



## **RESOLUTION #16-01-2024**

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF FRANKLIN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, HELD AT THE FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE FRANKLIN COUNTY 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND WESTLAKE – HALES FORD AREA PLAN BY UPDATING, ADOPTING, AND INCORPORATING INTO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AN AMENDMENT TO THE WESTLAKE – HALES FORD AREA PLAN.**

**WHEREAS**, on May 22, 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Franklin County 2025 Comprehensive Plan that identified seven (7) villages and two (2) unincorporated towns as developed areas in Franklin County and calls for the creation of a more detailed village or area plan for each of the designated villages and towns; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 15, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan, which designated this planning area as a Designated Growth Area (DGA) consistent with Section 15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended; and

**WHEREAS**, a citizen advisory committee was established by the Gills Creek Supervisor to review the adopted 2016 Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan and supporting documents and the committee recommended goals and strategies to be included as an amendment to the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, after due legal notice as required by Section 15.2-2204/2205 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, the Planning Commission did hold a public hearing on December 12, 2023, and voted to recommend approval of the Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan amendment to the Board of Supervisors, and the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on the proposed Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan amendment on January 16, 2024 at which time all parties in interest were given an opportunity to be heard.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Supervisors of Franklin County, Virginia, that the Board of Supervisors hereby amends the adopted Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan dated January 16, 2024; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Supervisors hereby amends the Franklin County 2025 Comprehensive Plan by amending the Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan, for public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice.

**ADOPTED** on motion of Supervisor Lorie Smith, representative of the Gills Creek District of Franklin County; seconded by Supervisor Tim Tatum, representative of the Blue Ridge District of Franklin County, upon the following recorded vote:

AYES: Carter, Jamison, Mitchell, Quinn, Smith, Tatum, Thompson

\*Roll call vote was taken\*



Attest:

Madherleyn Torres  
Clerk, Board of Supervisors

January 24, 2024

DATE



# WESTLAKE-HALES FORD AREA PLAN

Adopted November 15, 2016

Amended January 16, 2023



## Table of Contents

Background.....	1
History of Westlake and Hales Ford.....	1
Booker T. Washington National Monument.....	1
Prior Planning Context.....	3
Relationship to Countywide Comprehensive Plan update .....	5
Demographics.....	5
Area Context and Existing Conditions.....	7
Existing Land Use/Figure 1 .....	7
Existing Zoning/Figure 2.....	9
Environmental Conditions/Figure 3 .....	10
Land Occupancy/Figure 4.....	12
Transportation Conditions/Figure 5 .....	14
Summary of Key Issues.....	15
Planning Process .....	15
Advisory Committee Report .....	16
Public Involvement.....	16
UDA Technical Assistance Grant .....	17
Policies for Designated Growth Areas .....	178
Vision Plan.....	19
Major Circulation Concept/Figure 6 .....	19
Minor Circulation Concept/Figure 7.....	21
Neighborhood Center Concept/Figure 8 .....	22
Open Space and Trails/Greenways Concept/Figure 9 .....	24

Water and Wastewater/Figure 10.....	26
Community Facilities .....	27
Future Land Use Concept.....	28
Future Land Use Map/Figure 11.....	289
Development Character.....	30
Policies by Land Use Category.....	30
Commercial Mixed Use .....	30
Residential Mixed Use .....	32
Suburban Residential .....	34
Rural Residential.....	36
Civic and Open Space.....	37
Gateways.....	38
Implementation .....	43
Funding Options for Infrastructure.....	43
Recommended Zoning Revisions.....	46
Recommended Amendments to the Residential Planned Unit Development District (RPD).....	47
Recommended Amendments to the Planned Commercial District (PCD).....	50
Recommended Amendments to the Westlake Village Center Overlay District. ....	52
Designated Growth Area Boundary.....	53
Designated Growth Area/Figure 12.....	54
Appendix A – Charting A Path to 2030 and Beyond .....	56

## BACKGROUND

### History of Westlake and Hales Ford

The Westlake - Hales Ford Planning Area was very rural in character for a long time. Both areas had farms (tobacco) and mills along the Roanoke River (formerly named Staunton River) before becoming part of Smith Mountain Lake. The Burroughs Plantation, 207 acre tobacco farm, was the birth place of Booker T. Washington. The Booker T. Washington National Monument was created by Congress in 1956. Another landmark is the Hook-Powell-Moorman property, which consist of numerous buildings and sites; such as the main farmhouse, store/slave quarters, and doctor's office. The Holland-Duncan House is another historic place in the area. The two-story house was built in the 1830s and a one-story frame post office and a v-notched log meat house that is used as a guest cabin still stand on the property. All three (3) properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

However, the Westlake – Hales Ford area in terms of development is a youthful area. In May of 1988 the Board of Supervisors adopted zoning for the Westlake and Hales Ford area and most of the existing developments were built over the last twenty-five (25) years. Developments like Bridgewater and Westlake Towne Center were developed less than twenty years ago. The surrounding residential growth has seen more commercial businesses develop to support the residences with goods and services to create a sense of community for the Gills Creek District. In fact, the Westlake – Hales Ford area has undergone a transformation from a predominant agricultural area to an area resembling more suburban type.

In 1960, Appalachian Power (American Electric Power) began to dam the Roanoke River and the Blackwater River at the Smith Mountain gorge to generate electricity. In March of 1966, Smith Mountain Lake reached full pond level, 795 feet above sea level, for the first time. The lake covers 20,600 acres and has over 500 miles of shoreline and the majority of the south shore of the lake lies in Franklin County. In 2016, Smith Mountain Lake is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with numerous events to promote the yearlong celebration. The lake is one of the most popular residential, recreational, and commercial destinations in all of Franklin County and beyond the County's borders.

### Booker T. Washington National Monument

The Monument contains a visitor center, administrative offices, and maintenance support and storage headquartered with the former Booker T. Washington Elementary School building, (a segregated school for African American children from 1954-1966). Cultural Resources include a 1890s tobacco barn, marked archeological sites and historic features, cemeteries, the Plantation Trail which allows visitor access to the park's Historic Area, and the Jack-O-Lantern Branch Trail which loops through old field meadows and forest and introduces visitors to the rich diversity of natural resources located within the park. The plantation house, known as the "big house" during Washington's tenure on the farm, burned in 1950. Its location is currently identified by an outline of stones that illustrate the dimension and size of the house. A second slave cabin structure believed to be the location of Washington's birth, once existed to the east and behind the plantation house and is marked with a similar outline of stones. The veracity of site improvements and features was documented in archeological

Adopted November 15, 2016

studies conducted in 1959 and 1999. Twentieth-century replicas include the kitchen cabin, smokehouse, horse barn, corn crib, blacksmith shop, hog pen, split rail fences, ducks, and chicken house. Heritage breed farm animals are kept at the park. Heirloom vegetables, dark-fired tobacco, corn, flax, and other 19th century era demonstrations crops are cultivated and harvested for interpretive setting and visitor education.

The mission of Booker T. Washington National Monument preserves and protects the birth, childhood home, and emancipation site of Booker T. Washington while interpreting his life experiences and significance in American history as the most influential African American between 1895 and 1915. The park provides a resource for public education and a focal point for continuing discussions about the legacy of Booker T. Washington, slavery, and the evolving context of race in American Society.

Booker T. Washington National Monument is managed as an educational center where Washington's life and work and the complexity of American civil rights and race relations from the antebellum period to the present can be examined. This concept expands the mission of the site beyond its original legislative purpose as a memorial to Mr. Washington, noted "educator and apostle of good will." The goal is to create a dynamic, challenging environment in which visitors contribute their views on the issues presented through on-site interpretation of life on a small, slave-holding Virginia tobacco plantation. Living history presentations of the life during Washington's developmental years as an enslaved child, supplemented by ranger programs, special events, an orientation film, and interactive exhibits, and provided visitors with a sensory immersion experience that lends understanding of the meaning and significance of Washington's life and the Monument. Resources are managed in a way to visually tell a compelling story. Existing historic and reconstructed structures, including buildings and fences, remain in situ to be preserved through regular maintenance. Some reconstruction of cultural landscape features may be undertaken from time to time if sufficient documentations are found. Natural resources have been baseline inventoried and are continuously monitored by park staff with assistance from the NPS Mid-Atlantic Inventory and Monitoring Program. The park is supported by large and enthusiastic volunteers in parks program and advocated for by the Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument. Source: General Management Plan for the Booker T. Washington National Monument.

#### Benefits of National Monument Designation

- A source of pride and identity and a benefit to the Franklin County community. The uniqueness of having a site that has been designated as being significant by the people of the United States of America, to be preserved and protected because of its importance and relevance to the American Experience.
- Raises profile of the site and brings new visitors. Hotels, restaurants, tour guide agencies, and local businesses all reap the economic advantages of national monument designation.
- Provides a unique opportunity to stimulate rural economies. According to the NPS, every dollar invested in national parks generates \$10 in return to local communities.
- National monuments protect America's most treasured lands, helping to guarantee they remain intact and unadulterated, while ensuring a lasting legacy for future generations.

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

### Planning Concerns

- In order to achieve its missions, the BTWNM must ensure that stream flows, both quantity and quality, are sustained in healthy conditions. Therefore, the success of the Monument is dependent on all actions within the watershed that affect flows in Gills Creek and Jack-O-Lantern Branch Streams.
- Visitors to BTWNM bring with them the expectation of an experience that portrays the mid-nineteenth century environment into which Mr. Washington was born and spent his early childhood years in slavery. An integral component of that experience is the visual experience. In order to deliver the opportunity for such visitor experience, it is important that uses outside the Monument but visible from within the historical core be designed with sensitivity to the Monument mission. The viewshed from within the park must be considered to protect the historical integrity of the site and quality of the visitor experience.

### Prior Planning Context

The Westlake – Hales Ford planning area has been studied and planned on numerous occasions. Citizens, business owners, agents, developers, and government officials have been planning anticipated growth in this area for over thirty (30) years. The following are documents used for planning purposes throughout the years.

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors adopted their first comprehensive land use (plan) on April 19, 1976. This newly adopted plan anticipated growth it what is known as Westlake and Hales Ford today. The Future Land Use Map shows commercial nodes in these two areas. The plan further discusses what type of growth to serve the residents of the district.

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors adopted their second comprehensive plan on December 16, 1985. The plan envisioned for this area would undergo intensive development over the next 15 years and built upon the first comprehensive plan showing small commercial nodes to support future residential development happening due to Smith Mountain Lake being a recreational area and the Roanoke urban area growth introducing individuals to this northern/northeastern part of the County. However, the area was beginning to undergo a transformation with single-family dwellings, mobile homes, multi-family dwellings, and campgrounds.

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors adopted the third comprehensive plan entitled: *Inventing Franklin County's Future – 1995 Comprehensive Plan* on April 4, 1995. The plan's future land use map envisioned what is known as Westlake and Hales Ford as a town, community center, or rural village area and growth area boundaries. The plan, like previous plans, saw the growth happening and envisioned the area needing support of retail, business, and service uses to support the different types of residential growth in the lake community.

A planning document entitled “Charting A Course For Smith Mountain Lake”: *The Vision. May, 1998*” describes a vision for the future of Smith Mountain Lake. In 1995, a strategic planning effort for the Smith Mountain Lake Policy Advisory Board grew to include three jurisdictions, two planning district commissions, American Electric Power, and numerous citizens. The Vision document had specific policies for land areas such

Adopted November 15, 2016

as, the lake waters, village centers, shorelines of the lake, gateways and highway corridors, rural, agricultural, forest lands and regional watershed. Furthermore, the Vision document had policies for infrastructure, cultural and social activities and how to finance these policies.

The draft Westlake Corner Community Plan "An element of the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan" dated July 18, 2000 was prepared by staff with information from a survey and results from a community visioning workshop. This draft plan had elements of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan with background studies and goals and objectives. This Plan had implementation strategies for future road network for short-term and long-term, future land use pattern for short-term and long-term and community design. This Plan was not officially adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

In June of 2001, Frazier Associates with the help of key stakeholders, planning commission, and staff built upon the Westlake Corner Community Plan and developed the Westlake Design Guidelines. The draft had design goals for the Westlake area with specific guidelines for streetscapes, private site development, and buildings. The Westlake Design Guidelines help in establishing the Westlake Village Center Overlay District located in the Franklin County Zoning Ordinance.

In November of 2001, a draft report entitled "Route 122 Corridor Study" from Burnt Chimney to Hales Ford Bridge analyzed the corridor for transportation needs. The corridor study prepared for West Piedmont Planning District Commission by URS Corporation (formerly United Research Services) dealt with corridor issues along Route 122. The study analyzed existing corridor conditions, forecasted corridor conditions, and suggested improvement alternatives along the corridor, and established conclusions and recommendations for the corridor.

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors adopted the County's fourth comprehensive plan in May of 2007. The Future Land Use Map designated Westlake as an unincorporated town and Hales Ford designation was a mixed use village due to the growth and potential growth of both areas. The Plan discusses the potential of both areas to have mixed use development and serve the surrounding areas.

In March of 2010, the Smith Mountain Lake Corridor Study was prepared by Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. with assistance from VDOT, HSMM/AECOM, Renaissance Planning Group, and Peggy Malone & Associates, Inc. This corridor study provided a comprehensive analysis focusing on the primary and secondary public roadways that provide access to and circulation around Smith Mountain Lake. The key roadways were the primary routes of 122, 24, 116, 40, and secondary routes of 634, 626, 834, 608, and 616. The study included community profile, existing conditions, public and stakeholder input, projected future conditions, recommendations, and context sensitive design solutions and guidelines.

### **Relationship to Countywide Comprehensive Plan update**

The most recent update of the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in May of 2007. The Plan identified two (2) unincorporated towns and seven (7) villages in the County. The Plan identified Westlake as an unincorporated town and Hales Ford as a village. The Plan stated that each of the two (2) unincorporated towns and seven (7) villages should adopt detailed community plans to help guide growth and development for these important commercial/residential areas throughout the County. It was the recommendation of the advisory committee that Westlake and Hales Ford areas be combined into a single plan. The Plan established policies for each of the towns and villages specifically to establish, identify, and plan the enhancement of key gateways and entry points to the towns and villages and to establish guidelines for landscaping, setback, and coordination of access to enhance the quality of these points. To date, the County has adopted one (1) village plan in Union Hall.

### **Demographics**

The 2010 census total population of Franklin County was 56,159 an increase of 18.8 percent. The Gills Creek District was made up of the following census tracts 201.01 and 203 and one Census Designated Place (CDP) – Westlake Corner. Census tracts are subdivisions of counties and equivalent areas that average around 4,000 or more and have boundaries that follow permanent, easily identifiable features. CDPs are closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. The census supplies demographics are total population, age, race, and housing types for each area. Another source for demographics by the Census Bureau is the American Community Survey (ACS) which is an ongoing statistical survey. The data is collected and estimated for five (5), three (3), or one (1) year estimates. The ACS regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census, such as educational attainment, income, disability, employment and housing characteristics to name a few. The ACS is estimated data unlike the decennial census which is an actual count every ten (10) years.

