

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. HISTORY**

The area now considered to be the Town of Wise was originally referred to as the Big Glades and incorporated as the Town of Gladeville because of the open expanse of land expanding from the center of town to the area of Glade Creek. When Wise County was formed in 1856, Gladeville was the principal town of the County with a population of 250 persons. To avoid confusion with another post office of the same name in West Virginia, the name "Gladeville" was changed to Wise Court House in May 1858 and then was shortened to "Wise" in 1895.

Settlement in this area was slow due to a lack of fertile soil for agriculture, Indian raids and access problems caused by the mountainous terrain. Initial interest in settling Wise County was spurred by the discovery of iron ore and coal in the late 1870's. Developers purchased nearly all coal producing lands by 1880. A "boom" period followed in 1890 with the advent of the railroads to transport lumber, coal and iron ore to eastern and southern markets. The County and its seat of government at Wise flourished from 1890 to 1910 with the County population expanding from 9,345 persons to 34,162 during this twenty-year period, an increase of 266 percent. Coal production peaked in 1926 with the mining of 6.5 million tons of coal and the employment of 6500 men. Lumbering operations declined and iron ore production ceased, leaving coal as the basis of the County's economy. During the 1950's, the use of diesel fuel on the railroads and the decreased use of coal for home heating began the boom-bust cycles for coal production, which largely affect local economies to this day.

(Historical perspective taken in part from History of Wise County, Virginia, Luther F. Addington, 1956 and The Wise County Comprehensive Plan, December 1988)

### **B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

In accordance with section 15.2.2223 of the Code of Virginia, "The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be in use...Such plan, with accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter shall show the planning commission's long range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

"The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use...  
The designation of a system of transportation facilities...  
The designation of a system of community service facilities...  
The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal...

An official map, a capital improvement program, a subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and zoning district map."

Further, as a minimum "in the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the local commission shall survey and study...use of land, production of food and fiber, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources, population factors, employment and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, transportation facilities, the need for housing..."

Within the context of the State enabling legislation governing the preparation of a comprehensive plan this planning document represents a resource of pertinent community data in addition to its primary function - a guide for the local growth and development of the Town of Wise.

The Comprehensive Plan is prepared for design year 2020 for the Town of Wise and surrounding urbanized areas extending at least a mile to 1-1/2 miles beyond the existing Town corporate limits. The Plan is intended to reflect the current objectives of local officials and citizens of Wise and current conditions, but will also set forth a series of long range objectives to allow for anticipated conditions occurring within the next twenty years.

### **C. PLAN ORGANIZATION**

The Wise Comprehensive Plan consists of three major sections.

The first section presents a profile of the community including a brief review of related plans and activities that may have an influence on planning for the Town, physiographic and natural features, population characteristics and trends, local economy and employment data, and a housing and neighborhood analysis. The community profile serves as a basis for analysis of the physical development potential and the social economic well being of the Town of Wise.

The second major section of the Plan presents the goals and objectives as determined by the existing land use, transportation, utilities and community facilities and summarizes major findings of the background analysis in terms of planning factors which influence future development.

The third major section of the plan deals with specific implementation of plan recommendations throughout the zoning and subdivisions ordinances and capital improvements program.

A separate section containing mapping is included in the Comprehensive Plan following the text sections. Existing zoning, existing and future land use mapping, existing and future transportation mapping, existing water and sewer line mapping and existing and future community facilities mapping are included.

## ***SECTION I - PROFILE OF COMMUNITY***

### **A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

#### **1. Parks and Recreation Areas**

Veldon Dotson Park, located on Airport Road, near Lonesome Pine Airport, features several playing fields including two lighted baseball fields.

Arrowhead Park found across from Wise Primary School on Elam Street, is equipped with picnic tables and grills, two shelters, playground equipment and other recreational facilities.

Also located within Arrowhead Park is the newly constructed Municipal Swimming Pool facility. This facility contains an H-shaped zero depth entry pool equipped with two slides, a large fountain and several small fountains, as well as a four-lane lap pool. This recreation facility also includes a "kiddie pool", concessions stand, a beach volley-ball court, bath house and ample deck space for sunbathers and non-swimmers.

Pow Wow Park, the town's newest playground park, is located adjacent to the Primary School. The park features playground equipment, walking track and a small amphitheater.

Bear Creek Reservoir and Recreation area just off State Route 646 at State Route 829 features fishing and picnicking.

#### **2. University of Virginia's College at Wise**

The University of Virginia's College at Wise, founded in 1954 and occupying a 367-acre campus, is the only four-year, state-supported college in far southwestern Virginia. It is also the only branch of the University of Virginia. Recent expansion and construction projects include the football field and science building. Further renovation and construction projects are planned for the campus in the near future. Student enrollment has been increasing and the current goal is to enroll 2000 students by 2005.

### 3. Shopping Centers

There are two area shopping centers, Wise County Shopping Plaza and Ridgeview Center. The centers are located adjacent to each other on Route 23 and feature several large store chains and restaurants, locally based establishments, and a movie theater.

### 4. CNW Regional Wastewater Authority

The Coeburn-Norton-Wise (CNW) Regional Wastewater Authority provides wastewater treatment for the partnering towns in addition to other area communities. The authority is chartered by the state and has a permitted capacity to treat four million gallons of wastewater per day.

### 5. Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant

The Town owns its own public water system with its reservoir and water treatment plant located on Bear Creek just east of town with a production capacity of two million gallons of treated water per day.

### 6. Wireless Telecommunication Providers

The recent development of new devices and services for voice, data, and multi-media communication have generated a demand for better wireless communication services. Increasing demand and competition among wireless service providers has prompted them to seek additional facilities in order to expand the capacities of their systems and to upgrade to digital technology. Currently there are two wireless telecommunication providers in Wise County. This number is certain to grow as the demand for wireless communication services increases and competition among providers' advances.

## **B. Related Plans and Activities**

Current and future planning efforts for the Town of Wise are influenced by planning activities of neighboring jurisdictions, Wise County and regional agencies and authorities. Planning activities which affect the future development of Wise may range from the general, comprehensive plans of neighboring jurisdictions to the more specific site plans of industries or commercial developments. A brief review of related planning efforts and activities that may affect recommendations contained in the Town of Wise Comprehensive Plan are outlined as follows.

### **1. Wise County Comprehensive Plan**

The current Wise County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Wise County Planning Commission with assistance from the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission and was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors October 8, 1998. County-wide statistics on physical characteristics, natural resources, the economy and population, land use and land use suitable, housing, public water and sewer, community facilities and transportation form a basis for goals and objectives. These goals for development in the County, including its incorporated towns provide a foundation for specific comprehensive plan recommendations.

