SEVEN

CONCLUSION



Credit: Susan Reeves

CONCLUSION

"...a way of life where day-before-yesterday and day-after-tomorrow exist in odd and fascinating harmony."

—Author Wilma Dykeman describing Appalachia

Wilma Dykeman's words, which open this Plan, are also a fitting way to close it.

Tazewell has always lived in that harmony—a county seat founded in 1800 that has outlasted the coal boom that built it, a Main Street that never emptied while peer downtowns across Appalachia did, a community old enough to remember its own streetcar and modern enough to run gigabit fiber to most of its doorsteps. This Plan does not ask Tazewell to become something else. It asks the Town to keep doing, deliberately and on purpose, what it has already shown it knows how to do: hold its ground and then build from it.

The honest accounting in the pages above is not a verdict on Tazewell's prospects—it is the necessary first step of any strategy meant to actually work. The Town's housing stock is aging and its population older still. Incomes lag the county, which lags the Commonwealth, and roughly one in four residents lives in poverty. Working-age residents make up just 51 percent of the town's population, well below the county and state, and the coal economy that once defined this corner of Southwest Virginia continues its long recession into memory. These conditions constrain what Tazewell can do on its own, in the near term, without help. Fortunately, they do not ultimately define or constrain what Tazewell is or can be.

What defines Tazewell today is a walkable, occupied historic downtown; a hospital system that outperforms its regional peers; a broadband network most of rural America would envy; and a group of institutions—Town Council, Planning Commission, Comprehensive Planning Committee, Tazewell Today, and a Town Manager's office that has already shown it can carry a project from concept to completion—capable of converting opportunity into results.

This is why the Plan proceeds the way it does. It stabilizes first—protecting the housing stock, the utilities, the Main Street occupancy, and the fiscal capacity the Town cannot afford to lose—because a community cannot build on ground it is allowing to erode. It builds next—on connectivity, on the historic district, on the parks and trails that keep families in Town and draw new ones—because much of the work that arrests decline also creates the platform for growth. And it aims, in time, to convert that platform into sustained gains in population, investment, and opportunity, so that Tazewell becomes fully the place its history and setting furnish it to be, not merely a smaller version of what it once was.

This community evolution is not theoretical…it is already well underway. Design work on Tazewell Gateway Park at the Ramey Lot is in hand and moving toward construction. The Rural Trades & Ag Fab Lab has cleared its first planning hurdle and is pursuing the funding to make it real. The Downtown Sidewalk and Streetscape Program is stitching the Clinch River Pavilion, Lincolnshire Park, and Main Street into the walkable town Tazewell has always been at its core. And at Gratton, roughly 550 acres the Town already owns—rare in a region where the mountains are beautiful but almost entirely private—are being readied as a trail destination that could do for Tazewell what similar systems have done for other small Appalachian towns: turn landscape into livelihood.

The same follow-through shows up in the Town's transportation program, where Tazewell is not waiting on this Plan to pursue the infrastructure its own data says it needs. A SMART SCALE 2026 application already in scoring would rebuild sidewalks and upgrade three crossings along BUS 19 at Ben Bolt Avenue—precisely the intersection VDOT's own Bristol District safety study flagged as one of the Town's three highest-risk locations—and a companion State of Good Repair application, already validated and moving through scoring, would resurface Riverside Drive. Neither is guaranteed; the SMART SCALE application's early competitive score is a reminder that securing this funding will take sustained advocacy, not a single submission. But the applications exist, are technically sound, and are already in the pipeline—consistent with a Town that identifies its problems honestly and acts on them rather than waiting to be told. The same discipline produced the updated flood-hazard mapping now carried in this Plan's Future Land Use and Transportation element, so that development review going forward rests on current data rather than a five-year-old baseline. None of these efforts waited for this Plan's adoption to begin. They are the clearest evidence that Tazewell's habit of follow-through, documented candidly in the review of the 2021 Plan, is intact and improving. It also points to a common vision and strong leadership in many nooks and crannies of the community.

Speaking of leadership, a comprehensive plan succeeds or fails on the discipline of the people who carry it forward, not on the eloquence or even urgency of the document itself. That responsibility now passes from the Comprehensive Planning Committee that shaped this Plan to the Town Council that adopts it, the Planning Commission that will measure development proposals against it, the Town Manager and staff who will execute it year over year, and the regional partners—the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority, the Appalachian Regional Commission, GO Virginia, and Tazewell Today—whose funding and technical capacity this Plan depends on and was written to attract.

While Virginia law asks that this Plan be revisited at least once every five years, this Plan asks more of itself: that it be used continuously as a North Star—in every rezoning decision, every budget cycle, and every grant application between now and then, as the torch bearer to the question every small town must keep asking itself—*"Where are we going, and how do we get there together?"*

Tazewell has weathered many storms in its storied trajectory. Geographic isolation, perpetual coal boom and bust cycles, population stagnation, and education and related labor force challenges. Despite all of this, the community has remained—without interruption—the county seat and the anchor of the region. Certainly, the Town does not need this Plan to survive. However, this Plan will allow the Town of Tazewell to capitalize on this unique moment in time. As we indicated throughout the Plan, the Town of Tazewell has many strengths such as universal broadband, a dynamic Main Street corridor, multiple, synergistic community and economic development initiatives that are underway, and—most importantly—the community vision, leadership, and pervasive will to self-actualize.

The next five years should be transformational for the Town of Tazewell, as it builds on what already works and confronts what does not.