According to the 2010 census approximately 11,321 individuals lived in the Gills Creek District. There were 5,194 individuals residing in tract 201.01 and 6,127 in tract 203. There were 5,799 individuals over the age of 50 combined in the two districts, which makes up 51 percent of the population in Gills Creek. The age group 18 and under in the Gills Creek District was 1,915, which made up only 17 percent of the population. The two census tracts breaks down race as the following: 10,843 Whites, 265 African Americans, 46 Asians, 27 AIAN (American Indian/Alaska Native), 5 NHPI (Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander), 36 classified as some other race, and 99 identified as two or more races.

The 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates 8,081 individuals living in the Gills Creek District. This number is lower than the 2010 census due to redistricting of the election district in 2011. There is an estimate of 4,615 individuals over the age of 50, which makes up 57 percent of the population in the Gills Creek District. The Gills Creek District estimated break down of race as follows: 7457 Whites, 286 African Americans, 12 Asians, 86 classified as some other race, and 240 identified as two or more races.

According to the 2010 census the Westlake Corner CDP had a total population of 976 individuals with 946 White, 10 African American, 7 Asian, 3 American Indian and Alaska Native, 2 as other race, and 8 identified by two or more races. There were 553 over the age of 50, which made up 57 percent of the CDP population. The ACS has an estimate of 940 individuals living in the Westlake Corner CDP with 906 White and 34 identified as two or more races. The CDP has an estimated 583 over the age of 50, which is 62 percent of the population of the CDP.

In 2010, the total housing units for the two tracts were 7,354 with 4,181 being owner-occupied and 650 housing units were renter-occupied. Vacant housing in the two tracts was 2,523. The census bureau defines vacant housing as housing for rent, rented, not occupied, for sale only, sold, not occupied, for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, for migrant workers, and other vacant.

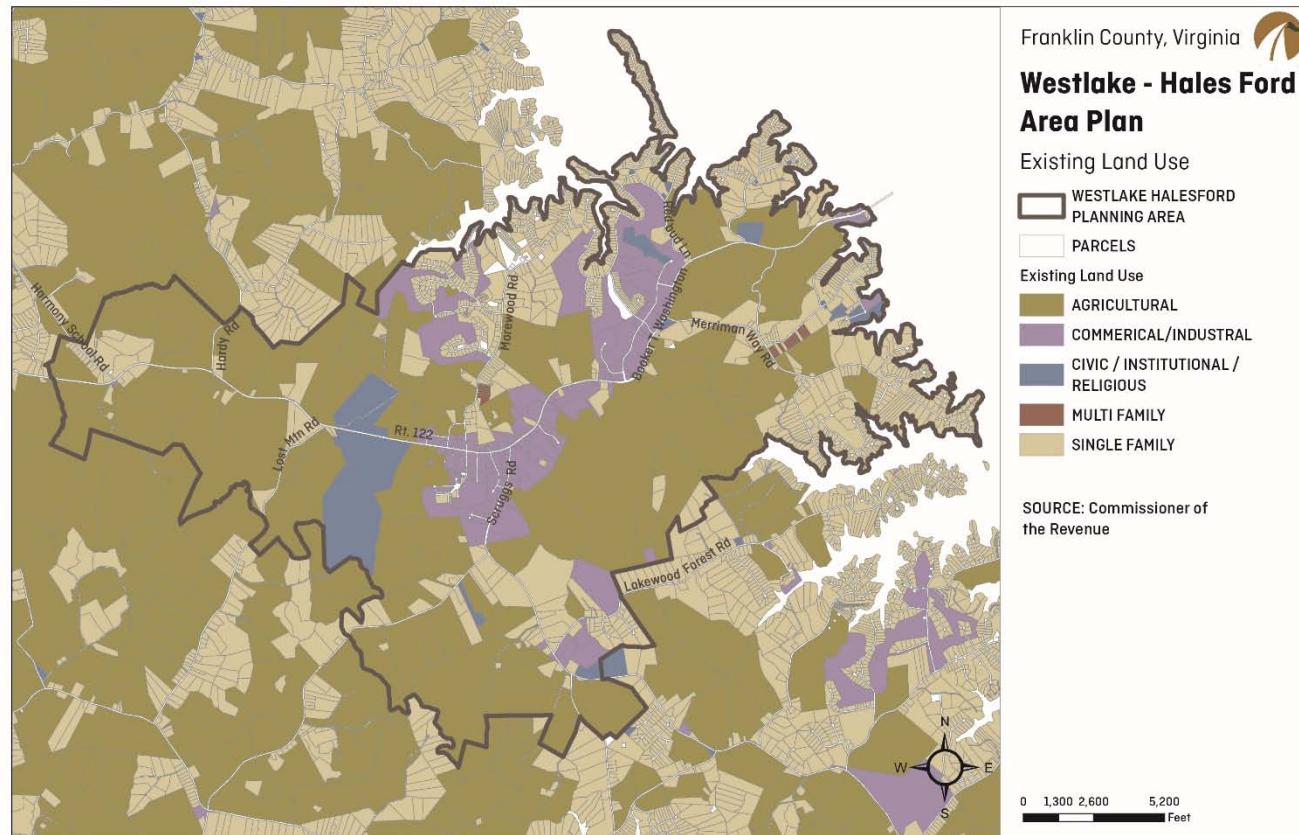
In 2010, the total housing units for the CDP was 663 with 361 being owner-occupied and 78 being renter-occupied. Vacant housing is 224.

It is intended that the Westlake Corner Census Designated Place (CDP) will be modified as a result of the adoption of this plan to allow the County to more accurately collect demographic data within the Westlake – Hales Ford Planning Area and Designated Growth Area (DGA).

## AREA CONTEXT AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section provides context for the planning area's future vision by outlining a series of current conditions, including information on land use, transportation, and environment. This information can guide the area vision and implementation strategy by identifying existing trends, issues, and opportunities.

### Existing Land Use /Figure 1



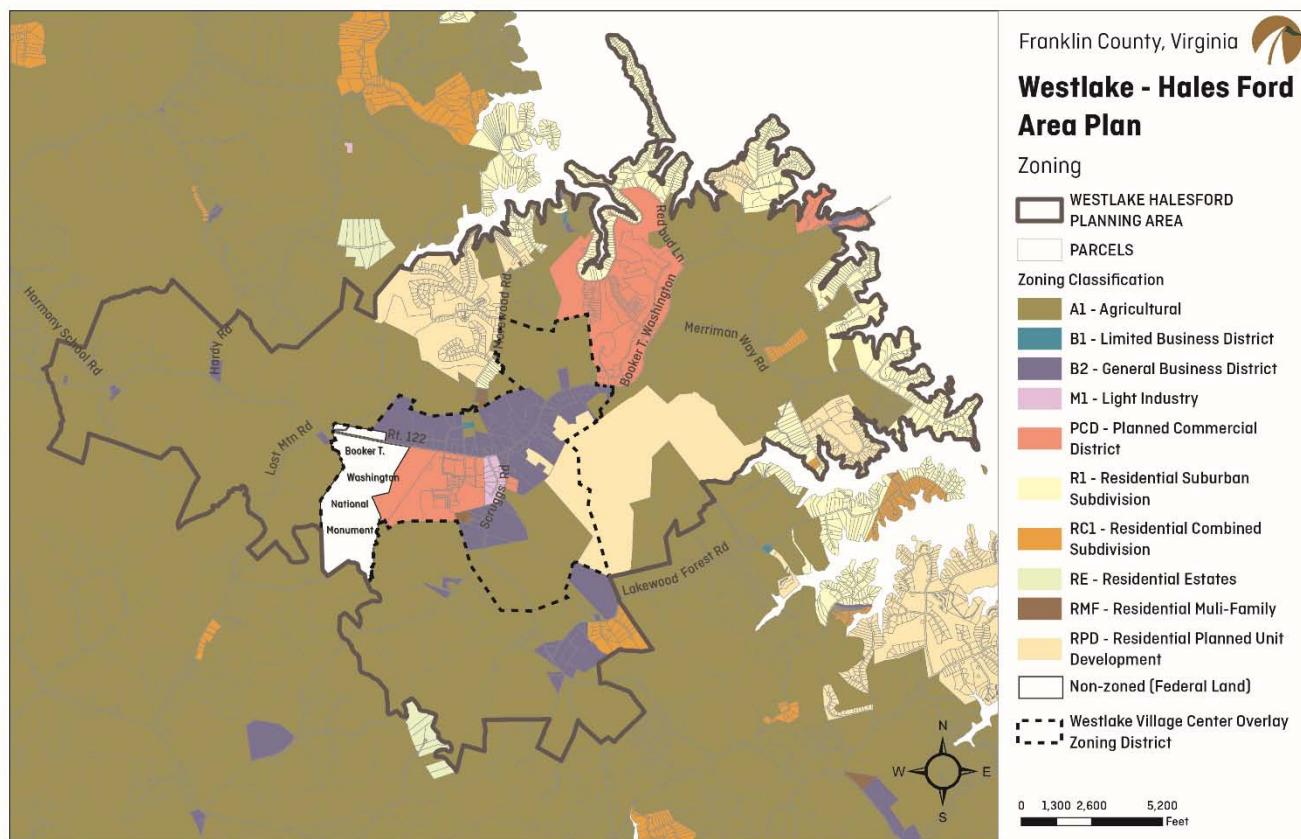
The mix of land uses in the Westlake Hales Ford Planning Area is as diverse as any unincorporated part of Franklin County, with agricultural, single family, and commercial/industrial parcels found in roughly equal measure. In general, single family and agricultural uses form an outer ring in the planning area, with single family uses along the lake shore and agricultural uses inland. There are a few commercial uses in this outer ring, most notably at Hales Ford, as well as

at crossroads or other high visibility locations. The planning area's inner core is heavily commercial, though interspersed with single-family, multi-family, and civic uses.

The mix and location of land uses is evidence of a high-functioning community that is a regional draw for commercial and civic activities. However, the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and multi-family housing along Route 122 all reflect and reinforce the auto-oriented nature of the area. Overall, a future development pattern that focuses on a mix of uses that could be accessed by a range of transportation modes would support the existing land use, though some changes would be needed to encourage alternative transportation modes.

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

### Existing Zoning/Figure 2



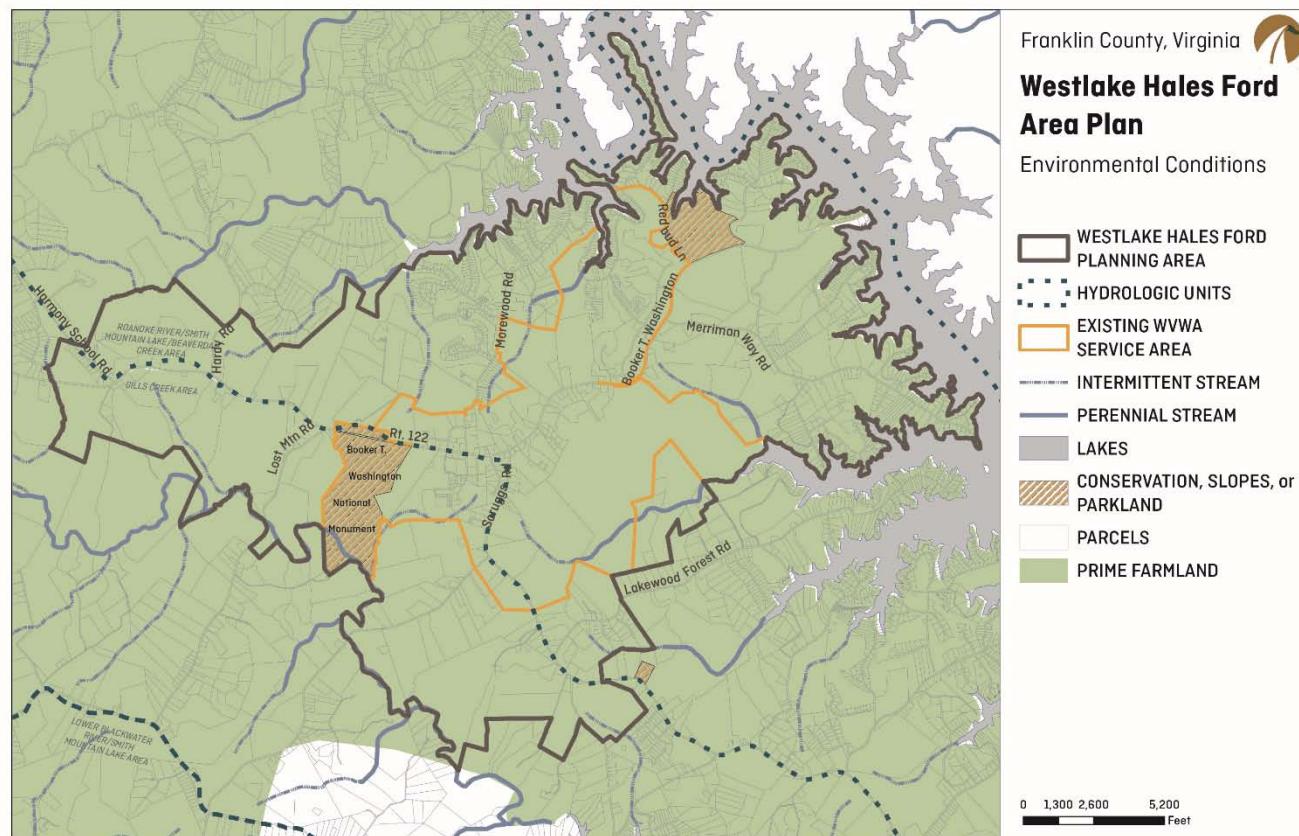
The pattern of zoning designation within the planning area resembles the existing land use pattern. A-1 Agricultural is the predominant zoning classification in the planning area, and is even more prevalent outside of it. R-1, RC-1, RPD and RMF residential districts are all found in the planning area, as well as within the Westlake Village Center Overlay District. B-1 and B-2 Business Districts, M-1 Light Manufacturing District, and PCD Planned Commercial Districts comprise the remaining zoning districts in the planning area. The commercial zoning districts are mostly concentrated in the center of the planning area, though there are non-residential districts at major crossroads and other high visibility areas. A large portion of these zoned area have been approved with conditional zoning, but have not yet been developed.

The existing zoning pattern – a commercially-focused core immediately surrounded by higher density planned development, ringed by traditional rural and suburban development – reflects an intentional effort to create a cohesive

town. However, existing zoning requirements limit the potential for a nuanced transition from town center to low-density suburban or rural uses, as there is little opportunity for mixes of uses within the various zoning classifications.

Accommodating a compact, mixed use development pattern in the planning area would be fairly consistent with existing zoning patterns, but there is a need to insert additional development flexibility into the prominent zoning districts of which the Westlake – Hales Ford area is comprised.

