



# City Of Bedford

---

## *Comprehensive Plan*

Prepared by  
**The City of Bedford Planning Commission**  
with the assistance of the  
**City Department of Planning and Community Development**  
at the request of  
**Bedford City Council**

Submitted for review:  
**January 2, 2003**



## **CITY COUNCIL**

G. Michael Shelton, Mayor  
E. Thomas Messier, Vice Mayor  
Mary L. Flood  
Thomas M. Padgett  
C. G. Stanley, Jr.  
W. D. (Skip) Tharp  
Robert T. Wandrei

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Charlene McFall, Chairman  
Lonne Bailey, Vice Chairman  
Frances B. Coles, Secretary  
E. Thomas Messier, Council Representative  
H.D. "Dave" Ballard  
William H. Ross  
John L. Sites

## **CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS**

F. Craig Meadows, City Manager  
Barrett F. Warner, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Elizabeth Berry-Mosley, Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development  
Margaret H. Cameron, Clerk to Planning Commission  
Jimmy English, Building Official  
Cayce R. Campbell, Code Enforcement Officer/Planner I  
Clarke W. Gibson, Director of Public Works  
Milton H. Graham, Chief of Police  
Rosemarie Jordan, Finance Director  
Eugene L. Ratzlaff, Electric Utility Director  
Donald Hale, Fire Chief  
William W. Berry, IV, City Attorney  
Joanne M. Caldwell, Treasurer  
Brenda A. Daniel, Commissioner of Revenue  
James Ervin, Network Administrator

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their assistance and participation in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan:

Marcia Apperson, *News and Advance*, Lynchburg  
Cynthia Arrington  
Raymond Arrington, Bedford City Board of Zoning Appeals  
Don Buffington, Brian Wishneff and Associates, Roanoke  
Winston Burks, Bedford City Board of Zoning Appeals  
Keith Campbell, WBLT, Bedford  
Robert F. Clark, Sr., Bedford City Recreation Advisory Board  
Scott Dadson, City Manager, City of Buena Vista  
Joe Davidson, Bedford City/County Joint Industrial Development Authority  
Melissa DiPane, WSET, Lynchburg  
Nanci Drake, Bedford City/County Joint Department of Tourism  
Bill Gillespie, Executive Director, Region 2000 Planning Commission  
Frederick Gusler, Neighborhood Planner, City of Roanoke  
Fran Hart, retired Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cemeteries, City of Bedford  
Edna Hayden, Bedford City Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
Viola Henry  
Milton Herd, Herd Planning and Design, Purcellville  
Rebecca Jackson, *Bedford Bulletin*, Bedford  
Rob Jarvis  
Gregg Kelley, Architect, Virginia Tech  
Dustin Landreth, CB Richard Ellis and Associates, Charlotte, NC  
Craig Lewis, The Lawrence Group, Davidson, NC  
Sue Montgomery, Economic Development Coordinator, Bedford County  
Allen Persinger, Bedford City Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
Rudy Rash, Retired Zoning Official, Bedford County  
Tommy Reynolds  
Jeanette Richardson  
Jesse Richardson, Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech  
Bill Rolfe, County Administrator, Bedford County  
Martha Mason Semmes, Zoning Administrator, Town of Middleburg  
Tracey Shiflett, Planning Director, City of Buena Vista  
Scott Smith, Executive Director, Bedford Main Street  
Glenda Stanley, Bedford City Recreation Advisory Board  
Dave Thomas, Bedford City Board of Zoning Appeals  
Richard M. Thomas  
Philip Thompson, Planning Director, Bedford County  
Dick Turpin  
Diane Wilson  
Ben Witt, Bedford City School Board

and to all the citizens of the City of Bedford...thank you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## 1 / INTRODUCTION, HISTORICAL SUMMARY, & VISION

## 2 / INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

POPULATION .....	14
1. Introduction .....	14
2. Past and Present Population Characteristics .....	14
3. Components of the Population.....	15
Age .....	15
Race .....	17
4. Population Projections .....	17
ECONOMY.....	20
1. Introduction .....	20
2. Economic Trends/History.....	20
Manufacturing.....	21
Business, Commercial, and Retail .....	22
Tourism.....	23
3. Labor Force .....	25
Occupations.....	25
4. Structure of the Economy .....	26
5. Economic Forecast .....	27
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES .....	28
1. Introduction .....	28
2. Community Facilities.....	28
Water.....	28
Wastewater.....	29
Solid Waste.....	30
Electricity .....	30
3. Community Services.....	31
Police Department .....	31
Fire Department.....	33
Recreation .....	34
Cemeteries .....	35
Schools.....	35
Library .....	36
Social Services.....	37
Level of Service Policy .....	37
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....	38
1. Introduction.....	38

2. Housing .....	38
Inventory .....	38
Housing Quality .....	39
Federally Assisted Housing .....	39
Future Housing Needs .....	40
Environmental Considerations .....	42
3. City Finances .....	42
<b>TRANSPORTATION .....</b>	<b>44</b>
1. Introduction .....	44
2. Existing Transportation Services .....	44
Roadways .....	44
Railways .....	45
Airports .....	45
Trucking .....	45
Other Transportation Services .....	45
3. Future Transportation Needs .....	46
<b>ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>48</b>
1. Climate .....	48
2. Precipitation .....	49
3. Air Quality .....	49
4. Water Supply .....	50
5. Surface Water Quality .....	50
6. Groundwater Quality .....	51
7. Flood Hazard Areas .....	51
8. Slopes .....	51
<b>HISTORIC RESOURCES / HISTORIC PRESERVATION .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>EXISTING LAND USE .....</b>	<b>54</b>
1. Historical Overview .....	54
2. Current Land Use .....	54
3. Land Use Trends .....	54
4. Land Use Needs .....	56
<b>3 / GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>LAND USE .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CONSERVATION .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>66</b>

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES .....	69
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....	71
TRANSPORTATION .....	73
<b>4 / THE PLAN</b>	
INTRODUCTION.....	76
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STANDARDS .....	77
Environmental Standards .....	77
Residential Land Use Standards .....	77
Commercial Land Use Standards.....	78
Industrial Land Use Standards .....	79
Street Standards.....	79
LAND USE PLAN.....	81
IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES .....	83
Land Use .....	83
Economy .....	83
Community Facilities and Services.....	84
Community Development .....	87
Transportation .....	88
<b>FIVE-YEAR SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION.....</b>	<b>91</b>
APPENDIX 1: Bedford 2020 Transportation Plan	
APPENDIX 2: Bedford Visioning – Strategic Planning for the Future (1996)	
APPENDIX 3: Capital Improvement Program FY 2003-2007	

**INDEX**

## LIST OF TABLES

---

I.	Population Growth 1840-2000.....	14
II.	Population by Age.....	16
III.	Population by Race.....	17
IV.	Regional Population Projections Through 2010.....	18
V.	Population Projections by Age Through 2010 .....	19
VI.	Average Employment by City Employees.....	21
VII.	Revenue Sharing Area Tax Revenues .....	22
VIII.	Business License Gross Receipts .....	23
IX.	Bedford City Travel Impacts 1995-2000 .....	24
X.	Bedford's Average Annual Labor Force Estimates 1981-2001 .....	25
XI.	Occupational Distributions for Employee Workers: 1990.....	26
XII.	Ten Largest Employers, 2000.....	27
XIII.	Projected Water Supply Surplus for City of Bedford Demand Center .....	29
XIV.	Housing Units Authorized, 1995-2000 .....	38
XV.	Assisted Housing in the City of Bedford .....	40
XVI.	City of Bedford FY 2001-02 Budget.....	43
XVII.	Average Monthly Temperatures for the City of Bedford.....	49
XVIII.	Average Monthly Precipitation for the City of Bedford .....	49

# ***1***

---

## **Introduction, Historical Summary & Vision**

**S***IMPLY STATED*, the Comprehensive Plan is a means for local government officials and citizens to express their goals for the future of their community. The Virginia General Assembly requires that local governments adopt a comprehensive plan and update it every 5 years in order to best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

The City of Bedford is governed by a seven-member city council, with the mayor selected from among the council. The City Council is advised on present and future land use and development by a seven-member planning commission. Bedford has operated under the Council-Manager form of government since 1920. The Planning Commission is charged with recommending the Comprehensive Plan for adoption by City Council.

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into three sections: Inventory and Analysis; Goals and Objectives; and Implementation Strategies. The Inventory and Analysis section provides a detailed analysis of data that describes the City of Bedford. This analysis serves as the factual basis for establishing the Goals and Objectives for the City's future. The Implementation Strategies section spells out methods for carrying out the stated goals and objectives. This last section can influence changes made to land use regulations, subdivision ordinances, capital improvement plans and other codes and ordinances.

The Comprehensive Plan examines past trends and existing conditions in order to gain insight into future trends. Citizens, through the Planning Commission and City Council, set goals, objectives and policies to guide governmental decisions and overall development. The Comprehensive Plan is general in nature, but does establish implementation strategies that can acutely affect the character of the community. The Comprehensive Plan guides the establishment and construction of public areas, structures and other facilities.

### HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Bedford was founded in 1782 and has been an agrarian-based, service-oriented community for most of its history. The completion of rail service through Bedford in 1852 encouraged development of industry. During the twentieth century Bedford experienced steady growth and expanded its industrial base. It has remained a strong industrial community, where several major manufacturers are based.

In 1968 Bedford was granted a charter to become an independent city. Although it is within the physical boundaries of Bedford County, it is a separate political entity providing a wide range of government services.

Today the City of Bedford covers 6.81 square miles and has a population of

approximately 6,300 persons. Set in rolling countryside, farm and pastureland, Bedford enjoys a splendid Blue Ridge Mountain setting accentuated by the Peaks of Otter. Bedford is also proximal to several major highways, including Routes 460, 29 and Interstate 81. It is strategically located between Lynchburg and Roanoke, which has allowed Bedford to preserve its unique character while simultaneously capitalizing upon economic activities and levels of service typically associated with larger metropolitan areas.

## VISION

A community-based strategic planning process was begun in the mid-1990's and aptly named "Bedford Visioning." From it emerged a shared vision of Bedford as "a prosperous, world class community that preserves our heritage, builds upon our assets, and promotes and enhances educational, technological, cultural and economic opportunities for all citizens."

The vision for Bedford is one of a city that will be vibrant and alive with opportunity ensuring a sound, stable economy. Excellent employment opportunities will keep young people in the area. Downtown will have a colorful, festive atmosphere with a variety of restaurants, retail stores and entertainment opportunities. Centertown will brim with refurbished buildings, and all storefronts will be filled.

The City will be a leader in telecommunications with appropriate infrastructure to enable businesses and residents to capitalize on telecommunications opportunities and access the Internet. Bedford will continue to maintain its own World Wide Web Page linked to a wide variety of economic development, tourism, and other service related information. Because of its location midway between Roanoke and Lynchburg, Bedford will serve as a focal site for regional development and host for various educational and economic development activities that neither metropolitan area provides on its own.

A world class education system for youth and adults will be recognized as one of the best in the state. The middle school will provide a center for advanced technology and extended learning. Vocational and high-tech training will be available to support local industry needs and equip Bedford's young people to obtain well-paying jobs. High quality day care before and after school will be available as well as enrichment and Head Start programs for children.

A multi-purpose community center will offer activities for a wide variety of ages and interests, and a Youth Activity Center will provide planned, supervised programs specifically for youth.

Improved accessibility, including a new downtown bridge, stacked parking and public transportation, will help residents and visitors enjoy shops and facilities in the City.

Important community assets will be protected and marketed. The area's spectacular mountain vistas will be preserved as a principle of future development. The National

D-Day Memorial and Educational Center will be completed, and other historic sites will be undergoing extensive restoration. Effective tourism marketing and promotion programs will continue to attract thousands of visitors to the area resulting in significant increases in tourism related revenues.

Local government officials in the region will continue to work cooperatively on shared economic development goals and will be supported in their efforts by the private sector and area residents.

In order to realize this future, the Visioning Plan identified five areas for strategic initiatives:

- Promote industrial development by developing an industrial park in order to attract new industry and retain existing industry while maintaining Bedford's small town character;
- Promote retail development by making Centertown a preferred choice for working, playing and living;
- Increase tourism by developing and executing programs that make Bedford a tourist destination;
- Expand educational opportunities for all citizens with a special emphasis on advanced technology;
- Focus on recreational opportunities for all ages.

# 2

---

## Inventory and Analysis

## POPULATION

---

### 1. Introduction

Analysis of past, present, and future population trends is important because it gives the City of Bedford an idea of how fast it is growing, and thus how many people it will have to provide public services for in the future. Population information allows the city to create future land use plans, which include water, sewer, roads and other services the City provides to its citizens. The number of people in a community determines the need for commercial, industrial, residential and recreational services. This section examines the characteristics of the historic, present and future population of the City of Bedford.

### 2. Past and Present Population Characteristics

The population of the City of Bedford has shown a steady increase almost every year since its inception (see Table I). In 1839 the village of Bedford had a population of 350 persons, but by 1880 had grown to a population of almost 2,000. In 1910 the population reached 2,508 and increased steadily to 6,011 in 1970. The decade from 1950 to 1960 showed the greatest growth, with Bedford's population increasing by approximately 46%, from 4,061 to 5,921. The population was stable for the period from 1960 to 1980 as minimal growth occurred during this period. Population estimates between the 1970 and 1980 Census predicted that Bedford's population would reach 6,500, but the official tally from the 1980 Census put Bedford's population at 5,991. The 2000 Census reported Bedford's population as 6,299, representing an increase of 5.1% since 1980. Table I provides a historical review of Bedford's population.

---

TABLE I  
POPULATION GROWTH 1840-2000

<u>1840</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
350	2,000	2,508	3,243	3,713	3,973	4,061	5,921	6,011	5,991	6,073	6,299

Source: U.S. Census

---

As an independent city, Bedford is currently governed by a mandate from the General Assembly that prohibits involuntary annexation. Therefore, at this point in time, annexation is not a tool that could be used to augment the City's population. Future growth in population will most likely be accommodated by infill development within the City's present borders.

From a regional perspective, the City of Bedford has been affected by the "suburbanization" of Bedford County that began in the 1970's. Since 1970 the population of Bedford County has more than doubled. In 1970, the County's population was 26,728. The 2000 Census reported 60,371 residents, which represents an almost 33% increase from the 1990 census figure of 45,656. This growth can be traced

primarily to the suburban expansion around Roanoke and Lynchburg and to the growth of Smith Mountain Lake as a residential community. The cities of Lynchburg and Roanoke, like the City of Bedford, have remained rather stable, with most of the population increase in those areas occurring outside the cities' limits. The growth Bedford County is experiencing places it in a category as one of the predominant growth areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This growth can be expected to continue and may result in further impact upon population and development activity within the City of Bedford.

### 3. Components of the Population

Since 1968, when the City of Bedford became an independent city, the amount of detailed data collected and reported has increased considerably. The availability of this data assists in providing a more specific examination of Bedford's population. This information, largely socio-economic in nature, helps predict the degree to which the community will require specific community services and support.

#### Age

The 2000 Census reports that the City of Bedford is remarkably well-balanced in terms of age distribution. Persons aged 65 years and over comprise 22.6% of the population, while persons under the age of 18 years constitute approximately 21.6%. The median age is 40.9 years. The school-aged population has increased slightly in the last decade (from 1,032 in 1990 to 1,149 in 2000), while the elderly population has experienced a similar decrease (dropping from 1,508 to 1,422). This directly contradicts previous studies that identified Bedford as a City with an "aging" population. In fact, from a standpoint of age demographics, the City occupies a very attractive market position among municipalities.

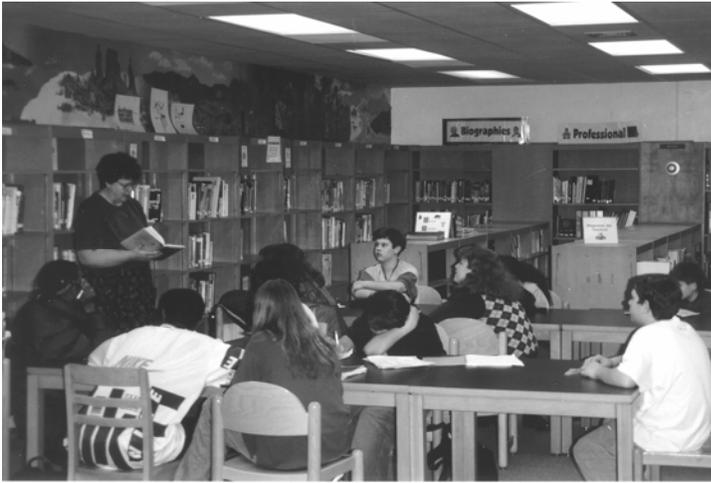
This balance infers that Bedford is uniquely positioned to serve any number of niches in the marketplace. Bedford is very desirable as a community for retired persons, due partially to the number of residential care facilities for the elderly that are present in the City. As the economic vitality of the two metropolitan areas of Lynchburg and Roanoke continues to expand, Bedford's strategic location between these areas makes it attractive as a home for commuters to workplaces in larger cities. In addition, Bedford's central location also positions the City to function as a center for commerce serving the larger Roanoke and Lynchburg markets. Furthermore, the City's value as a tourist destination should not be discounted. This is all to say that the City should view itself as a healthy mix of diverse activities and interests and avoid simplistic terms such as "bedroom community" or "retirement community" in reference to its identity.