The goals set forth by the current Town of Wise Comprehensive Plan include:

- a. Enhancement of the natural setting of the Town of Wise, and to promote a greater awareness of the natural beauty and positive attributes of the area.
- b. Encouraging harmonious and wise use of land through future development decisions.
- c. Promoting feasible solutions to relieve current traffic problems and support specific land use objectives.
- d. Providing opportunities to increase the supply, and to improve the quality and affordability of housing for Town of Wise residents.
- e. Expansions of present utility systems to serve both present and future needs of the Wise area population.
- f. Provide community facilities commensurate with the needs of the present and future population.
- g. Make effective use of implementation tools provided to the Town of Wise to carry out plan goals and objectives.

## 2. City of Norton Comprehensive Plan

The City of Norton, the Town of Wise's closest neighbor to the west, adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1983 which was reviewed and updated in the mid-1990's. It contains several considerations and recommendations pertinent to the future growth of the Town of Wise that include:

- a. The need for a cooperative understanding between the Town of Wise and City of Norton with regard to the land area located between Wise and Norton. One option worthy of consideration for both jurisdictions is consolidation.
- b. The call for utility problems of circa 1980 (i.e., secondary sewage treatment and adequate water supply and distribution) to be resolved on a regional basis, involving the Town of Wise and Wise County, with improvements implemented well before the turn of the century.
- c. A suggestion that an intergovernmental effort be made with the County and Town of Wise to promote development of a major industrial complex served by both four-lane divided highways and railroad spurs near the interchange of U.S. 23 and U.S. 58-A and to promote regional cooperation in the control of roadside development along major arteries such as U.S. Route 58 Alternate and U.S. 23 Bypass.
- d. A recommendation to consolidate the separate sewage disposal systems of the City and Town into an enlarged and modernized regional system which would be upgraded to include secondary treatment of effluent.

## 3. LENOWISCO Regional Planning District Commission

LENOWISCO - taken from Lee-Norton-Wise-Scott Redevelopment Authority - was organized as a Planning District Commission in 1969 and currently operates under the Regional Cooperation Act, Title 15.2 of the 1950 Code of Virginia. Its primary purpose is to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social, and economic elements of the district by planning and assisting its three counties, one city and fifteen incorporated towns to plan for the future. The Commission's Board of Directors consists of 15 members appointed by their respective localities. LENOWISCO is a multi-purpose association of its constituents for mutual benefits, and as such, operates a broadly based planning and economic development program for the region. The Commission formally plans for the orderly growth in the towns and surrounding areas of the District, while pursuing programs for the economic and social development of the entire area. LENOWISCO serves as the communicator between local governments and federal and state agencies, provides technical assistance and acts as a clearinghouse for federal grant applications. The Commission also acts as a databank, collecting and analyzing economic and environmental data for the region.

In compliance with the Regional Cooperation Act, one of the primary duties of the Planning District Commission is the preparation and adoption of a Strategic Plan for the region. LENOWISCO completed its first regional plan entitled the 1970 Regional Land Use Plan, unanimously adopted by its local units of government in April 1973. This plan has recently been updated by LENOWISCO. The Regional Water Quality Management Plan has also been prepared by LENOWISCO and serves as a major policy document regarding water quality issues in the region. From 1972 to 1978, the Commission had special authority to implement the Overall Economic Development Plan that promulgated a Growth Center concept. The counties and city of the District organized the Duffield Development Authority to implement the industrial park at Duffield, a designated growth center. LENOWISCO has also been instrumental in providing direct services to the Town of Wise in the procurement of federal/state funds for recreation and utility system improvements.

#### 4. Regional Water and Sewer Service

Under the direction of LENOWISCO, the Wise County Public Service Authority, the City of Norton and each of the towns in Wise County prepared a regional water study in November 1998. This study looked at the best operational methods for water and sewer transmission and treatment to serve the entire county/city and provide growth opportunities.

Coeburn-Norton-Wise Regional Wastewater Authority provides wastewater treatment for the Town, along with other localities, and has a permitted capacity to treat four million gallons of wastewater per day. Bear Creek Reservoir, located just off State Route 646 at State Route 829 is the town's water source.

#### 5. Virginia Department of Transportation

The Virginia Department of Transportation revises its six-year plan each year. The Town of Wise is a participant in the Department's Urban Program and maintains projects on the list for implementation. The Virginia Department of Transportation 2020 plan outlines solutions and specific land use suggestions to relieve current traffic problems.

#### 6. Cumberland Airport Commission - Lonesome Pine Airport

The airport completed its master plan in 1994. The plan shows the need for an instrument approach and completion of the taxiway.

## **C. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The physical characteristics of an area - topography, drainage and flooding conditions, soil types, location of large areas of forests/vegetation and mine reclamation areas - work together to influence the future development of Wise and the surrounding area. Typical of the southwest Virginia region in which Wise is located, many of these physical features restrict development and require special protection to be preserved as unique elements which contribute to the Town's setting in the region.

### **1. Physiography**

The Town of Wise and most of Wise County is located in the Cumberland Mountain section of the Appalachian Plateau physiographic province. The Town lies 2450 feet above sea level and is the highest point of population in the County. Indian Mountain (Elev. 2600 MSL) rises to the north and Guest Mountain (Elev. 2900 MSL), immediately south of town. Approximately one-half of the land area in Town is within the hilly and rolling (Ridgeland) plateau, while the remaining portion of the Town lies within the steep, less deeply dissected Appalachian Plateau. The hilly and rolling Ridgeland Plateau, confined to the center of town and extending east, has been dissected only to a small extent by streams and the plateau-like surface has remained relatively unchanged. Difference in relief ranges from a minimum of 100 feet to a maximum of 350 feet and slopes range from two percent to 20 percent. Portions of this area are suitable for farming and urban type development. The steep, less deeply dissected plateau surrounding the town center to the north, south and west is characterized by somewhat linear ridges and rounding knobs. The difference in relief ranges from a minimum of 200 feet to a maximum of 600 feet. Under some circumstances, portions of these areas may be suitable for development.

Approximately 50 percent of the land area within and immediately around Wise consists of slopes exceeding 20 percent which generally precludes any large scale development other than scattered single family residential. Ten to fifteen percent of the land area has slopes from 10-20 percent, which can accommodate many types of urban uses with the exception of large-scale development such as industry or large commercial centers. Slopes of less than 10 percent represent 35 to 40 percent of the land area and are principally developed.

## 2. Geology and Soil Conditions

The Appalachian Plateau where the Town of Wise is located is characterized by generally flat-lying, relatively undisturbed, alternating beds of sandstone, shale and coal. Mineral rights are very often not owned by the present surface dweller or mining that is not evident from the surface may have taken place. For these reasons, settling and/or unstable bedrock are possible and urban development should proceed cautiously. Coal reserves, under any given piece of property, should be evaluated in light of future mining that may affect the surface use of the property (Wise County Comprehensive Plan, p.7).