### Environmental Conditions/Figure 3



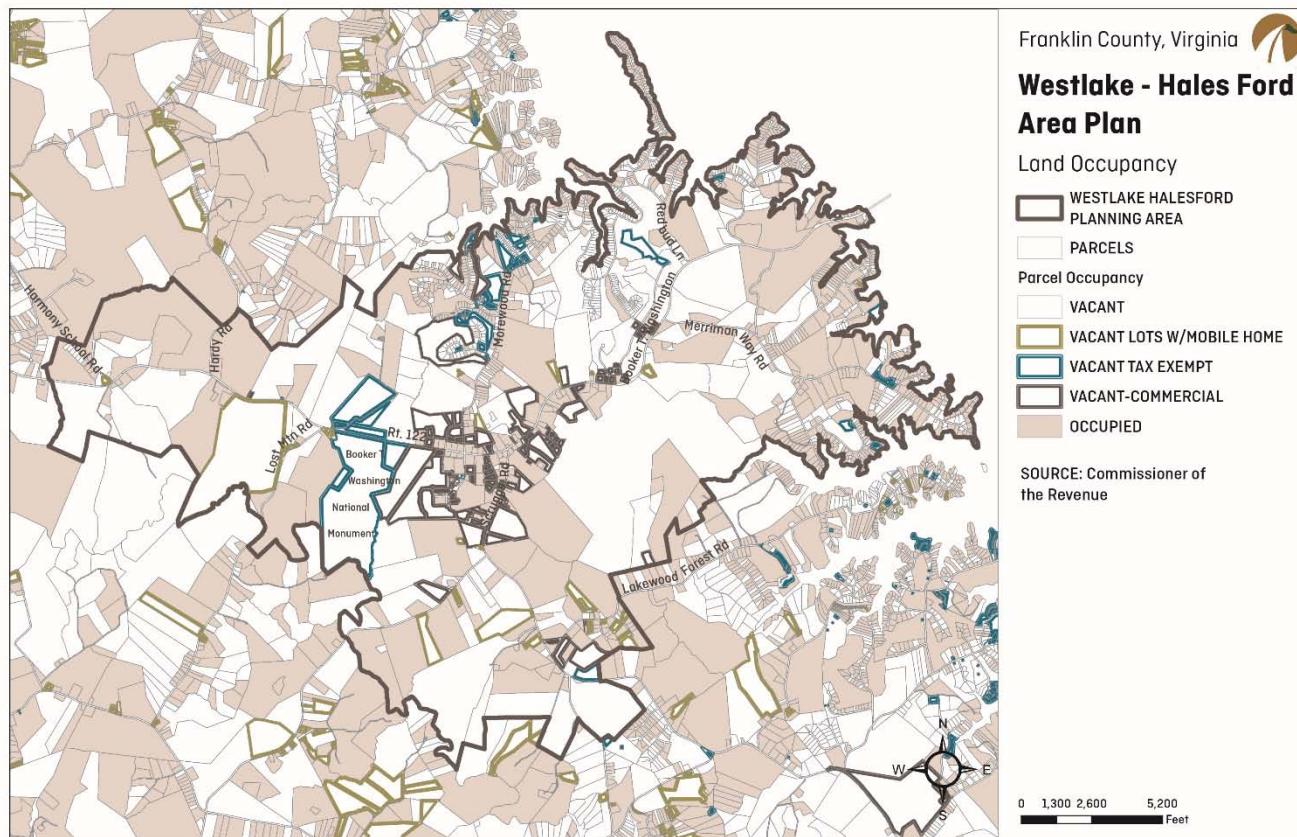
Environmental conditions in the planning area were evaluated to determine the extent to which there are environmental constraints that would impact future development, either by prohibiting or limiting development, or otherwise through the need for mitigation in the event of future development. The entire Westlake Hales Ford

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

Planning Area is identified as prime farmland, as is most of the land in the vicinity of the planning area. The central third of the planning area is within the existing Western Virginia Water Authority service area, which means that new development outside this area would need on-site water and wastewater service.

Additionally, there are a limited number of perennial and intermittent streams in the planning area, some of which serve as natural parcel boundaries. All told, the environmental conditions in the planning area do not look to impact future development potential.

Land Occupancy/Figure 4



Land occupancy data can be helpful in showing the extent to which land is available for new development, and the amount of untouched land as opposed to previously developed and occupied land that have become vacant over time.

County GIS data provides information on the occupancy status of all parcels in the county. Parcels are generally listed as occupied or vacant, but some vacant parcels are listed with additional information about the nature of their previous use. As a result, parcels can be listed as the following:

- Occupied
- Vacant

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

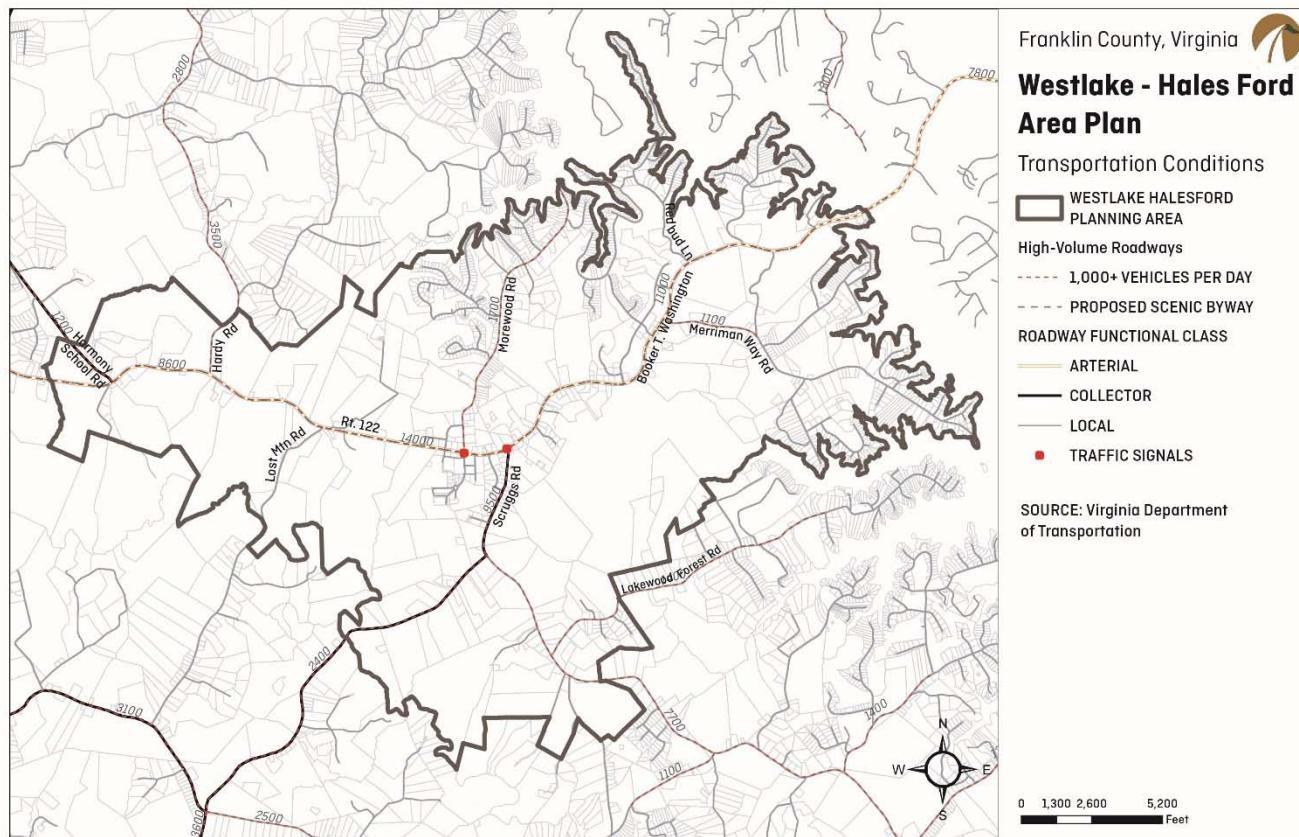
- Vacant – Commercial parcel
- Vacant – Tax Exempt parcel (such as publicly owned land that has not been built upon)
- Vacant – Mobile Home lot/parcel

There is an even mix of occupied and vacant land in the planning area, with higher occupancy along the lakeshore and in the Westlake core, as well as a long stretch of Route 122 and Scruggs Road. However, no areas except perhaps the lakeshore are fully occupied. There are a large number of vacant commercial sites along Route 122, especially in and around the town's core. There are also several large undeveloped parcels throughout the planning area, with many smaller commercial sites. Note that the parcels listed as vacant tax exempt include the Booker T. Washington National Monument, which is not subject to this area plan. Other tax exempt parcels are common open space and permanent conservation easements.

The only undevelopable land is the Booker T. Washington National Monument. It should be noted that two places are listed on the National Historic Registry as Historic Places being Booker T. Washington National Monument and the Hook-Powell-Moorman Farm. Furthermore, the Dinwiddie Farms Limited Company and Virginia Outdoors Foundation own a conservation easement containing over 127 acres of land along Route 122 between Redbud Lane (LakeWatch Plantation) and Lakemount Drive.

Overall, there appears to be ample room for accommodating a wide range of residential and non-residential growth in the Westlake – Hales Ford area.

## Transportation Conditions/Figure 5



Transportation infrastructure and the current use of that infrastructure support the existing development in the area, and also point to potential transportation needs for accommodating future growth.

The planning area's transportation network is dominated by Route 122 and Scruggs Road, both of which carry much higher volumes of traffic than the remaining network. This is reflected in the location of traffic signals at the intersections of Route 122 and Scruggs Road and Route 122 and Morewood Road.

High volume through traffic is not, however, the only purpose of Route 122. It is also a regional connector, the main connection to Smith Mountain Lake, and is part of a larger proposed scenic byway. As such, there are seemingly conflicting priorities for this roadway, which can only be accommodated through thoughtful, coordinated land use

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

and transportation planning decisions. It is possible that satisfying all priorities cannot be accomplished without additional infrastructure investments. Future growth management must be careful to consider and appropriately weigh through traffic and community needs.

VItrans2040 is the Commonwealth of Virginia's long-range multimodal transportation plan. Only projects that help address needs identified in the VItrans2040 will be considered for funding under SMART Scale. Urban Development Area (UDAs)/ Designated Growth Areas (DGAs) and Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS), are eligible for SMART Scale funding along with regional networks. The County and the Chamber of Commerce is requesting an update to VItrans to include Route 122 from Hales Ford Bridge to the town of Rocky Mount as a regional collector to help with funding. The safety needs assessment for VItrans had two (2) intersections listed in the top 100 safety needs in the Salem District. The intersections of Route 122 and Hardy Road and Route 122 and Lost Mountain Road were ranked in the top 100 fatal and serious injury.

Two (2) VDOT projects have been approved for the Westlake - Hales Ford area to improve safety and traffic flow. The first project is the construction of a new right turn lane on Scruggs Road at the intersection of Route 122 and Scruggs Road at the existing traffic signal. The second project was approved June 2016 by the Commonwealth Transportation Board under the new funding source called Smart Scale (formerly HB2) for the County's Six Year Improvement Program for primary roads; this project is located at the intersection of Route 122 and Hardy Road. The improvements include a new north bound left turn lane on Route 122, the improvement of an existing right turn lane on Route 122, access management to the existing commercial business on the northeast corner of Route 122, and shoulder improvements.

### Summary of Key Issues

The main issues identified in the context and existing conditions analysis are as follows:

- Existing zoning districts do not permit a mix of uses consistent with a town concept
- Existing wastewater and water service is available to many – but not all – areas of potential higher intensity development
- Route 122 is a heavily used roadway that serves multiple and often conflicting uses
- Travel in the area is almost exclusively by automobile, and there is little in the way of infrastructure or policy to facilitate a more multi-modal travel environment

The goal of this area plan is to find ways to address these issues while remaining true to the Comprehensive Plan and the evolving vision for Westlake – Hales Ford. In addition, an updated Route 122 corridor study should be conducted within the planning area to build on previously written plans for the corridor. Also, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan will be updated to guide transportation projects along Route 122 and throughout the planning area.

## Planning Process

### **Advisory Committee Report**

In January 2014, the Gills Creek Supervisor, Bob Camicia established a Westlake – Hales Ford Planning Advisory Committee to review the Westlake Hales Ford Area (WHFA) and to make recommendations for the future of this area. The advisory committee was comprised of real estate agents, chamber of commerce members, land owners, citizens, contractors, and developers.

The advisory report is the culmination of two years of monthly meeting and discussions with subject-matter professionals, close dialogue with the business community, numerous discussions with individuals and small group. Three public community meetings were held on February 24, 2014, March 23, 2015 and January 27, 2016, for public input on the process and direction of the advisory committee report. The Advisory Report is attached to the plan as an addendum.

The advisory report identifies planning concerns and challenges such as, but not limited to; maintaining and improving property values, promote the area's competitiveness for business and employment, land use threats, need for safe movement for pedestrians and bicyclist, infrastructure improvements, to protect and preserve heritage resources, and foster diversity of housing types. Recommended strategies were developed by the advisory committee to guide future of WHFA such as, but not limited to, changing the future land use map to be suburban like, (see map attached), finalize proposed zoning categories, expand recreational opportunities, develop and support a vibrant business and residential community.

The advisory report was presented to the Planning Commission on March 8, 2016, and to the Board of Supervisors on March 15, 2016. On March 15, 2016, the Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Commission and staff to write a community plan for the Westlake – Hales Ford Area.

### **Public Involvement**

The Planning Commission held work sessions on March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 23rd, and July 23rd to develop the Westlake – Hales Ford Community Plan. The work sessions were facilitated by county planning staff and a consultant team that was provided by a technical assistance grant from the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OPII) under the Urban Development Area Grant Program. In addition, an Open House was held at the Westlake Library on September 1<sup>st</sup> from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for public comment prior to the Planning Commission public hearing.

The planning commission held a public hearing at Trinity Ecumenical Parish on September 13, 2016 for the Westlake – Hales Ford Community Plan. At the public hearing the Planning Commission decided to delay the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to allow staff to make changes gathered at the public hearing. The

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

Planning Commission recommended approval by a vote of 6-0 on October 11, 2016 and to forward the recommendation of approval to the Board of Supervisors for a public hearing.

The Board of Supervisor held a public hearing on November 15, 2016 for the adoption of the Westlake – Hales Ford Community Plan. The plan was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan on November 15, 2016.

### UDA Technical Assistance Grant

As enabled by Virginia Code § 2.2-229, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OAPI) of the Secretary of Transportation is offering grants for professional planning consultant assistance to local governments and regional entities to establish and support Urban Development Areas. Urban Development Areas (UDAs) can cover a wide variety of community types, ranging from small town or village centers to suburban activity areas to urban downtowns. UDAs can help local governments and regional entities to focus investments and create great places that attract businesses and workers alike.

The Franklin County Planning Department applied for a technical assistance grant on December 18, 2015, and was awarded on January 7, 2016.

The technical assistance, in the form of direct on-call consultant support, assisted the County in the following:

- plan for and designate at least one urban/village development area in their comprehensive plan,
- revise as appropriate applicable land use ordinances (including appropriate zoning classifications and subdivision ordinances) to incorporate the principles of traditional neighborhood design (see §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia),
- assist with public participation processes, and other related tasks.

