

**2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**OF**

**THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA**

**Prepared for the Town Council of the Town of Wise, Virginia by  
the Town of Wise Planning Commission, LENOWISCO  
Planning District Commission, and with Input  
From Virginia Department of Transportation**

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## 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 stretching 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 1870s. 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 6,500 men. Lumbering operations declined and iron ore production ceased, leaving coal as the basis of the County's economy. During the 1950s, 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 affected local economies until 2012 at which time Environmental Protection Agency regulations stifled the coal economy from any growth.

(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 2035 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 ten 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 and 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, existing and future community facilities, and existing and future recreation mapping are included.

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

### **A. Community Facilities – Parks & Recreation**

The Town of Wise Sports Complex, located on Veldon Dotson Boulevard along Airport Road, near Lonesome Pine Airport, features soccer fields, lighted baseball fields, softball Fields and a cross country trail. A new indoor batting facility was added by the Little League Baseball organization, and additional bathroom facilities were added to accommodate the growing soccer league. Central High School has recently been using the park for its cross country matches and created a cross country trail in 2012.

Arrowhead Park, located on Varner Avenue across from the Wise Primary School parking lot, has metal picnic shelters and play equipment for children as well as swings for both toddlers and children.

The Wise Municipal Pool facility is also located within Arrowhead Park and contains a heated H-shaped zero-depth entry pool equipped with two slides, a large fountain, several small fountains, and a four-lane lap pool. The municipal pool facility also contains a “kiddie pool”, concessions stand, a beach volleyball court, bath house, and ample deck space for sunbathers and non-swimmers.

Gateway Garden, located at the intersection of Norton Road and West Main Street, was constructed in 2009 and has a stone-paved plaza, metal benches for seating, a surrounding dry-stacked stone wall, seasonal perennial flowers and shrubs, and serves as the location for the annual Christmas Tree.

Big Glades Community Square, located at 309 East Main Street, is a community gathering space constructed in 2010 and provides an outdoor amphitheater with a covered stage flanked by eight covered farmers market bays, a bathroom facility, four covered picnic tables, and a self-contained recirculating water feature. The facility is surrounded by perennial landscaping which incorporates the stacked Gladeville Sandstone in columns, walls, and seating areas. The facility is ADA accessible. Concerts, outdoor movies, and other public events are held at the facility which draws folks into the heart of downtown Wise.

### **B. The University of Virginia’s College at Wise**

The University of Virginia’s College at Wise, founded in 1954 and occupying a 396-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. UVA Wise is a public liberal arts college offering 33 majors, 39 minors, and 24 teaching licensures. UVA Wise also offers numerous pre-professional study tracks. The college currently competes in seven men’s sports and eight women’s sports, recently adding track and field for both men and women. UVA Wise is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The college is also currently a member of the South Atlantic Conference and an active member of NCAA Division II. The current

number of students enrolled is 2,021. The Board approved headcount is 2,500 and they do expect that this number may change and go upward. In 2022, the Virginia General Assembly authorized UVA Wise to offer master's degrees for the master's level of courses.

### **C. Shopping Centers**

Wise is home to three area shopping centers. The Ridgeview Center and Wise County Plaza are located along US Route 23 featuring several large store chains and restaurants, and locally-based small businesses. The IGA Shopping Center is located in downtown Wise and features a locally-based grocery store chain, pharmacy, and several locally-owned small retail businesses. Other retail and service centers are found throughout the downtown corridor offering a diverse array of small and large businesses from which consumers can choose.

### **D. Woodland Drive Development**

In addition to the shopping centers, Woodland Drive has been developed along US 23 and features a large home goods and construction center, several large restaurant chains, a large grocery chain, and a large automotive dealership.

### **E. CNW Regional Wastewater Authority**

The Coeburn-Norton-Wise (CNW) Regional Wastewater Authority provides wastewater treatment for partnering towns in addition to other area communities. The authority is chartered by the state and has a permitted capacity to treat 6.5 million gallons of wastewater per day. The allotted capacity for the Town of Wise is 1.78 mgd.

### **F. Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant**

The Town of Wise owns its own public water system with its reservoir and water treatment plant located on Bear Creek just east of the town with a production capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day. The 2012 Bear Creek reservoir project raised the level of the reservoir by five feet, thus increasing the water supply to more closely match the capacity to treat.

### **G. Wireless Telecommunication Providers**

An increase in both wireless telecommunication providers and wireless telecommunication towers throughout not only the Town of Wise, but the entire county, allows the residents in the Town of Wise the option to use wireless telecommunication, landline telecommunication, or both.



## **H. 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 industrial 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 in May of 2018. 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 Wise County Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Wise 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 March 13, 2003. 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 US23 and US 58-A, and to promote regional cooperation in the control of roadside development along major arteries such as US Route 58 Alternate and US23 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 was established as the first of 22 planning district commissions in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1969 and serves the Counties of Lee, Scott, Wise, and the City of Norton. Its primary purpose is to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social, and economic elements of the district by coordinating, planning, and assisting the localities that make up the district. LENOWISCO's Board of Directors consists of 15 members appointed by Lee, Wise, and Scott Counties and the City of Norton. LENOWISCO serves as the communicator between local governments and federal and state agencies.