An examination of the age of Bedford's population reveals several factors that influence the kinds of public services the City may need to provide. Given the diversity of the population by age, as evidenced in Table II, the City will face increased demands to provide service for all age groups, ranging from young to old.

TABLE II  
POPULATION BY AGE: 1970 - 2000

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Pre-School (0-4)	430	352	371	354
School Age:				
5-9	487	352	375	408
10-14	562	323	313	378
15-19	486	459	344	363
Work Force (20-64)	3,042	3,094	3,162	3,374
<u>Elderly (65+)</u>	<u>1,004</u>	<u>1,411</u>	<u>1,508</u>	<u>1,422</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>6,011</u>	<u>5,991</u>	<u>6,073</u>	<u>6,299</u>

Source: U.S. Census



*In the 1990's the number of children attending Bedford's middle and high schools increased.*

A second important factor for the City of Bedford is the nature of the workforce population since the availability of capable workers is critical for economic growth. During the period 1980 to 1990, Bedford's workforce population increased moderately by 2.2%. More significant growth took place between 1990 and 2000, when the workforce population increased by 6.7%. The workforce population is the population least likely to require public support and the one most likely to add tax revenue. Thus, Bedford's ability to grow economically will be directly related to the growth of its workforce population. It is difficult to forecast workforce population figures, as the growth between 1990 and 2000 took place in an unprecedented period of economic expansion nationwide. During this period, the City's unemployment rate fell to a level of 1.7%. This figure is currently undergoing what can fairly be described as a market correction.

Perhaps most pressing issues are the needs of youth and the elderly. Both populations are significantly dependent and in need of community resources. Transportation is an important issue for both groups, since they are largely comprised of individuals who are unable to drive. Bedford Ride, a non-emergency medical transportation program sponsored by the Bedford Community Health Foundation and involving public and private support, partially addresses service needs for elderly, handicapped, disabled and under-served citizens. In the period between 1990 and 1996, Bedford experienced continued development in facilities which focus on the housing and care of the elderly, the most recent being expansions of the Elks Home, Runk and Pratt nursing home and the Adult Day Care Center located adjacent to the hospital. The Bedford Adult Day Care Center opened in 1997 and serves 25 persons per day. Bedford's Promise has been formed to address youth issues and has experienced success in coordinating youth and family service providers, as well as, educational and community service activities. However, establishing a youth center, which is seen as a critical step in youth programming has made little progress. Funding for a Teen Center has been included in the City's five-year capital improvement program, which is a positive first step.

Race

During the period from 1940 to 1970, Bedford's non-white population declined from 23% of the total population to 17% of the population. This trend has reversed itself, with the 2000 non-white population rising to approximately 25% of the population. The majority of Bedford's minority population is black. Table III presents the racial composition of Bedford's population for 1970 through 1990.

TABLE III  
POPULATION BY RACE: 1970-2000

	<u>1970</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
White	4,959	82.5%	4,825	80.5%	4,691	77.2%	4,745	75.3%
Black	1,048	17.4%	1,159	19.4%	1,328	21.8%	1,410	22.4%
Other	4	0.1%	7	0.1%	54	1.0%	144	2.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,011</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,991</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

4. Population Projections

Population projections, as based on birth rates, death rates and migration patterns, help identify the overall rate of growth and the age groups in which the growth will occur. However, it is worth noting that typical migration patterns may not be applicable, since the City is landlocked and has little hope of expanding beyond its present borders. Since the data may be skewed this would explain the reason why the City of Bedford lags behind the current and projected growth rate of the County.

Bedford had limited growth for the period from 1980 to 1990. However, based on the 2000 Census, the City of Bedford has experienced its first sustainable growth in approximately thirty years. This translates into a net growth of approximately 226 persons (see Table IV). From 2000 to 2010, it is anticipated that this modest rate of growth will continue. This roughly mirrors growth patterns for the entire planning district, but lags behind growth predicted in Bedford County. Table IV details regional projections through the year 2000.

TABLE IV  
REGIONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS THROUGH 2010

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Historical 1980</u>	<u>Historical 1990</u>	<u>Historical 2000</u>	<u>Projection 2010</u>
City of Bedford	5,991	6,073	6,299	6,898
Bedford County	34,927	45,476	60,371	71,601
Lynchburg MSA	194,178	215,500	226,300	230,400

Source: U.S. Census and Virginia Office of Planning and Budget

The City's future economic development will most likely be affected by factors not considered in official population projections. The rapid rate of commercial growth in the vicinity and the availability of water, sewer and electricity suggest that growth pressures will increase on the periphery of the City. This could increase development within the City limits as well. In a regional context, its proximity to Lynchburg and Roanoke and the rate of growth in the County are factors that could also contribute to growth. As noted before, given the City's inability to exercise the power of involuntary annexation, and the relatively small amount of land available for development, typical migration patterns assumed in official population projections may not be applicable for Bedford. Therefore, attention must be given to regulations promoting and governing infill development, as this is the most promising source of potential growth for the City.

For planning purposes, population projections broken down by age signal future needs, particularly for schools and other community facilities. For the period 1980-1990, the segment of the population growing most quickly was the elderly, followed by pre-school children, (see Table V). Based on historical information, an increase in the school-age population has occurred.

Other segments of the population - the work force and the elderly populations - show slightly different growth patterns. By 2010 the workforce population is projected to increase by 6.52% from 2000 level. Economically, this signals a healthy trend, although employment opportunities must be available to accommodate this segment of the population. Current economic development efforts may assist in providing a healthy balance between commercial, industrial and residential development. Based on historical trends, the elderly segment of the population should continue to grow through 2010. It will likely drop some as an overall percentage, due to an increasing workforce

population as school children age. Table V details population projections by age for the period through the year 2010.

---

TABLE V  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE THROUGH 2010

<u>Age Group</u>	Historical <u>1980</u>	Historical <u>1990</u>	Historical <u>2000</u>	Projected <u>2010*</u>
Pre-School (0-4)	352	371	354	383
School Age				
5- 9	352	375	408	312
10-14	323	313	378	293
15-19	459	344	363	392
Work Force (20-64)	3,094	3,162	3,374	3,594
<u>Elderly (65+)</u>	<u>1,411</u>	<u>1,508</u>	<u>1,422</u>	<u>1,924</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,011</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>6,898</b>

Source: U.S. Census, City Planning Office, and Virginia Employment Commission

---

## ECONOMY

---

### 1. Introduction

Most, if not all, of the factors analyzed in this Comprehensive Plan, affect the City's economic structure. The size, skill and educational levels of the workforce; the availability and suitability of sites and buildings; the availability of water, sewer, electricity and gas; and access to telecommunications and transportation all affect the local economy. Even the variety and affordability of housing and other quality-of-life components affect the attractiveness and marketability of the City.

A vital local economy is important in creating a solid base to ensure the viability and sustainability of Bedford's unique quality of life. The economic base provides goods, services and employment for Bedford's citizens, as well as generates tax revenues which pay for services needed by residents. This section of the plan examines the general economic trends that affect Bedford's economy, reviews the labor force and the current economic structure, and makes forecasts for the future.

### 2. Economic Trends/History

The City of Bedford is highly dependent on its manufacturing sector. As can be seen in Table VI, the City's manufacturing base has dropped from 43.6% of total employment in 1995 to 33% of the City's employment base. Bedford's high percentage of manufacturing employees mirrors that of Region 2000, its regional marketing partnership, which well exceeds the state and national averages. In large part, the continuing loss in manufacturing's employment share relates to increased foreign competition and the use of technology rather than labor-intensive alternatives. Many of Bedford's manufacturers are home grown; however in recent years, out-of-state and international corporations have purchased several operations.

After manufacturing, retail trade (27%) and professional and related services (23.6%) comprise the most significant employment sectors in the City as can be seen in Table VI. Decreases in manufacturing have been countered by high growth in the retail trade sector, which accounted for 17.5% of Bedford employment in 1995.

TABLE VI  
AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT BY CITY EMPLOYEES 1995 & 2001

<u>Industry</u>	<u>1995 Total</u>	<u>1995 % of Total</u>	<u>2001 Total</u>	<u>2001 % of Total</u>
Construction	110	2.4%	124	2.5%
Manufacturing	2,021	43.6%	1,627	33.0%
Trans., Comm., & Other				
Pub.Util.	32	.7%	47	1.0%
Wholesale Trade	119	2.6%	106	2.0%
Retail Trade	812	17.5%	1,323	27.0%
Finance, Ins., Real Estate	131	2.8%	233	4.8%
Professional and Related				
Services	1,125	24.2%	1,162	23.7%
<u>Public Administration</u>	<u>286</u>	<u>6.2%</u>	<u>283</u>	<u>5.8%</u>
TOTAL EMPLOYED: (age 16 & over)	4,636	100%	4,905	99.8%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

City businesses and industries currently employ 4,905 persons, a figure that has grown slightly throughout the 1990s. Many of the employees working in Bedford do not reside here, but commute to Bedford for employment. This is seen most graphically by the fact that the City of Bedford had a resident labor force population of about 2,955 persons in 2001, many of whom were employed outside the City of Bedford or did not work. Of the 4,905 persons employed in Bedford, over half must be recruited from outside the City of Bedford. Because of the City's strong economic base and relatively small population, Bedford's economy must be seen in a regional context.

Traditionally, commuting patterns have reflected that most of the City's work force resides in Bedford County. The City enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate (2.98% for 2001) and employers must draw from a larger region to find employees. Because of the relatively large number of in-commuters, the City of Bedford is considered a regional employment center for the area serviced by the Central Virginia Planning District. A healthy influx of workers is desirable since it raises retail sales and the tax base.

### Manufacturing

Several recent developments have potential to significantly impact Bedford's economy. Historically, the City of Bedford lacked appropriate industrial sites and could not compete in Region 2000 for industrial relocations and expansions until the mid-1990's. With the opening of Independence Boulevard, which connects State highways 460 and

221 in 1994, land for industrial development became accessible. In 1997, the City of Bedford and Bedford County adopted an historic Joint Economic Development and Growth Sharing Agreement, which established revenue-sharing zones immediately outside the City limits in exchange for the extension of water and sewer lines into those areas. The agreement further established a revenue-sharing district within the City, which has been developed into a 100-acre industrial park -- the Bedford Center for Business. In 1999, the County constructed a shell building in the park, which temporarily housed the Courts and Social Services operations while Centertown facilities were renovated. The City and County are collaboratively marketing the shell building and the Bedford Center for Business to industrial clients. Additionally, a number of industrial facilities, formerly housing Rubatex operations, are available for reuse.

The four revenue-sharing areas outside the City are zoned for commercial and industrial growth and the City is in the process of extending water and sewer lines. Development is already beginning with the construction of a Super WalMart on Route 460, immediately outside the City. The City's share of real estate, personal property, inventory and sales tax revenues from outside the City limits, as outlined in Table VII, can be expected to continue its rapid increase with development in this high-growth area.

---

TABLE VII  
REVENUE SHARING AREA TAX REVENUES

	<u>Sales Tax</u>	<u>Meals Tax</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1999	\$ 128,752.77	\$ 39,655.50	\$ 168,408.27
2000	\$ 128,946.11	\$ 47,286.08	\$ 176,232.19
<u>2001</u>	<u>\$ 198,288.09</u>	<u>\$ 54,162.98</u>	<u>\$ 252,451.07</u>
Totals	\$ 455,986.97	\$ 141,104.56	<u>\$ 597,091.53</u>

Source: Bedford County Commissioner of Revenue

---

### Business, Commercial & Retail

In 1985, the City of Bedford became one of the first Main Street Cities in Virginia. Subsequent infrastructure improvements and private investment in the central business district area have contributed to the attractiveness and economic well-being of Centertown. Additional business, commercial and retail activity in the City is centered in the Westgate, Peakview, and, most recently, the Route 460/Independence Boulevard areas. Retail sales and business license gross receipts data is a key indicator of a jurisdiction's economic health.

TABLE VIII  
BUSINESS LICENSE GROSS RECEIPTS

License Type	1985 (\$000)	1990 (\$000)	1995 (\$000)	2000 (\$000)
Retail	\$58,754	\$79,924	\$91,985	\$122,723
Services	\$5,797	\$8,021	\$13,850	\$22,999
Professional	\$6,736	\$8,546	\$11,221	\$18,196
Wholesale	\$16,687	\$22,738	\$17,243	\$6,426
Contractor	<u>\$15,413</u>	<u>\$15,635</u>	<u>\$15,499</u>	<u>\$18,299</u>
Total	\$103,387	\$134,864	\$149,798	\$188,643

Source: Commissioner of Revenue, City of Bedford

According to Census 2000 data, figures on retail sales in Bedford and in the area confirm that Bedford is a local center of commerce. With a total of \$91,711,600 in taxable sales in 2000, Bedford had a per capita spending of \$14,560, based on a population of 6,299. In 2001, Bedford's total taxable sales were \$96,854,000, equivalent to per capital spending of \$15,376, based on 6,299 population. Bedford County, with a population of 60,371 reported a total of \$185,218,900 in 2000 taxable sales for a per capita rate of \$306. The State per capita sales figure was \$10,469. Thus it can be inferred that Bedford's retail establishments draw from a population beyond the city limits.

As Table VIII shows, there has been an overall increase in Business License Gross Receipts in nearly every category.

#### Tourism

Tourism development is a major focus of the City's Economic Development efforts and Bedford is taking advantage of the significant number of visitors to the area's

attractions, including the National D-Day Memorial that opened June 6, 2001. Bedford City has partnered with Bedford County to create a City/County Tourism Development Department and hired an executive director on June 4, 2001.

In November, 2001, the City and County's fully accredited Visitor's Center opened at the intersection of Highways 460 and 122 in a temporary facility. A permanent 10,000 square foot facility is being designed and constructed on this site. The estimated opening date for the permanent center is late 2003 or early 2004.

The Bedford Area is home to many attractions, including The National D-Day Memorial, Centertown Bedford, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Historic Avenel, HolyLand USA, Smith Mountain Lake, The Peaks of Otter, and the City/County Museum. Orchards, wineries, antiques and unique shopping opportunities, as well as, the area's bountiful recreation, historic and scenic opportunities are a natural draw to the traveling public. With the Visitor's Center located on the major highway and at the base of the Memorial (by far the largest attraction in the southwest and central Virginia region), we have created the means to educate visitors about all of the attractions and amenities mentioned above.

The Tourism Office operates the Visitors Center and actively markets the area through advertising, travel shows, direct mail, and participation and cooperative opportunities derived from the many affiliations with regional, state and national travel associations.

Bedford's hospitality industry has grown with the addition of one hotel and several bed & breakfasts. Table IX provides an estimate of the impact of tourist travel in Bedford.

---

TABLE IX  
BEDFORD CITY TRAVEL IMPACTS 1995 – 2000

	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000 (Preliminary)</b>
State Travel Taxes	\$200,000	\$350,000
Local Taxes	\$ 50,000	\$221,000
Travel Employment	60	91
Travel Payroll	\$710,000	\$1,290,000
Traveler Spending	\$3,770,000	\$6,542,000

**Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service**

---

### 3. Labor Force

#### Employment

Today the City of Bedford's civilian labor force stands at 2,955. This represents a steady increase from the 1981 labor force of about 2,305 persons. By 1990 this labor force had grown to 2,700 persons. During the 1990's the unemployment rate dropped from 5.2% to 2.1%. In 2000, the unemployment rate reached an all time low of 1.7%. However in December 2001, Bedford's unemployment rate jumped to 4.3%, primarily as a result of layoffs in manufacturing. Historically Bedford has maintained a stable economy and employment base. Table X charts Bedford's average annual labor force.

---

TABLE X  
BEDFORD'S AVERAGE ANNUAL LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES 1981-2001

	1981	1986	1990	1996	2001
Employed	2,217	2,737	2,504	2,837	2,867
Unemployed	88	110	196	80	88
Total Labor Force	2,305	2,847	2,700	2,917	2,955
Percent Unemployed	3.8%	3.9%	7.3%	2.8%	3.0%
National Unemployment	7.6%	7.0%	5.5%	4.7%	4.5%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

---

#### Occupations

Bedford's resident labor force at 2,955 employees is considerably smaller than its employment base of 4,905, which refers to the number of employees physically working in the City.

Private wage and salaried workers accounted for 79% of the employed Bedford residents. Government workers (federal, state, and local) comprised 14.8% of employees, and the remaining employed persons were self-employed (6.2%).