The predominant soil types in Wise and surrounding vicinity include the following:

- Coeburn silt loam, hilly phase
- Muskingum fine sandy loam, hilly phase
- Rolling stony land (Muskingum soil materials)
- Philo loam
- Muskingum stony loam, hilly phase
- Hartsells fine sandy loam, rolling phase
- Atkins loam
- Jefferson stony loam, rolling phase

There are three broad classifications of soil types in and around the Town of Wise. Those soils capable of being used for a wide range of uses from cropland development are limited to approximately 10-15 percent of the area. Soils with a mid-range capability for supporting future development are confined to those areas of moderately steep slopes (20 percent). By far the largest category (65 percent) of soils are those which are limited in their use. These soils are principally the Muskingum, which cover about three-fourths of Wise County and are primarily forested on steep slopes. It is important to note that this largest category of soils is not suitable for development without provision of public sewer services prior to initial development, because the soils will not allow for installation of wastewater drain fields.

## D. Flood Plains and Flood Prone Areas

Many of the land areas characterized by relatively level topography and soils suitable for development are also located within flood prone areas of Yellow and Glade Creeks and their tributaries. The 100-year flood plain of Yellow Creek primarily affects properties immediately south of Park Avenue and north of Vanover and Gilliam Streets. A relatively narrow floodplain (100 feet along each side of a Yellow Creek tributary) indicates flooding problems for the mostly residential properties south of Hurricane Road east to the corporate line. A triangle of property formed by Old Hurricane and Hurricane Roads lies wholly within the 100-year flood plain of Yellow Creek. Flooding from Glade Creek largely affects downtown properties on both sides of Main Street between Modoc Avenue and Nottingham Street. A relatively narrow floodplain extending north following Spring Street and Birchfield Road affects a large concentration of residents located in this area. The most serious flood of record occurred during the spring of 1977 when substantial property damage was reported in the Wise area.

The following table, Table 1, outlines the Dominant Soil Characteristics of the various soil types found in and around the Town of Wise.

**Table 1**  
**Dominant Soil Characteristics**  
**Town of Wise and Vicinity**

<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>% Coverage</u>	<u>Dominant Slope</u>	<u>General Characteristics</u>	<u>Range of Suitability</u>
Atkins loam	3%	0-3%	Commonly referred to as "wet-land" near streams	Narrow
Coeburn silt loam, hilly phase	10%	15-30%	Strongly acid, external drainage rapid	Medium
Hartsells fine sandy loam, rolling phase	10%	7-15%	Very important to farmers who specialize in truck crops (apple orchards east of Wise)	Wide
Jefferson stony loam, hilly phase	5%	5-15%	Generally stony, use for cultivated crops excluded, practically all in pasture or forested	Medium
Muskingum stony loam, hilly phase	20%	15-30%	Difficult to work because of steep slopes	Narrow

Muskingum fine sandy loam, hilly phase	3%	15-30%	Low in organic matter, strongly acidic with work can be fairly well suited for pasture	Narrow
Philo loam	3%	0-3%	Extensive in bottom lands used for general field crops of pasture with added nutrients	Medium
Rolling stony land (Mustingum soil material)	5%	5-16%	Difficult to work, low in productivity	Narrow

Source: Wise County, Virginia [Soil Survey](#), Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Series 1940 (Issued May 1954)

## E. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

According to the U.S. Census of Population, the incorporated Town of Wise had a population of 3,193 in 1990. This figure represents a decline of 18.1 percent from a 1980 population count of 3,897. The decline in population from 1980 to 1996 is not only occurring in the Town of Wise, but also in the surrounding areas. According to the 2000 Census, however, the population increased slightly to 3,255. The increase in population for 2000 is also shown in Wise Co., LENOWISCO and the state. A comparison of the Town of Wise population trends to adjacent jurisdictions and Wise County is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
Population Trends  
1950-2000

Year	Town of Wise	Wise Co.	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1950	1,574	56,335	N/A	3,318,680
1960	2,614	43,579	100,212	3,966,949
1970	2,891	35,947	84,645	4,651,448
1980	3,897	43,863	99,644	5,346,797
1990	3,193	39,573	91,520	6,187,358
1994*	3,395	39,600	92,100	6,551,500
1996*	3,124	39,000	90,700	6,666,200
2000	3,255	40,123	91,019	7,078,515

\*Estimates

Table 3 outlines the age distribution of the population and the percentage of each age group of the total population of the Town of Wise in comparison with Wise County. This distribution is taken from the Population Census information available from 1990 and 2000.

**Table 3**  
Population Age Distribution  
Town of Wise and Wise County

Age Group:	1990		1990		2000		2000	
	Wise	%	Wise Co.	%	Wise	%	Wise Co.	%
Under 5	209	5.98	2426	6.1	153	4.7	2313	5.8
5-14	421	12.05	6052	15.3	372	11.4	5123	12.8
15-24	476	13.63	6164	15.6	483	14.8	5902	14.7
25-34	780	22.33	5862	14.8	479	14.7	5236	13.0
35-44	418	11.97	5862	14.8	520	16.0	6012	15.0
44-54	433	12.40	4423	11.2	425	13.1	5986	14.9
55-64	324	9.28	3585	9.1	336	10.3	3963	9.9
65-74	255	7.30	3077	7.8	257	7.9	3034	7.6
Over 75	177	5.07	2122	5.4	230	7.1	2554	6.4

Table 4 shows the population distribution by race for the Town of Wise taken from both the 1990 Census of Population and the 2000 Census of Population

**Table 4**  
**Population by Race**  
**Town of Wise**

<b>Race</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>
White	3,099	97.06	3,100	95.2
Black	46	1.44	63	1.9
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0	0	9	0.3
Asian or Pacific Islander	48	1.5	74	2.2
Hispanic	0	0	46	1.4
Other	0	0	25	0.8

## F. EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The largest single industry group of employed residents in the Town of Wise and Wise County characteristically has been coal mining. However, the trend in the last several years for Town residents has shown a dramatic increase in professional and related services, surpassing mining employment in 1970, as shown in Table 5. This dominance of the professional services industry as a place of employment for Town residents is largely due to the proximity of the University of Virginia's College at Wise, the County Health Department and Clinic and the Wise County Public Schools, and the function the Town serves as the County seat.