LENOWISCO is federally recognized by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) as an ARC Local Development District and by the Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District. LENOWISCO is also heavily involved in local infrastructure planning and development.

One of the primary duties of the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission is the preparation and adoption of various regional strategic plans to include the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. LENOWISCO also provides grant writing, grant management, and Geographic Information Services (GIS) assistance to the localities in the district.

#### 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 6.5 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) Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) and the Six-Year Improvement Plan

The Commonwealth Transportation Board created a vision for multimodal transportation across the Commonwealth of Virginia. This vision is outlined in Virginia's Transportation Plan, VTrans. The CTB in conjunction with other state agencies develops VTrans to identify transportation needs which can be addressed by infrastructure improvement projects, transportation strategies, creation of new policies, or modification of existing policies. This Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Wise was developed with input from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

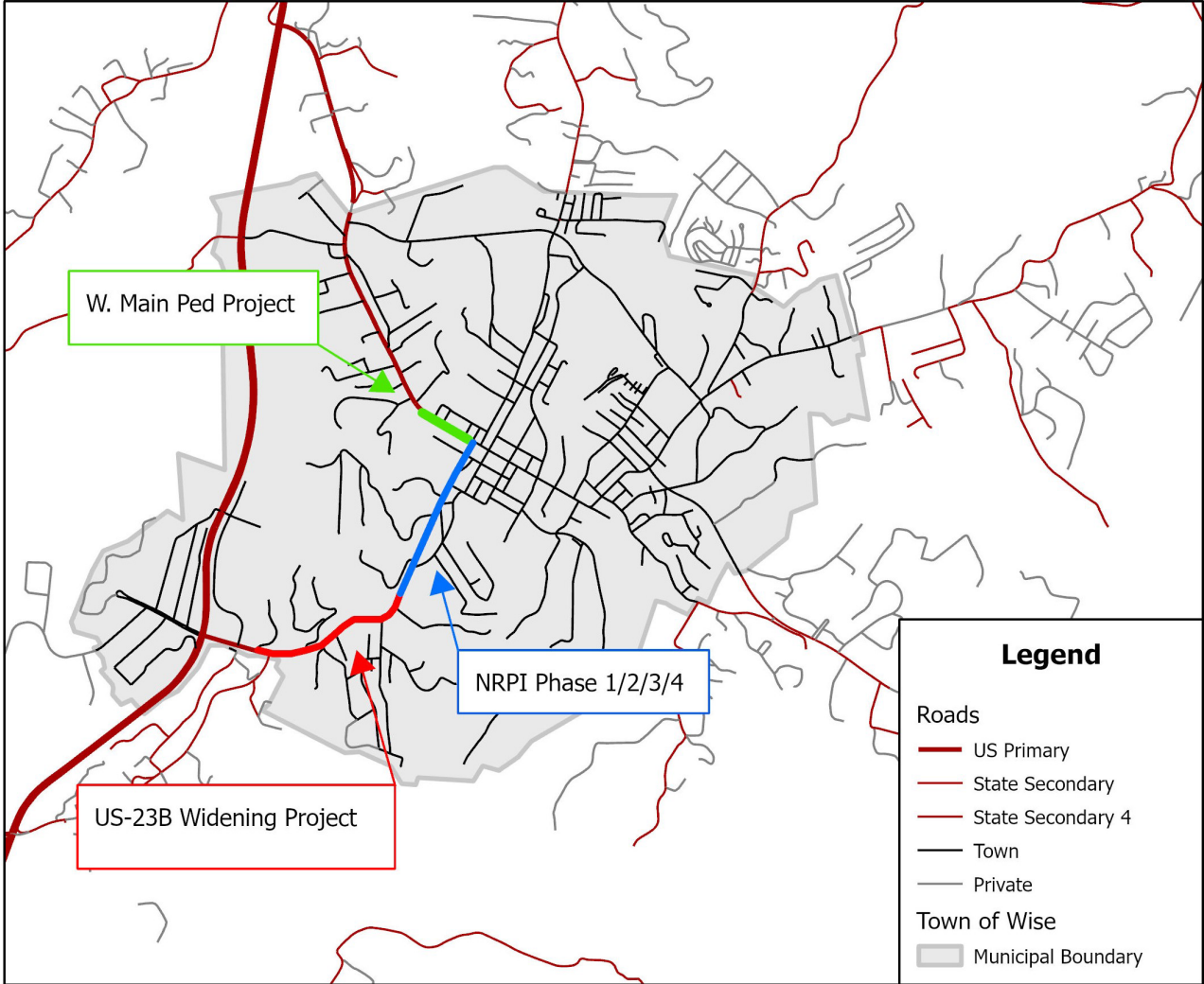
As the Town of Wise develops transportation-related projects, consideration must be made with regard to specific needs addressed by VTrans. This is crucial to ensuring that the town's transportation goals align with those of the CTB, which enables the town to receive funding assistance for these projects. Projects proposed by the town are screened by the CTB, which are then prioritized based on alignment with VTrans needs. VTrans was last updated in 2020 and identifies issues that need to be addressed over a 10-year period (Mid-term Needs) as well as develops long term planning strategies.

The CTB through coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) oversees a Six-Year Improvement Program which outlines anticipated projects across the Commonwealth. This program is updated yearly. The Town of Wise currently has five active projects listed with the program. Project names and cost estimates are listed below.