Based on figures from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, the Sales and Office Occupations make up the largest employment group for residents, replacing Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations. Management, Professionals and Related Occupations held its rank as third largest sector and Service Occupations followed by Construction, Extraction and Maintenance Occupations ranked fourth and fifth respectively. Table XI charts the occupational distributions for employed residents.

TABLE XI  
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS: 1990 & 2000

<u>Employment Category</u>	<u>1990 Number Employed</u>	<u>1990 % of Total</u>	<u>2000 Number Employed</u>	<u>2000 % of Total</u>
Sales and Office Occupations	568	22.7%	656	26.6%
Service Occupations	388	15.5%	418	17.0%
Management, Professionals & Related Occupations	556	22.2%	559	22.7%
Construction, Extraction & Maintenance Occupations	255	10.1%	200	8.1%
<u>Production, Transportation &amp; Material Moving Occupations</u>	<u>737</u>	<u>29.4%</u>	<u>632</u>	<u>25.6%</u>
TOTAL	2,504	100%	2465	100%

Source: 1990 Census

### Structure of the Economy

#### Basic and Non-Basic Economy

For planning purposes, it is helpful to distinguish between basic and non-basic industries. Basic industries export goods and services outside the area and thereby bring income into the area. Non-basic industries provide support services to the basic industries and to the local citizenry. Basic and non-basic industries are classified as follows:

#### BASIC

Manufacturing  
Mining  
Agriculture  
Military  
Federal Government  
State Government

#### NON-BASIC

Local Government  
Contract Construction  
Transportation and Public Utilities  
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Services  
Wholesale and Retail Trade  
Self-Employment  
Other Non-Manufacturing

Bedford has a more balanced service economy, as has been the trend regionally and nationally. Table XII provides the product or service and the approximate employment for Bedford's ten eight largest employers.

TABLE XII  
TEN LARGEST BEDFORD EMPLOYERS, 2000

<u>Company</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Approx. Employment</u>
Sam Moore Furniture Industries	Furniture	377
Bedford Memorial Hospital	Health Care	330
Brooks Food Group/Golden West	Frozen Food Products	185
Bedford Public Schools	Education	179
Bedford Weaving Mills	Textile	170
Frank Chervan	Furniture Frames	140
Smythe Companies/Piedmont Label	Labels	140
Rubatex Corp. / Bondtex	Rubber Products	150
Longwood Industries	Coin Bags	150
Rental Uniforms	Uniforms	112

Source: Human Resource Departments

## 5. Economic Forecast

Projections made by the State Department of Planning and Budget indicate that Bedford's workforce population would grow from 3,374 persons in 2000 to 3,594 persons in the year 2010. This growth, combined with the proximity, growth and commuting patterns of Bedford County, Roanoke and Lynchburg residents, suggests that Bedford will have a workforce sufficient to meet economic growth, if those of employment age have the skills necessary to support new growth. Decline of the traditional manufacturing sector and emergence of more technology-oriented industries will require a continued emphasis on technology in secondary schools and a focus on workforce training and re-training for displaced workers.

Economic growth also is predicated on the availability of land, good transportation and on a public infrastructure sufficient to meet future demand. Results of recent Water and Sewer and Electric Studies show that Bedford has a climate suitable to economic growth. The City is doing a good job of providing services and the downtown economic revitalization effort has been successful. The need for natural gas service was noted. Currently the telecommunications infrastructure in the City provides easy, affordable, high-speed access for businesses and residents, as well as considerable excess capacity. The transportation infrastructure is generally seen as adequate to meet current and future needs, but there is a need for public transportation in the City.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

---

### 1. Introduction

This section of the plan contains inventories of water, sewer, solid waste and electrical and telecommunications services provided by the City. In addition, the City's schools, police and fire protection, recreation and library services are examined. They are classified as community services. Clearly these facilities and services contribute significantly to the health and quality of life for the citizens of Bedford. Community facilities generate revenue but are expensive to maintain and expand, yet they are at the heart of Bedford's ability to grow. The capacity and quality of these facilities and services influence to a large degree the city's ability to attract and support new development. Land development in revenue sharing areas should be required to meet City standards to qualify for extension of water and sewer service.

### 2. Community Facilities

#### Water

Raw water is obtained from three sources: Stoney Creek Reservoir, an intake at the headwaters of Big Otter River and five deep wells located off Route 43 North. The Big Otter River intake and the five deep wells are only used when the reservoir level drops below the spillway. The reservoir has a safe yield of 1.85 million gallons per day (mgd); the Big Otter River intake yields up to 1.0 mgd, and the five deep wells can produce 0.2 mgd. Thus, the City has a water source capacity of 3.05 mgd. The water treatment plant went into operation in 1972 and has a design treatment capacity of 3.0 mgd. The water storage capacity includes a 1-million-gallon steel tank and two concrete reservoirs with a capacity of 1-million gallons and 1.5 million gallons. The average daily finished water production is 1.13 mgd serving 3,181 residential, commercial and industrial customers.

The April 2000 Water and Sewer Master Plan indicates sufficient water supply, treatment and distribution capacity for a 20-year planning period with recommended improvements that are underway. The master plan takes into account the projected demand from residential, commercial and industrial uses within the City limits as well the projected demand from the revenue sharing zones adjacent to the City in Bedford County. Public water has been implemented within the first priority revenue sharing zone (460 East).

Although the City has sufficient water capacity for 20 years for the current service areas, there are still areas of the City with no public water service, and new water sources are being studied. They include the James River and interconnections with the Bedford County Public Service Authority. When surveyed, a significant percentage of citizens favored the James River as a primary water source.

Table XIII provides the projected water supply surplus through 2030.

---

TABLE XIII  
PROJECTED WATER SUPPLY SURPLUS FOR THE CITY OF BEDFORD DEMAND  
CENTER

(In millions of gallons per day)

	2000	2010	2020	2030
Without Conservation	+1.73	+1.62	+1.57	+1.52
With Conservation	+1.81	+1.47	+1.72	+1.70

Note: Assumes a system capacity of 3.05 mgd  
Source: State Water Control Board

---

### Wastewater

The City of Bedford wastewater treatment plant upgrade was completed in 1999. Improvements focused on a redesign of the process, including headworks, nutrient removal, a sludge digestion process, new laboratory and upgrade of many other outdated systems. The purpose of this upgrade was to enhance wastewater treatment and plant performance. In addition, the capacity of the plant was increased from 1.5 mgd to 2.0 mgd. The plant currently treats 0.98 mgd. Because of these improvements, the wastewater plant is operating efficiently and the effluent discharge continuously tests well below the VPDES permit limits.

The City's sanitary sewer collection system is also being upgraded by replacing pumps to increase capacity and eliminate sewer overflows during heavy storms. Concurrently, approximately 45,000 feet of sewer line and associated manholes are being rehabilitated or replaced. This will reduce the amount inflow (stormwater) and infiltration (groundwater) from leaking into the collection system and will also increase the capacity of the sewer collection system. The wastewater treatment plant and collection systems serves 2,575 customers.

The April 2000 Water and Sewer Master Plan indicates the improved sanitary sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant will have sufficient capacity to serve the City of Bedford and the revenue sharing zones adjacent to the City for 20 years. However, there are still areas within the City limits that are not served by the City's sewer system.

The City has agreed to provide gravity sanitary sewer service as well as public water within the revenue sharing zones to industrial and commercial customers. The 460 East corridor extension, which was identified as the first priority, has been completed.

### Solid Waste

The City supplies refuse collection service to 2,432 customers including residents, most businesses and a few Bedford County residents in the immediate area. Both curbside refuse and recyclable collection services are provided once a week. The City has a mandatory recycling program for residents and voluntary recycling for businesses. A drop-off-recycling center is also provided. The recycling program includes glass, newspaper, plastic, cardboard, mixed paper, aluminum and steel cans. In addition to curbside recycling, brush and pallets received at the landfill are diverted and recycled into mulch, which is available to the public for a small fee. Leaves collected in the fall are also recycled into an organic soil additive, which is also available for a small fee. Additionally, old tires, metals and appliances are diverted from the landfill and recycled. A solid waste transfer station is under construction which is part of a regional effort. The transfer station is expected to extend the lifespan of the current City landfill's capacity by approximately 12 years.

### Electricity

The City owns and operates its own electric service system. Wholesale power is purchased from Cinergy and is delivered to the City by American Electric Power. The City owns and operates a hydroelectric generating plant at Snowden on the James River and generates approximately 8 % of the total system requirements. The current system peak load is 54 megawatts.

Most of the recent growth in electrical service has been from residential and small general services, although large users receive a break under the current rate structure. Expansion to accommodate a large industrial user would be accomplished through the addition of new facilities.

In conjunction with the electric service system, the City provides street lighting to various parts of Bedford. The current policy is to provide lights on every other utility pole, and to provide new lights as requested. As part of the Downtown revitalization effort, decorative lighting has been installed. The placing of utilities underground has also been supported as part of revitalization efforts.

The City of Bedford is preparing for restructuring of the electric industry. Through the Blue Ridge Power Agency, an alliance of Virginia Municipal Electric Departments, the City has negotiated a new wholesale energy contract. This is a result of competitive bidding which has already saved the City approximately 1 million dollars a year since July 1998. The City's rates are still among the lowest in the nation.

### 3. Community Services

#### Law Enforcement

The City of Bedford Police Department has a staff of 28 sworn officers consisting of the Chief of Police, a Captain, a Lieutenant and 4 Sergeants. This also includes 4 investigators, an animal control officer, and 16 patrol officers, two of which are assigned as school resource officers. This provides a ratio of one officer per 239 Bedford City residents. The Police Department also has a support staff consisting of one administrative assistant, one records clerk, two part-time crossing guards, and one emergency management planner/training coordinator. Each sworn member of the Department meets or exceeds the training standards as established by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

The Police Department's administrative offices are located in the lower level of the City Municipal Building. The office is open weekdays from 8:30 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. The City and County joint communications center is a state-of-the-art Enhanced-9-1-1 dispatching facility located in Bedford County on Falling Creek Road. The operating costs for the center are shared by the City and County of Bedford. The communications center dispatches calls for police, fire, and emergency medical response. There is a push-to-talk telephone located in the Department's foyer which allows citizens to contact the 9-1-1 center anytime the Department's offices are closed.

Firearms training is conducted at the Police Department's training facility located on Orange Street adjoining the landfill. The facility has a 100-yard range with concrete walkways. A metal building on the property serves as a storage area and may also be used for small class training. Several other law enforcement agencies use the range and contribute toward its maintenance. The Bedford Police Department is a member of the Cardinal Criminal Justice Training Academy, one of nine regional Department of Criminal Justice Services certified training academies. Many of our state mandated and specialized training classes are received at this facility in Salem, VA. Several officers from the Police Department are part-time instructors at the academy teaching such courses as firearms, defensive tactics, radar operation and state code.

In 2005, the Bedford Police Department responded to 6140 calls for service, a 22.3% increase since 2001. Of these, 2393 were related to criminal complaints, a 41.1% increase over the 2001 numbers. In addition, 261 traffic crashes were investigated, 1812 traffic citations were issued and a total of 1693 parking citations were written during 2005. 490 animal related complaints were received in 2005. The City has an agreement with Bedford County regarding the operation of the animal shelter which is located at 1307 Falling Creek Road.

The 2005 Crime in Virginia publication lists a total of 593 Group A\* offenses reported in the City of Bedford. Group A offenses include such crimes as Robbery, Homicide, Larceny, Assault, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Burglary as well as 18 other types of crime. 8 Robberies, 1 Homicide, 148 Larcenies, 158 Assaults, 3 Motor Vehicle Thefts, and 16 Burglaries were among those crimes reported to the Police Department. The Department made 729 arrests for Group A offenses in 2005.

Group B\*\* offenses include Driving under the Influence, Drunk in Public, and Bad Checks as well as a number of other offenses. Bedford Police made 912 arrests for Group B crimes in 2005. This resulted in a total of 1641 arrests for Group A and Group B crimes by Bedford Police.

There are a number of crime prevention initiatives and programs offered by the Police Department. Among them are Neighborhood Watch programs, Business Watch, home security checks and a variety of traffic safety related programs. The Department has one officer that has received certified crime prevention officer status through the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Police Department also is involved in teaching the gang resistance program (G.R.E.A.T.) in the elementary school. During the summer, the Department, along with Bedford Sheriff's Department, participates in the "Great Summer Cop Camp" which is one week long and this year provided instruction for 88 students.

The Police Department is housed in the Municipal Building at 215 E. Main St. and has outgrown its facilities. Additional space is a significant need. Updated security for the building is also a concern. A review of building security is currently being undertaken with recommendations to be made regarding limiting free access while still addressing needs related to disabled persons.

Community policing is a well known process of policing, part of which is referred to as problem solving. Problem-solving policing is a method whereby officers, through crime analysis techniques and crime prevention surveys, determine those areas or problems that are repetitive in nature. The officer then determines how best to address or correct that problem through use of City or State codes and by collaboration with citizens and other municipal departments. The goal is to develop a long-term solution for problems that affect our communities.

An especially important part of the community policing process is citizen involvement. Citizens need to feel they are a part of the solution to crime issues in their neighborhood. Building a trust relationship between police and citizens is essential to a successful community policing program. One means by which a Police Department builds this trust is simply through regular casual

contact with citizens who currently are not in immediate need of police services. Having officers periodically getting out of their vehicle for foot or bike patrol, conducting crime prevention surveys in a neighborhood or downtown area, and attending neighborhood watch meetings, are some of the ways officers meet and converse with the citizenry and build the rapport that is fundamental to the success of community policing.

Modern, technologically advanced equipment is also necessary for effective and efficient policing. Routine updating of computers, surveillance equipment, weaponry and vehicles are crucial to combat an increasingly well-trained and well-equipped criminal element. Identity theft, gang infiltration and terrorist activity are all crimes that have recent development but are becoming more commonplace. Up-to-date training to fight these new crimes and to maintain standards is a primary need to ensure that officers are competently prepared. Leadership training for upper level police staff should be utilized as well as community policing techniques for all police employees.

Currently, the Basic Training Academy is 20 weeks long. Training and equipping a new officer is an expensive investment for the City, so it is wise use of resources to retain trained officers. Competition for new and certified officers is very intense, so the City must make every effort to maintain their current competitive salary and benefit structure to attract quality personnel and retain Police personnel.

---

\*Group A offenses consists of arson, assault, bribery, burglary, counterfeiting/forgery, destruction/damage/vandalism of property, drug/narcotic offenses, embezzlement, extortion/blackmail, fraud offenses, gambling offenses, homicide, kidnapping/abduction, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, pornography/obscene material, prostitution offenses, robbery, sex offenses, stolen property offenses, and weapons violations.

\*\*Group B offenses consists of bad checks, curfew/loitering/vagrancy, disorderly conduct, driving under the influence, drunk in public, non-forcible family offenses, liquor law violations, peeping tom, runaway, trespass of real property, conspiracy, and all other (less traffic).

## Fire Department

The Bedford Fire Department is staffed by a 38 member volunteer squad and a paid chief. All of the active members of the City of Bedford Fire Department are required to be certified, and 9 of the members have had hazardous materials training. The department serves a radius of about 10 miles, including part of the County. Equipment includes three pumpers, two tankers, two brush trucks and one heavy rescue truck, as well as a command car driven by the Fire Chief, and an all-purpose vehicle.

In 2001 the Fire Department responded to 482 calls, or an average of 40 calls per month, with more calls occurring in the winter months. The average time out is four minutes, and 12 volunteers typically respond to a call. Except for one pumper to be replaced by 1999, the Department has equipment adequate for 5-10 years. There is a continuing need to maintain 20 active volunteers, which requires recruiting about two new volunteers each year.

The City Rescue Squad also is a volunteer squad. It has 50 members on the crew, however because it is volunteer that number does change regularly. The rescue squad has four advanced life-support ambulances, one mass casualty trauma trailer, two response cars, one suburban, and one medium-duty crash truck. They responded to 1,500 calls last year.

Bedford County Memorial Hospital is a 161-bed hospital located in the City of Bedford, with a 24-hour emergency room as well as a broad range of in and out-patient services. They have 50 acute care beds (normal hospital admission – surgery, emergency's etc.) and 111 long-term skilled nursing care beds (mostly the elderly who need nursing home type care).

One factor affecting both the fire and rescue squads is the increasing difficulty in meeting State requirements necessary for certification. This difficulty is particularly strong for volunteer squads, whose members must balance employment with increasingly rigorous training programs. If this becomes a major problem, there may be the need for a private or public paid staff.