In response to emerging regional, state, and national demographic and real estate trends, the County has incorporated Designated Growth Areas (DGA) as the mechanism for future development that is consistent with traditional neighborhood design principles. Market pressure for new residential and non-residential development, along with preferences among existing residents and businesses for opportunities to age in place is expected to increase demand for different types of development than traditional single-family detached homes and highway-oriented commercial development. In many counties across Virginia, these trends are leading to the development of walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types that have easy access to shops, jobs, and entertainment. Moreover, enabling this type of development in Franklin County supports the housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental goals and objectives of the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan.

The County's DGA designation is consistent with Section 15.2–2223.1 of the Virginia State Code for urban development areas. This designation does not restrict development outside of the DGA, it merely provides clarity of purpose in future development patterns within the DGA.

### **Policies for Designated Growth Areas**

Designated Growth Areas are intended to encourage development that makes use of traditional neighborhood design principles. Encouraging these principles in new development within the DGAs will help position Franklin County for growth and economic development, while maintaining its rural look and feel. It is the County's policy to encourage within the DGAs the following traditional town design principles:

- Pedestrian-friendly road design
- Interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads
- Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks
- Preservation of natural areas
- Mixed-use neighborhoods and a mixture of housing types
- Reduction of front and side yard building setbacks
- Reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections to calm traffic on local streets, as permissible by VDOT standards.

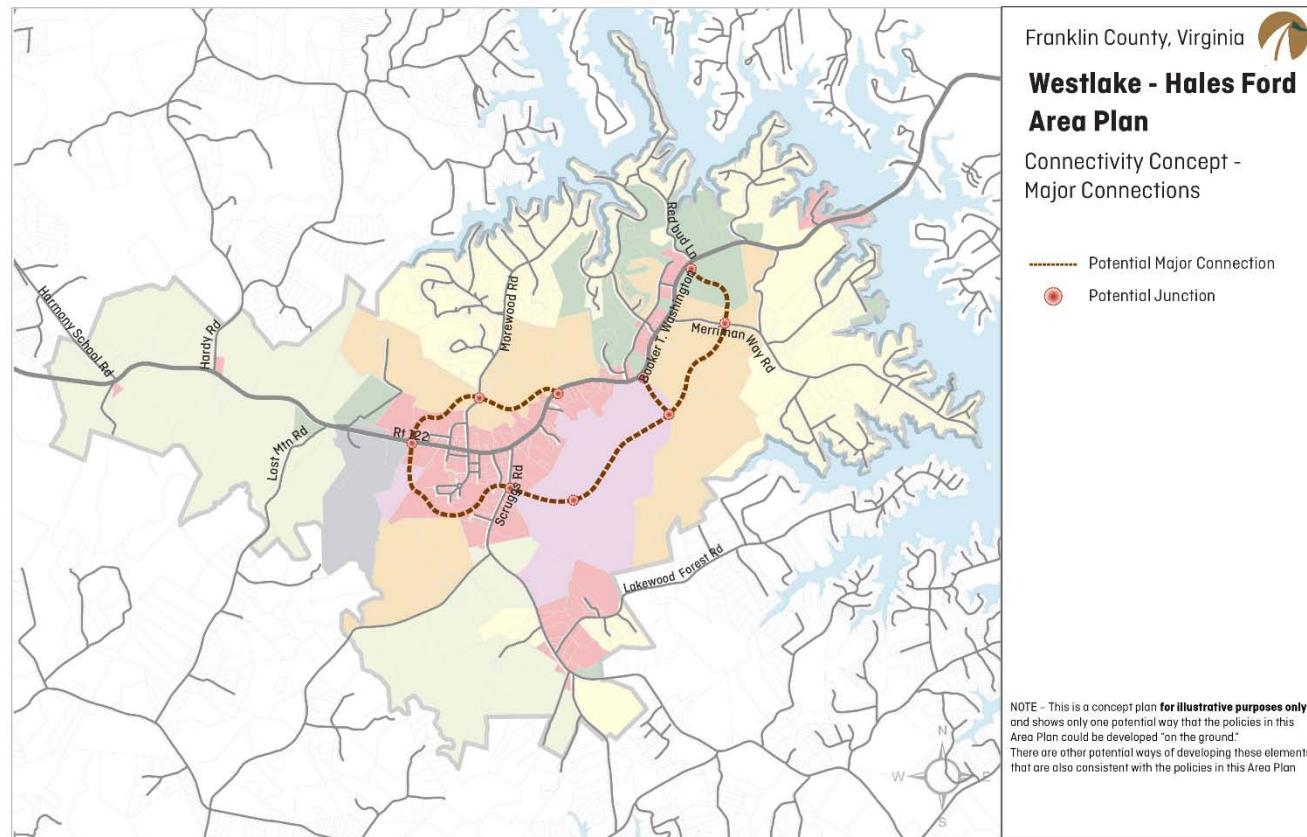
The County intends to review its zoning and subdivision ordinance to remove obstacles to development that embodies these traditional neighborhood design principles within the DGAs.

See the 'Designated Growth Area Boundary' section at the end of this plan for the determination of a DGA for the Westlake – Hales Ford area.

## VISION PLAN

This area plan was undertaken as an independent project from the Citizens' Advisory Report, but did incorporate and build upon that work wherever possible. To that end, the vision plan was based in large part on the Report's Future Land Use Concept. Many of the other items and recommendations found in the Citizen's Advisory Report can be used to assist the County in recreation planning, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) development, and overall strategic planning.

### Major Circulation Concept/Figure 6

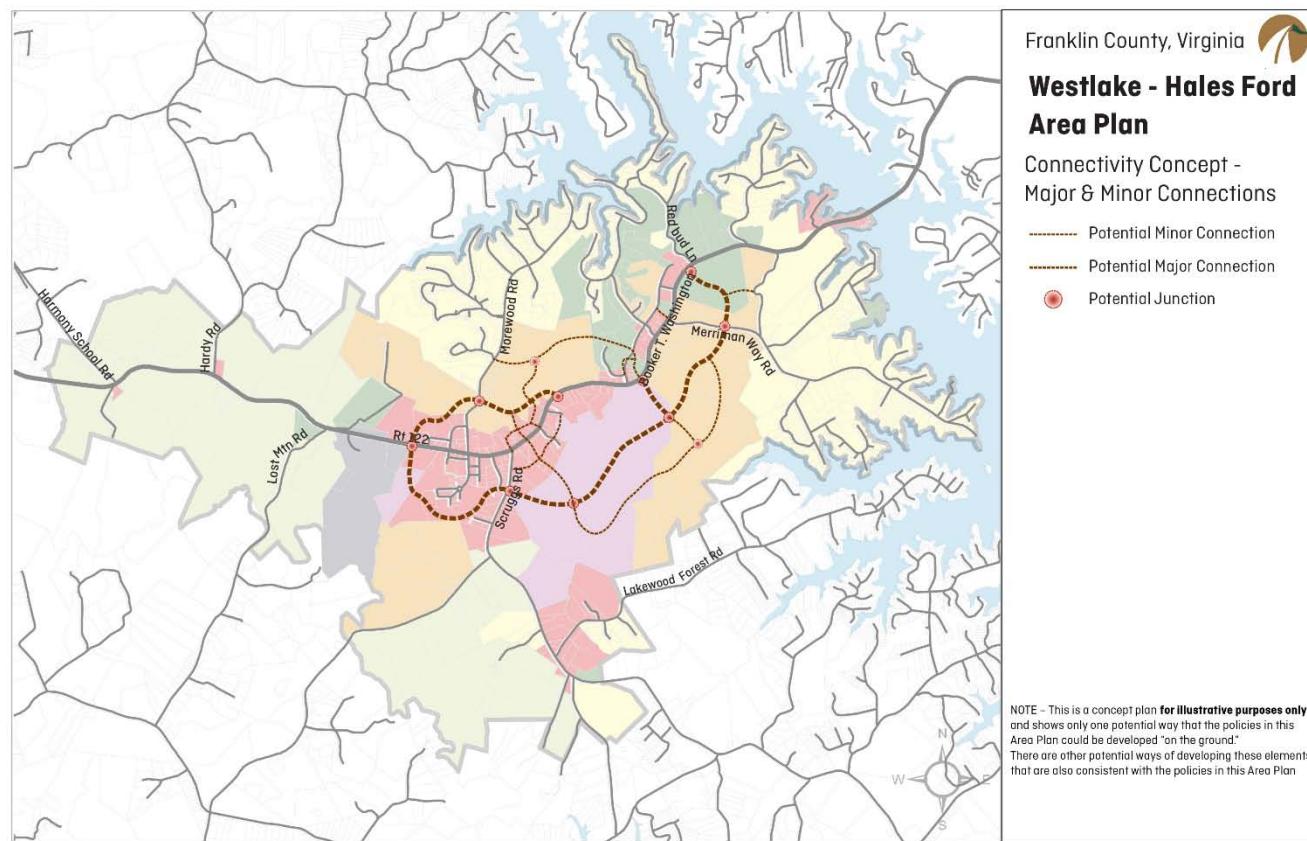


Circulation constraints were identified previously as a potential issue in the Westlake-Hales Ford planning area, especially as new development is attracted to the area. Route 122 is already the only east-west roadway in the planning area, and any new development would likely add increased traffic volumes of local residents, shoppers, visitors, and intercountry travelers. With this growth in destinations (both residential and non-residential) and traffic, increasing conflicts between local and through traffic are expected. With some travelers looking for a slower, scenic drive, and other travelers expecting a faster through trip, safety issues become a primary concern.

This concept attempts to address these issues by creating a series of parallel east-west connections both north and south of Route 122. These major connections would be of moderate speed (such as 35 or 45 MPH), and would be designed to accommodate bicycle users and small-scale transit services throughout. Pedestrian infrastructure – either sidewalks or multi-use paths – are also recommended, but there may be instances where there would be limited or no development along stretches of these major connectors, thus limiting pedestrian use.

Overall, the creation of a new set of east-west connections that intersect Route 122 in a few places allows for an internal connectivity network between the higher intensity future land uses that fosters effective travel for local residents, while also easing some of the congestion on Route 122 related to new growth in the planning area.

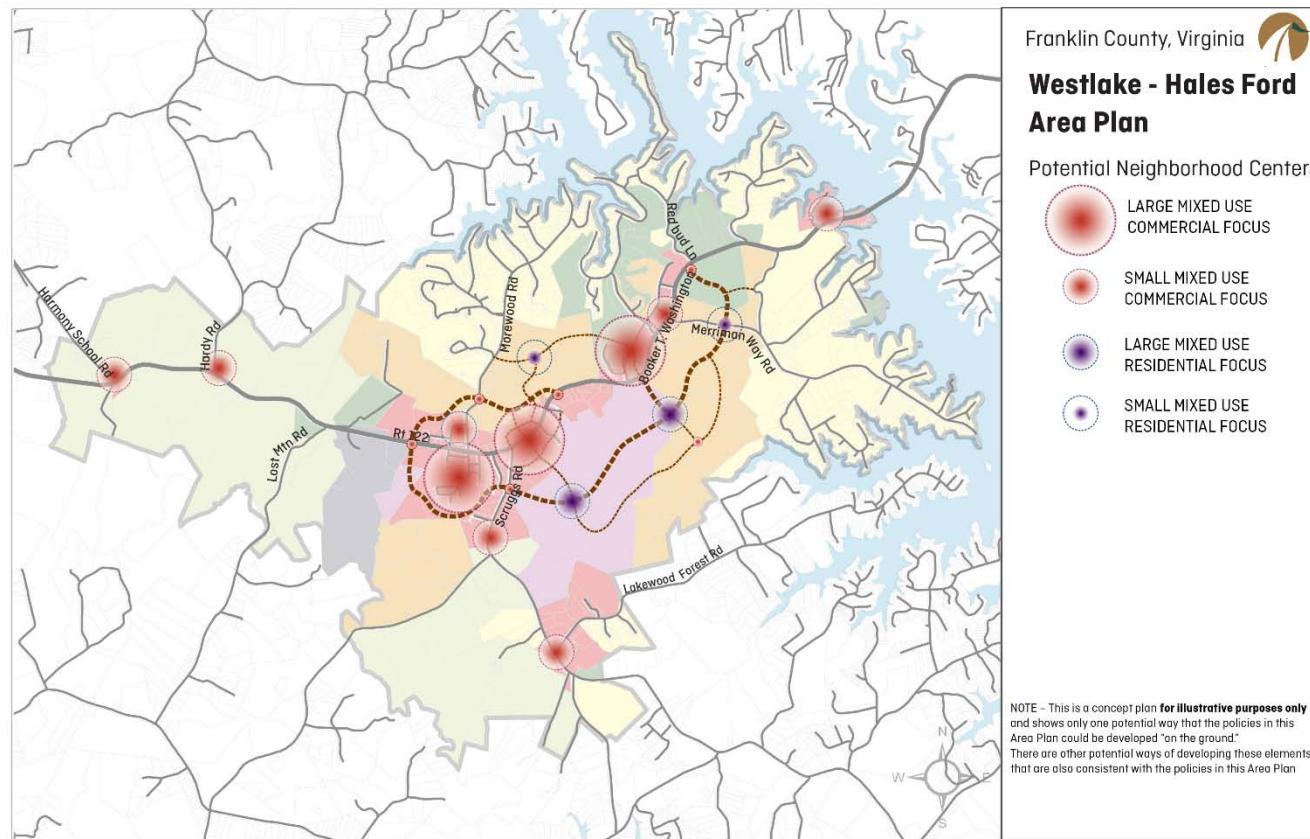
## Minor Circulation Concept/Figure 7



As areas build out over time, secondary connections are needed to enhance local circulation patterns, such as those taken within or between adjacent neighborhoods. Areas like Westlake Towne Center have a good network of interconnected local roads that distribute local traffic, and this type of pattern should be generally continued for all new developments.

These minor connections should be designed for lower to moderate speeds (such as 25 to 35 MPH), and would accommodate bicycle and pedestrian use throughout. Unlike major connections, all minor connections would emphasize walking through the use of sidewalks on all streets and crosswalks at key junctions.