1. **Norton Road Pedestrian Improvement Project Phase 1 - \$1,047,000**
  - a. VTrans Need: Pedestrian Safety, Pedestrian Access to Activity Centers
2. **Norton Road Pedestrian Improvement Project Phase 2 and 3 - \$895,000**
  - a. VTrans Need: Pedestrian Safety, Pedestrian Access to Activity Centers
3. **Norton Road Pedestrian Improvement Project Phase 4 - \$584,000**
  - a. VTrans Need: Pedestrian Safety, Pedestrian Access to Activity Centers
4. **Widen Business Route 23 to Four Lanes - \$10,444,000**
  - a. VTrans Need: Congestion Mitigation, Roadway Safety

5. **West Main Street Pedestrian Improvement Project - \$1,269,930**  
a. VTrans Need: Pedestrian Safety, Pedestrian Access to Activity Centers

**Map 1: Town of Wise Six-Year Improvement Program Projects**



## I. 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.

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.

## **J. 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 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. During 2004 and 2016, the town participated in hazard mitigation grants, funding projects that allowed the town to purchase 27 properties that were located within the flood plains of either Glade Creek or Yellow Creek. The residents relocated out of harm's way, and the structures were demolished leaving grassy areas for overflow when the creeks exceed their banks during heavy rain. The town will continue to identify grant programs which will reduce the number of people and homes in harm's way along the two creeks. Newly passed legislation eliminates the need to calculate Benefit Cost Ratios for properties in the 100-year floodplains for acquisition and demolition projects. Development in the flood plain is guided by the Town's Zoning Ordinance which doesn't permit development in the

floodway. Development is permitted in 100-year and 500-year floodplain, however; this development is restricted.

**K. Population Characteristics and Trends**

According to the U.S. Census of Population, the incorporated Town of Wise had a population of 2,971 in 2020. This figure represents a decline of population from a 1990 population count of 3,193. The decline in population from 1990 to 2020 is not only occurring in the Town of Wise, but also in the surrounding areas. The decrease in population for 2020 is also shown in Wise County and LENOWISCO. The population of 2020 has been added for the Town of Wise, Wise County, LENOWISCO and Virginia. A comparison of the Town of Wise population trends to adjacent jurisdictions and Wise County is shown in Table 1.

<b>TABLE 1 POPULATION TRENDS</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOWN OF WISE</b>	<b>WISE COUNTY</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
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
2010	3,286	41,452	94,174	8,001,024
2020	2,970	37,206	83,566	8,631,393

Table 2 outlines the age distribution of the population of the Town of Wise in comparison with Wise County. This distribution is taken from the Population Census information available for 2010 and 2020.

<b>TABLE 2 POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION TOWN OF WISE AND WISE COUNTY</b>				
<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>2010 TOWN OF WISE</b>	<b>2010 WISE COUNTY</b>	<b>2020 TOWN OF WISE</b>	<b>2020 WISE COUNTY</b>
<b>19 and under</b>	597	9,997	606	8,671
<b>20-64</b>	2136	25,590	1488	22,415
<b>65 and over</b>	553	5,865	876	7,468

Table 3 shows the population distribution by race for the Town of Wise taken from both the 2010 Census of Population and the 2020 Census of Population.

<b>TABLE 3</b>				
<b>POPULATION BY RACE TOWN OF WISE</b>				
<b>RACE</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>White</b>	3,157	96.1	2,760	92.9
<b>Black</b>	33	1	68	2.3
<b>American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut</b>	4	0.1	0	0
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	28	0.9	21	0.7
<b>Hispanic</b>	42	1.28	98	3.3
<b>Other</b>	22	0.7	24	0.8



## L. 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, but it has been on the decline. However, the trend in the last several years for Town residents has shown a dramatic increase in professional, health services, educational services, and related services. This dominance of these service industries 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, Wise County Public Schools, and the function the Town serves as the County seat. The Wise County School system is the largest single employer located in the Town.

There has been some growth in wholesale and retail trade in the Town of Wise.

Table 4 provides an overview of the Town of Wise, Wise County, and City of Norton labor force characteristics for the year 2010. Unfortunately, the 2020 information has not been released. To view the most up to date information as it is released, you can go to <https://www.census.gov/2020census>.

<b>TABLE 4</b>						
<b>EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY GROUP</b>						
<b>TOWN OF WISE/CITY OF NORTON/WISE COUNTY</b>						
	<b>TOWN OF WISE</b>		<b>CITY OF NORTON</b>		<b>WISE COUNTY</b>	
<b>INDUSTRY GROUP</b>	<b>2010</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>2010</b>	
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, Mining	179		NF		1716	
Construction	37		103		1047	
Manufacturing, Non-Durable & Durable	54		165		684	
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	31		228		995	
Wholesale and Retail Trade	198		412		2597	
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	132		121		619	
Professional, Health Services, Education						
Services and Related Services	772		732		4671	
Public Administration	52		112		1081	
Other Industry/Not Reported	85		83		639	

1) Unemployment

Table 5 shows that rates of unemployment in Virginia and Wise County have been cyclical in nature. The unemployment rate for Wise County increased dramatically from 1990 to 1996, while the state of Virginia only endured a small increase in unemployment. The 2000 information shows a substantial decrease in unemployment for both areas. However, substantial increases occurred during the period between from the 2000-2010 Census. This distribution is taken from the Population Census information available.