**Table 5**  
**Employment by Industry Group**  
**Town of Wise**  
**Total Persons Employed - 16 years and Older**

Industry/Group	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	8	4	1	21	35
Mining	175	164	264	119	93
Construction	44	55	61	79	47
Manufacturing, Non-Durable	25	86	51	32	15
Manufacturing, Durable	8	30	23	63	40
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	38	42	96	55	87
Wholesale and Retail Trade	152	186	319	280	167
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	34	50	74	118	132
Business and Repair Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Professional and Related Services	168	357	509	429	106
Health Services	N/A	N/A	157	110	101
Educational Services	N/A	242	265	247	272
Public Administration	45	38	101	59	122
Other Industry /Not Reported	47	77	N/A	N/A	60

The previous table shows an increase in mining employment from 1960 to 1980 and a decline in 1990 and 2000. While employment in the mining industry has declined, there has been some growth in industries such as Manufacturing, Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate from 1960 until the present.

Table 6 provides an overview of similar County-wide and City of Norton labor force characteristics for comparison to the Town of Wise statistics.

**Table 6**  
**Employment by Industry Group**  
**City of Norton/Wise County**  
**Total Persons Employed - 16 Years and Older**

Industry Group	City of Norton		Wise County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	NA	NA	120	72
Mining	124	248	2515	1,603
Construction	64	103	794	1,086
Manufacturing, Non-Durable	57	165	539	521
Manufacturing, Durable	NA	NA	422	453
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	85	228	1083	1,297
Wholesale and Retail Trade	381	412	3019	2,527
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	90	121	829	433
Business and Repair Services	NA	NA	NA	NA
Professional and Related Services	449	349	3279	1961
Health Services	207	221	1206	1138
Educational Services	134	162	1509	2201
Public Administration	105	112	476	982
Other Industry /Not Reported	NA	83	NA	774

As with the Town of Wise, this table illustrates a shift in employment industries in Wise County as well as the City of Norton.

Professional and Related Services represents the largest single employment group of Town of Wise residents. The Wise County School system is the largest single employer located in the town. The health industry encountered a decline in employment due to the exit of the Wise General Hospital, but the Norton Community Clinic and Pharmacy still contribute to employment in the health industry in the Town of Wise. Educational services also are a major influence in the town because of the presence of the University of Virginia's College at Wise, the Wise County Career and Technical Center and the Wise County Public School System.

## 1. Unemployment

Table 7 shows that rates of unemployment in Wise County and the surrounding area have been cyclical in nature. It further illustrates the relationship between Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia in terms of unemployment rates as compared with the percentage of Labor Force Participation Rate. The unemployment rate for Wise County increased dramatically from 1990 to 1996, while LENOWISCO and the state of Virginia only endured a small increase in unemployment. The 2000 information, however, shows a substantial decrease in unemployment for all three areas.

**Table 7  
Unemployment Levels**

Yr.	Wise County		LENOWISCO		Virginia	
	Unemployment Rte	Participation Rte	Unemployment Rte	Participation Rte	Unemployment Rte	Participation Rate
1980	7.6%	47.7%	8.1%	47.0%	5.0%	64.1%
1990	8.3%	49.2%	9.9%	48.9%	4.3%	68.9%
1996	15.4%	49.2%	10.2%	N/A	4.5%	50.6%
2000	5.0%	45.1%	4.5%	46.2%	2.4%	64.5%

## 2. Income Characteristics

Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 illustrate income characteristics for the Town of Wise, Wise County and the LENOWISCO Planning District as well as the state of Virginia.

Table 8 compares the Average Weekly Wage for Wise County, LENOWISCO and the state of Virginia from March 1993 to March 2000.

**Table 8  
Average Weekly Wages  
Total All Industries**

Year	Wise County	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1993	\$430	\$380	\$463
1994	\$444	\$398	\$490
1995	\$456	\$419	\$518
1996	\$480	\$418	\$526
1997	\$479	\$448	\$571
1998	\$493	\$446	\$584
1999	\$501	\$468	\$638
2000	\$507	\$500	\$661

Table 9 illustrates the average Median Family Income for the Town of Wise, Wise County, LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia

**Table 9**  
**Median Family Income**

Year	Town of Wise	Wise Co.	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1979	N/A	\$16,942	\$14,389	\$20,108
1989	\$25,446	\$23,007	\$21,821	\$38,213
1994	N/A	\$25,661	\$24,057	\$44,643
1996	NA	\$26,448	\$24,952	\$47,549
1997	NA	\$26,593	\$24,557	\$40209

Table 10 presents the average Per Capita Income level for the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia

**Table 10**  
**Per Capita Income**

Year	Town of Wise	Wise Co.	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1989	\$11,880	\$ 9,392	\$ 8,886	\$15,713
1993	N/A	\$16,694	\$14,578	\$21,653
1999	N/A	\$18,677	\$17,336	\$29,794

Table 11 shows the percentage of the population that have an annual household income below the federally mandated Family Poverty Level for the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District and the state of Virginia.

**Table 11**  
**Family Poverty Level**

Year	Town of Wise	Wise Co.	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1980	N/A	12.5%	16.9%	9.2%
1990	18.1%	18.7%	19.2%	7.8%
1997	19.8%	23.1%	23.3%	11.6%

## **G. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS**

The Town of Wise and the immediately surrounding areas were divided into 14 separate planning areas for study purposes. Eight of the study areas are located wholly or partially within the Town corporate limits while six cover the outlying areas. A brief description of each planning area follows.

**Stephens.** Located northwest of the Town outside the corporate limits west of the U.S. Route 23 Bypass, the community principally consists of an area within a highway loop formed by Rt. 823, Rt. 625 and Rt. 624 back to the U.S. Route 23 Bypass. Stephens is a coal mine community centered around Glamorgan Coal operations served by a Norfolk/Southern Railroad line. Approximately 91% of all residences are single family; approximately 10 mobile homes are located on individual lots. Exterior housing conditions are generally sound and opportunities exist for rehabilitation of several older structures which are characteristic of the early twentieth century coal mining community.

**Glamorgan.** North of the Town corporate limits on both sides of Business Route 23, the Glamorgan area is characterized by a mixture of strip commercial land uses oriented to the highway, single family residential and mobile homes on scattered lots. Approximately two-thirds of the residences are single family detached, and one-third are mobile homes on single lots. It is not uncommon to find substandard housing in the area. Based on visual exterior surveys, nearly one-fourth of the units are standard while approximately 76% were found in below average conditions. Access from Route 23 is limited to gravel drives that are frequently in diminished condition. Some of the area is overgrown and debris has gathered at a few locations.

**Beckner Chapel.** This planning area is also located north of the Town corporate boundaries and consists of the land area on both sides of Route 636 (Birchfield Road). The area is primarily residential; approximately six commercial establishments are located on scattered sites along Route 636. About two-thirds of the dwelling units are single family residential and one-third are mobile home units. The majority of the mobile home units are located within a mobile home park immediately north of Country Manor Mobile Home Park inside the Town corporate limits. Camp Bethel, an active summer camp facility is also located in the area off Route 759. Housing conditions are generally good in this area, although approximately 17% of the units were considered to be deteriorating.