Neighborhood Center Concept/Figure 8

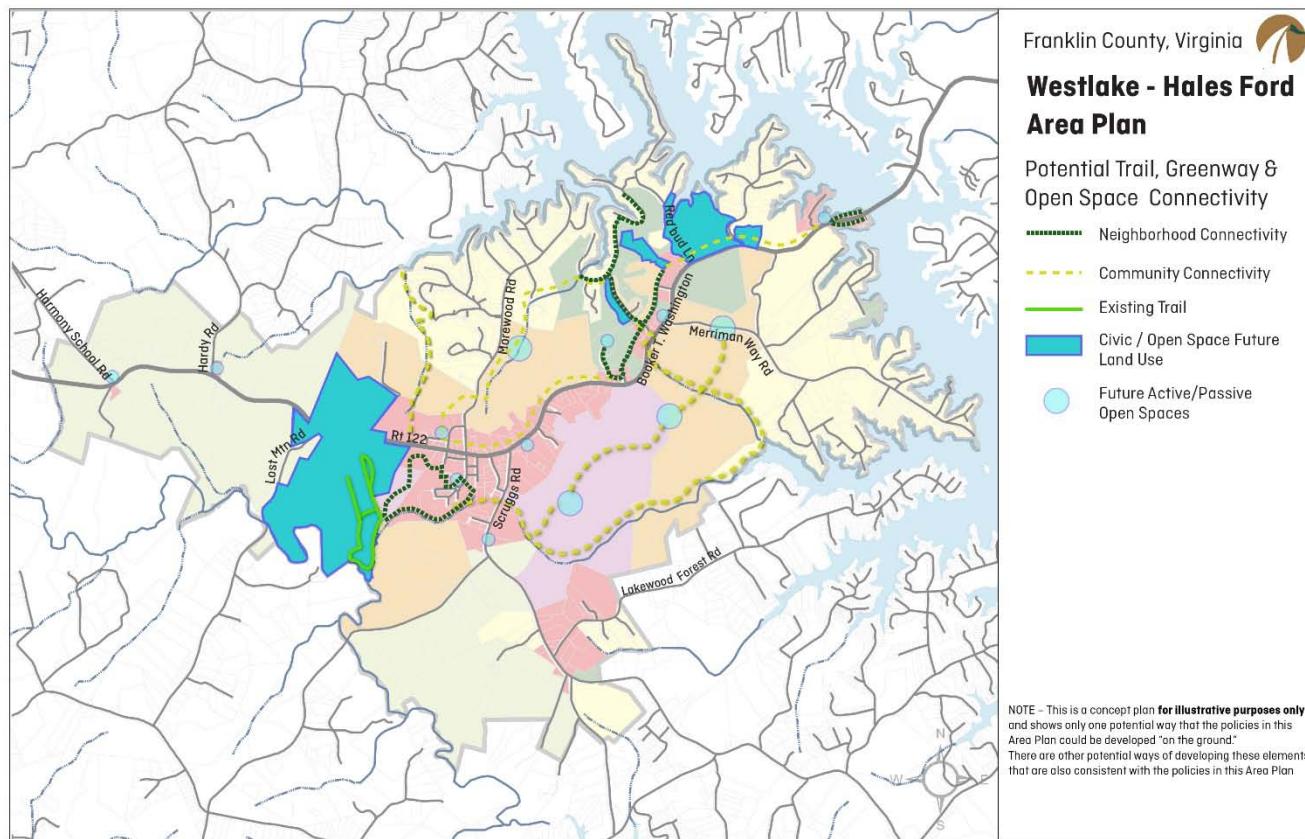


Neighborhood Centers develop most naturally at the crossroads of connectivity, and thus are influenced by any major and minor connections developed in the future. In general, larger neighborhood centers would be located at major crossroads, while smaller centers would be more likely located as minor crossroads. Neighborhood Centers should be mixed use, but each center should have a commercial or residential "focus" based on future land use policies. This means that within each center there would exist both residential and commercial uses, but one or the other would be the predominant use. In the conceptual plan above, a mix of commercially-focused and residentially-focused centers are envisioned for the Westlake – Hales Ford area. Centers on or adjacent to existing major roads (Route 122 and

Scruggs Road) are generally best suited to be commercially focused. Centers on new major connectors or at otherwise more minor junctions are generally best suited to be residentially focused.

For each neighborhood center, regardless of type, a system of internal circulation would provide auto and non-auto connections within its borders. These secondary internal connections should be designed to provide low speed local traffic so as to enhance safety along with connectivity. Centers would also have multiple points of entry, with those entry points thoughtfully located so as to make for easy connections from one center to another.

## Open Space and Trails/Greenways Concept/Figure 9



Three hallmarks of successful towns is that they have a focal point, such as a multi-purpose center, and provide a range of open spaces and trails/greenways that residents, workers, or visitors can access using multiple modes of travel, not just automobiles. One way to provide benefits to both open space and multi-modal access is through an interconnected open space and trails/greenways system.

The concept plan above envisions a set of new open spaces and trails/greenways that connect to one another and provide access to active recreation, scenic vistas, and other outdoor amenities. Each neighborhood center would have its own open space: residentially focused centers would have larger spaces focused on active recreation (trails/greenways, playgrounds, ballfields, etc.) and land conservation; commercially focused centers would have

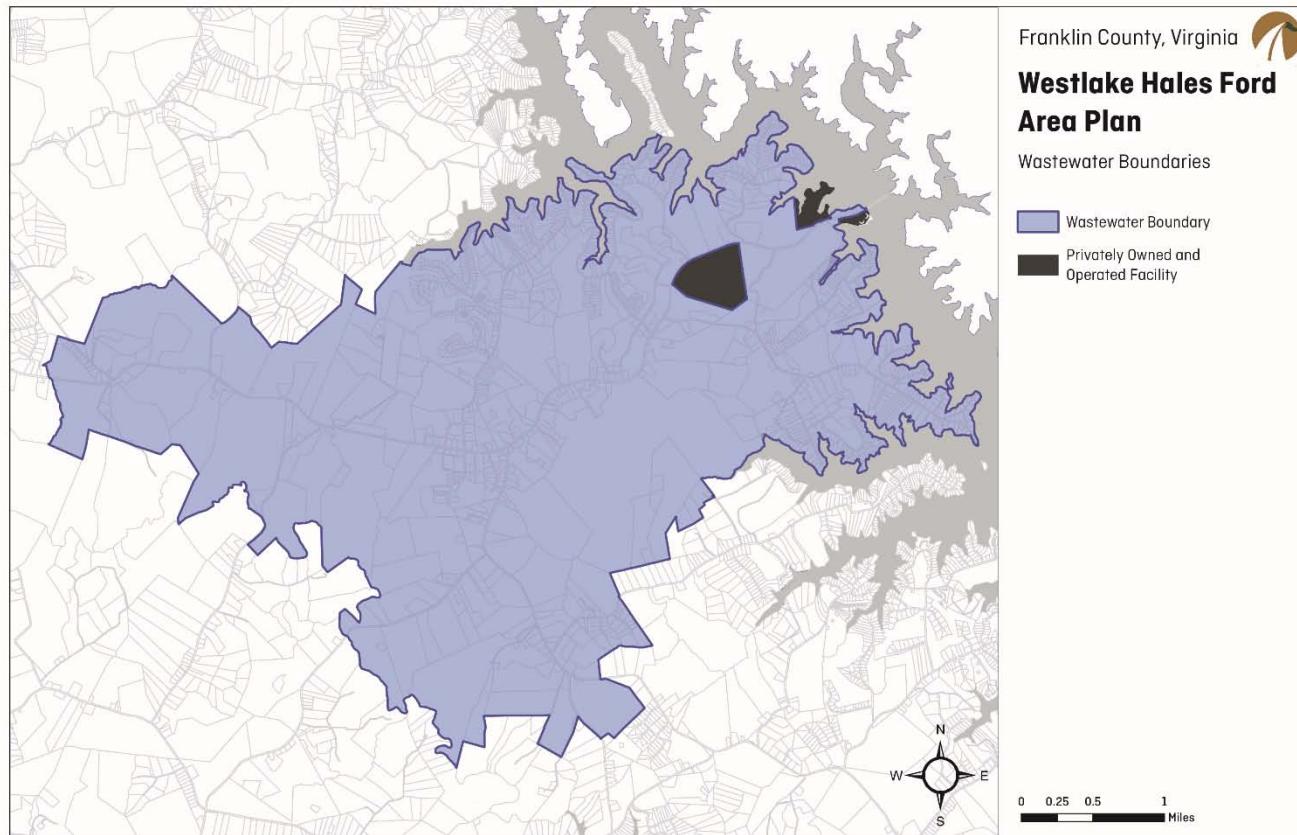
## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

smaller open spaces focused on passive recreation (plazas, public gardens, etc.). In general, open spaces would have a connection to an area wide trail/greenway system. Larger residentially focused centers would include extensive neighborhood trails/greenways like the ones envisioned for Westlake and reproduced in the map above.

A group of citizens and business owners are working together to obtain a recreational needs assessment for the Gills Creek District. This group has been meeting to discuss recreational needs for the citizens, businesses, and tourist for this area to promote the area as a place to work, play, and live.

The establishment of a multi-purpose center, to be located in the Westlake area, will support the "urban like" identification of this designated growth area. The center will support and grow a vibrant retirement sector, as well as, a business and tourism community that will serve as an economic engine therein preserving and sustaining a strong tax base for Franklin County.

Water and Wastewater/Figure 10



Franklin County joined the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) in November of 2009. The boundary of the Westlake Village Center Overlay District was the first service boundary for wastewater in the Westlake area. In July 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted a new wastewater service area for the WVWA to encompass all areas in the Westlake – Hales Ford Planning area boundary not already under control by another entity. The map above shows the wastewater service for WVWA. Water service is available for almost the entire Westlake – Hales Ford Planning Area. The Plan envisions the entire area of Westlake – Hales Ford to be served by public water. The expansion of a larger service area will be approved by the Board of Supervisors at a later date.

## **Community Facilities**

Community facilities are an important part of the Westlake – Hales Ford Planning area. Sheriff's Department in 2005 opened a substation in the Westlake area due to the population growth of the County. In 2008 Franklin County Public Safety opened Westlake Station behind Velocity Care on Route 122. This station is opened 24/7 and is the second busiest district for the entire County. There are six paramedic firefighters working out of the Westlake Station. Franklin County library opened the Westlake Branch Library at Westlake Towne Center; which offers a wide variety of services and events for the Westlake – Hales Ford area.

The County's public works department is working on a new collection site at the LakeWatch Plantation for citizens of the area to have another option for trash collection.

One of the key components of the Citizen Advisory Report was the establishment of a multi-purpose center, to be located in the Westlake area. The multi-purpose center is proposed to provide space for the Westlake Library, Visitors' Center, Regional Chamber of Commerce, educational programming through partnerships with regional colleges, a multi-functional area for events, conventions, etc., and meeting rooms. The Center will support the "urban-like" identification of this targeted growth area. It will also serve as an economic driver to attract retirees and those employed at the new business park, both necessary to protect and sustain the Franklin County tax base.

## Future Land Use Concept

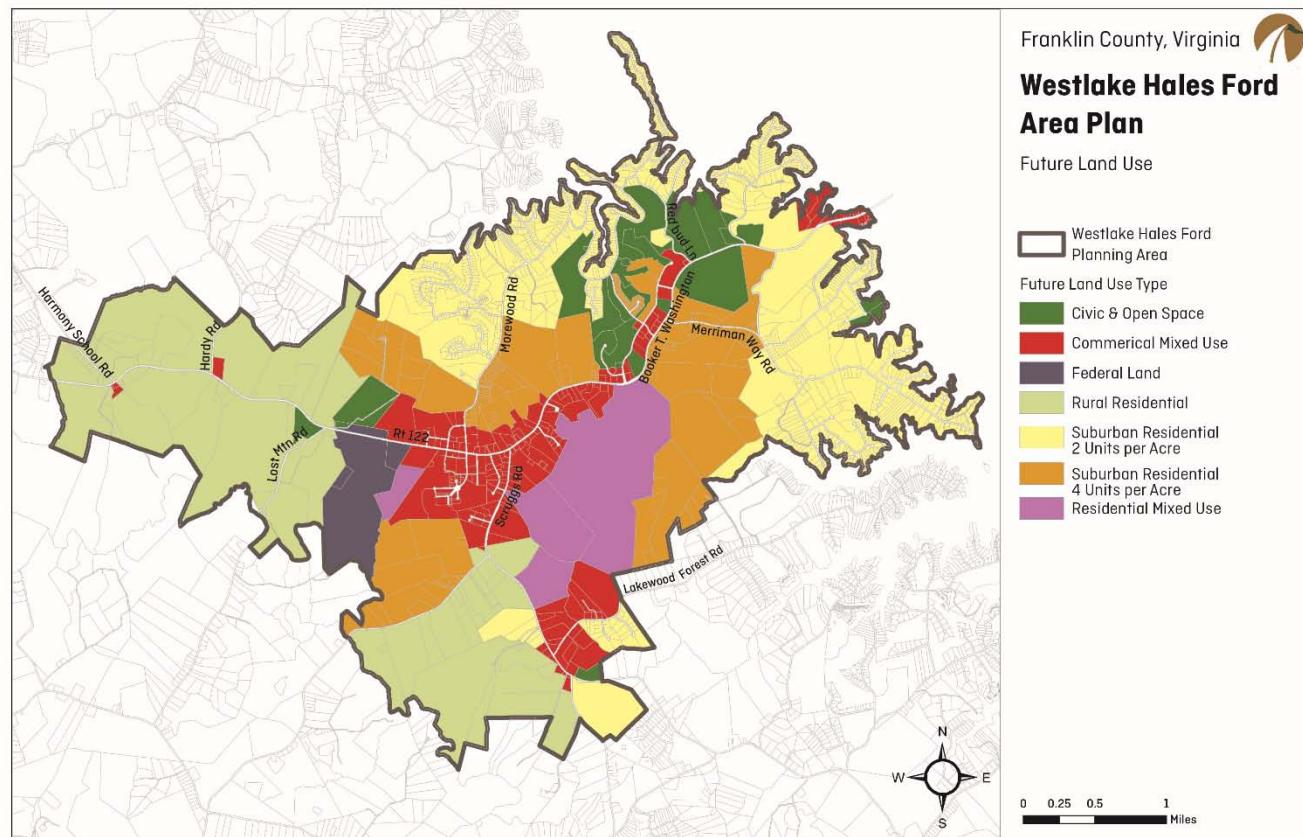
The Future Land Use Concept envisions a more intense, diverse set of land uses than are currently in place. The heart of the area would be commercial mixed use, within which a predominantly commercial area would also include residential and other non-commercial uses. Smaller pockets of this commercial mixed use are also envisioned at a few crossroads along Route 122, including Hales Ford.

Surrounding these central commercial mixed use areas are suburban and rural residential areas of varying density, ranging up to as high as eight dwelling units per acre. In general, residential densities are highest in the immediate vicinity of the core commercial mixed use area, and gradually diminish farther away from the core.

The Future Land Use map also retains federal lands, specifically the Booker T. Washington Monument, along with civic and open space uses.

Planning staff, Planning Commission Members, and Planning Advisory Committee Members built upon the Future Land Use Map reference in “Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond” a report of the Westlake – Hales Ford Planning Advisory Committee to refine the Future Land Use Map in the Plan. It is envisioned to have commercial mixed use core that provided better multi-modal connections and a greater diversity of uses, while higher density suburban residential uses surrounded it. The areas along the lakefront are envisioned to remain single family residential, while the western and inland portions of the planning area were to remain rural residential. Small pockets of commercial mixed use were envisioned at a few crossroads, as well as at Hales Ford.

**Future Land Use Map/**Figure 11



## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

### Policies by Land Use Category

#### Commercial Mixed Use



Commercial mixed use areas center around a neighborhood main street that should operate at lower speeds and offer accommodations for pedestrian movement. Storefronts line the main street, in buildings that range from one to four stories. Typically, buildings taller than one story have office and residential uses above.