<b>TABLE 5</b>		
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS</b>		
	<b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b>
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>RATE FOR WISE COUNTY</b>	<b>RATE FOR VIRGINIA</b>
1990	8.30%	4.30%
1996	15.40%	4.50%
2000	5.00%	2.40%
2010	7.60%	7.10%
2020	7.60%	4.60%

2) Income Characteristics

Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 illustrate income characteristics for Virginia, LENOWISCO Planning District, and Wise County. This distribution is taken from the Population Census information available from 2000, 2010, and 2021.

Table 6 compares the Average Weekly Wage for Wise County, LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia from 2000 to 2021. All three areas saw an increase in average weekly wages.

<b>TABLE 6</b>			
<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
2000	\$507	\$500	\$661
2010	\$670	\$661	\$845
2021	\$886	\$726	\$1,424

Table 7 illustrates the average Median Family Income for the Town of Wise, Wise County, LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia, and reflects the average weekly wage increase seen in Table 6 above. The median family income increased from 2000-2020.

<b>TABLE 7</b>				
<b>MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
1997	NF	\$26,593	\$24,557	\$40,209
2010	\$36,875	\$34,717	\$45,229	\$63,302
2020	\$51,329	\$41,285	\$38,549	\$66,149

Table 8 presents the average Per Capita Income level for the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia. The 2010 per capita income declined slightly in Wise County, but increased dramatically in the LENOWISCO Planning District area, and increased slightly in the state from 2010-2020.

<b>TABLE 8</b>				
<b>PER CAPITA INCOME</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
1999	\$18,760	\$18,677	\$17,336	\$29,794
2010	NF	\$18,458	\$26,880	\$33,040
2020	\$28,684	\$21,508	\$22,861	\$34,967

Table 9 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. The family poverty level increased by two-percent in the Town of Wise from 2010 to 2020.

<b>TABLE 9</b>				
<b>FAMILY POVERTY LEVEL</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
1997	19.80%	23.10%	23.30%	11.60%
2010	10.80%	21.60%	17.80%	10.70%
2020	12.80%	19.90%	21.70%	11.20%

## **M. 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 US 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 US 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, and 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 Avenue, which runs east-west linking US Route 23 Bypass with Business Route 23 (Main Street). This area contains both single family dwellings and mobile homes, including three mobile home parks as well as several commercial buildings. Housing units are in standard condition. Strip commercial uses extend throughout the area along Route 23 from Addington Avenue to Hall Avenue. Some commercial properties along Route 23 in Addington are in less than perfect condition, and some have been converted to multi-family residential structures.

**Central High School.** The area surrounding the former Central High School complex is primarily residential with a mix of single family dwellings and mobile homes located in mobile home parks. Conditions of the housing units are standard and substandard.

**Virginia Avenue.** The Virginia Avenue study area includes the residential neighborhoods surrounding the Wise County School Board property and the Wise County Career and Technical Center east of the former Central High School property and west of Old Hurricane Road (Route 680). Almost two-thirds of the residential units in this area are mobile homes which are located within four mobile home parks. The majority of the single family and mobile home residences are in standard condition.

**Hurricane Road.** Hurricane Road has the greatest number of residential units of all study areas and includes the area located generally between Old Hurricane Road and Darden Drive. Multi-family units are concentrated in this area. Commonwealth Apartments, Baugh Apartments, and Gilliam Court Apartments are all located within this study area. Approximately half of the units are in standard condition while the others are substandard. 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.

**Old Wise.** The area defined as Old Wise is the center of Town consisting of all Central Business District commercial uses and immediately adjacent, older residential neighborhoods. A major portion are single family, and there are several mixed-use apartment units located above stores in commercial buildings along Main Street. The condition of housing units in the Central Business District is generally good. There are minimal units located along Main Street that are considered to be dilapidated. Commercial enterprises are primarily confined to Main Street with some concentration of offices behind the Wise County Courthouse. There is a continuing concern regarding road maintenance due to heavy truck traffic along Main Street; however, the structures are in good, sound condition. Included in the Old Wise study area are the Wise County Courthouse and the Wise Primary and Middle School complex.

**Old Coeburn Road.** This study 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. Approximately 60% of the residential units are single family detached residences. Multi-family units including apartments, duplex units, and attached condominium units are also included in this area. Housing conditions are generally good with the majority of the units being standard. Substandard housing occurs 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 four residential neighborhoods. All are single family detached residences, mostly in standard condition.

**Parsons Gap.** The Parsons Gap study area is the southern-most region within the corporate limits, and consists mostly of older residential subdivisions with access from Route 23 Business. Commercial uses are limited. Eighty-seven percent of the residential uses are single family detached dwellings. There is one small mobile home lot and the other mobile homes are on single lots. More than 75% of the units are in standard condition with only pockets of deterioration found in certain areas.

**Shopping Plaza.** The area designated as the Shopping Plaza is the area to the west of US 23 and contains two shopping centers – Wise County Plaza and Ridgeview Centre, along with associated commercially developed outparcels.