#### Recreation

The Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Department maintains facilities throughout the City of Bedford. These facilities include:

#### Liberty Lake Park

The largest of the City's parks, this 60-acre facility on Burks Hill Road functions as a regional park. Its features three developed playgrounds, a 2.5 acre lake, fishing docks, three athletic fields, three lighted tennis courts, a skateboard pod, fenced basketball courts, six picnic shelters, two concession stands, a racquetball court, public restroom facilities, large open play areas and a nature trails facility including a paved handicapped-accessible trail. The park also houses a Community Center, where classes and programs are conducted and where the administrative offices for the Department are located. In January 1996, the City of Bedford received a national award from the National Organization on Disability (NOD) for its multi-handicapped nature trails project.

#### Greenwood Park

This 3-acre park features picnic tables, a basketball court, playground equipment and large open play areas. The park is located at the intersection of Greenwood Street and Quarles Street.

#### Edmund Street Park

The 1.5 acre park features playground equipment, picnic tables, a tennis court, basketball courts and a soccer field that is also used as a large open play area. Edmund Street Park has recently undergone extensive renovation.

#### Orange Street

A 2-acre ball field.

### Poplar Park

This 1.5-acre park hosts the largest Yellow Poplar in the United States and the largest tree in the State of Virginia. It features picnic tables and benches. Poplar Park is located on Grand Arbore Drive.

### Town Lake

This 4-acre park features a small lake for fishing, quiet woods. Town Lake is located on Lake Drive.

### Reynolds Memorial Park

Bedford's newest park, on East Main Street, opened in November 1997. Passive recreational facilities in the park include walking trails, picnic areas, flower gardens and statuary.

There are other regional recreational facilities in close proximity to Bedford. To the south lies Smith Mountain Lake, a 23,000-acre lake with over 500 miles of shoreline that is attractive for both year-round residence or for recreation. Other outstanding nearby resources having recreational value for Bedford residents include Peaks of Otter, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Poplar Forest. The Bedford YMCA offers numerous classes and features an indoor swimming pool. Explore Park in Bedford County's southwest corner, while not recreational, adds historic significance and passive recreation uses. Located in close proximity to the Bedford Elementary School site, the National D-Day Memorial has been designed to enhance the recreational inventory for the school and the community through walking trails-and a planned amphitheater, as well as providing for historic reflection on that monumental event.

The intent and purpose of City-parks and the City's commitment to them needs to be examined. Bedford has few functional and prominent neighborhood parks which as places that are of civic importance. Distinction needs to be made between community parks, neighborhood parks and pocket parks.

Recreational opportunities need to be increased for all citizens by ensuring that recreation is available to all neighborhoods and is easily accessible. Cultural opportunities need to be encouraged as well.

There have been repeated requests for a community center. Some believe this means an operational facility with areas designated for youth, adult and senior daily activities. Others believe we need rentable spaces for groups up to 500-700 for meals, banquets, reunions, weddings and other events. This should include catering kitchens and adequate parking facilities, preferably on a loop served by City transit.

### Cemeteries

The City currently maintains four active cemeteries (Oakwood, Longwood, Greenwood and Fairmont) and four inactive ones (Jackson Street, Otey, Fuqua and Mountain). Current municipal cemeteries will sell out some time between 2014 and 2020.

## Schools

The City of Bedford maintains a contractual agreement with Bedford County whereby the County school system provides education to City children. The five schools serving the City are, Bedford Primary, Bedford Elementary, Bedford Middle, Bedford Science and Technology Center and Liberty High School. The Bedford Elementary and Middle Schools are owned and maintained by the City. The other three are owned and operated by the County.

Enrollment for the 2001-2002 school year for the combined City/County system was 11,110. The City of Bedford pays a proportional share of the County's operating cost, which in the 2001-2002 fiscal year amounted to \$4,903,140 or .0942% of the total school operating costs.

Bedford Elementary, the newest City school, was completed in 1989 on a 50-acre site on Burks Hill Road. Bedford Elementary School has a functional capacity of 620 students in grades two through five. The site is sufficient for additional expansion and could accommodate a middle school if required to meet future population and educational needs.

The Bedford Middle School (with a functional capacity of 602 and a 2001-2002 enrollment of 786) has been the center of recent development and planning as well. In 1996, the Mayor appointed the Bedford Middle School Facilities Utilization Committee to analyze the current facilities at the middle school. The objective of the committee was to determine improvements necessary to meet educational, community and recreational programming. The committee recommended a true middle school system which would house sixth through eighth grades. Currently, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is located at the Bedford Science and Technology Annex. There are 147 students enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The former Bedford High School building, was renovated and converted for use as Bedford Middle School. The former Bedford Elementary School building, adjacent to the Middle School, could be renovated to accommodate the sixth grade.

In response to the recommendations of the Committee, a new gymnasium facility has been constructed that is a multilevel structure with space for band, music, health and classrooms. This multifunctional facility helps to meet the social and recreational needs of the middle school age children. The recommendations of the Bedford Middle School Facilities Utilization Committee (1996) still need to be acted upon in full. For 2001-2002 there were 537 students enrolled in this school.

Beyond physical needs, study of educational quality at all levels, but particularly the high school level, is warranted.

## Library

The Bedford Central Library opened on July 30, 1995. It is both the headquarters and central facility of the Bedford Public Library System, which serves both the City and Bedford County. The building includes a community meeting room that has a capacity to seat 100 people and a room dedicated to the preservation and study of Bedford's local history and genealogy, the Tharp Room, that seats 16 people. The public area seats approximately 85 people. This library is a renovation and expansion which encompasses the original 1942 building on three sides, retaining the original Bridge Street exterior, with a new main entrance facing the Wharton House and Garden. The library now has 26,500 total square feet, of which, approximately 7,000 square feet is available for future expansion to meet library needs through the year 2015.

A varied collection of over 62,000 books, magazines, newspapers, audio and video cassettes, microfilms and other materials is available. Both print and electronic reference sources are available, including online databases and interactive CD-ROM titles. An online catalog and circulation system is in use that links all library locations throughout the City and County. Public Internet access is provided. The building incorporates conduits, floor boxes and extensive cabling for computers and telecommunications to allow expansion needed for information technology. There are currently 12 public access computer stations.

### 3. Social Services

The Bedford County Department of Social Services offers many programs that benefit City residents. There are four money assistance programs: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the food stamps program, the Diversionary Assistance Program and Medicaid. TANF focuses on aid to families with minor children who are in need. The amount of aid given is based on family income and resources. There were 56 City families who benefited from TANF in 2001, with \$11,600 in assistance given. The food stamps program gives coupons to needy families for the purchase of groceries. In January 2001, there were 339 people within the City who received assistance through this program valued at \$46,000. The Diversionary Assistance Program offers a one-time grant for low-income families or persons to assist in handling a specific crisis. Medicaid offers medical insurance for those who may not qualify for, or be able to afford, private health insurance. In 2001, 545 City residents participated in this program. Combined with the 2,147 County participants, this program paid \$1.5 million in expenses for the Bedford County service area in 2001. Other programs offered by the Social Services Department include child protection, adult protection, child welfare, general adult welfare, daycare, employment assistance, adoptions, custody, and foster care.

### Level of Service Policy

Some formal administrative mechanism needs to be developed to ensure that public facilities are planned and installed to adequately meet future demand. A Level of Service Policy is a tool that other municipalities have developed. Bedford should

consider adoption of one as well. The logical time to do so would be after adoption of the revised Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

---

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Introduction

Community development is used in this comprehensive plan to describe the City's housing stock, its social services and financial status. This section also discusses the activities and service organizations that improve the quality of life for City residents, and the aid that is given to those who need governmental assistance. This information is important because it conveys how many people in the City need assistance, and what the City and Federal governments are doing to help.

### 2. Housing

#### Inventory

The City of Bedford is blessed with a large stock of historic homes. According to the 1990 Census, more than 600 dwelling units in the City were at least fifty years old. Many of the older neighborhoods in the City are being revitalized through grants, private investment, and renovation of dilapidated structures. The Census Bureau reports that there were 2,702 total housing units in the City in 2000. This number represents an increase of 77 units from 1990. 2,519 of these housing units are occupied, and almost half of these are rental units. The housing base for the City continues to grow as more housing units are permitted. Table XIV demonstrates this pattern.

---

TABLE XIV  
HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED, 1995-2000

Year	Total Units	Single Units	Duplex Units	3 Units or more
1995	20	20	0	0
1996	13	13	0	0
1997	30	12	18	0
1998	23	11	12	0
1999	9	9	0	0
2000	15	11	4	0
TOTAL	120	76	34	0

Bedford experienced a substantial growth in multi-family units from 1970 to 1985. In 1970 a total of 422 multi-family units were located in the City, none of which were over 12 units per development. By 1985 the number reached 658 units, with the largest complex containing 198 units. These units, in large measure, are designed for low and moderate-income families. The City allows mobile home parks by conditional use in the R-3 District, and most mobile homes in the City are located in parks.

The City of Bedford maintains a demolition program for structurally unsound vacant dwellings. Substandard homes in Bedford are encouraged to be revitalized through the enforcement of the Housing Maintenance Code for existing structures. Demolition in areas of historic and architectural significance, can negatively affect the character of existing neighborhoods by creating vacant lots and gaps in the streetscape. Demolition should only be utilized as a last resort when properties cannot be rehabilitated.

#### Housing Quality

The Census Bureau declares a dwelling unit substandard when:

1. It is dilapidated;
2. It does not have operable indoor plumbing;
3. It does not have a usable flush toilet inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family;
4. It does not have a usable bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family;
5. It does not have electricity, or has inadequate or unsafe electrical service;
6. It does not have a safe or adequate source of heat; and/or
7. It should, but does not, have a kitchen.

The 1990 U.S. Census found that there were 23 housing units that lacked complete plumbing facilities and 21 housing units that lacked complete kitchen facilities in the City. There are many other factors that make a home unsafe to live in, such as vermin infestation, buckling walls, missing windows, and poorly constructed roofs. The City of Bedford, has adopted the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and the BOCA National Property Maintenance Code. The City is also in the process of writing Minimum Housing Standards that will require homeowners to repair their unsafe buildings. For those who do not have the funds for necessary repair work, there is a revolving fund available.

#### Federally Assisted Housing

There are numerous housing facilities and programs that support low and moderate income persons. They can be divided into two categories:

1. Those that increase the housing stock
2. Those that provide financial support to persons living in private quarters.

There are six housing complexes in the City that fall into the first category (see Table XV).

---

TABLE XV  
ASSISTED HOUSING IN THE CITY OF BEDFORD

<u>Project Name and Funding Source</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Type of Units</u>
Liberty Manor Apartments Virginia Housing and Development Authority	24	Low and Moderate Income
Pinecrest Apartments Farmers Home 515	64	Low and Moderate Income
Powder Horn Apartments Farmers Home Administration	48	Low and Moderate Income
Raintree Village U.S. Housing and Urban Development	120	Low and Moderate Income
Raintree East U.S. Housing and Urban Development	78	Elderly and Handicapped
Salem Court Farmers Home Administration	40	Elderly, Disabled & Handicapped

Source: City of Bedford

---

The Lynchburg Community Action Group (LYNCAG) runs the Section 8 voucher program. This program provides rental assistance for those who fall into the very low to low income range as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It allows those who qualify to receive rental assistance to live

anywhere in the City or County. LYNCAG currently is allowed 56 vouchers, which are filled and there are 85 families on the waiting list. LYNCAG also administers a Homeless Intervention Program, which provides a one-time emergency grant for people who are in danger of becoming evicted from their dwelling, and a federally funded Fuel Assistance Program that helps needy families pay heating bills.

#### Future Housing Needs

Average household size in the City has remained fairly level in the last decade. In 1990 the average household size in the City of Bedford was 2.37 persons for owner-occupied dwellings and 2.13 for renter-occupied dwellings. In 2000, the figures were 2.36 and 2.11 persons, respectively. Overall average household size continues to reflect a general downward historical trend. The average household size decreased from 2.9 persons per household in 1970 to 2.6 persons per household by 1980. In 2000 the figure was 2.26 persons.

Bedford's population, at about 6,400 persons, will continue to grow moderately. Working-age families and the elderly are expected to comprise most of the City's growth.

The surveys conducted by Land and Community Associates in 1987 reveal the need for more prime single family residential units and for planned residential developments suited to single individuals and the elderly. In addition, the long waiting list for the Section 8 rent subsidy program indicates the need for more affordable housing.

Bedford has reduced the number of substandard houses in the City through both demolition and the CDBG Housing Program, yet rehabilitation is an on-going need since housing continues to deteriorate without regular maintenance. The historic character of many of Bedford's neighborhoods is an asset for the community, and rehabilitation, rather than demolition, will preserve the character of these neighborhoods and a sense of community.



---

*The pleasant character of many of Bedford's older neighborhoods is an asset to the community.*

The City's economic growth is dependent upon a high-quality housing stock to attract new residents. Related factors, such as proximity to parks, shopping and schools, also promote quality housing and economic growth. Bedford's future housing needs should be met with private and public initiatives that promote quality neighborhoods.

### Environmental Considerations

The physical environment, including the geology, soils, slope and location of flood plains, has a great influence on residential development. Residential development in flood plains and on slopes of greater than 15% should be prevented. Soil erosion is monitored through the City Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations which require that careful precautions be taken during construction, especially in multi-family, commercial, industrial projects and in subdivisions. Vegetation, including trees and ground cover, is important for limiting erosion, buffering noise and creating a healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment. Bedford is known for its tree-lined streets and historic neighborhoods and city policies should encourage their preservation. New residential growth should fit into the character of the neighborhood.

The City infrastructure (water and sewer, streets, sidewalks, access to parks, shopping and schools) can also greatly influence residential development. The strength of a neighborhood is based on shared interests, and it is in the interest of a community to preserve and strengthen neighborhood ties by responding to neighborhood needs for services and by considering the structure and character of proposed and existing neighborhoods when planning roads and other community facilities. There are several identifiable neighborhoods that should be strengthened through both private activity and

public policy.

### 3. City Finances

---

The City of Bedford is an independent political subdivision governed by a seven member City Council, the members of which are elected for four-year terms. City Council levies taxes, adopts a City budget, passes various ordinances and regulations, and appoints the City Manager. Council employs the City Manager as the chief administrative officer, who administers laws and the budget through the various departments of the City government. For the fiscal year 2006-07, the City of Bedford budgeted total revenues of \$44,996,872 and total expenditures of \$43,899,958, with a contingency fund of \$1,096,914.

The City of Bedford levies taxes on real estate, personal property, machinery and tools and imposes a business license tax. Real estate tax is based on 100% of fair market value and is levied at \$0.81 per \$100 in value. Personal property tax is assessed at \$1.80 per \$100 of trade in value. Machinery and tools are assessed at 60% of original cost and are taxed at \$1.30 per \$100 of assessed value. For fiscal year 1994-95, the median assessment ratio for real estate was 94.4%. The ratio is a measure of the City's assessment of real estate as compared to market values and a 94.4% rate means that City assessments reach, on the average, to 94.4% of market rates.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

---

### 1. Introduction

Transportation directly and indirectly influences physical development in the City of Bedford. The availability and quality of the transportation system affects the locations and character of housing, community facilities, commercial and industrial areas. Transportation and land use have a dynamic relationship. This section of the plan includes an inventory of existing transportation services and identifies future transportation needs. This comprehensive plan incorporates, with revisions, the former Major Street and Highway Improvement Plan.

The City's built environment should be constructed to a pedestrian scale to the greatest extent possible. Alternatives to the automobile should be explored and promoted. These may include transit, bicycle paths, rail service and sidewalks.

### 2. Existing Transportation Services

#### Roadways

Route 460 is the principal east-west highway serving Bedford. It originates in Norfolk and terminates in St. Louis. Route 460 connects Bedford with the Hampton Roads area to the east and Roanoke and Interstate 81 to the west. Interstate 81 is the main north-south highway that passes through the Shenandoah Valley. Route 221 begins in Lynchburg, passes through Bedford and into North Carolina.

East Main Street, Blue Ridge Avenue and West Main Street (460 Business) are principal highways into the City of Bedford from Route 460 at the southeast and southwest ends of the City. Other major roadways within the City are Peaks and South Street (Route 43), Longwood Avenue (Routes 221 and 122), Orange Street (Route 718) and Burks Hill Road (Route 122). The Bedford City Department of Public Works maintains these and all other City streets with funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

A major new roadway, Independence Boulevard, extends from East Main Street (460 Business) to Routes 122/221 in the northeast corner of the City. This roadway enhances travel efficiency in and around Bedford. East Main Street is in the process of being widened to four lanes of traffic from Lyle Street to the 460 Bypass interchange.

Several primary highways serve the City of Bedford. Route 43 extends from Altavista through Bedford City to Route 220 at Eagle Rock. This highway crosses the Blue Ridge Parkway and is a main access route to the Peaks of Otter. Route 122 begins at Big Island in the northeast section of Bedford County and terminates at Route 40 in Franklin County. Route 122 between Bedford City and southern Bedford County is a heavily used route to Smith Mountain Lake.

The City has improved the primary and secondary road system as well as subdivision streets with an aggressive asphalt overlay program that includes substantial preparation work to repair major defects before re-paving. These improvements have been made possible by increased funding for asphalt overlay and equipment. In order to maintain a high level of street maintenance, this support should continue.