**Addington.** Addington includes the land area within the Northwestern most quadrant of the Town. The area is bisected by Addington Street, which runs east-west linking U.S. Route 23 Bypass with the Business Route of Route 23 (Main Street). One-half of the residences are single family units, while the other half are mobile homes or multi-family units. Only approximately eleven of the mobile homes are located on scattered lots. Three mobile home parks contain 75 units or lots available for occupancy. One park has recently been developed south of Gibson Street and east of Route 23 (Business). An estimated 60% of the housing units are in standard condition.

Strip commercial uses extend throughout the area along Route 23 from Addington Street to Hall Avenue and include approximately 17 commercial structures. Some commercial properties along Route 23 in Addington are in less-than-perfect condition, however, several positive attributes are found in the area including the Health Center on Roberts Street, a new bank complex at Roberts on Main Street and sidewalks extending from Hall Avenue into the Central Business District.

**Kelly High School.** The area surrounding Kelly High School is primarily residential with 53% of the units single family, and 40% being mobile homes. The majority of the mobile homes are located in a single mobile home park located off Birchfield Road north of Kelly High School. Forty-eight percent of the housing units are in standard condition while 52% are substandard.

**Virginia Avenue.** This study area includes the residential neighborhoods surrounding the Wise County School Board property and the Wise County Career and Technical Center east of Kelly High School and west of Old Hurricane Road (Route 680). Almost two-thirds of the residential units in this area are mobile homes. Ninety percent of these units are located within four mobile home parks. The remaining one-third of the units are single family. Approximately 53% of the housing units are in standard condition while only 46% are substandard.

**Hurricane Road.** Hurricane Road has the greatest amount of residential units of all study areas and includes the area located generally between Old Hurricane Road and Darden Drive. Almost the entire Town's multiple family units are concentrated in this area. Twenty-nine percent of all residential units are contained in duplex or multi-family apartments located along Commonwealth Avenue and Gilliam Street. Approximately 54% of the housing units are in standard condition and less than 47% do not meet standard housing requirements. A large portion of the Hurricane Road area east of Darden Drive and south of Hurricane Road within the corporate limits is occupied by reclaimed strip mine property owned by the University of Virginia's College at Wise and is reserved for future expansion of the campus. A few commercial uses, offices, and the VDOT residency office are located on Hurricane Road.

**Old Wise.** The area defined as Old Wise is the center of town consisting of all Central Business District (CBD) commercial uses and immediately adjacent, older residential neighborhoods. A major portion, approximately 66.2% of residential units are single family, and an estimated 30 apartment units are housed above stores in commercial buildings along Main Street. The condition of housing units in the CBD is generally good, approximately 75% of units are in standard condition and 24% are deteriorating. Only minimal units located on Main Street are considered to be dilapidated. Commercial enterprises are primarily confined to Main Street with some concentration of offices behind the Wise County Courthouse. There are an estimated 35 commercial structures in the CBD which are occupied by approximately 45 to 50 businesses, commercial establishments and offices. The commercial structures are very sound, but road maintenance is a continuing concern due to heavy truck traffic along Main Street. The

Wise County Courthouse complex and adjacent Wise Inn are the most prominent buildings on Main Street. Also, both Wise Primary School and L.F. Addington Middle School are located within the Old Wise area.

**Old Coeburn Road.** This area includes the property south of Darden Drive (Route 646), Old Coeburn Road, Yellow Creek Road and Woodland Court. The principal use is residential except for the commercial uses on the east side of Park Avenue and scattered along the south end of Coeburn Road. There are an estimated 199 dwelling units of which approximately 60% are single family detached residences. Multi-family units are confined to the 48 Woodland Court condominium units and fifteen units at the University apartments. Approximately eight percent of units are mobile homes and are located on single lots along Woodland Court and the Vanover Street - Coeburn Road area. Housing conditions are generally good with almost 60% of the units being standard, with most instances of substandard housing occurring in isolated pockets.

**Wise General.** The area surrounding the property once utilized by the Wise General Hospital and the Wise County Public Library consists of two residential neighborhoods separated by Route 23 (Business). Commercial uses are confined to Route 23 in the area of Spring and Glade Streets. All residences in the area are single family detached residences, and 93% were found to be in standard condition.

**Parsons Gap.** The Parsons Gap study area is the southern-most within the corporate limits and consists of mostly older residential subdivisions with access from Route 23 (Business). Commercial uses are limited to approximately 3-4 business establishments located between Varner and Cherry Streets. Development on the northwest side of Route 23 is constricted by topography. Of the total dwelling units in the area, approximately 87% are single family detached residences and 13% are mobile homes located on single lots and within a small mobile home park off Orchard Drive. More than three-fourths of the units are in standard condition with only pockets of deterioration found in certain areas.

**Wise County Shopping Plaza.** The area designated Wise Plaza consists of all property recently incorporated by the Town through boundary expansion. Presently, the majority of development within the area is the Wise County Shopping Plaza and Ridgeview Centre, adjacent shopping centers that have 38-40 retail establishments and associated commercially developed out parcels. Approximately 98 acres of vacant property, which is prime commercial and/or industrial land is located immediately south of the shopping center.

**Hamiltontown.** The area known as Hamiltontown is made up of the acreage south of the town corporate limits on both sides of Route 757 or Old Norton Road. As in the other study areas, all the commercial uses relate to the main route; four commercial enterprises are located immediately east of the Route 23 Bypass intersection with Route 757. Several other businesses are located along Route 757. Of the total residential structures in Hamiltontown, 90% are single family detached and 10% are mobile homes. In general, housing conditions are substandard with a few pockets of deterioration scattered throughout the area.

**University of Virginia's College at Wise.** The presence of the 367 acre (125 acres developed) University of Virginia's College at Wise campus provides a very suitable eastern entrance into the community from Route 646. Commercial land uses are confined to a triangle formed by Old Coeburn Road and Route 646. Non-residential uses along Route 646 include a ranger station, nursing home and college related buildings. Residential units in the area are equally divided among single family residences and mobile homes. Housing conditions are generally good, and one new large-lot subdivision has recently been developed off Route 646 east of the UVA-Wise campus.

The following series of tables presents housing statistics for the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia. Table 12 illustrates the Median Value of Housing for the before mentioned localities.

**Table 12**  
**Median Value of Housing**

Year	Town of Wise	Wise Co.	LENOWISCO	Virginia
1970	\$42,000	\$10,000	\$ 7,725	\$17,100
1980	\$47,500	\$30,700	\$29,750	\$48,000
1990	\$60,100	\$43,600	\$39,700	\$90,400
2000	\$81,700	\$65,700	\$63,900	\$125,400

Table 13 shows the Total Housing Units for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District and the state of Virginia.