**Hamiltontown.** The area known as Hamiltontown is made up of the acreage south of the Town corporate limits on both sides of Route 757 (Wise-Norton Road). As in the other study areas, all the commercial uses relate to the main route. Route 757 is now the main thoroughfare to both the Walmart Shopping Center and the new Central High School. The houses are primarily single family detached structures with only a couple of mobile homes on individual lots. Housing conditions are generally standard with minimal areas of deterioration.

**University of Virginia's College at Wise.** The presence of the 396-acre (125 acres developed) campus of the University of Virginia's College at Wise provides a very suitable eastern entrance into the community from Route 646 (Darden Drive). Commercial land uses are confined to a triangle formed by Old Coeburn Road and Route 646. Housing conditions are generally good and there are no mobile homes in this study area.

**Additional Newly Developed Housing Options Outside Corporate Limits of Wise.** The surrounding unincorporated area has seen an increase in a variety of housing options. There are two developed double-wide manufactured housing subdivisions – Robinette Subdivision off Birchfield Road and Mountain Meadows Subdivision off Old Hurricane Road. Another housing option with both Town water and sewer service is Bear Creek Subdivision which contains developed detached single-family dwellings. Currently, the Walk to Campus student housing complex adjacent to the eastern side of the UVA Wise campus is completed and opened in 2014. This housing complex offers students one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom rental units within walking distance of the college 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 10 illustrates the Median Value of Housing for the before mentioned localities. This distribution is taken from the Census information available from 2000 to 2020.

<b>TABLE 10</b>				
<b>MEDIAN VALUE OF HOUSING</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
2000	\$81,700	\$65,700	\$63,900	\$125,400
2010	\$126,800	\$82,400	\$83,650	\$249,700
2020	\$136,000	\$87,300	\$90,600	\$282,800

Table 11 shows the Total Housing Units for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, the LENOWISCO Planning District, and the state of Virginia. This distribution is taken from the Census information available from 2000 to 2020.

<b>TABLE 11</b>				
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>LENOWISCO</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
2000	1,594	17,792	42,179	2,904,192
2010	1,549	17,935	43,435	3,365,855
2020	1,496	16,638	41,178	3,562,258

Table 12 illustrates the Total Housing Units by Type for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, and the state of Virginia. This distribution is taken from the Census information available from 2000 and 2010. The 2020 information is not available at this time.

<b>TABLE 12</b>			
<b>HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE</b>			
<b>2000 YEAR/TYPE</b>	<b>Town of Wise</b>	<b>Wise County</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
SINGLE FAMILY UNITS	873	11,042	1,810,353
MULTI FAMILY UNITS	319	1,413	625,422
MOBILE HOMES	405	5,281	185,282
<b>2010</b>			
SINGLE FAMILY UNITS	963	12,131	2,452,933
MULTI FAMILY UNITS	189	1,300	725,311
MOBILE HOMES	396	4,501	186,758

Table 13 shows the Number of Housing Units Built by Year for the localities of the Town of Wise, Wise County, and the state of Virginia. This distribution is taken from the Census information available from 1990-2000 and 2000-2009. No data is available for 2009 up to date.

<b>TABLE 13</b>			
<b>NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS BUILT BY YEAR BUILT</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOWN OF WISE</b>	<b>WISE COUNTY</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
1990-2000	220	3176	579,721
2000-2009	55	1733	502,630

Table 14 shows the relationship between the Town of Wise, Wise County, and the state of Virginia in terms of Average Household Size. This distribution is taken from the Census information available from 2000 to 2020.

<b>TABLE 14</b>			
<b>AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOWN OF WISE</b>	<b>WISE COUNTY</b>	<b>VIRGINIA</b>
2000	2.17	2.44	2.54
2010	2.31	2.50	2.54
2020	2.17	2.34	2.64



## N. Transportation Characteristics and Analysis

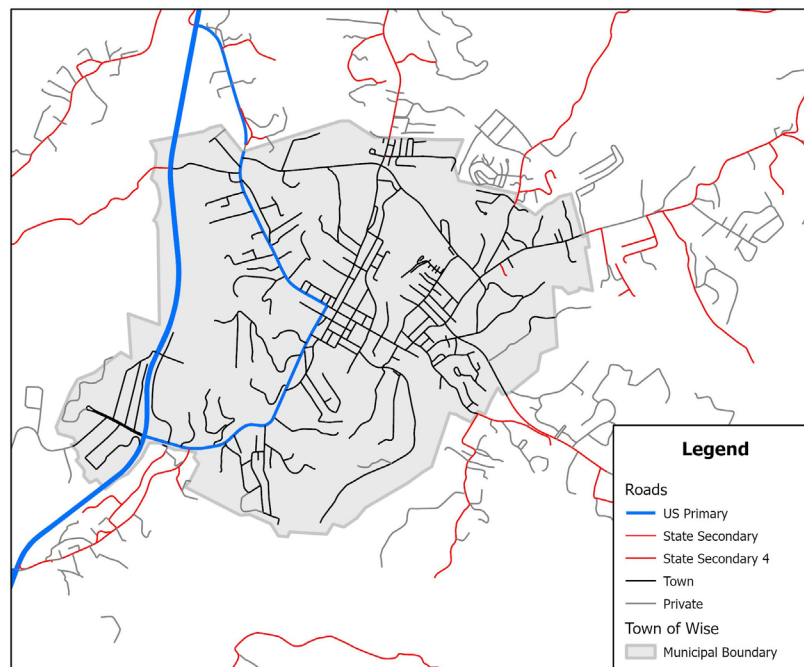
### 1) Streets, Roads, and Highways

The Town of Wise is served by a network of streets, roads, and one major highway. With the town being the county seat for Wise County, the town experiences higher levels of traffic volume and congestion when compared to surrounding localities. This is especially true when local public schools, to include the University of Virginia's College at Wise, are in session.