Several recorded streets need to be improved, including Orange Street, Macon Street, Peaks Street, and Link Road. Some right-of-way will need to be purchased before piecemeal development takes place (this is particularly relevant to Link Road).

### Railways

Freight service is available from the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The NS line connects with most rail lines and the recently acquired Conrail has opened more routes in the northeast and midwest. The NS line crosses through the center of Bedford. Rail sidings are in use by Bedford's industry and other sites have been identified for sidings including the Bedford Center for Business. The eastern terminus of the NS line at Norfolk connects with a large deep-water port.

There is no passenger rail service in Bedford, however, the Amtrak Crescent has passenger service from Lynchburg to Washington, DC and Atlanta. Additional passenger service via the Trans-Dominion Express (running from Washington to Bristol) could be available as early as 2006 and would use the existing NS rail route. A passenger station in Bedford would be needed.

### Airports

There are two general utility airports, New London, and Smith Mountain, in Bedford County. The New London airport is located off Route 811 about 14 miles east of Bedford. Smith Mountain airport is located east of Moneta. These airports are attended during daylight hours and have runway markers and lights for nighttime flying. These airports serve regional businesses and the general citizenry. In addition, the Lynchburg and Roanoke Regional Airports are readily accessible from Bedford. Both airports offer commercial passenger service to connecting airline hubs.

### Trucking

Bedford is served by at least eighteen interstate and intrastate motor freight companies. These freight companies provide extensive coverage throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and northern South America. In addition to motor freight, United Parcel Service, Federal Express, Airborne Express and others are available in the City of Bedford.

### Other Transportation Services

The Greyhound Bus Company has scheduled passenger service to Bedford. Routes are on Route 460 and Route 221 with 4 trips daily in each direction. There is no inter-city bus service, although private taxi service is available.

Other specialized transportation services include services to the elderly and handicapped. The Central Virginia Area Agency on Aging serves the planning district with 13 passenger vans and two wheelchair-equipped vans. Longwood Industries, formerly the Sheltered Workshop of Bedford, has several vans to transport its handicapped employees to the workshop. Bedford Ride, a non-profit, public/private effort operating with volunteer drivers, provides non-emergency transportation service for elderly, handicapped, disabled and low-income residents. The Bedford County Department of Social Services also serves the transportation disadvantaged, as does taxi service.

### 3. Future Transportation Needs

The recommendations of the 2020 Transportation Plan as adopted by Council earlier this year (2002) are hereby incorporated into this document as Appendix 1.

A site for the passenger rail station needs to be identified and acquired with construction completed before operation of the Trans Dominion Express. Pedestrian access to the station and transportation to and from it are issues that merit strong attention. The following general sites should be pursued, in order of priority:

1. The intersection of Plunkett and Court streets (which would necessitate the relocation of existing Electric Department offices)
2. The Woollen Mill property on Jackson Street
3. The site of the original rail station near the Elks Home
4. The former rail station now occupied by the Olde Liberty Station restaurant

In addition to the on going sidewalk construction program, a system of greenways, bike paths and hiking trails should be implemented. Staff recommendation is to examine areas along streams throughout the City first and to discuss citizen negative reaction to most of the previously proposed routes. The possibility of locating bike paths along existing street right-of-ways should also be explored.

The City should strongly encourage development of transit service (including taxi cabs, trolleys or shuttles) to provide pedestrian links throughout the City, to the National D-Day Memorial, Centertown, local industry and other centers of employment.

The City should support development of an east west Interstate highway in close proximity to town as well as upgrading U.S. 29 to Interstate status.

The careful use of landscaping along a street can provide separation between motorists and pedestrians, reduce the visual width of the roadway (which can help reduce vehicle speeds), and provide a more pleasant street environment for all. This can include a variety of trees, bushes, and/or flowerpots, which can be planted in the buffer area between the sidewalk or walkway and the street.

The most significant issue with any landscaping scheme is ongoing maintenance.

Some communities have managed effectively through the volunteer efforts of neighbors, while others have found them to be unreliable and have budgeted for public maintenance instead. Irrigation systems should be added in areas with extensive planting.

Choosing appropriate plants and preparing the ground can help ensure that landscaping survives with minimal maintenance and does not buckle the sidewalks as it matures.

The following guidelines should be considered:

1. Plants should be adapted to the local climate and fit the character of the surrounding area;
2. They should survive without protection or extensive irrigation; and
3. Plants' growth patterns should not obscure signs or pedestrians' and motorists' views of each other.

The City should strongly consider construction of a multi-story parking deck.

Participants in the April 2002 public meetings suggested the following potential locations for such a structure:

1. The block bounded by Depot and Court streets
2. The site of the passenger rail station (once the station site has been selected)
3. The block bounded by Washington and South Bridge streets.

The City should also strongly encourage development and employment of a trolley or shuttle service that would transport people around Centertown and to other sites of interest such as the National D-Day Memorial.

## ENVIRONMENT

---

The City of Bedford is situated in the Piedmont Region of Virginia. The City and surrounding area are marked by characteristically hilly piedmont terrain with deep cutting narrow streams. The underlying bedrock, beneath a variably deep soil mantle, is part of the Virginia Blue Ridge Complex, and is largely composed of granite and gneiss. Elevations within the City limits range between 800 and 1100 feet. Eight miles north are the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the Peaks of Otter (Sharp Top and Flat Top Mountain) which are visible from most parts of the City.

Approximately 15% of the area within the City limits is classified as forest on the 1967 USGS topographical map (photo-revised 1985). This particular forest community is characterized as having a preponderance of broad leaf species, well developed forest understories, and diverse species composition including elms, oaks and dogwoods. An unusually large number of mature pecan trees are growing in and around the City of Bedford. Residential areas in the City are generally well planted with mature street trees. Within the central core of downtown, however, there is little vegetation, because buildings line narrow streets and sidewalks, and there is generally no room for a planting strip. Parking lots, in particular, are notable for their lack of vegetation although some improvement has been seen in downtown lots as part of the implementation of the City's Centertown Plan.

Tree planting and landscaping regulations currently require installation but make no provisions for funds or manpower for maintenance. Replacement and responsibility are not currently addressed as issues, either. Commitment needs to be made to beautify all entries into the City. This may include acquiring land or right-of-way. Funds need to be secured and design elements proposed in the Keep Bedford Beautiful Commission gateway plan need to be included.

Adjacent County lands to the north, west and south are largely cleared for farming or development activities. Substantial amounts of new residential development has occurred in the last decade both on the edges of the City, and in neighboring County lands, mirroring the simultaneous growth of Lynchburg and

### 1. Climate

The City of Bedford has a moderate climate, with an average annual temperature of 56.3 degrees (F). The Blue Ridge Mountains to the northwest act as a blocking and modifying effect on storms and air masses, and the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean to the east modify the temperature and contribute to the humidity in the summer. Hurricanes and tornadoes rarely occur in Bedford, though thunderstorms with lightning and hail are common occurrences in the summer months. The average summertime temperature is 72.38 degrees (F); the wintertime average is 39.55 degrees (F). The average last freezing temperature in spring is on April 20, and the average first freezing temperature in the fall is October 16 (Source: Bedford Chamber of Commerce) Average daily temperatures as shown in Table XVII are based on a 30-year evaluation.

---

TABLE XVII

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE FOR THE CITY OF BEDFORD (F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
35.6	38.3	47.9	56.8	64.6	71.6	75.1	73.7	67.3	56.8	48.2	39.1

ANNUAL AVERAGE MONTHLY 56.3 degrees (F)

Source: *climate.virginia.edu*

---

## 2. Precipitation

The average annual precipitation in the City of Bedford is 43.06 inches. Average monthly precipitation is shown in the following table. Snowfall has averaged 17.9 inches annually, although this varies greatly from year to year. All precipitation, shown below, is based on a 30-year evaluation.

---

TABLE XVIII

AVERAGE MONTHLY PRECIPITATION FOR THE CITY OF BEDFORD

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2.93	3.34	3.58	3.43	4.37	3.56	4.25	3.86	3.44	3.9	3.29	3.1

Source: *climate.virginia.edu*

---

## 3. Air Quality

The overall air quality in the City of Bedford is considered to be good, owing largely to the rural nature of the surrounding Bedford County, and the general scarcity of polluting industries in both the City and the County. The Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board and the Environmental Protection Agency has classified the City of Bedford and Bedford County as an "attainment area" or Class II Prevention of Significant Deterioration Zone, meaning that current air quality levels are considered satisfactory and must be maintained. A Class II PST area is one that should "allow for growth and economic development provided siting practices and pollution control measures are acceptable.

In a Class II PST zone, all new industries, or industries that wish to expand, are carefully examined on a case by case basis to insure that they will not lead to deterioration of existing air quality.

The highest levels of pollution in the City and the County are located along Routes 460 and 221, due to automobile emissions, and a relatively high concentration of emission point sources. Overall, air quality in Bedford meets or exceeds the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Sulfur Dioxide, suspended particulate, Carbon Monoxide Ozone, Nitrogen Dioxide and Lead.

Landscaping must be emphasized. In addition to improving the aesthetic quality of the City, features such as a tree canopy are also economical in terms of improving air quality and other factors that are heavily scrutinized and regulated at the federal level. Our attainment status needs to be preserved and defended to the greatest possible extent. In addition, the development of a healthy tree canopy can actually prevent damage to structures during severe weather events, such as high winds.

#### 4. Water Supply

The City of Bedford is located in segment 4-6 of the Roanoke River Watershed. The major continuously flowing stream within the City limits is Johns Creek, which flows easterly into the Little Otter River. Small creeks on the north and west side of the City flow north to the Little Otter River. At the extreme south end, drainage is carried to Skinnels Creek. Large streams in the area include Stoney Creek and the Big Otter River. The City of Bedford's primary source of raw water is the Stoney Creek Reservoir, located approximately 8 miles north of the City on Rt. 640. This reservoir has a holding capacity of 156,000,000 gallons. The City owns five wells with a design capacity of 200,000 gallons per day. A secondary source is located on the headwaters of the Big Otter River which has a potential yield of 1,000,000 gallons per day. Treated water is provided by a filtration plant with a design capacity of 3,000,000 gallons per day, which provides approximately 1,190,000 gallons per day for present water demands.

#### 5. Surface Water Quality

Surface water quality in the Bedford area is generally good. However, surface water quality has been degraded by large domestic waste loads from sources in the County and upstream. The Bedford City Wastewater Treatment Plant is a major discharger to the Little Otter River, and agricultural lands are a large potential source of non-point pollution. At present, non-point pollution, predominantly from farm run-off, is the greatest concern with respect to surface water quality in the Bedford area. Farm lot runoff and silt from erosion contribute phosphorus, nitrogen and organic material to the County's rivers and streams resulting in siltation.

## 6. Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality is considered to be good, though groundwater data in the City is sparse. It is known that the nature of the geology underlying much of Bedford County lends itself to rapid well discharge. The ground water in Bedford County may be acidic and exhibit high iron concentrations; the likelihood of this increases with well depth. The effect of recent droughts, currently excessive well drawdown, and pollutant transport are particular groundwater related concerns in the area around Bedford.

## 7. Flood Hazard Areas

Flood plains are relatively flat areas adjacent to bodies of water that are subject to periodic flooding. Flood plains play an important role in the overall hydrologic system, by providing a temporary storage area for water when the standard capacity of a body of water is exceeded. Flood plains also provide a habitat for wildlife and, because the soil is generally very fertile, they are usually good areas for crop cultivation. Developments such as housing, industry or commercial buildings are inappropriate to a flood plain because damages are high during floods. Ideally, flood plains should be maintained as open space, trails, or park land to sustain the natural environment of the river or stream and to prevent property loss.

## 8. Slopes

As a part of this study, a slope analysis was done from the USGS topographic map for the City of Bedford. Slopes for the area were divided into three categories: 0-7%, 7-15%, and greater than 15%. Areas with slopes of 7-15% permit good conditions for natural and slow drainage and consequently should not pose any problems for development if no other constraints are present. Depending on the soil type, these slopes are suitable for many types of industrial, commercial, institutional and residential uses, as well as primary and secondary roads and utility corridors. Areas of 7-15% slope will generally necessitate higher grading and construction costs and should be developed less intensively. Slopes in this category are suitable for most residential uses and secondary roads, but are too steep for extensive industrial, commercial, and high density uses and many forms of cropland. Areas with slopes greater than 15% are suitable only for individual homes and other low intensity uses. Building in areas falling in this last category may require excessive grading, excavation, and construction costs, and should only be undertaken with great care, if at all.

The terrain in Bedford is generally hilly. Slope analysis reveals that roughly one-fourth of the area has slopes from 0-7%, one-half has slopes from 7-15% and one-fourth has slopes greater than 15%.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES / HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Bedford is well known throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia for its historic resources and the interest of many of its citizens in historic preservation. Preservation has played a major role in the revitalization of the historic downtown with a number of rehabilitations of historic buildings in the commercial district. The Bedford Historical Society is an active organization that promotes preservation awareness and has restored several historic structures. The Avenel Foundation has restored the Avenel Manor House, which now serves as a meeting facility. The Wharton Memorial Foundation also has been instrumental in the planning, acquisition and development of the historic Wharton-Gregory House and the Wharton Gardens adjacent to the new central library. City government continues to work with these private, non-profit organizations in an effort to preserve historic buildings, improve streetscapes and enhance public space with minimum public expenditure.



*Bedford and the surrounding area feature a wealth of historic and architectural resources, such as The Avenel Manor House*

There is no locally enacted historic district to regulate alterations or demolitions of historic buildings. Federal, State and local tax incentives exist for historic preservation, but need to be promoted. The local tax abatement program should be extended to include all historic properties and other incentives for redevelopment of historic properties should be promoted.

Nevertheless, approximately 105 acres of the traditional core of the city are included in a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Central Business District and much of the residential area to the north and west of the downtown lie within the district (Map 4). The district contains a concentration of historic and architecturally significant buildings.



---

*The Downtown Business District contains a concentration of historic buildings that have been renovated with the assistance of the Virginia Main Street program.*

In addition to the district, four properties - Avenel, the Bedford Historic Meeting House on Main Street, the Ballard-Worsham House and the Burks-Guy-Hagan House, which is subject to an historical easement of about 14 acres and held by the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

According to the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, the architectural and historic survey of the City is not complete. Only the area to be included in the National Register district was included in the Division's most recent survey of the City. Other pre-1940 structures outside the district remain to be identified, documented and evaluated.

Certain areas (such as the neighborhood around Avenel) seem to be redeveloping well through private investment and activity. Special attention needs to be given to other areas, particularly the neighborhood around the historic Woolen Mill complex.

Review of proposed changes to historic structures needs to be carried out by a qualified authority. For commercial buildings within the Centertown area, any development proposals should be reviewed and approved by Bedford Main Street, Inc.

## EXISTING LAND USE

---

### 1. Historical Overview

Founded in 1782 as the town of Liberty on 100 acres donated by Joseph Fuqua, Bedford has been an agrarian-based, service-oriented community for most of its history. Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge on an early turnpike highway between Lynchburg and Salem, the Bedford area was the fifth largest producer of tobacco in the state during the nineteenth century. The town remained fairly compact until the arrival of the Virginia Tennessee railroad (predecessor of the Norfolk Southern) in 1852, which encouraged the development of industry along its tracks. Although few antebellum buildings survive in Bedford today, the development pattern established in the nineteenth century still remains, with governmental and bank buildings largely defining the character of Main Street, retail establishments lining both Main and Bridge Streets, industries lining the tracks of Depot Street one block north of Main Street, and residential neighborhoods developed in concentric zones.

### 2. Current Land Use

Today land use in the City of Bedford has the varied characteristics of a county seat, with a mix of retail, professional, industrial and residential uses. Despite recent development in Bedford County and in nearby Lynchburg and Roanoke, Bedford remains the focus for governmental, financial, legal, medical and retail services for its immediate vicinity. Bedford is also an industrial center for the County and produces such goods as paper labels, rubber, textiles, furniture, steel ruled dies, steel shot and canned and frozen foods, providing an industrial employment base for the City and County. Finally, more than half of the City's area is residential, with a majority of single and two family homes, and a smaller portion of higher density housing.

### 3. Land Use Trends

The City of Bedford has functioned (since at least 1989) under a traditional system of Euclidean zoning (based entirely on land use and specifically upon the segregation of those uses). There has been constant friction between land uses and districts throughout its employment to date.

Residential land available in Bedford remained stable from the period 1991 to 1997. However, a reduction in land zoned R-1, Low Density Residential, occurred when 19 acres in the vicinity of Independence Boulevard and 460 was changed to B-2, General Business. This rezoning resulted in an increase in commercial development. The four laning of Main Street in this area also impacted the change of land use. Land zoned R-1A was reduced by four acres in order to increase the B-1, Limited Business District, along Crenshaw Street on the Centertown border. The reduction in these lower density residential zones was offset by an increase in R-3, High Density Residential. This was the result of an annexation of approximately twenty-five acres at the Carriage Hill Retirement Home located in the southwestern corner of the City. Approximately three

acres of R-3 land were downzoned to R-1A, Low Density Residential, on Bedford Avenue adjoining Centertown.