The mix of uses are envisioned as predominantly commercial, but also include residential and planned open space. These non-commercial uses intended to comprise around 10-20% of total development, though the exact amount is

less critical than the regulatory allowance of a diversity of uses. This diversity of uses should extend to housing, where single-family and multi-family housing should both be offered, ideally with a range of housing stock that includes apartments, townhomes, and detached units.

Streetscapes along the commercial mixed use main street should be walkable, with wide sidewalks (8 feet minimum), landscaping, and internal plazas designed for easy public congregation. Land conservation is best reserved for areas on the periphery of the area.

Streets in commercial mixed use centers should be low speed, with on-street parking on the main street and off-street parking pushed behind buildings.

As commercial mixed use centers develop; the centers need to consider impact of the developments located close to historic places like Booker T. Washington National Monument. Booker T. Washington National Monument conducted a viewshed study in 1998 to help focus on issues of the park like viewsheds, transportation, and environmental impacts on the monument. An adequate boundary is important to protecting the park and maintaining the quiet setting and rural character. In addition, the widening or additional lanes to Route 122 in the park's vicinity would increase traffic which would affect the park in a negative way by causing increased traffic noise, impact the visual character, and increase emissions. Water quality of Jack-O-Lantern Branch is important to the park and officials would not want chemical leaks from vehicles parking at a new development to run off into the creek. Commercial mixed use centers design buildings with heights no more than three (3) stories, additional setbacks with landscaping and natural buffering to protect viewshed and the historic setting of the park. Slowing traffic down and having safeguards improves the noise level to maintain the character of the park for visitors to have the entire experience of the time.

### Residential Mixed Use



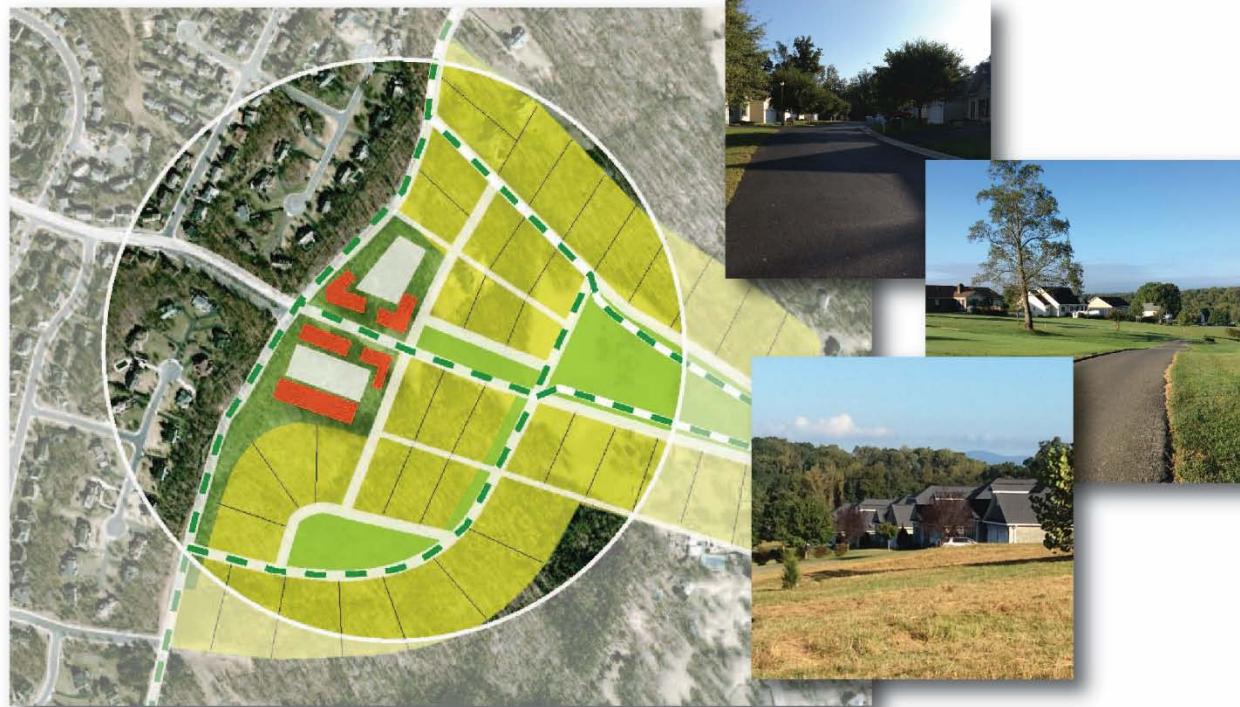
Residential mixed use areas are generally smaller centers that feature compact residentially focused living. These areas are predominantly residential, and feature a mix of housing types from apartments, townhomes, and attached and detached homes. Housing density is highest in the center of the neighborhood, and get less dense further out.

These areas offer a limited set of neighborhood retail that mostly consists of small scale ground floor retail and service uses in the core area. Home office or in-home commercial services can also be found here. Retail parking needs are small, and can be accommodated either on street or by small on-site lots.

Non-residential uses intended to comprise around 5-10% of total development, though the exact amount is less critical than the regulatory allowance of a diversity of uses. This percentage breakdown includes active recreational spaces, such as playgrounds, ballfields, courts, or similar uses. More passive recreation should also be included on the periphery, and can be as much as half of the total land area, but these spaces should be used less intensively than active recreation spaces and should primarily provide conservation and environmental quality benefits.

All streets in residential mixed use areas should be walkable, with narrow sidewalks (5 feet minimum) sufficing. There should be enough sidewalk coverage to connect all residential lots to all non-residential lots. Additionally, streets in residential mixed use centers should be low speed, with an emphasis on safety, while also providing efficient internal circulation.

### Suburban Residential



Suburban Residential areas are consistent with traditional suburban development. They are predominantly if not exclusively residential areas that typically contain single-family detached homes, though townhomes and attached single-family homes would be allowed. This land use pattern is best applied at fairly low densities of two to four units per acre.

Commercial uses are expected to be very limited, and serve local retail needs at major neighborhood crossroads. Suburban residential areas can be good areas for in-home offices, though regulations in these areas should ensure that traffic and parking are mitigated without affecting neighboring residents. Other non-residential uses would include active and passive open space, including playgrounds, ballfields, courts, or similar uses, potentially as part of a neighborhood club or recreation center.

Streets in Suburban Residential areas are generally of two types: local streets and collector streets. Local streets would serve slow-moving, low-volume local traffic, sometimes within a contained subdivision. Sidewalks are beneficial on these streets, but can be absent without discouraging walking due to the low volume and slow travel speeds. While local streets in Suburban Residential areas are not intended for longer trips, attempts to improve connectivity within and between adjacent neighborhoods should be encouraged. Collector streets are higher-volume, higher-speed roads that are used by multiple neighborhoods to access the larger community. Collector roads should have sidewalks on at least one side, providing walking access to essential goods and services in the immediate vicinity of the area.

## Rural Residential



Rural Residential areas consist of agricultural, forestry and residential communities. Homes should be on large lots or clustered with extensive communal preserved open space. Utility extensions should be limited. These areas should preserve very low density rural landscape characteristics with preserved natural features, scenic viewsheds and homes that are visually separated and buffered from the roadways.

In general, development in rural residential areas is 90%-95% very low density, with residential generally developed at 1 unit per 5 acres on average. Sporadic rural service, rural industry, such as wineries, or institutional uses are mixed in to this low density residential development. Residential development intended to occur as large lots or conservation

## Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan

cluster subdivisions that maximize open space protection. Remaining lands should be permanently protected through conservation easements.

Rural residential areas are served by existing rural roadways. Connectivity is limited to locations within conservation subdivisions and new homes should generally not have driveways entering onto existing rural highways but onto new local roads in conservation subdivisions. The homes themselves can be visually separated from existing collector roadways through screening or large setbacks.

Conservation subdivisions are envisioned to be utilized as much as possible here, and be designed to fit in with natural features to reduce land disturbance, preserve vegetation, maximize protection of environmentally sensitive features and minimize impervious surface and utility extensions. Preserved open space should include natural areas and common areas for passive recreation. Trails/greenways should connect development to the larger greenway network. Limited public facility provision is expected, and would mostly involve parks and the types of recreation facilities that do not attract significant auto traffic, such as trails/greenways and bikeways.

### Civic & Open Space



Civic & Open Space areas are spaces that provide a range of amenities and services available to the general public. This includes recreation, police, fire, and government services, but can include other similar uses not listed here, as

long as they serve some civic purpose. In general, there are two types of open space: active and passive. Active open spaces allowed for formal or programmed activity, such as playgrounds and ballfields. Passive open space is designed more for more informal use, focused on preservation of the natural environment. The best open space areas provide some combination of these two open space types, allowing for the widest range of benefits to the general public and environment.

## **Gateways**

The planning and development of the Westlake – Hales Ford area needs to place an emphasis on good design. This need stems from the area's multifaceted role in the county. In order to serve simultaneously as a scenic corridor, a growth center, a residential community, and a commercial hub, thoughtful design must be a part of all public and private development activities. One highly visible way to establish the importance of Westlake – Hales Ford as a multifaceted place is through the use of gateway design. Gateways can take many forms, but all of them serve to define the boundaries of a place and mark that place as worth noticing. Often, these places also have physically distinct characteristics that visitors need to be informed about, such as lower speeds or different intensity of activities.

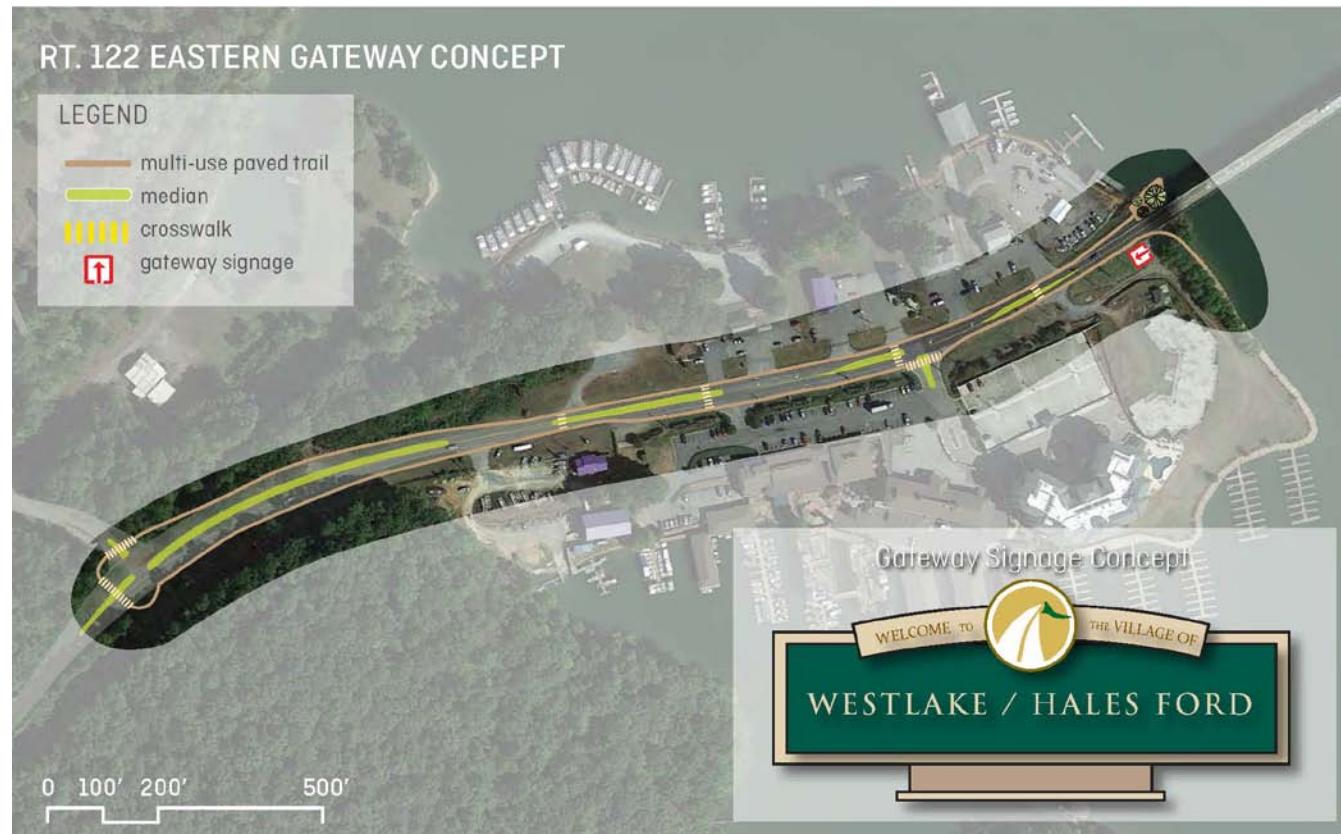
With these ideas in mind, gateway concepts have been created for Westlake – Hales Ford planning area. The following gateway concepts are conceptual in nature and further analysis, study and discussions with different agencies would need to be accomplished before a final decision on any gateway concepts is accepted. Described below are four (4) conceptual options for gateways at the eastern and western entrances of the planning area.

### **Eastern Gateway Concept**

Hales Ford is an obvious gateway into and out of Franklin County, and has a more intensive development character than a mile or more in either direction along Route 122. It also has the potential for providing pedestrian connectivity for recreational and retail purposes. Despite these characteristics, there is nothing to help visually signify the area as a gateway or a unique place. The gateway concept presented here provides the following elements:

- welcome signs for westbound traffic, providing immediate visual cue that drivers have entered a new place that's distinct from the eastern shore of Smith Mountain Lake
- pedestrian connectivity across Route 122 at select locations of bustling commercial and tourism activity
- landscaped median with pedestrian refuges along Route 122
- a multiuse trail ringing the roadway

These elements in combination help to strongly identify Hales Ford as a place worth noticing, and could provide a safe, visually appealing sense of place for the community. The concept plan below illustrates these ideas.





### Western Gateway Concept

The Booker T. Washington National Monument just east of the Route 122 and Lost Mountain Road intersection serves as an unofficial entry to the Westlake- Hales Ford area, making it a natural fit for a gateway for eastbound travelers. Given the less developed nature of this area, there is no need for pedestrian crossings or refuges, but a welcome sign and median treatments can both provide visual cues to visitors as to the import of both the Monument and the area as a whole. Two different concepts are provided here, with the primary difference being the use of a roundabout at the Lost Mountain Road / Route 122 intersection.





## IMPLEMENTATION

### Funding Options for Infrastructure

The following is a general list of opportunities for funding infrastructure and improvements within the WHFA planning area, with a description of the requirements and standards for each. Enabling legislation and grant programs are inherently fluid and each legislative session changes the range of opportunities available. Therefore, the county should monitor these opportunities over time and look for those that are most conducive at each phase of evolution of the WHFA area over time.