US-23, a four-lane divided highway, runs through the western portion of the town and provides access to the City of Norton, neighboring counties, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Three major shopping centers and numerous restaurants are located off of US-23 and provide services to town residents as well as travelers from across the region. US-23 is a major factor in the economic development capacity for the town as it is the primary route used by non-residents and those from out-of-state who come to the town to shop.

US-23 Business, which runs from the intersection with US-23 along Norton Road into town and continues westerly along West Main Street, is the main thoroughfare through the Town of Wise and experiences the highest volume of traffic.

**Map 2: Transportation Map – Functional Classifications**



Access to the town from major roads is limited and proves to be an issue during extreme weather events, large local events, and during construction. Access to town is primarily gained through Norton Road, West Main Street, and Darden Drive.

Norton Road and West Main Street both connect to US-23 and Darden Drive connects to US-58A by way of Coeburn Mountain and Tacoma Mountain Roads. During heavy snowfall events, access to town is restricted due to the slope of these roads and can be an issue for emergency responders.

Streets within and maintained by the town are in generally good condition, though improvements need to continue to be made to improve walkability and promote other means of transportation. The Town of Wise maintains all public roads within its corporate boundaries with the exception of US-23.

## 2) Cumberland Airport Commission - Lonesome Pine Airport

The Lonesome Pine Airport is located at 6225 Airport Road, approximately 3 miles from downtown Wise, and is owned by the Cumberland Airport Commission. The airport has one lighted runway measuring 5,280 ft. long by 100 ft. wide and has the following capacity: single wheel – 42,000 lbs, dual wheel – 55,000 lbs, dual tandem wheels – 100,000 lbs. The Lonesome Pine Airport has 12 single engine air craft, 3 multi-engine air craft, 1 jet engine aircraft, 1 helicopter, and 1 ultralight air craft. The airport is open to the public and offers pilot instruction, aircraft rental and annual surveying services. There is no air traffic control tower at the airport.

The airport received \$9.32 million in Federal Aviation Administration grants and in other federal infrastructure grants in 2022 to upgrade the runway and lighting system. Phase 1 of the project will be comprised of resurfacing the eastern half of the runway and improving the drainage system. This phase is estimated to be completed by mid-October, 2022. Phase 2 of the project is estimated to begin in the spring of 2023 and will involve resurfacing the western half of the runway and replacing the runway lighting system. Estimated completion is scheduled for early fall of 2023.

## 3) Public Transportation

The Town of Wise does not currently operate a system for public transportation. Mountain Empire Transit, a service provided by Mountain Empire Older Citizens, serves the citizens of Wise, Lee, Scott Counties and the City of Norton. A new program, MetGo!, was developed to provide a rideshare service for the citizens of the Town of Wise and City of Norton. MetGo! has plans to expand their service area, which will allow the residents of the Town of Wise to travel further without needing personal transportation.

A more detailed outline of the needs, goals, and recommendations for transportation can be found in Section Two of this plan. Additional transportation mapping can also be found at the end of this plan.

## 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.
- 5) To include environmentally friendly "green construction" options in the zoning ordinance such as grass paving for overflow parking and green roofing on buildings in the Central Business District.
- 6) A Farmers Market Facility has been established in the B-3 Central Business District. Encourage expansion of the farmer's market located at the Big Glades Amphitheater.
- 7) To encourage energy conservation methods to include solar and wind power for residential structures.

**Goal:** Recreational Facilities Enhancements, Improvements and Creation of Outdoor Recreation.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To provide a link from the Bear Creek Reservoir Trail through the Town of Wise Sports Complex to the UVA Wise Trails.
- 2) To provide a network of walking and bicycling trails throughout Wise with special emphasis on linking Yellow Creek to UVA Wise and UVA Wise to the Town of Wise Sports Complex.
- 3) To provide possible use for VDEM properties additional public parks or recreational fields.
- 4) To develop an RV park on VDEM properties.
- 5) To provide additional access to Buchanan Park Trails.

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

**Objectives:**

- 1) Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit mixed use (retail/residential uses) in B-1 Zoning District to include Park Avenue.
- 2) Develop property across from former JJ Kelly High School.
- 3) Develop Straughan property along US23 N to tie into existing neighborhoods.
- 4) Encourage redevelopment of existing aging and deteriorating neighborhoods throughout the Town.

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

**Goal:** Promote solutions to mitigate traffic congestion and support specific land use objectives to increase roadway and pedestrian safety.