Given the topography of the City, most of the single family neighborhoods are located in corridors along major roads that follow the ridge lines. These neighborhoods are compact, fairly definable and are generally homogeneous in their architectural characters. Most of the existing single family development is of moderate density with higher densities present in some of the older neighborhoods. More recent single-family development has occurred at the edges of the City in areas such as North Hills, Bedford Hills, Coolbrook Road, Governors Hill and the development of High Acre Estates off of Boone Drive.

Historic residences can be subject to deterioration, such as properties on Longwood Avenue, Burks Hill Road and Bedford Avenue. As Bedford grows, there will be increased competition among the variety of land uses for buildable sites. Efforts should be made to identify historic residential sites and protect them by adopting and enforcing regulations incorporating design standards as well as restrictions on land uses.

Land zoned for business or commercial uses has increased by 51 acres or 1.1% of the total area of the City of Bedford since 1979. All of this expansion occurred in the B-2, or general business category, with the Central Business District remaining the only area zoned for B-1, or limited business use. The growth in B-2 land primarily reflects the conversion of the Walmart site, north of 460, from industrial to B-2 zoning.

The focus of the City's commercial identity is the Central Business District, which is loosely defined by the Norfolk Southern Railroad track on the north, Washington Street on the south, Ballard Street on the west and Stone Street on the east. It contains a variety of retail, office and governmental uses, and appears healthy with few vacant stores. Since its selection as one of Virginia's five original Main Street Cities in 1985, downtown has witnessed considerable revitalization efforts. Implementation of the City's downtown physical improvements brought newly paved streets and sidewalks, historic lighting fixtures, creation of an outdoor event space in the downtown park, as well as a critically needed new underground infrastructure. Coupled with private and government building renovations as part of the City's participation in the Virginia Main Street program, these improvements have made the downtown an attractive environment for both professional and retail businesses.

Several commercial centers outside of the Centertown area have also developed as viable parts of the retail sector of the City of Bedford. These include the Westgate Shopping Center, East Main and Lyle Streets, the "Forks" area at the junction of Routes 221 and 122, and the Walmart Plaza Shopping Center on Route 460 East. So far, little commercial development has occurred at the Main Street/Link Road or Burks Hill exits adjacent to Route 460.

The main industrial areas are located along the NS Railroad tracks in the eastern section of the City, and the Dawn Drive-Monroe Street area. Other industries are

located at various sites in the city, such as Piedmont Label on West Depot Street and Wheelabrator Company at the western edge of the City. The construction of Independence Boulevard on the east side of city has increased access to a large portion of the City's undeveloped M-1 land, thus providing the potential for development of new industrial land, such as the 100-acre Bedford Center for Business, which opened in 1999.

#### 4. Land Use Needs

Land Development Regulations should be supportive of innovative strategies such as Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). Five main organizing principles that define TND are:

1. Compact, defined urban neighborhoods, comprising a compatible mix of uses and housing types;
2. A network of connected streets with sidewalks and street trees to facilitate convenient and safe movement throughout neighborhoods for all modes of transportation;
3. Focus on the pedestrian over the automobile (while retaining automobile convenience);
4. Integration of parks and public spaces into each neighborhood; and
5. The placement of important civic buildings on key sites to create landmarks and a strong sense of place.

There are two scales at which to conceptualize and to implement Traditional Neighborhood Development. Individual subdivisions use TND to create a more compact layout to encourage compatible infill development and to conserve open space. TND principles of design can also be applied on a community-wide basis as the foundation for a Smart Growth development pattern. If the City is to continue under the present context of zoning, our existing Land Development Regulations need to be amended to support and promote the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

It may be time for the City to do away with Euclidean zoning (based entirely on land use and specifically upon the segregation of those uses) altogether. The practice of such has never been particularly adaptable to changes in technology, market preference or the needs of the public in terms of places to live, work and shop. It is also completely incapable of dealing effectively with issues of design, which is often the source of most concern for citizens. Instead of a rigid system of regulation, based on land use districts without regard for design considerations or the possibility that development is more diverse than simple categorization of residential, commercial or industrial uses, a more flexible, design-based approach should be considered.

An alternate form of Land Development Regulations could take the form of "districts" crafted around neighborhoods with definitive and unique characteristics. A variety of different land uses could be permitted to take place within any given district, provided that they occur within structures and sites that meet regulations crafted to preserve the

district's character and identity. For example, regulations governing the design and definition of public space, such as streets and parks, would be compatible between different planning areas or districts. Building types, while not uniform, reflect their setting. Coordination of actual building types by their settings seems to be a much better system than the abstract logic of zoning.

The City currently lacks available territory for all three general land use classifications: industrial, general business and residential development. The City is also unable to annex additional land under present legislation, and the creation of more land is a technological impossibility. Traditional Euclidean zoning creates competition between land uses, which will inevitably require the triumph of one use at the expense of every other. This is not an effective system of managing development when the City's well being requires simultaneous increases in all categories.

The previous Comprehensive Plan called for the employment of scenic overlay districts to correct apparent aesthetic problems that have arisen due to the use of conventional zoning. While well-intentioned, the fundamental problem with such a tool is that it is a secondary and artificial construct that is inadequate in addressing blight which is actually encouraged by the existing Land Development Regulations. Instead of drafting overlay regulations to deal with the consequences of segregated, land-use zoning and the infrastructure required to support it, a set of new Land Development Regulations based primarily on issues of design would more effectively deal with aesthetic concerns.

Although there are certain noxious uses that should be prohibited, severely restricted, or may require vegetative screening and/or buffering, the practice of automatically requiring such between all differing land uses is not necessary and should be discontinued. The primary issue related to any development proposal should be the manner in which it complements existing development. If a use is deemed noxious or undesirable, it should not be permitted at all.

There are few issues in planning more provocative and more misunderstood than density. One of the most common misconceptions is that low density, large-lot zoning is the best means of preserving a rural character with plenty of open space. In fact, the opposite is true. All around the City, the natural landscape is being urbanized because of this well-intentioned but mistaken belief. When minimum residential lot sizes are required to be one-half acre to two acres in size, development is spread all over the land with lots of road surface needed to connect all the houses. The very things that communities want to preserve – good usable open space and a rural character – are exactly what communities demolish in the process.

The issue of density should be secondary at the least to the goal of continuing to build Bedford after its own image. In fact, in the 2002 Comprehensive Planning Survey, density was cited as the least important aspect of land development. The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations need to be flexible tools that reconcile existing property rights with incentives for good quality and diverse development. The City needs diversity of development in order to sustain its livability,

its role as a service, retail and employment center for City and County, and a healthy tax base.

Another provocative issue relates to the debate between urban versus rural identity. Certainly Bedford is blessed by its location in the midst of a bucolic and beautiful area at the foot of the Peaks of Otter. However, given its location, the City serves to function as a service area not only for its citizens, but also for residents of the County within a substantial radius. Given the artificial limits on its growth placed on the City by the General Assembly, the City must make calculated decisions about the most efficient way in which it is to manage development. The City needs to embrace the notion that it is a distinctly urban entity within a largely rural area, and that this connotation is an asset rather than a liability.

The previous Comprehensive Plan also stated that Centertown is the basis of the City's commercial area, citing vacancy as the primary criterion for assessing the health of our downtown. Although most buildings in Centertown are occupied, many are underutilized and some are deteriorating due to a lack of revenue generation. In the 2002 Survey, more respondents cited the range of available goods and services and sales receipts as better indicators of economic vitality than occupancy rates.

The present Land Development Regulations severely restrict the pattern of development exemplified by Centertown at the expense of automobile-dependent commercial development which is in direct competition with Centertown and which is costly to sustain. Centertown should be the basis of the City's commercial area, and with notable exceptions such as areas near major highways, the design elements embodied by Centertown should be adopted and enforced throughout the City in an effort to build upon Bedford's unique identity. Centertown is not the area that should be subjected to more "vigorous development standards." Instead, the design standards present in Centertown need to be adopted and vigorously imposed upon all other areas of commercial development.

In addition, design standards typically associated with Centertown development need to be universally applied in any zoning district governing the area. The disruption of the pattern of zero lot line development on East Main Street in the block just east of Otey Street is an example of the need for this type of consistency. The buildings that have been constructed with parking lots in their front yards are not only difficult to tie in to the physical identity of Centertown, they also promote a Euclidean pattern of development beginning immediately adjacent to their boundaries.

The 1996 Visioning document is excellent in providing direction and benchmarks for Bedford's development. It is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan as Appendix 2.

A fundamental change in the manner by which the City develops is both inevitable and necessary. Current zoning regulations actually stifle economic development while simultaneously requiring a pattern of development that is unpopular, unsustainable and

inconsistent with the history or character of Bedford. City Council should empower staff to guide this change to the greatest degree possible and to educate citizens about its impact and direction.

Staff should be empowered to approve and administer Land Development Regulations to the greatest acceptable extent. Approval of proposals should be on a “by-right” basis provided that a public participation process (such as a charrette) is included for any project of a significant scale. The approval process should be based on the following steps:

1. Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan
2. Compliance with the Land Development Regulations
3. Compliance with any existing Small Area Plan that may be in place for the property in question. (If none is in place, then one should be developed before the individual proposal proceeds.)
4. For proposals of a certain scale (to be determined), a public participation function such as a charrette shall be required
5. Public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council
6. Final approval by staff

Land use decisions near corporate limits need to take place in cooperation with Bedford County. Although not subject to its approval, under a reciprocal arrangement, the County should receive a set of plans for review of any property located within a quarter mile of corporate limits. Such receipt should be a condition of approval for all development.

The City’s budget (and particularly the Capital Improvement Program) should be structured to support the proposals of the Comprehensive Plan over an appropriate timeframe (even if implementation requires a multi-year commitment). The City’s Capital Improvement Program, as amended during any given fiscal year, is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan as Appendix 3.

A strategy for addressing the issue of commercial communication towers also needs to be developed. Current regulations effectively prohibit employment of ideas such as “stealth” technology that might be desirable in the City.

The City needs to encourage development that strengthens and diversifies the tax base. Although many people project that future growth will be residential, more attention needs to be given to non-residential development, particularly as it pertains to revenue generation. In *Fiscal Impact of Major Land Uses in Culpeper County, Virginia* (1988) Tamara Vance and Arthur Larson noted that \$1.25 was spent on services for residential development for every \$1.00 in revenue that it generated. By comparison, industrial development only cost 19 cents in terms of service demand for every dollar of revenue that it generated.

Minimum lot sizes and large setbacks in residential areas should be abandoned, as they

promote urban sprawl. To the greatest extent possible, the standards of the current R-1E zoning classification should be applied citywide to preserve and promote the City's historical pattern of development. The perceived need for large lots can be addressed by providing more public open spaces at varying scales, and by also utilizing and promoting streetscapes as public open spaces.

The role of streets and their contribution to property values, as well as the the City's identity and their effect on pedestrians, needs to be carefully examined. Instead of steering residential development away from busy roads, regulations should be drafted that calm traffic. This can be achieved through elements such as on-street parking and narrower pavement widths, for example. Road construction and the promotion of high-speed vehicular traffic should not be the factors that dominate land use planning decisions.

The City's present zoning is a "hodgepodge" of single use districts applied arbitrarily throughout a relatively compact area. When zoning regulations do not adequately address the needs of a particular area of the community, citizens believe that it is both easy and proper to "get the regulations changed" on a case-by-case basis. Instead of requiring such processes (which call for a great deal of bureaucratic support), regulations should be flexible enough to accommodate the demands of the free market, while still enforcing the broad community view of what is acceptable in terms of development.

Zoning districts, to the extent that they are employed, should be based on neighborhood boundaries and identity rather than land use. The neighborhood is the essential unit of land use planning and should be given precedence in any planning discussion. Individuals' sense of neighborhood is conveyed in elements such as streets, institutions and similarity of building design or age. In fact, land uses are mixed in most areas of the City, particularly in those areas close to Centertown.

Bedford's identity is that of an urban place in a rural setting. It is presently a quintessential American small town, surrounded by open space. There are pleasant rural vistas surrounding the City that may be easily viewed from nearly any vantage point within. It is important for the City to preserve and advocate its identity as an urban place within a greater rural setting.

When cities are healthy, everybody prospers (including counties and the State in general). The delivery of services is more effective, the quality of life is better, and there is an overwhelming sense of hometown pride. Design-based planning, which encourages these things by connecting us as a community, makes for a better delivery of essential public services and encourages commerce.

# 3

---

## Goals and Objectives

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

The statement of goals and objectives establishes a foundation for future decision-making in the City of Bedford. Goals and objectives are based on the data and information gathered in the Inventory and Analysis section of this plan and on considerable public input.

A goal is defined as a long-range statement of an end or value toward which efforts are directed, but may be so broad as to be specifically unattainable. Under each goal are more specific objectives, which are clear statements of ways in which goals are reached. They refer to more specific accomplishments that are attainable. In the third major section of this Comprehensive Plan, the Plan itself, further implementation strategies are discussed, as are comprehensive plan standards and the future land use plan.

In large measure, this Comprehensive Plan affirms and further refines the goals stated in the previous comprehensive plan. Goals and objectives are stated in six broad areas; land use, conservation, economy, community facilities community development and transportation. After the goals and objectives are presented, major implementation strategies are summarized. The Plan section of this document discusses additional strategies and standards for fulfilling the stated goals and objectives.

## **LAND USE**

---

### **GOAL 1: Encourage an orderly, efficient and environmentally appropriate land use pattern.**

- Objective 1: Promote balanced growth through land use planning that allows for a diversity of land uses.
- Objective 2: Ensure development that is compatible with adjacent land uses in terms of its design.
- Objective 3: Promote land use immediately outside Bedford City limits that is compatible with adjacent land use in the City.
- Objective 4: Ensure that future development is compatible with available transportation and community facilities.
- Objective 5: Enact design standards for streets and scenic vistas that preserve the City's unique character and visual identity.
- Objective 6: Promote installation of sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and trees on all existing streets within City limits.

### **GOAL 2: Maintain and strengthen the availability of land for future residential, commercial and industrial growth.**

- Objective 1: Expand the commercial and industrial base in the City of Bedford.
- Objective 2: Promote residential land use of diverse densities to attract investment from all possible sectors of the free market.
- Objective 3: Maintain and develop community facilities that will meet the future needs of Bedford's citizens, both individual and corporate.
- Objective 4: Allow for expansion of existing residential, commercial and industrial uses.

#### **◆ Land Use Strategies**

1. Completely review and revise Land Development Regulations to allow greater flexibility of land use with more emphasis on considerations of design.
2. Promote Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) concepts on a Citywide basis.

3. In terms of future development, promote compact, defined urban neighborhoods comprising a compatible mix of uses and housing types.
4. In terms of existing development, identify present neighborhood boundaries and enhance their established physical character.
5. Promote commercial development constructed at a zero-lot-line scale on a Citywide basis.
6. Coordinate infrastructure improvements with intended future land use.
7. Evaluate and coordinate land use decisions with the surrounding County.
8. Base all land use decisions within the context of their design implications.

## **CONSERVATION**

---

**GOAL 1: Make wise use of the City's historic resources, including significant sites, buildings, structures and landscape features.**

- Objective 1: Enhance and make wise use of Bedford's historic character.
- Objective 2: Ensure a pattern of development that is consistent in its design with Bedford's historic district.
- Objective 3: Encourage private sector improvement of substandard and historically significant houses through increased use of public incentives.
- Objective 4: Encourage events and activities that celebrate the City's heritage.

◆ **Conservation Strategies**

1. Continue to promote recycling.

## 1. ECONOMY

---

### **GOAL 1: Support retention and expansion of existing industries, businesses and services.**

- Objective 1: Insure that economic incentives apply to existing industry as well as new industry.
- Objective 2: Provide employment opportunities commensurate with the education, skill level and abilities of residents.
- Objective 3: Encourage environmentally compatible, mixed-use and adaptive reuse of historic structures and facilities.
- Objective 4: Facilitate brownfield development of former industrial sites.

### **GOAL 2: Diversify the economic base by attracting sustainable industries, businesses and services, which improve the mix of jobs, goods and services available to meet the needs of City residents.**

- Objective 1: In conjunction with Bedford County, Region 2000 and the State, actively recruit technology-based manufacturing and businesses using applied technology.
- Objective 2: Ensure that proposed business or industrial development is consistent with the future land use plan and preserves the quality of the environment.
- Objective 3: Encourage business and industry that is consistent with the City's ability to provide necessary utilities and community facilities.
- Objective 4: Consistent with land use planning, encourage retail and office development in clustered rather than strip pattern within the City and Revenue-Sharing Areas.
- Objective 5: Maximize allowed and compatible uses of land areas to reduce future land use conflicts.
- Objective 6: Encourage development of a highly trained, educated and motivated workforce within the City.
- Objective 7: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings and facilities.