**Table 13**  
**Total Housing Units**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise Co.</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
1970	1,020	11,548	28,453	1,493,707
1980	1,490	15,666	36,942	2,020,941
1990	1,419	15,927	38,038	2,496,334
2000	1,594	17,792	42,179	2,904,192

Table 14 illustrates the Total Housing Units by Type for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District and the state of Virginia.

**Table 14**  
**Housing Units by Type**

<b>Yr./Type</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise Co.</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
1980				
Single Family Units	N/A	11,353	28,747	1,437,748
Multi-Family Units	N/A	1,048	2,434	466,868
Mobile Homes	N/A	3,244	5,696	95,460
1990				
Single Family Units	833	10,347	26,664	1,750,777
Multi-Family Units	190	1,230	2,520	568,893
Mobile Homes	388	4,195	8,410	155,429
2000				
Single Family Units	873	11,042	N/A	1,810,353
Multi-Family Units	319	1,413	N/A	625,422
Mobile Homes	405	5,281	N/A	185,282

Table 15 shows the Number of Housing Units Built by Year for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia.

**Table 15**  
**Number of Housing Units by Year Built**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise Co.</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
<b>Prior 1939</b>	96	4,064	10,466	353,597
<b>1940-1949</b>	116	2,126	5,612	231,235
<b>1950-1959</b>	294	1,894	4,738	339,662
<b>1960-1969</b>	226	2,011	4,905	457,798
<b>1970-1979</b>	411	5,073	10,042	589,187
<b>1980-/1990</b>	276	3,156	6,691	657,099
<b>1990-/2000</b>	220	3,176	6,936	579,721

Table 16 shows the relationship between the Town of Wise, Wise County, LENOWISCO Planning District and the state of Virginia in terms of Average Household size.

**Table 16**  
**Average Household Size**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise Co.</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
1970	N/A	3.34	3.19	3.20
1980	N/A	2.93	2.88	2.77
1990	2.41	2.67	2.59	2.61
2000	2.17	2.44	2.36	2.54

## **SECTION II - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The long-range goals and related short-range objectives presented below serve as the centerpiece for this planning document. Such goals and objectives build upon opportunities and problems identified through analysis of background materials and provide guidance for the adoption of specific policies to implement plan recommendations.

### **A. Environmental Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Enhance the natural setting of the Town; promote a greater awareness of the natural beauty and positive attributes of the area.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Actively promote appreciation and use of scenic and surrounding areas in the town through development of passive recreation opportunities along Yellow Creek, Glade Creek, and throughout the town.
2. Promote environmentally sound and aesthetically pleasing development through judicious review of proposed site and building plans in accordance with the Town Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.
3. Promote inclusion of "green" areas in development plans in conjunction with commercial development.
4. Encourage the general maintenance and upkeep of existing residences through the enforcement of the local housing code, as well as the ordinance on abandoned vehicles and yard maintenance.

### **B. Transportation Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Promote solutions to relieve current traffic problems and support specific land use objectives as outlined in the Virginia Department of Transportation 2020 Transportation Plan.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Coordinate ingress-egress of all development plans with future highway improvements.
2. Work closely with VDOT officials in planning new routes and making improvements to existing routes that will alleviate traffic congestion and vehicular conflicts in coordination with the 2020 Transportation Plan.

3. Provide new access roads into appropriately zoned areas to stimulate planned potential residential and commercial development.
4. Develop improved routes for internal circulation within the central business district, which accommodate proposals for external traffic circulation, such as Varner Street and Lake Street.
5. Provide for commercial areas along the U.S. 23 Corridor, with access that does not provide additional impediments to through traffic on U.S. 23.

### **C. Housing Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Provide opportunities to increase the supply, quality, and affordability of housing for residents.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Encourage the construction of new single-family and multi-family housing in designated areas suitable for such development through the provision of utilities and roads.
2. Encourage the general maintenance and upkeep of existing residences through the enforcement of local housing code, as well as the ordinance on abandoned vehicles and yard maintenance.
3. Provide incentives for general neighborhood improvements and individual property rehabilitation by targeting comprehensive public improvement programs in neighborhoods exhibiting the greatest need.
4. Develop a set of specific design standards to be applied in the future development of mobile home parks.
5. Adopt neighborhood revitalization programs for blighted areas.

**Goal:** Encourage development of additional residential areas in undeveloped areas.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Develop vacant land in the Ridgefield area.
2. Promote mixed commercial/residential uses along Lake Street.

## **D. Public Facilities Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Expand and improve present utility systems to serve both present and future needs of the Wise and surrounding area.

### **Objectives:**

1. Develop a comprehensive arrangement with Norton, Wise County and the Wise County Public Service Authority for the provision of regional sewer and water treatment facilities and equitable extension of such services to areas that are not presently served.
2. Use the extension of appropriately sized sewer and water facilities into potential development areas as a positive development incentive.

**Goal:** Provide community facilities commensurate with the needs of the present and future population.

### **Objectives:**

1. Recognizing the public need to provide neighborhood level parks within the community, work toward achieving a standard of 2.5 acres of neighborhood park facilities for every 1000 people in the Town of Wise.
2. Cooperate with County and/or City officials when appropriate in the provision of certain public facilities such as community recreation, schools, libraries, fire and rescue, which work best when planned on an area-wide basis.

## **E. Wireless Telecommunications Goals and Objectives**

**Goals:** To encourage managed development of wireless communication infrastructure, while at the same time not unreasonably interfering with the development of the competitive wireless communication marketplace.

To maintain and preserve the residential character of the Town and its neighborhoods and to promote the creation of an attractive and harmonious community.

To ensure that wireless communication towers and related wireless communication facilities are compatible with surrounding land uses.

To provide a uniform and comprehensive set of standards for the development and installation of wireless communication towers, antennas and related facilities.

To promote public safety and to avoid the risk of damage to adjacent properties by ensuring that wireless communication towers and related wireless communication facilities are properly designed, constructed modified and maintained.

**Objectives:**

1. Minimize the adverse visual impacts of wireless communication towers and related facilities through careful design, siting, landscape screening and innovative camouflaging techniques.
2. Horizontally separate wireless communication towers from residential neighborhoods and visually sensitive areas to the extent necessary to minimize visual obstruction.
3. Encourage the use of alternative support structures, collocation of new antennas or existing wireless communication towers, camouflaged towers, and construction of towers with the ability to maximize additional providers.
4. Ensure that collocation opportunities are fully met before permitting new wireless communication towers.
5. Ensure timely removal of obsolete or abandoned equipment at no cost to residents of the Town.

**F. Implementation Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Make effective use of implementation tools provided to the Town to carry out plan goals and objectives.

**Objectives:**

1. Continue to review and revise the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years, so that it can be a useful guide for future growth and development.
2. Establish a set of procedures that will encourage systematic reference of proposed improvements to standards, goals and objectives set forth by the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Develop and use zoning and subdivision ordinances that establish practical land use regulations, standards for design, and environmental quality.
4. Develop a priority list of proposed major capital improvements and recommended program for accomplishment based on a fiscal forecast of the Town.