#### Grant Programs

Transportation Partnership Opportunity Fund (TPOF) is to be used by the Governor of Virginia through the Design-Build provisions of the Virginia Code (§33.1-12(2)(b)) pursuant to the Public Private Partnership Act of 1995 (Virginia Code §56-556 et seq.). The Governor can also use TPOF monies for transportation aspects of economic development projects. Grants can be up to \$5 million, while loans up to \$30 million can be obtained interest free, but require repayment within 7 years. While flexible, TPOF funds are limited to use when the capacity of existing funding mechanisms has been exceeded.

#### Revenue Leveraging

The Transportation Funding and Reform Act of 2007 (HB 3202) allows counties to raise commercial property taxes as much as \$0.25. Funds can be spent on roadway, pedestrian and transit projects.

#### Revenue Sharing

The Virginia Department of Transportation Revenue-Sharing Program is authorized under Virginia Code §33.1-2305. The program allows for Virginia Department of Transportation funds to match locality funds for improvement, construction or reconstruction on any functional class of roadway. A locality can request funds for projects in other localities. A locality may apply for up to a maximum of \$10 million in matching allocations. Up to \$5 million of these requested funds may be specified for maintenance projects.

#### Smart Scale (formerly HB2)

Virginia's SMART SCALE (§33.2-21.4) is picking the right transportation projects for funding and ensuring the best use of limited tax dollars. It is the method of scoring planned projects included in VTrans that are funded by HB 1887. Transportation projects are scored based on an objective, outcome-based process that is transparent to the public and allows decision-makers to be held accountable to taxpayers. Once projects are scored and prioritized, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has the best information possible to select the right projects for funding.

Funding for project prioritization comes from two main pathways – the construction District Grants Program (DGP) and the High-Priority Projects Program (HPPP) – both established in 2015 under Code of Virginia §33.2-358. The DGP is open only to localities. Projects applying for the DGP funds compete with other projects from the same construction district. Projects applying for HPPP funds compete with projects from across the Commonwealth.

### **General Obligation Bond Financing**

General obligation bonds provide up-front capital financed through a revenue stream backed by local government tax revenues (primarily property tax). However, there are nearly always competing priorities for the use of general obligation bonds, since they are commonly used for many local capital projects, including schools, parks, libraries, etc. Infrastructure improvements in the Westlake – Hales Ford area would need to be put in the County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) in conjunction with local funding allocations and financing provisions.

### **Service Districts**

Service districts may be created by any locality, by ordinance (Code of Virginia § 15.2-2400). The locality must hold a public hearing prior to the creation of any district. Two localities may jointly act to create such a district located in both localities.

Service districts are created to provide additional, more complete, or more timely services of government than are desired in the locality as a whole. Once an ordinance creating a service district is adopted, the governing body has additional powers pertaining to the district, including:

- to construct, maintain, and operate such facilities and equipment as may be necessary or desirable to provide additional, more complete, or more timely governmental services within a service district.
- to provide construction, maintenance, and general upkeep of streets and roads, public transportation systems serving the district, including the acquisition of real estate necessary to provide such services.
- to levy and collect an annual tax upon any property in the service district subject to local taxation to pay for providing the additional governmental services. Note, however, in contrast with the Community Development Authority provisions, such annual tax shall not be levied for or used to pay for schools, police, or general government services.

In addition to the taxes and assessments provide for by the enabling legislation, a locality may contribute money from its general fund as it deems appropriate to pay for the governmental services authorized within the service district. The proceeds from any annual tax or portion thereof collected for road construction may be accumulated and set aside for such period of time as is necessary to finance such construction.

### **Community Development Authorities (CDA)**

Community Development Authorities may be established by the governing body upon petition from 51% of the land area or assessed value of land in any tract or tracts of land in a proposed district (Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-5152).

The locality may then adopt a resolution or ordinance creating the authority, after a public hearing. The resolution or ordinance is then recorded in the land records of the circuit court for each parcel included in the district. Two localities may jointly act to create such a district located in both localities.

The main powers of a CDA are to finance, fund, plan, construct, operate, and maintain the infrastructure improvements enumerated in the ordinance establishing the district. These can include acquisition of land; construction or improvement of roads, bridges, parking facilities, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, traffic signals, storm water management and retention systems, gas and electric lines and street lights, parks, cultural and educational uses; fencing and landscaping; fire stations, water mains and plugs, fire trucks, rescue vehicles and other vehicles and equipment; and school buildings and related structures.

A CDA may issue revenue bonds, subject to terms and conditions as may be established in the ordinance or resolution establishing the district, for all costs associated with the improvements. Revenue bonds must be payable solely from revenues received by the development authority. The revenue bonds issued by a CDA do not require the consent of the locality, except where consent is specifically required by the provisions of the authorizing resolution, and such bonds are not deemed to constitute a debt or obligation of the local governing body. The CDA may provide that the locality annually collect a special tax on taxable real property within the CDA's jurisdiction to finance the services and facilities provided by the authority.

The CDA may provide that the locality annually collect a special tax on real property within the CDA's jurisdiction to finance the services and facilities provided by the authority. Unless requested by every property owner within the proposed district, the rate of the special tax cannot be more than \$0.25 per \$100 of the assessed fair market value of any taxable real estate.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

The governing body of any county, city or town may adopt tax increment financing by passing an ordinance designating a development project area and providing that real estate taxes in the development project area shall be assessed, collected and allocated such that the future gains in tax revenues created by the improvements are used to finance the improvements (Virginia Code §58.1-3245.2).

When a public project (e.g., sidewalk improvements) is constructed, surrounding property values generally increase and encourage surrounding development or redevelopment. The increased tax revenues are then dedicated to finance the debt created by the original public improvement project.

The local assessing officer records in the land book both the base assessed value and the current assessed value of the real estate in the development project area. Real estate taxes attributable to the increased value between the current assessed value of any parcel of real estate and the base assessed value of such real estate are allocated by the local treasurer and paid into a special fund entitled the "Tax Increment Financing Fund" to pay the principal and interest on obligations issued or development project cost commitments entered into to finance the development project costs.

Tax Increment Financing typically occurs within designated Urban Renewal Areas (URA) that meet certain economic criteria and approved by a local governing body. To be eligible for this financing, a project (or a portion of it) must be located within the URA.

### **Conditional Zoning**

Conditional zoning was enabled by the Virginia General Assembly to address the shortcomings of traditional zoning methods when competing and incompatible land uses conflict (Virginia Code §15.2-2296-2203). While it is technically a zoning tool, it is also a tool for funding infrastructure and the financial impacts of growth.

Conditional zoning allows reasonable conditions, known as proffers, to be offered by the applicant during a rezoning process as a way of mitigating the impacts of the proposed rezoning. Proffers may include land, infrastructure, cash or other conditions or constraints on the use of the property. These proffers, if accepted by the governing body as part of the rezoning approval, become part of the zoning ordinance as it applies to that property. In theory, conditional zoning allows land to be rezoned that might not otherwise be rezoned because the proffers will protect the community or area affected by the rezoning.

All proffers must be made voluntarily. A governing body is not authorized to require a specific proffer as a condition to granting a rezoning. However, there may be times, in the near or longer-term future, where an owner may indeed wish to rezone their property in the Westlake – Hales Ford area, in which case proffers could come into play.

### **Recommended Zoning Revisions**

An identified goal of the UDA program is to better align County zoning ordinances with traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles. This includes:

- Mix of uses
- Diversity of housing type
- Well-connected streets

- Multiple means of travel
- Green space
- Conservation of land

This area plan includes the review of three particularly important zoning districts for the Westlake – Hales Ford area, in an attempt to identify changes that would improve consistency with the TND principles that are at the heart of the vision plan and development character portions of this area plan. Two planned development districts and one overlay district were reviewed.

- Residential Planned Unit Development District (RPD)
- Planned Commercial Development District (PCD)
- Westlake Village Center Overlay District

The findings of those reviews follow.

### **Recommended Amendments to the Residential Planned Unit Development District (RPD).**

#### **Background and Introduction:**

The following potential amendments are proposed for consideration to the existing Residential Planned Unit Development District (RPD). These recommendations are designed to better implement principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design and to foster an enhanced small town and traditional neighborhood character in developments using this zoning district.

#### **Purpose**

Add language relating to the district being “consistent with the principles of traditional neighborhood design”

#### **Permitted Uses**

Add the following Permitted Uses:

- Day care
- Condominiums
- Elderly care/Senior Citizen Housing
- Neighborhood commercial uses (see section 25-304(b) [formerly special use permit])

### **Area Regulations**

Change the minimum district area to be considered as a residential planned unit development, from the current 5 acres to 20 acres or 10 acres if located within an approved Designated Growth Area.

### **Off Street Parking**

Add a maximum parking requirement in addition to the existing minimum parking requirements. For example, require that maximum parking be no more than 150% of the minimum requirements.

### **Open Space Requirements**

Minimum contiguous open space - require that:

- Open spaces shall contain a minimum of 5,000 contiguous square feet
- Developed open spaces shall contain a minimum of 600 contiguous square feet

Define developed open space as areas that provide infrastructure to support active recreation of any sort. Leave flexibility in the type of active recreation that land developers employ, and encourage them to identify the needs of their consumer base and the larger community.

### **Special Regulations**

Maximum and minimum percent of commercial use – increase the maximum percent of the gross area of the RPD project that may be occupied by buildings and structures devoted to commercial uses from the existing 3 percent to a proposed level of at least 10 percent. Also; increase the maximum total floor space devoted to such uses from the existing 10 square feet per dwelling unit\_to a proposed 30 square feet per dwelling unit.

Include a minimum percent of gross area for commercial uses at three percent of gross area and ten square feet per dwelling unit.

Diversity of residential uses – Require a minimum range of residential dwelling types. For example, a minimum of 2 residential types would be required to be developed (dwelling types would need to be defined as single family, duplex, multifamily, etc.), and no one type of residential dwelling type may comprise more than 90% of all dwellings.

Permitted Neighborhood Commercial Uses – add the following to the list of Permitted Neighborhood Commercial Uses:

- Restaurants of no greater than 5,000 square feet per establishment and without drive-through service

#### **Streets**

Add the following provisions:

- Street layout shall be a modified grid street pattern, which means that the grid should be adapted to the topography, unique natural features, environmental constraints of the tract, and peripheral open space areas.
- There shall be a minimum of two (2) interconnections with the existing public street system.
- There shall be, to the maximum extent possible, linkages to adjacent developments and neighborhoods consisting of roads adjacent to commercial or mixed-use areas, pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- Street layout shall form an interconnected system of streets primarily in a rectilinear grid pattern, modified, however, to avoid a monotonous pattern.
- The street system shall be designed to create blocks that are generally rectilinear in shape; to the greatest extent possible. Blocks shall be designed to have a maximum length of four hundred eighty (480) feet.
- Allowable street types include alleys with paved widths of 18 feet
- A sidewalk network shall be provided on all streets throughout the development that connects all dwelling units with other dwelling units, non-residential uses, and common open spaces.
- Sidewalks shall be a minimum of 5 feet in width; sidewalks in commercial areas shall be no less than 8 feet in width.

#### **Timing of Development**

The timing of construction of the non-residential portions of the RPD should be left to the discretion of the applicant(s) as long as not more than seventy five (75) percent of the total approved residential units (for the entire RPD) may be built prior to construction of at least fifty (50) percent of the approved non-residential floor area.

## **Recommended Amendments to the Planned Commercial District (PCD).**

### **Background and Introduction**

The following potential amendments are proposed for consideration to the existing Planned Commercial District (PCD). These recommendations are designed to better implement principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design and to foster an enhanced small town and traditional neighborhood character in developments using this zoning district.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this district is to promote the efficient use of predominantly commercial land by allowing a wide range of complementary land uses of various densities and flexible application of development controls in a manner that reflects traditional neighborhood development principles. The district encourages achievement of these goals while also protecting surrounding property, natural features and scenic beauty.

### **Permitted Uses**

Add the following Permitted Uses:

- Residential uses up to a maximum of 30% of the total gross floor area

### **Area Regulations**

Change the minimum district area to be considered as a residential planned unit development, from the current 5 acres to 20 acres or 10 acres if located within an approved Designated Growth Area

### **Off Street Parking**

Add a maximum parking requirement in addition to the existing minimum parking requirements. For example, require that maximum parking be no more than 150% of the minimum requirements.

### **Open Space Requirements**

Minimum contiguous open space - require that:

- Open spaces shall contain a minimum of 2,500 contiguous square feet.
- Developed open spaces shall contain a minimum of 600 contiguous square feet

Define developed open space as areas that provide infrastructure to support active recreation of any sort. Leave flexibility in the type of active recreation that land developers employ, and encourage them to identify the needs of their consumer base and the larger community.

Additional design guidelines for commercial development:

- Ground floor residential is not permitted in Mixed Use Buildings.
- Outdoor seating areas must have a minimum sidewalk width of 5 ft. between the limits of the outdoor seating area and the roadway edge of the sidewalk.

### Streets

Add the following provisions:

- Street layout shall be a modified grid street pattern adapted to the topography, unique natural features, environmental constraints of the tract, and peripheral open space areas.
- There shall be a minimum of two (2) interconnections with the existing public or private street system.
- There shall be, to the maximum extent possible, linkages to adjacent developments and neighborhoods consisting roads, pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- Street layout shall form an interconnected system of streets primarily in a rectilinear grid pattern, modified, however, to avoid a monotonous pattern.
- The street system shall be designed to create blocks that are generally rectilinear in shape; to the greatest extent possible. Blocks shall be designed to have a maximum length of six hundred (600) feet.
- A sidewalk and greenway network shall be provided on all streets throughout the development that connects all dwelling units with other dwelling units, non-residential uses, and common open spaces.
- Sidewalks shall be a minimum of 8 feet in width in commercial areas; sidewalks in residential areas shall be no less than 5 feet in width.

### **Special Regulations**

Maximum percent of commercial use – include a minimum percent of the gross area of the PCD project to be occupied by residential uses to a proposed ten percent.

Diversity of residential uses – Require a minimum range of residential dwelling types. For example, a minimum of 2 residential types would be required to be developed (dwelling types would need to be defined as single family, duplex, multifamily, etc.), and no one type of residential dwelling type may comprise more than 90% of all dwellings.

## **Recommended Amendments to the Westlake Village Center Overlay District.**

### **Background and Introduction:**

The following potential amendments are proposed for consideration to the existing Westlake Village Center Overlay District. These recommendations are designed to better implement principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design and to foster an enhanced small town and traditional neighborhood character in developments using this zoning district. In addition, it is recommended an expansion of the Westlake Village Center Overlay District to include the entire Designated Growth Area (DGA).

### **Purpose**

The Westlake Village Center Overlay district recognizes that the area will serve as a focal point for cultural and commercial activity of the Smith Mountain Lake area of the county. The village center overlay district promotes a development pattern that is consistent with traditional neighborhood design concepts which bring a sense of community to the surrounding rural area with an emphasis on facilitating the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community center that provides essential goods and services to rural residents and may also include higher density housing and office and light industrial employment centers. The purpose of the overlay district is to implement key provisions of the Westlake – Hales Ford Area Plan and the Westlake Design Guidelines in order to:

- Create a sense of place.
- Create a unified architectural character where new development is harmonious, well coordinated and compatible with the historic architecture of the area.
- Create convenient, safe and comfortable pedestrian linkage between commercial and residential areas and between commercial sites.
- Create a consistent approach to location, design and landscaping of parking areas for commercial use.