**GOAL 3: Protect and expand public and private investments in Centertown Bedford.**

- Objective 1: Maintain Centertown Bedford as the hub of community activity by encouraging the location of government, retail, financial and professional services as well as its use for cultural, recreational, and educational programs.
- Objective 2: Strengthen the retail vitality of the Centertown area by encouraging recruitment of new businesses and expansion of existing ones.
- Objective 3: Increase investment in Centertown by supporting economic incentives, diversity and residential growth.
- Objective 4: Support the efforts of Bedford Main Street to revitalize the Centertown area.
- Objective 5: Preserve the integrity of the commercial blocks in the historic district.
- Objective 6: Continue to implement improvements detailed in the Centertown Plan.

**GOAL 4: Support economic growth and tourism by capitalizing on the National D-Day Memorial, other regional visitor destinations and on the unique location of Bedford.**

- Objective 1: Strengthen tourism promotion activities in conjunction with Bedford County, Region 2000 and the State.
- Objective 2: Encourage expansion of hospitality industry development that attracts and serves tourists and visitors.
- Objective 3: Protect the site and scenic vistas of the National D-Day Memorial from encroachment.
- Objective 4: Preserve the scenic and historic character of Bedford.

**◆ Economic Development Strategies**

1. Complete infrastructure improvements to water, sewer, wastewater, telecommunications, and electric systems.
2. Encourage availability of natural gas services to serve existing industry and to attract new industry.

3. Encourage ready, affordable and reliable access to first-rate telecommunications infrastructure to serve new and existing businesses.
4. Encourage brownfield redevelopment and adaptive reuse of out-dated industrial facilities.
5. Encourage the development of passenger rail service serving Bedford and locate a station in the Centertown area.
6. Increase cultural, educational and shopping opportunities to attract a resident professional workforce and the tourist trade.
7. Enhance all adaptive-reuse and new development through rigorous development standards, quality maintenance, lighting and parking, and by regulating new construction and demolition.
8. Support mixed use, including residential use, whenever environmentally compatible.
9. Consider traffic patterns, parking, lighting, landscaping and environmental controls on all industrial and commercial applications.
10. Aggressively pursue infrastructure and controlled economic and commercial development in Revenue-Sharing Areas.
11. Expand the applicability of tax abatement for historic property improvements as an incentive for historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
12. Encourage the use of incentives such as establishment of a Technology Zone, Recycling Machinery Tax Credits and Enterprise Zone as incentives for business and industry.
13. Encourage the development of hospitality entities, such as restaurants and lodging.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

---

### **GOAL 1: Ensure that community facilities support existing and future needs.**

- Objective 1: Promote appropriate growth through provision of services such as water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications, and natural gas.
- Objective 2: Ensure adequate long-term funding for community facilities improvements.
- Objective 3: Promote community health by collecting solid waste and providing an environmentally sound waste disposal system.
- Objective 4: Encourage a reduction in the amount of solid waste processed through recycling efforts.
- Objective 5: Place important civic buildings on key sites to create landmarks and develop a stronger sense of place.

### **GOAL 2: Promote a strong standard of living and quality of life for all Bedford City residents.**

- Objective 1: Ensure that all residents are afforded high quality police, fire and rescue protection.
- Objective 2: Ensure that public buildings adequately support the City's departments and services.
- Objective 3: Provide a high quality and cost efficient educational program for Bedford's school age population.
- Objective 4: Ensure that public school buildings and support services meet the needs of the City's school age population.
- Objective 5: Improve the quality of recreational opportunities for all citizens.
- Objective 6: Encourage educational and cultural opportunities for all City residents.
- Objective 7: Maintain the library system to meet the needs of City residents.

#### **◆ Community Facilities and Services Strategies**

1. Expand community facilities through development of a rate structure for water and sewer services that is sufficient to finance expansion.

2. Improve access to Liberty Lake Park for pedestrians and bicycle riders.
3. Support development of neighborhood parks throughout the City in residential areas with special attention given to their design and function.
4. Examine the City's educational goals and develop strategies for meeting these goals.
5. Develop a media center for local government and public programming for service delivery and programs.
6. Adopt design standards for all roadways within City limits ranging from alleyways to limited access highways.
7. Identify a secondary water source that would provide a level of service comparable to that of Stoney Creek Reservoir on a long-term basis.
8. Develop a signage system directing people to Centertown, tourist sites, and other commercial nodes as a means of establishing a visible physical connection between them.
9. Establish and promote recreational programs and facilities geared toward the needs of teenagers.
10. Develop a neighborhood park in the northern portion of the City.
11. Develop a Community Youth Center in the City.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

---

### **GOAL 1: Promote safe, sanitary and affordable housing for City residents of all incomes.**

- Objective 1: Ensure an adequate supply of housing in a broad range of prices.
- Objective 2: Promote the orderly growth of residential development in order to retain the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Objective 3: Ensure development that is designed in a manner that is sensitive to and compatible with adjacent residential areas.
- Objective 4: Identify and rehabilitate substandard housing throughout the City, but with particular attention given to neighborhoods with a high concentration of substandard housing.
- Objective 5: Encourage private sector improvement of substandard housing through increased use of public incentives and adoption of more stringent minimum housing code.

### **GOAL 2: Promote residential growth that is environmentally sound and convenient to transportation, shopping and recreation.**

- Objective 1: Ensure that residential development preserves the architectural, scenic and environmental character of the area.
- Objective 2: Increase the housing stock for single and elderly persons that is accessible to transportation, shopping and recreation.
- Objective 3: Support Centertown through promotion of downtown buildings for residential use.

### **GOAL 3: Ensure fiscal responsibility in the City of Bedford through sound management practices and planning for needed capital improvements.**

- Objective 1: Supply public services equitably to all residents on a cost effective basis.
- Objective 2: Support capital improvements that are consistent with the City's land use planning.
- Objective 3: Ensure that revenues for all City services meet needs by the periodic review of the City's tax structure and future expenditure and demand.
- Objective 4: Encourage State tax modernization and restructuring to better meet

local needs.

◆ **Community Development Strategies**

1. Encourage private renovation of houses of historic character through tax incentives and a City-based revolving loan fund.
2. Support renovation of substandard housing in targeted neighborhoods.
3. Use site planning, landscaping, and similar land use design techniques to protect residential areas from the effects of noxious land uses.
4. Site plan review should include consideration of pedestrian scale, building height and placement, appropriate traffic speeds on adjacent roadways, parking, access, utilities, and public open space (both passive and active).
5. Design standards for neighborhood streets should be implemented that guide their development into pleasant public open spaces in and of themselves.
6. Plan for specific City improvements including capital investments in existing buildings.
7. Develop and implement a Level of Service Policy.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

---

### **GOAL 1: Promote a balanced, safe, efficient and environmentally sound transportation system serving the City of Bedford.**

- Objective 1: Maintain and upgrade Bedford's roadway and sidewalk systems as needed to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic in an equitable manner.
- Objective 2: Promote safer and more efficient truck access to industrial sites.
- Objective 3: Promote a safe transportation system by ensuring that new development includes a network of connected streets and sidewalks to facilitate convenient and safe movement throughout neighborhoods for all modes of transportation.
- Objective 4: Promote regional transportation improvements through coordination with adjacent localities.
- Objective 5: Increase the mobility of the general public by promoting development on a pedestrian scale.
- Objective 6: Focus on pedestrian safety while retaining automobile convenience.

### **GOAL 2: Promote a transportation system that is compatible with existing land uses and preserves the quality of Bedford's neighborhoods.**

Objective 1: Protect the pedestrian-oriented character of Bedford's neighborhood streets by implementing street usage and design standards that regulate speed at an acceptable level.

Objective 2: Identify and enforce a defined route system to be used by heavy trucks throughout the City.

Objective 3: Ensure that the available transportation system is complementary to future growth within the City of Bedford.

Objective 4: Promote use of on-street parking to meet the needs of existing and future development.

Objective 5: Allow for adequate off-street parking at a design scale that is not threatening to pedestrians.

#### **◆ Transportation Strategies**

1. Construct additional parking in downtown area featuring appropriate street level design from a pedestrian perspective.
2. Upgrade Macon Street to allow for future development.
3. Implement the provisions contained within the 2020 Transportation Plan.
4. Support development of an east-west Interstate highway in close proximity to Bedford.
5. Support upgrading of U.S. Highway 29 to Interstate status.
6. Encourage shuttle service around Centertown Bedford.
7. Construct Transportation Center to include passenger rail stop, taxi stand, and inter-city bus station in close proximity to Centertown.

# **4**

---

## **The Plan**

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This section of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide land use decisions in a manner that is harmonious with the natural environment and with the man-made character of Bedford. The land use standards, the land use plan and the implementation techniques are not meant to be exhaustive but are intended to provide a basic framework for evaluation of land use planning processes.

These standards are intended as general guides, but are presented as requirements to be incorporated into the Land Development Regulations. Substitution of alternative measures may be permitted in a particular situation as defined in the Land Development Regulations. However, an alternative should only be accepted upon demonstration that the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the stated goals and objectives would be met to an equivalent degree.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STANDARDS**

---

### Environmental Standards

Environmental standards are designed to protect and conserve natural resources. Conservation is defined as the practice of managing in a manner that avoids wasteful or destructive uses and provides for future availability. Development should adapt to the natural environment rather than modifying the natural environment with uncertain consequences.

Critical slopes are defined as those areas with a slope of 25 percent or greater. Clearing, grading or building on such land can result in extensive erosion, storm water run-off and increased sedimentation of bodies of water.

1. Buildings and other development should be discouraged on critical slopes.
2. Roads constructed on slopes of 12 percent or more should be discouraged. When possible, roads should follow the natural topography to minimize grading, cutting and filling.
3. Public utility corridors should be designed to fit the topography, avoiding straight line and up and over alignments in sensitive areas.

Flood hazard areas are those lands identified as being subject to flooding in a 100-year storm. Encroachment into flood plain areas by development and other inappropriate uses can result in danger to life, health and property and can stimulate erosion and sedimentation. Stripping land and paving increases the rate and amount of storm water runoff and can increase flood levels.

1. Residential use within flood hazard areas should be prohibited.
2. No use, structure or activity should be permitted in a flood hazard area if it will result in increased flood levels for a 100-year storm.
3. Where buildings or other structures are permitted in flood hazard areas, construction must follow the requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code for potential hazards.
4. Water and sewer facilities should be located and designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration into the system, and, in the case of sewer facilities, discharge of effluent into flood waters.
5. Utilities should be located and designed to minimize damage and prevent flotation and dislocation due to flooding.

### Residential Land Use Standards

The residential development objectives of this Comprehensive Plan call for increased flexibility with regard to land use throughout the City, with the exception of certain noxious uses that shall be prohibited. Residential standards are presented here as a basic framework in which to guide future development proposals. Field surveys and the subsequent analysis indicate that Bedford currently possesses an adequate number of

subsidized multi-family dwelling units in developments such as Raintree Village and Liberty Manor. Additional units of affordable housing, however, are still necessary to meet the housing needs of the citizens of Bedford. For purposes of definition, “affordable housing” shall mean that which could be purchased through traditional means of finance by a family whose income is at least 80% of the City’s average household income. This need can be met most effectively through the rehabilitation of existing housing and through promotion of the City’s Housing Rehabilitation Grant. Utilization of these programs will not only meet low-income housing needs but will also contribute to the preservation and continued vitality of the City’s existing residential neighborhoods. Because the amount of land available to allow residential growth is limited, and because market and housing industry standards may change, review of these standards on a regular basis is recommended.

All dwelling types and forms of ownership should be permitted in the City so long as applicable building codes, land use standards and land development regulations are met.

Following are standards for all residential development:

1. Residential development should be required to tie into public water and sewer lines. Wells shall be allowed per City Code for non-potable water use and where existing sewer service is not available.
2. Accommodation of residential development to the natural setting should be encouraged as should the preservation of open space and the maintenance of trees and vegetation.
3. Lot design should be based on rational use of land by reflecting the architectural character of the adjacent area’s built environment as well as the topographic and other natural features of the site.
4. Layout should preserve the natural setting, including open space and trees and vegetation, and should prevent soil erosion.
5. A variety of development approaches should be made available to developers to encourage innovative design and reduce housing costs, including cluster development and mixed use districts.

#### Commercial Land Use Standards

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that commercial growth is needed and should be consistent with future population growth and transportation improvements. Residential and recreational uses should be designed to complement commercial districts in such a way as to preserve the character and unique identity of Bedford. The following standards are recommended to guide commercial development:

1. Highway- and singularly automobile-oriented commercial development should be discouraged in favor of zero-lot-line commercial development at a pedestrian scale (of the type found in Centertown).
2. Highway-oriented development shall be limited to an area not closer than 250 linear feet to the right-of-way of any limited access highway.

3. Off-street parking for commercial development should be placed in the rear yard area of the property. Parking in the front yard shall be prohibited.
4. Conversion of historic buildings to commercial uses should be considered as a method of historic preservation.
5. Traditional Neighborhood Development should be promoted and supported by all applicable City regulations.

### Industrial Land Use Standards

With approximately 33% of Bedford's economy based in manufacturing, it clearly plays a vital role in the local economy. Growth of industry, consistent with the availability of appropriate land and public services, is encouraged in this plan. Bedford's future industrial growth should reflect the following standards:

1. Manufacturing placement should more closely reflect operations of modern businesses and industries, including but not limited to microelectronics, information based businesses, bio-tech and bio-information businesses.
2. Industry should locate in areas where public facilities and utilities are adequate to support them. Upgrading and extension of roads, water, sewer, electrical and natural gas systems should be considered in reviewing an industrial application or to stimulate industrial growth.
3. Industry should locate in areas with highway or rail transportation for the convenience of industry and should attempt to divert industrial traffic from residential areas.
4. Industrial access should be to a primary highway and industrial intersections and minimize conflicts with other land uses or road functions.
5. Natural site characteristics should be appropriate to the intended industrial use. Extensive grading, cutting and filling, tree removal and the like should be discouraged.
6. Industrial uses should seek locations adjacent to compatible uses (commercial, other industrial or public) as opposed to residential, recreational or other sensitive areas. For industrial sites near sensitive areas, consideration should be given to transitional uses such as business or professional offices.

### Street Standards

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that a network of connected streets with sidewalks and street trees is needed to facilitate convenient and safe movement throughout the

City for all modes of transportation.

The following standards shall apply to existing and newly constructed streets:

1. A hierarchy of street types should be developed and implemented, ranging from service alleys to limited access highways, with specific cross sections illustrating the requirements for each. No residential street should be designed or used with a vehicle speed capacity (i.e. the speed at which motorists typically travel comfortably, regardless of the posted speed limit) above 25 miles per hour. Where existing situations exist that promote traffic speeds in excess of 25 miles per hour, traffic calming strategies such as on-street parking should be employed.
2. For reasons of safety and aesthetics, public roads should be designed and used in such a manner that does not detract from the character of residential development. Instead of discouraging residential development along “busy” thoroughfares or requiring greater lot frontages, roads should be conceived as public facilities that provide for the equitable movement of people and automobiles. If specific situations warrant such choices, preference should be given to the pedestrian over the automobile and to the character of residential development over the desire to increase the speed capacity of any particular road.
3. Residential streets should be built to City Standards and Specifications and allow for adequate on-and off-street parking. When assessing the impact of streets upon residential development, vehicle speed capacity shall be given precedence.

## LAND USE PLAN

---

The land use plan for the City of Bedford is based on the findings in the Inventory and Analysis section of the Comprehensive Plan and on considerable public input. The land use plan is one of the many tools used to fulfill the City's goals and objectives. With the City's limited size and limited land available for new growth, this Comprehensive Plan recognizes that options for new land uses are also limited. The entire City is presently zoned according to Euclidean planning principles based on segregation of land uses. Under the present system, because all of Bedford is zoned, future land use decisions would increase area in one district at the expense of another. As growth occurs, the City is finding this to be a rather clumsy arrangement.