### **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 Virginia's Transportation Plan – VTrans.
- 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 US-23 Corridor, with access that does not provide additional impediments to through traffic on US-23.
- 6) Provide a by-pass truck route around Wise and eliminate thru truck traffic in the Central Business District (Varner Street or Addington Avenue/Lake Street realignment).
- 7) Provide transportation alternatives such as safe, lighted sidewalks in areas where no sidewalks exist or sidewalks are deteriorated and in need of upgrade.
- 8) Connect sidewalks and improve walkability in areas that have missing links by building new sidewalks, curb and gutter, and crosswalks when needed. Areas include but are not limited to Park Avenue, Darden Drive, Hurricane Road, Lake Street, West Main Street, Norton Road, Birchfield Road, and Railroad Avenue.
- 9) Enhance pedestrian safety by implementing stamped crosswalks in areas with high pedestrian activity.

The following goals were developed by LENOWISCO with assistance from the Town of Wise in 2011, and incorporated into the 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan – a vision plan that addresses the needs of the transportation system within the LENOWISCO Planning District. Because these transportation plans are living documents, some of the goals originally written for the 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan have either been completed or amended to better suit the transportation needs for the Town of Wise. The goals that are still relevant today are listed below.

*Short Term Goals Specific to the Town of Wise:*

- 1) US-23 Business (Norton Road) from US-23 to Cherry Street – Widen roadway to four-lane urban standard.
- 2) Improve pedestrian transportation safety by completing the sidewalk system from neighborhoods to commercial areas.
- 3) Improve bicycling transportation safety by constructing bicycling lanes along major thoroughfares in Town (Main Street, Park Avenue, Darden Drive, Hurricane Road, and Lake Street).

*Mid-Term Goals Specific to the Town of Wise:*

- 1) Main Street at Railroad Avenue/Oakwood Avenue, SE – Apply access management and add right turn lane on eastbound approach.
- 2) Addington Avenue from US-23 to US-23 Business – Reconstruct roadway to two-lane rural standards. Align Addington Avenue with Lake Street and consider signalization based on warrant analysis at US-23/Addington Avenue thereby providing a much needed intersection safety improvement.

*Long Term Goals Specific to the Town of Wise:*

- 1) US23 (Orby Cantrell Highway)/US23 Business (Norton Rd) – Provide two through-lanes in each direction on minor approaches, add second left turn lane on both US23 approaches, and channelize southbound right turn to a free-flow movement.
- 2) VA646 (Darden Drive) from Park Avenue/Hurricane Road to the eastern corporation limit of Wise – Widen to urban three-lane roadway providing congestion mitigation between the Town of Wise and the University of Virginia's College at Wise.
- 3) Varner Street from Norton Road to Yellow Creek Road – Reconstruct roadway to urban two-lane standard to improve roadway safety and transit access to activity centers.

- 4) Provide an additional access bridge from East Main Street to Yellow Creek Road for residents along Yellow Creek and Woodland Court giving them an alternate transit access to activity centers.
- 5) Realign School Avenue, Yellow Creek Road, Varner Street, and Railroad Avenue to provide a true four-way intersection and bridge across Yellow Creek which will improve roadway safety and mitigate congestion due to the two adjacent public schools.

*Transportation Goals Outside Corporation Limits with Direct Impacts to Town of Wise:*

- 1) Construction of Innovation Highway from US-58 to the Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park which will greatly reduce traffic congestion in downtown Wise by providing an alternate route to the park.

### **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) Adopt neighborhood revitalization programs for blighted areas.
- 5) Work with Wise County to determine whether or not some boundary adjustments can be made to increase developable land.
- 6) Support Wise County in their efforts to develop the former J.J. Kelly High School Property into a mid-priced to upscale workforce housing development and/or community recreational site.

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

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Encourage development of vacant land in the Ridgefield area and Birchfield Road area.
- 2) Promote mixed commercial/residential uses along Lake Street.
- 3) Encourage residential development along the recently logged property situated between the former Appalachian Regional Hospital property and the Laurel Hills Subdivision along Norton Road, and property along Safenest Avenue and the Timbers Subdivision.
- 4) Encourage revitalization of older subdivisions to include mobile home parks, by eliminating blighted homes and replacing them with structurally sound and



updated homes.

**Goal:** To encourage development of affordable housing and adequate housing opportunities for all age groups.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To encourage development of affordable, mid-priced housing, which is continuing to grow, along with providing quality rental properties for not only college students, but for young professionals who may not want the responsibility and liability attached with purchasing a property.
- 2) To consider the merits of retirement complexes given the diversity of age groups within the Town of Wise. It is necessary to provide adequate housing opportunities for all age groups. Additionally, the specific needs of each age group must be considered along with the types of houses in which they are interested, their financial capacity, and community needs.

**D. Public Facilities Goals and Objectives**

**Goal:** Expand and improve present utility systems to serve both present and future needs of the Town of 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:** To encourage development of 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 1,000 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**

**Goal:** 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.

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To maintain and preserve the residential character of the Town and its neighborhoods, and to promote the creation of an attractive and harmonious community.
- 2) To ensure that wireless communication towers and related wireless communication facilities are compatible with surrounding land uses.
- 3) To provide a uniform and comprehensive set of standards for the development and installation of wireless communication towers, antennas, and related facilities.

**Goal:** 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 programs for accomplishment based on a fiscal forecast of the Town.