## **F. Land Use Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Encourage harmonious and wise use of land through future development decisions.

### **Objectives:**

1. Whenever practical, require aesthetic improvements such as trees, landscaped buffers and underground utilities to provide attractive divisions between conflicting land uses.
2. Consider the expansion beyond present corporate boundaries into areas most suitable for land development, which will strengthen the Town's tax base.
3. Maximize the use of all areas within the corporate limits and provide for housing-type transition zones.

**Goal:** Encourage coordination of use of land and transportation improvements/additions to match those of VDOT's 2020 Transportation Plan.

### **Objectives:**

1. Continue to establish retail service and office uses within the core and extending along Main Street.
2. Expand medium density residential uses (6,000 s.f. lots with public water and sewer) immediately adjacent to the commercial core and major arterial areas extending from Town.
3. Retain low density residential uses (10,000 s.f. lots with public water and sewer) in areas already so developed within the corporate limits and in newly developing areas outside of Town, primarily located off Route 640 and Route 646.
4. Contain mobile home parks within present locations limiting further expansion inside corporate limits.
5. Continue existence of major public and semi-public land uses.

The following proposals represent new development opportunities in and around the Town of Wise:

1. The expansion of general commercial land uses at key intersections such as U.S. Route 23 Bypass with U.S. Route 23 Business across from Wise Plaza; Addington/Lake St. with U.S. Route 23 Bypass and U.S. 23 Business (N) with U.S. 23 Bypass.
2. Provision of significant land areas for light and heavy industrial/technology development particularly oriented to the Lonesome Pine Airport access road, the new Lake Street extension, and in mine reclamation areas off Old Hurricane Road. Of specific importance is the Lonesome Pine Regional Technology Park which is located adjacent to the Lonesome Pine Airport and houses technology-based businesses.
3. Identification of opportunities for joint public/private industrial, recreational technical ventures on property owned by University of Virginia's College at Wise.
4. Extension of passive recreational opportunities, i.e., hiking trails along Yellow Creek to the south from the Town's Arrowhead Park, designated conservation areas around the Wise Reservoir to provide for both reservoir protection as well as passive recreation opportunities.
5. Provide incentives to encourage development and revitalization, especially in the central business district.
6. Downtown should be redeveloped to improve its physical appearance, in order to enhance its previous vital character.

## **SECTION III - IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN**

### **A. Administration of the Plan**

The Wise Comprehensive Plan document represents the continuation of formal, organized planning for the Town and immediate planning area. The Plan should serve as a foundation for addressing local problems and recognizing future needs and demands of growth. The Plan offers an opportunity to the Town leaders to apply appropriate controls and direct both public and private investments in a logical manner to achieve short-range objectives and long range goals.

The following sections address legal status, policy and administration of the Wise Comprehensive Plan required to promote an efficient application of plan provisions.

### **B. Legal Status of the Plan**

The following excerpts are taken from Title 15.2, Chapter 22 Code of Virginia, 1950 and support the legal foundation for the comprehensive plan.

15.2-2232 - Whenever the local commission shall have recommended a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the municipality and such plan shall have been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, unless such feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof no street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than railroad facility, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the local planning commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof. In connection with any such determination the commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, hold a public hearing after notice as required.

### **C. Plan Adoption**

The following provisions taken from Title 15.2 Chapter 22, outline the general procedures to be followed by the Town of Wise in adopting the Comprehensive Plan.

15.2-2225 - Notice and Hearing on Plan. Recommendation by local commission to governing body. Prior to the recommendation of a comprehensive plan or any part thereof, the local commission shall give notice and hold a public hearing on the plan. After such public hearing has been held the commission may approve, amend and approve, or disapprove the plan. Upon the approval of the plan, the commission shall by resolution recommend the plan to the governing body.

15.2-2226 - Adoption or Disapproval of Plan by Governing Body. After certification of the plan or part thereof, the governing body after a public hearing with notice as required shall proceed to a consideration of the plan or part thereof and shall approve and adopt, amend and adopt, or disapprove the same within ninety days after date of adoption of such resolution.

15.2-2227 - Return of the Plan to Commission; Resubmission. If such governing body disapproves the plan, then it shall be returned to the local commission for its reconsideration, with a written statement of the reasons for its disapproval.

The commission shall have sixty days in which to reconsider the plan and resubmit it with any changes to the governing body.

15.2-2228 - Adoption of Parts of Plan. As the work of preparing the comprehensive plan progresses, the local commission may, from time to time, recommend and the governing body approve and adopt, parts thereof, and such part shall cover one or more major sections or divisions of the municipality or one or more functional matters.

#### **D. Maintenance of the Plan**

15.2-2229 - Amendments. After the adoption of a comprehensive plan, all amendments to it shall be recommend, and approved and adopted, respectively. If the governing body desires an amendment it may direct the local commission to prepare an amendment and submit it to public hearing within sixty days after formal written request by the governing body.

15.2-2230 - Plan to be Reviewed At Least Once Every Five Years. At least once every five years, the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

Significant new developments, i.e. state highway proposals; location of new industry, shopping center, or residential subdivision; expansion of major public/private uses, etc., should trigger a re-evaluation of the adopted comprehensive plan. Review and appropriate revisions to the plan ensuring consistency with major proposals should be made to maintain it in a current condition. Changes in the plan should only be made in the best interest of established goals and objectives. Development proposals, which are contrary to the plan, require serious consideration within the context of the plan's provisions. The end result of unwarranted plan revision would be to the leave the Town without any enforceable plan.

#### **E. Plan Implementation**

Private property development and public improvement efforts can be coordinated with the plan through the use of applicable regulatory measures - zoning ordinance, subdivision

regulations, building and housing codes. An adopted Capital Improvement Program also provides a mechanism for the local governing body to schedule public improvements in accordance with the plan over both a five-year period and on an annual basis.

15.2-2239 - Local Commissions to Prepare and Submit Annually Capital Improvement Programs to Governing Body or Official Charged with Preparation of Budget. A local commission may, and at the direction of the governing body shall, prepare and revise annually a capital improvement program based on the comprehensive plan of the municipality for a period not to exceed the ensuing five years. The commission shall submit the same annually to the governing body, or to the chief administrative officer or other official charged with preparation of the budget for the municipality, at such time as it or he shall direct. Such capital improvement program shall include the commission's recommendations, and estimates of cost of such facilities and the means of financing them, to be undertaken in the ensuing fiscal year and in a period not to exceed the next four years, as the basis of the capital budget for the municipality. In the preparation of its capital budget recommendations, the commission shall consult with the chief administrative officer or other executive head of the government of the municipality, the heads of departments and interested citizens and organizations and shall hold such public hearings as necessary unless otherwise required.