Historically, the land use plan has recommended more land for single family residential, for additional business and commercial areas, and for industrial growth. Given the finite boundaries of the City, this is a practical impossibility. Future land use decisions reflect the need to expand Bedford's economic and residential base and to preserve and improve Bedford's existing neighborhoods. The following are specific land use elements that are essential to meet these needs:

1. Revise the Land Development Regulations to allow for greater flexibility of use with greater emphasis on design-based regulations.
2. Base the districts within the Land Development Regulations on neighborhoods or land use areas with definitive and unique characteristics. Compatibility of design and function should take precedence over questions of land use (with the exception of specifically identified noxious uses).
3. Regulation should be based on building type rather than use. While certain general use categories (residential, commercial, or industrial) may be permitted in any particular district, building type is the level of regulation that has the most profound impact on any given neighborhood.
4. Allow for the "tapered" development of the Independence Boulevard corridor. For example, commercial and workplace buildings could be constructed and used along the street, supplemented by less intense uses (including residential) in adjacent blocks moving away from Independence.
5. Expand the commercial district along East Main Street where it intersects with the Route 460 Bypass and Link Road. This will have to be done within the context of the built environment (ranging from zero-lot-line development in the western area to a more automobile-oriented style to the east).
6. Improve availability of land for a wide range of residential uses. Instead of segregating by density, residential use should be permitted by right in most areas of the City. However, this type of use should be qualified by design guidelines appropriate to the built environment of different neighborhoods throughout the City. For example, residential uses in Centertown should be limited to a zero-lot-line site plan and to buildings that blend in with the established pattern of development.

7. Implement specific development plans for sensitive areas such as Liberty Lake Park, the National D-Day Memorial and Bedford Elementary School. These plans should focus primarily on issues of design compatibility between adjacent structures and land uses, and their provisions should be incorporated as formal regulations.
8. Discourage construction of tall, monopole cellular communications towers, while allowing the employment of smaller transmitters and “stealth” technology which lessens the visual impact of telecommunications devices on the built environment. Allow communication towers that are small and not readily visible.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES**

---

### Land Use

As the major tool for implementing land use decisions, the City's Land Development Regulations must be modified to better reflect the goals and objectives contained within this document. The Land Development Regulations should also reflect the need to increase the diversity of land use in the City. This can be accomplished through allowing broader categories of use while simultaneously giving greater attention and enforcement to issues of design and site planning. Commercial growth can occur in a manner that is compatible with adjacent non-commercial development if expectations regarding the functions of specific building types are met.

The City's future zoning maps should allow for increases in all existing land uses. Future growth must allow commercial and industrial development that is conducted in an ecologically appropriate manner, while at the same time excluding processes which contribute to pollution, decrease adjacent property values, and raise safety concerns. The future land use plan should also reflect increased opportunities for residential development of all types.

Since Bedford County surrounds the City of Bedford, future land use decisions must be coordinated with the County. The County Planning Department should be allowed to comment formally on any development proposal within the City that requires review by the City Planning Commission.

### Economy

A healthy mix of private and public initiatives is necessary to achieve these economic goals. The City of Bedford can provide the environment and the infrastructure necessary to attract new business and industry, and can capitalize on Bedford's proximity to good transportation and major metropolitan areas. The development of the Bedford Center for Business has opened land suitable for industrial development. Former industrial facilities and potential brownfields should be considered for redevelopment. The City should continue its cooperative efforts with Region 2000, Bedford County, Bedford Chamber of Commerce and Bedford Main Street to assist in the expansion, retention and attraction of new industry and business. Bedford should capitalize on the National D-Day Memorial, its Main Street status, tourism accreditation and certified business community designations.

Bedford has a particularly large manufacturing base, which can be diversified with the addition of service, light, and "high-tech" industries. Such industries are less reliant on transportation and on infrastructure and often pose fewer environmental concerns. In order to attract these industries, Bedford must be a community that attracts professional and highly trained personnel. This can be accomplished through expanded housing options as well as through increased cultural, educational and shopping opportunities. Bedford has positioned itself for high tech development as a result of the commercial and residential availability of affordable, high-speed internet access.

Increased cultural, entertainment, educational and shopping opportunities will also attract another targeted group, the tourists. Support of the Little Town Players, a movie theater, festivals, specialty shops, arts and crafts fairs, the museum and bed and breakfast inns can bring significant economic vitality to Bedford. Accordingly, Bedford should promote the development of the National D-Day Memorial, recreational and entertainment facilities, special events, hotel and other commercial and industrial development.

Bedford's Land Development Regulations have enhanced the Centertown area through more rigorous development standards than are applied elsewhere. Plans for a passenger train station in Centertown could facilitate redevelopment within Centertown as well as adaptive reuse of former industrial sites.

The City can capitalize citywide on the successful Main Street Program by applying more rigorous development standards throughout the City and by providing quality maintenance, lighting and parking, and by regulating new construction and demolition. Mixed use development should also be encouraged throughout the City.

The Land Development Regulations should also require a grid pattern of development for all major commercial projects in order to expedite traffic flow. As previously discussed, the site plans for new business and industry must show traffic patterns, parking, lighting, landscaping and environmental controls.

#### Community Facilities and Services

To ensure economic growth and a healthy community, Bedford must commit funds to maintain and expand its community facilities. The City's Capital Improvement Program must reflect improvements to the water and sewer infrastructure. As a result of the Joint City and County Revenue Sharing Agreement, it is now necessary to coordinate the expansion of water and sewer lines with the County in order to serve the designated economic development areas outside the City limits.

A capacity increase of the water treatment plant should be considered as it was designed to be upgraded to 6 mgd. Furthermore, an alternative source is needed to provide adequate water supply during drought periods. The City of Bedford experienced a severe drought in 1999 and implemented mandatory water conservation practices for the first time since 1980. Although severe droughts occur infrequently, it is highly undesirable to be in the position of requiring mandatory water use restrictions. These restrictions are a tremendous inconvenience at the least and under more severe conditions, can deprive our customers of basic human needs, and fire protection. If the City is to be in a position to serve as a regional water supplier, the City must seriously consider the James River as a secondary water source or reevaluate additional impoundments that have been proposed in the past.

For both water and sewer, Independence Boulevard will establish new areas of need. Other sewer growth should occur in areas currently unserved and in those areas of the

City slated for industrial growth. Regarding residential growth, a curb and gutter requirement would help control run-off and erosion.

Electrical service is meeting current needs and additional capacity is presently being installed to meet foreseeable needs, but as economic growth occurs, a new substation may be required. Similarly, economic growth may establish the need for natural gas service. Should the City choose to operate natural gas service, a City bond may be needed for financing.

All overhead utility lines should be buried underground. Implementation of such a policy will take many years, but should be planned, financed, and implemented over an acceptable period of time (even if that period of time seems long). This will eliminate the need to damage the City's tree canopy, and will allow for its promotion citywide. In addition to promoting the City's appearance by removing the existing unsightly power lines, underground lines are also more resistant to damage by the elements (wind, snow, and ice, for example).

Bedford has a strong police, fire and rescue network. The E-911 system and City/County Communications Center should substantially alleviate this problem. The City needs to consider augmenting volunteers with paid staff for fire and rescue. A cost-benefit analysis of this service needs to be conducted, and a timetable for the "professionalization" of staff should be developed for reference. Responsibility for fire inspections and prevention needs to be assigned to a specific administrative unit of the City or individual.

Current police staffing levels are meeting the needs of the community; however, growth in and around the city will require additional manpower. Based on current trends, it would be beneficial to increase the department's force strength by four additional personnel over the next five years. This should include an additional staff officer and an additional investigator.

The current training facility is more than adequate to meet the needs of the department over the next five years. However, we need to address the lead contamination issue that is slowly being created. There are no clear cut guidelines concerning bullet traps or catch pans for facilities containing weapons ranges. With continued use, the ground behind the range becomes a repository of lead and brass. It would be both economically and ecologically responsible to address the issue within the next three years by funding a bullet trap system to prevent the deposits from expanding.

The department remains on the leading edge of police technology use. This has helped establish the City as a leader in the use of technological advances. The department benefits from modernized record keeping, fingerprint and imaging programs. To address future needs the department should immediately move ahead with plans to implement mobile data terminals in the patrol fleet. This will allow the officers more time in the field because they will be able to file reports and run queries. In addition, the

department should continue to pursue other technology options as available, to enhance public safety and performance.

The fire department is also in need of a new paging system. The current system has been in use for several years and is experiencing an increase in maintenance costs. Finally, the City needs to develop a paid fire service. As the City grows, so will the calls for service. Currently, many of the local employers allow members to leave work to respond to fires. However, as the business community changes, this practice will slowly change. In addition, a paid fire department makes for more professional firemen.

The City's commitment to Liberty Lake Park has resulted in a fine regional facility. It is important, however, that the park be accessible to City residents by walking or bicycling. A system of paths or sidewalks should be considered. The City should ensure that neighborhoods and larger housing developments also have access to recreation. This can be done through public or private initiatives, but the idea of providing recreation close to where people live should be supported. As public buildings and schools become unsuitable for their designed use, the City should consider adaptive re-use of these buildings for higher education, recreational and cultural pastimes.

The City should examine its educational goals and develop a strategy for meeting them. Population projections call for a slight increase in the City's school-age population from 1990 to 2000, going from 1032 to 1122 children. Clearly the attractiveness of Bedford as a place to live is affected by the quality of its schools as well as the educational program and thus should be given due consideration by the City.

To ensure that public facilities and services meet the needs of the community well into the future, the City should develop a Level of Service Policy. Such a policy would simultaneously tie together and support the Land Development Regulations and the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Essentially, this would involve establishment of certain levels of service for City activities that can be funded as CIP line items. The amount of development activity allowed in the City would be directly related to the established levels of service in the Policy. Following is an example of how such a Policy might be applied:

The City would establish a level of service for parks along the lines of 10 square feet of dedicated public open space for every citizen. The City would then include the appropriations necessary to meet this goal within five years in its CIP. If a residential developer wished to construct units that would affect this level of service (i.e. create a larger demand for the level of service that has not presently been attained), then he would have two choices. First, his development plans would be deferred until the City attained the identified level of service in its five year CIP. The other option would be for him to finance the acceleration necessary for his project to meet the identified level of service.

As a matter of sequence, the Level of Service Policy should be drafted after revision of the Land Development Regulations.

### Community Development

Bedford's housing strategies can be divided into two broad areas: the preservation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods, and the encouragement of new residential development that meets community needs and fits the character of the City. Regarding the preservation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods, the City should continue to promote the availability of affordable housing. Several communities now require a certain percentage of affordable housing to be included in any approved residential subdivision. Bedford may wish to make note of this practice in the future.

The City should maintain an ongoing effort to stimulate the rehabilitation of existing housing by extending applicability of historic tax abatement program. A mixture of private and public support for rehabilitation is desirable. In neighborhoods with houses of historic character, private efforts should be encouraged. Revitalization in these neighborhoods should focus on housing for all incomes and private revitalization efforts should include efforts to rehabilitate low-cost housing. Public efforts should focus in neighborhoods with a high incidence of substandard housing.

The City needs to examine its housing stock and the range of offerings that are currently available. For example, there is a demand for townhouse and condominium type housing. A greater variety of housing needs to be offered beyond the typical distinction drawn between single-family and multi-family units. The number of town homes, patio homes, and flex commercial structures (to cite a few examples) present in the City needs to be determined and analyzed. Many members of City staff currently live outside City limits because of a lack of housing choices. Planning in conjunction with the County should be undertaken to ensure that residential development that takes place on the edge of the City complements that which takes place within, and vice versa.

Preservation of Centertown structures can be accomplished through regulations that continue to encourage residential growth downtown, such as using second story space in commercial buildings. This can also be accomplished through City land use planning and by requiring that future development complement existing development. Points of transition between uses and building types should also be identified and enhanced to the greatest extent possible.

New residential growth is needed. The major impediment to encouraging this growth may be the relative lack of available land in the City for such uses. However, the City should ensure that growth occurs in an appropriate manner. The City's Land Development Regulations and Subdivision Ordinance are means for ensuring appropriate growth. These regulations should be reviewed and revised to encourage design elements such as on-street parking, street trees, and alleyways, which enhance the character of residential streets and neighborhoods. Neighborhood parks and "pocket" parks should also be incorporated into plans for residential growth.

The City's budget and Capital Improvements Program (CIP) should allow for the

provision of the necessary infrastructure to meet the City's needs for growth on at least a five-year basis. Development in the City for industrial and community services should also be reflected in the budget and CIP. Specific City improvements in the next five years include capital investments in adaptive re-use of existing buildings. Other investments include expansion of water and sewer lines, expansion of the City's cemeteries, a new electric department facility and reorganization of municipal office space.

### Transportation

Two main needs should be met by Bedford's transportation network. First, it must be compatible with Bedford's various neighborhoods; and second, it must efficiently carry persons (not necessarily automobiles). While there is no cure-all solution to Bedford's major transportation issues, the following strategies are suggested to meet the transportation goals listed above:

1. Implementation of the 2020 Transportation Plan.
2. Emphasis upon pedestrian access and circulation.
3. Promotion of alternative modes of transportation, including bicycling.
4. Support and promotion for mass transit initiatives such as the TransDominion Express.

Bedford can also strengthen its transportation system by dispersing the volume of automobile traffic traveling on its roads and highways. The promotion of street connectivity can go a long way toward meeting this goal. It is especially important to provide sidewalks and pathways. Roads near schools, parks and shopping should be constructed with sidewalks and with limited curb cuts to promote safety.

Bedford's future transportation needs should be addressed as new development occurs. Assurances must be made that existing or proposed roads will accommodate the new growth. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) should follow the lead of similar agencies in adjacent states and amend its neighborhood street standards. Current VDOT standards promote high automobile speed at the expense of driver and pedestrian safety. The City should either take an active role in lobbying VDOT to make necessary changes or abandon existing state standards that are incompatible with Bedford's historical pattern of development.

The City's goals with regard to vehicular traffic management should focus on dispersing traffic volume throughout the street network, directing heavy truck traffic to a specific route system, and promoting the safety and overall concern of pedestrians. When polled, a majority of citizens identified traffic congestion as time lost due to stopped or slowed vehicles. Availability of alternate routes is viewed as the solution to the problem of congestion. Heavy truck traffic should be limited to roads that have been designed to support speeds in excess of 45 mph. On-street parking needs to be promoted both as a design element encouraging safety and as a practical response to perceived parking shortages in Centertown.

The essential concept related to street design (and the concerns most often voiced by citizens) relates to the safety of roads. Roads need to be designed with pedestrians in mind as well as automobiles. A grid street pattern needs to be preserved and extended which provides motorists with several choices that will allow them to reach a single destination. Such a pattern would impact traffic volume by dispersing vehicles throughout a network of connected streets rather than funneling everyone into the same thoroughfares. The employment of cul-de-sacs and any other prohibition of through traffic should be discouraged unless based on a specific topographical concern.

The careful use of landscaping along a street can provide separation between motorists and pedestrians, reduce the visual width of the roadway (thus reducing vehicle speeds), and provide a more pleasant street environment for all. In fact, truly well designed streets function as identifiable public open spaces in and of themselves. Landscaping can include a variety of trees, bushes, and/or flowerpots, which can be planted in buffer areas between the sidewalk or walkway and the street. A precise list of appropriate species for use in street landscaping should be developed and included in the Land Development Regulations. Approved species should be adapted to the local climate and character of the area, they should survive without extensive maintenance, and their growth patterns should not obscure signs or pedestrians' and motorists' views of each other. The most significant issue associated with any landscaping scheme is ongoing maintenance. Irrigation systems should be added to areas with extensive planning. Where it is not feasible to install such systems, the Department of Public Services should receive appropriations necessary to maintain all plantings in the public right-of-way.

A uniform system of off-street parking requirements should be adopted, regardless of the particular use involved. A minimum standard of one space per 500 square feet of building area is favored by a majority of citizens who responded to the Comprehensive Planning Survey (2002). Single level parking lots should be discouraged and avoided to the greatest extent possible. All parking spaces in the City should be contemplated and designed to produce revenue. Participants in the April 2002 public meetings noted that, although parking in Centertown is often cited as a problem, the parking spaces located in this area are never completely full.

**FIVE YEAR SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

The following tasks related to this Comprehensive Plan should be completed in the order in which they are listed:

- 1. Review and Revision of Land Development Regulations**  
TARGETED COMPLETION DATE: December 2007
- 2. Development and Implementation of Level of Service Policy**  
TARGETED BEGINNING DATE: January 2008  
TARGETED COMPLETION DATE: July 2008
- 3. Review and Revision of Comprehensive Plan**  
TARGETED COMPLETION DATE: July 2007

The following processes should be ongoing in any given year. The dates associated with each are recommended for formal adoption and inclusion in the Planning Commission Bylaws.

**Comprehensive Plan Review and Amendment**

ACTIVITY: Amendment of the Comprehensive Plan to include latest revisions in formal policy such as the five year Capital Improvement Program.

DATE REQUIRED: On an annual basis at the Planning Commission's regular meeting in July or the first subsequent meeting thereafter.

**Land Development Regulations Review**

ACTIVITY: Documentation of issues related to specific provisions of the Land Development Regulations and consideration of amendments to address them.

DATE REQUIRED: On an annual basis at the Planning Commission's regular meeting in January or the first subsequent meeting thereafter.

**Capital Improvement Program Review**

ACTIVITY: Review of five year Capital Improvement Program and identification of possible levels of service contained within.

DATE REQUIRED: On an annual basis at the Planning Commission's regular meeting in July or the first subsequent meeting thereafter.