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

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

### **Objectives:**

- 1) The Zoning and/or Subdivision ordinances state that whenever practical, we 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.
- 4) Develop a cooperative understanding between the Town of Wise and City of Norton with regard to the land use decisions for the area located

between Wise and Norton. One option worthy of consideration for both jurisdictions is consolidation.

**Goal:** In the Central Business District, encourage downtown revitalization using the Town of Wise Strategic Economic Development Plan from which to establish goals and objectives.

**Objectives:**

- 1) Developing a community meeting place in the Central Business District at which a variety of events and activities can take place; i.e., farmers market, music venue, festivals, and community events.
- 2) Developing a streetscape theme (from the downtown master plan) for trashcans, street lights, flags and banners, etc... which can be implemented as funding becomes available.
- 3) Providing incentives such as façade improvement grants to existing businesses in the Central Business District to encourage revitalization.
- 4) Work with the County on amending its Enterprise Sub-zones to include the Central Business District and/or the shopping center.
- 5) Create a design committee to assist with establishing design guidelines for new construction in the Central Business District to encourage revitalization.
- 6) Develop a community meeting place in the Central Business District called a “senior citizen center/recreation center”.

**Goal:** Identify areas in the Town of Wise for potential growth sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth for at least 10 but not more than 20 years, which may include phasing of development, and to establish these designated growth areas pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 15.2.2223.1. The following designated growth area has been identified and established pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2223.1:

- 1) Property adjacent to US-23 Business (Norton Road) from Cherry Street to Hamilton Street which is shown on the Future Transportation and Land Use map herein.
- 2) Property located along Birchfield Road across from the former J.J. Kelly High School property, known by Parcel Identification Numbers: 041922, 036338, and 013100.
- 3) Property located in the Park Avenue/Darden Drive corridor bounded to the North

by Hurricane Road and Darden Drive; to the West by Pippin Avenue; to the South by East Main Street and Park Avenue; and to the East by Vanover Avenue.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To incorporate the Traditional Neighborhood Development plans in the designated growth area(s) described above as property adjacent to US23 Business (Norton Road) from Cherry Street to Hamilton Street shown on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map which may include:
  - a. Pedestrian-Friendly Road Design within the residential development.
  - b. Interconnection of new local streets in the development with existing streets found in the existing adjacent residential subdivisions as well as well as with US23 Business (Norton Road).
  - c. Connect the two existing adjacent subdivisions with the new residential development area via streets and sidewalks.
  - d. Maintain and preserve the natural barrier between US23 Business (Norton Road) and the new development area.
  - e. Mixed use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types with affordable housing, to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth.
  - f. Reduction in front and side yard building setbacks.
  - g. Reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radius at subdivision street intersections.
  
- 2) To provide for the following developable acreage densities in the identified growth area(s):
  - a. At least four single family residents per acre
  - b. At least six townhouses per acre
  - c. At least 12 apartments, condominium units or cooperative units per acre
  
- 3) To provide an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acre for commercial development in identified commercial growth area(s).
  
- 4) To provide commercial developers within Designated Commercial Growth Areas the available Enterprise Zone incentives when the commercial development is located in the Wise County Enterprise Subzone and designated growth area(s).
  
- 5) To modify the Town of Wise Zoning Ordinance and Map to create a Designated Growth Area overlay zoning district, and incorporate the Traditional Neighborhood Development Design regulations into the minimum standards for residential development in the Town of Wise Zoning Ordinance.

**H. Economic Development**

**Goal:** To provide a variety of retail and services businesses to meet needs of present and future population.

**Objectives:**

- 1) To encourage entrepreneurs to locate within the Town's Central Business District by continuing to offer incentives in the Wise County Enterprise Sub-Zone, which runs through the Town of Wise along Darden Drive, Park Avenue, Main Street, Norton Road, and the two shopping centers along US-23.
- 2) To provide opportunities for joint promotions and advertising to businesses by keeping Town representation in the Wise Business Association through support of the Wise Business Association activities and festivals.
- 3) To maintain current listing of available properties zoned for business use on the Town of Wise webpage.
- 4) To participate in county-wide and regional recruitment activities, when possible, to attract a variety of industrial and commercial businesses that provide many employment opportunities with "living wages" for the present and future populations.
- 5) To provide quality of life amenities by partnering with private employers to improve recreation, tourism, shopping, and housing needs.
- 6) To develop and implement a strategic economic development master plan.
- 7) To rezone the R-B section of Park Avenue to B-1 Neighborhood Business and add mixed use (retail and residential) as permitted uses.

**Goal:** To provide opportunities for workforce development, training, and retraining programs for displaced workers.

- 1) To encourage Wise County Schools to expand their technical skills programs.
- 2) To encourage UVA Wise to expand their software engineering programs.
- 3) To encourage UVA Wise to develop and implement a master's degree program in business, education, nursing, and other fields of study predicted for growth.
- 4) To encourage Mountain Empire Community College to offer associate degrees and training certificates commensurate with the present and future needs of local industries.
- 5) To encourage additional education entities.
- 6) To encourage development of affordable early childcare and daycare

facilities with trained employees/caregivers.

### **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**

15.2-2223 – Requires that VDOT review the transportation plan changes prior to approval by the governing body.

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 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 jurisdictions: Wise County, Regional, State, and Federal 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 plans.

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 the 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 a population less than 10,000 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, and 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 processes.

#### **H. 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.