15.2-2240 - Municipalities to Adopt Ordinances Regulating Subdivision and Development of Land. The governing body of any locality shall adopt an ordinance to assure the orderly subdivision of land and its development.

15.2-2280 - Zoning Ordinances Generally. Any locality may, by ordinance, classify the territory under its jurisdiction or any substantial portion thereof into districts of such number, shape and size as it may deem best suited to carry out the purposes of this article, and in each district it may regulate, restrict, permit, prohibit, and determine the following:

The use of land, buildings, structures and other premises for agricultural, business, industrial, residential, flood plain and other specific uses;

The size, height, area, bulk, location, erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, maintenance, razing or removal of structures;

The areas and dimensions of land, water, and air space to be occupied by buildings, structures and uses, and of courts, yards, and other open spaces to be left unoccupied by uses, structures, including variations in the size of lots based on whether a public or community water supply or sewer system is available and used;

The excavation or mining of soil or other natural resources. For the purpose of zoning, the governing body of a municipality shall have jurisdiction over the incorporated area of the municipality.

The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations for the Town of Wise accompany this

plan document. Legal enforcement is explained within the text of these regulations. The comprehensive plan must be used as the reference by which zoning requests, development proposals and the zoning of subdivision regulations are reviewed for approval or disapproval. Zoning and subdivision regulations are the tools intended to accomplish the plan's objectives.

## **F. Regional Review and Coordination**

Local town planning requires coordination with other adjacent jurisdiction: Wise County, Regional, Federal and State development proposals and plans. Without coordination among these jurisdictions, the danger of planning efforts being duplicated or conflicting will result in ineffective programs and unnecessarily high development costs. The LENOWISCO Planning District Commission is the most appropriate agency to provide regional coordination and review of related plan.

Special coordination efforts with the City of Norton, particularly in the provision of urban services, need to be continued to assure that efforts are not duplicated and costs are minimized. As more and more services are jointly provided through the Town of Wise and City of Norton, the two jurisdictions may wish to consider initiating formal consolidation proceedings.

## **G. Level of Professional Planning Assistance**

Planning assistance is presently provided to the Town of Wise by the staff of LENOWISCO and through contracted services of private planning consultants for special projects. Communities with less than 10,000 population typically do not require an in-house planning staff to administer daily planning functions. Special needs of the local planning commission which may warrant additional planning assistance from LENOWISCO and/or a planning consultant in order to implement the adopted comprehensive plan may include the following:

1. Maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan - Unforeseen changes in development trends, population growth or effects of economic changes resulting from new industrial commercial development, annexation or consolidation; all would have a major impact on long range community planning which would need to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Expansion of Major Elements of the Comprehensive Plan - The need for neighborhood studies, a plan for the central business district, housing need analysis, economic development studies may evolve from the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan. Such special studies should be used to expand on plan generalities and be treated as amendments to the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
3. Review and Administration of Housing, Building, Zoning and Subdivision regulations

and Development proposals which affect provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Assist in determining the most appropriate State and Federal assistance programs through which Wise may participate to aid in implementing proposed community improvements.
5. Promote local citizen involvement in planning by conducting public education programs on the Comprehensive Plan and related planning process.

**J. Public Education and Community Involvement**

The Town of Wise should continue to expand a public awareness program to inform local citizenry, including local commission members, on local planning efforts and issues. The intent of such program is to solicit citizen participation in making planning decisions and to promote public support for existing and future community improvement efforts. A classroom-type program could be offered to adult and student groups through the Wise County Career and Technical Center and/or the University of Virginia's College at Wise or through a series of lectures of citizens' advisory groups, civic organizations and other interested individuals. Local planning commission members should be encouraged to attend Planning Commissioner Institute training sessions offered periodically throughout the year by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD). Educational materials are also available from VDHCD, which should be distributed to local planning commissioners.

*Additional measures, which can be promoted by the Town to increase public awareness of local planning, include the following:*

1. Development of a brochure or graphic foldout depicting the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan on one side and an executive summary of major plan elements on the reverse side.
2. Exhibits and displays of important Plan elements placed in Town Hall, local bank lobbies, UVA-Wise, public schools, etc.
3. Newspaper coverage of comprehensive plan adoption process, highlights of land use and special zoning issues, in-depth series of articles on land use problems and opportunities in and around Wise, series of interviews with individuals in responsible positions in local and regional governmental agencies, business and industry who influence future land use decisions.

**TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**YEAR 2020**

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

**Prepared for the Town Council of the Town of Wise, Virginia  
by the Town of Wise Planning Commission  
with technical assistance provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service  
and LENOWISCO Planning District Commission**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
History.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Organization.....	2
Section One – Profile of Community.....	3
Community Facilities.....	3
Related Plans and Activities.....	5
Environmental Characteristics.....	8
Flood Plains and Flood Prone Areas.....	10
Table 1 – Dominant Soil Characteristics.....	10
Population Characteristics and Trends.....	12
Table 2 - Population Trends.....	12
Table 3 – Population Age Distribution.....	12
Table 4 – Population by Race.....	13
Employment and Labor Force Characteristics.....	14
Table 5 – Employment by Industry Groups (Town).....	14
Table 6 – Employment by Industry Groups (County/Norton).....	15
Table 7 – Unemployment Levels.....	16
Table 8 – Average Weekly Wages.....	16
Table 9 – Median Family Income.....	17
Table 10 – Per Capita Income.....	17
Table 11 – Family Poverty Level.....	17
Housing and Neighborhood Analysis.....	18
Table 12 – Median Value of Housing.....	21
Table 13 – Total Housing Units.....	22
Table 14 – Housing Units by Type.....	22
Table 15 – Number of Housing Units by Year Built.....	23
Table 16 – Average Household Size.....	23
Section Two – Goals and Objectives.....	24
Environmental Goals and Objectives.....	24
Transportation Goals and Objectives.....	24
Housing Goals and Objectives.....	25
Public Facilities Goals and Objectives.....	26
Wireless Telecommunications Goals and Objectives.....	26
Implementation Goals and Objectives.....	27
Land Use Goals and Objectives.....	28
Section Three – Implementation of Plan.....	30
Administration of the Plan.....	30
Legal Status of the Plan.....	30
Plan Adoption.....	30
Maintenance of the Plan.....	31
Plan Implementation.....	31

Regional Review and Coordination.....33  
Level of Professional Planning Assistance.....33  
Public Education and Community Involvement.....34

Mapping:

Physiographic Conditions  
Existing Zoning  
Existing Land Use  
Neighborhood Analysis  
Existing and Proposed Community Facilities  
Existing Water Lines  
Existing Sewer Lines  
Future Land Use & Transportation