- Create visual buffers between historic properties and commercial uses.
- Create an approach to signs that reduces clutter.
- Create lighting that does not pollute the night sky and does not impact adjacent uses, particularly historic sites.
- Create new development that protects scenic views.

#### **Permitted & Prohibited Uses**

Remove intensive uses such as feedlot, commercial, automobile graveyard, custom meat cutting operation, livestock market, etc.

Add Mobile / Manufactured Homes as a prohibited use (specific uses to be prohibited or removed pending legal review)

#### **Site Development regulations**

Required Landscape Area – reduce planting strip requirements from existing 20 feet to proposed 10 feet. Minimum building setback - reduce minimum building setback from landscaped area requirements from existing 20 feet to proposed 10 feet; and change building setbacks from roadways to edge of Right of Way rather than from roadway centerline.

#### **Off Street Parking**

Add a maximum parking requirement in addition to the existing minimum parking requirements. For example, require that maximum parking be no more than 150% of the minimum requirements.

#### **Signs**

Consider limitation and duration of temporary and advertising signs and review current sign regulation in the overlay district.

### **Designated Growth Area Boundary**

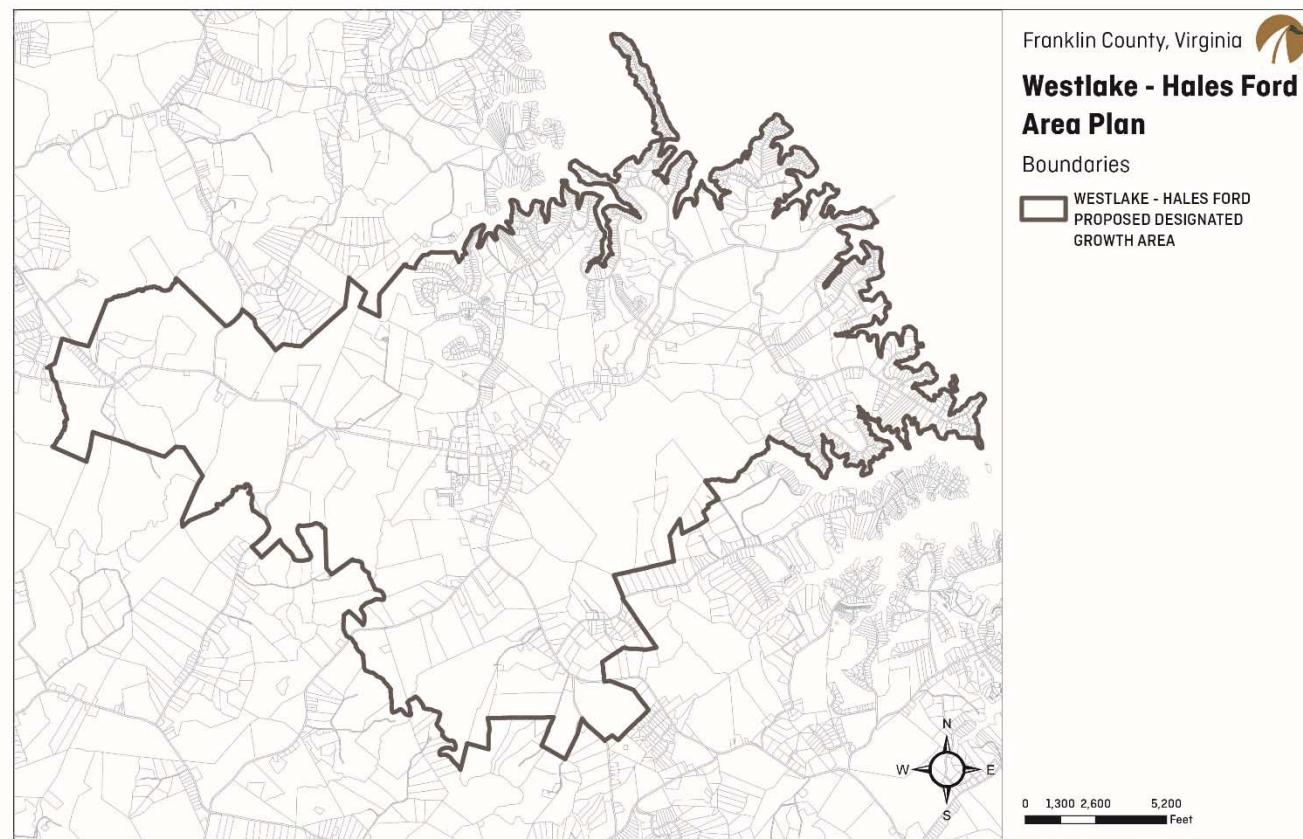
The County's DGA designation is consistent with Section 15.2-2223.1 of the Virginia State Code for urban development areas. This designation does not restrict development outside of the DGA, it merely provides clarity of purpose in future development patterns within the DGA.

Designated Growth Areas are intended to encourage development that makes use of traditional neighborhood design principles. Encouraging these principles in new development within the DGAs will help position Franklin County for growth and economic development, while maintaining its rural look and feel. It is the County's policy to encourage within the DGAs the following traditional town design principles:

- Pedestrian-friendly road design
- Interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads
- Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks
- Preservation of natural areas
- Mixed-use neighborhoods and a mixture of housing types
- Reduction of front and side yard building setbacks
- Reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections to calm traffic on local streets, as permissible by VDOT standards.

The designation qualifies this area to potentially receive funding under SMART SCALE (formerly State House Bill 2) legislation passed in 2014 as a qualified Urban Development Area. The DGA boundary is identical to the wastewater service area and the planning area boundary for the Westlake – Hales Ford area.

**Designated Growth Area/**Figure 12



Adopted November 15, 2016

## APPENDIX A – CHARTING A PATH TO 2030 AND BEYOND

### Report of the Westlake – Hales Ford Planning Advisory Committee

## APPENDIX B – WESTLAKE – HALES-FORD AREA PLAN **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

## WESTLAKE – HALES-FORD AREA PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

### Introduction

This Appendix provides goals, strategies, and an implementation matrix that brings the adopted Westlake Hales-Ford Area Plan to life. The Goals and Strategies developed here provide a framework for how the public sector, private sector, community members and regional partners can work together to foster the continued development of the Westlake Hales-Ford community. The provided goals and strategies are reflective of previously discussed priorities found in the guiding document, *Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond*, for the adopted Plan; community-planning best practices; and community-driven concepts identified during engagement with the Westlake Advisory Committee. The intent of this Appendix is to identify actions that will need to be undertaken to implement the Area Plan. See the Implementation Matrix, page 77, for further detail.

See page 59 for a timeline of previous and current efforts.



Former Gills Creek Supervisor Bob Camicia established a Westlake-Hales Ford Planning Advisory Committee to review the Westlake and Hales Ford areas and make recommendations for the area's future.

The Advisory Committee met monthly for two years and had discussions with subject-matter professionals, close dialogue with the business community, and numerous discussions with individuals and small groups. In addition, the Committee held three public community meetings over the two years.

Current Gills Creek Supervisor Lorie Smith established a new Westlake Work Group to review the recommended goals and strategies found in *Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond*. Between January and September, the Work Group revised new goals and strategies to be included in the adopted Westlake Hales Ford Area Plan.

2014

2016

2023

Spring

In March of 2016, the Advisory Committee presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors a report entitled *Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond*.

The Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Commission and staff to write a community plan for the Westlake-Hales Ford area, based off of, and informed by, *Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond*.

Fall

The Franklin County Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of the Plan on October 11, 2016. The Franklin County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on November 15, 2016 for the adoption of the Westlake-Hales Ford Area Plan by resolution. The Area Plan was adopted as part of the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan.

# Goal 1: Improve the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area multimodal transportation network for increased safety, access, and mobility.

Franklin County's overall transportation network impacts the day-to-day life of residents in a variety of ways; the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is a critical component of that network, as it serves as a commercial and residential hub for those on the northern portion of Smith Mountain Lake, as well as those travelling into Franklin County from Bedford County. All Franklin County residents are entitled to safe and efficient access to a multimodal transportation network that supports the existing forms of transportation including automotive, pedestrian, and biking – while being adaptable and accommodating to additional innovations, such as transit. Westlake Hales-Ford's transportation network should equitably and reliably connect all residents to their jobs, their homes, where they shop and receive healthcare, and where they go for educational, recreational, and social opportunities. Further, the transportation network should provide a variety of access means – whether travelling by vehicle, foot, or bike.

## Strategy 1.1 **Maintain a working relationship with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to work on road improvements, safety needs, grant funding opportunities, and other transportation projects with the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

A transportation network's needs and demands are constantly changing, based on increased populations and development – and even travel patterns. Planning for an efficient transportation network not only includes existing concerns and improvements, but also looks ahead to determine what transportation should look like years from now.

All transportation networks are complex systems that require coordination among localities, State and Federal Agencies, and occasionally neighboring communities – particularly for regional transportation needs. Franklin County relies heavily on VDOT to ensure a safe and accessible transportation network; this reliance comes in the form of funding opportunities, maintenance and repair, as well as plans and studies that improve the transportation network. As the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area continues to grow, the County and VDOT must maintain the established working relationship to pursue all available opportunities to study, plan, and continually improve the existing transportation network.

**Strategy 1.2** Seek funding opportunities to improve dangerous intersections and other safety needs along Route 122 (Booker T. Washington Highway) and Scruggs Road. Known priorities include the intersections of Brooks Mill Rd and Scruggs Rd, Village Springs Dr and Route 122, Lakewatch Dr and Route 122, Lakemount Dr and Route 122, Harmony School Road and Route 122, and Morewood Rd and Route 122; however, the County should continually assess other intersections not directly mentioned, as needed.

To improve identified and known intersections that impose safety concerns, the County should continue to pursue State funding opportunities as they become available – including SMART SCALE, Revenue Sharing, Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and other programs. Additionally, the County should leverage all applicable and available Federal opportunities, as they become available. While these are more competitive than State-funded programs, and often not as consistently offered, they can be a viable option for funding of large, costly projects, and they should not be overlooked.

**Strategy 1.3** Consider a study to determine the need and viability of four-lane segments along Route 122 (Booker T. Washington Highway).

During the 2016 process of creating the Area Plan, public engagement indicated a goal of redesigning segments of Route 122 into a four-lane roadway. While the need is yet to be established, and the funding unrealistic to leverage through the current funding opportunities, the Westlake Advisory Committee indicated that this idea should remain on the County's radar, so that if Westlake Hales-Ford reaches the point that it has “outgrown” the size of Route 122, the conversation has already begun. The County and VDOT will need to work together in the future to first determine the need for four lanes – based on traffic flow, congestion, etc. – and then move on to a feasibility study, and lastly leveraging and sourcing funds to construct.

**Strategy 1.4** Ensure that multimodal interconnectivity – including pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections and mobility – is considered during development planning and design.

Much of the existing development in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, particularly along Route 122, Scruggs Road, and Westlake Towne Center, came before current zoning regulations were put into place that required the construction of sidewalks. In 2002, the Westlake Village Overlay District was adopted, and regulations were put into place that requires new development to include the construction of sidewalks along public roads. These regulations do not require connector roads for larger developments, nor do they suggest or require that new developments incorporate multi-modal paths where appropriate, for pedestrian and

bicycle mobility. Further, the regulations do not require sidewalks along private streets. While some developers have constructed sidewalks and crosswalks along private streets, such as those in the Westlake Towne Center, the zoning regulations should be revised to require pedestrian infrastructure along all streets at the time of any new development. See Strategy 1.5.

To ensure that the current regulations are being met, and until revisions occur, the County should be diligent in site plan review and at the time of development to ensure that sidewalks are being incorporated. In the interim, the County should continue to try and leverage Federal and State agency funding opportunities, such as HSIP and Transportation Alternatives (TA), to help bridge the gaps in the pedestrian infrastructure throughout the Village. Additionally, in 2023, the County partnered with Bedford County, West Piedmont Planning District Commission, and Central Virginia Planning District Commission to pursue a RAISE grant to study the 122 corridor; the grant was not secured and the County and partners should pursue this grant in 2024.

**Strategy 1.5** **Revise zoning regulations to encourage pedestrian and vehicular connections at the time of new development – including connector roads within developments, sidewalks and crosswalks, and multimodal paths.**

As noted above, the existing zoning regulations lack robust measures for mobility within and along new development. Further, the existing roadways largely do not provide pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; no roadways provide dedicated bike lanes or pedestrian crosswalks (namely Route 122), and sidewalks are intermittent throughout the developed Village area. The Westlake Village Overlay District should be revised to include requirements that ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular mobility are a priority for all new development, especially as the area continues to grow and State and Federal funding opportunities are not always available in the short-term to construct these facilities.

**Strategy 1.6** **Assess the existing gaps and opportunities for pedestrian infrastructure within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area; and seek funding through grants, public-private partnerships, and other revenue streams to design and install signalized pedestrian infrastructure and sidewalk/trail connectivity between developed areas. Additionally, seek funding opportunities pertaining to pedestrian safety at the intersection of Parkcrest Dr and Route 122.**

In early 2023, Franklin County was awarded a Growth and Accessibility Planning (GAP) Technical Assistance grant to study and assess the existing gaps in Westlake Hales-Ford's pedestrian infrastructure gaps, particularly along Route 122 and the small roads around the concentrated development of the Westlake Towne Center. This study will provide a document that shows the identified gaps – where there is a lack of sidewalks and crosswalks – as well as provide conceptual alternatives to fill those gaps.

However, the study is one piece of the puzzle. Looking ahead, the County will need to work closely with VDOT, as well as private developers, to coordinate the construction of the needed sidewalks and crosswalks to serve the community. Further, the County should continually seek opportunities through funding, partnerships that share cost, and potential new revenue streams that would ensure availability of funds to construct future pedestrian improvements as the Village grows, such as further along Route 122, and along Scruggs Road and Lakewatch Drive, as three examples.

**Strategy 1.7** **Pursue and foster public-private partnerships to offer shared transportation options, such as micro-transit or other transit services, particularly for the aging-in-place population.**

As the more commercialized area of Smith Mountain Lake, thus drawing more residents, Westlake Hales-Ford's population has steadily increased since 2016. Each year between 2016-2021, an average of 2.8% of the population moved into the Westlake Hales-Ford area from elsewhere in the Commonwealth; all those individuals were between the ages of 45 and 74.<sup>1</sup> This indicates that the future transportation network must consider those aging-in-place and how to incorporate elements into the transportation network that make mobility efficient for the older population. These elements include transit services that offer connection to necessary services, such as medical visits, and grocery and pharmaceutical shopping needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2021 datasets.

The County should first seek opportunities to understand the transit needs at the present time, as well as forecasted transit needs. Further, the County should seek to understand the potential for transit services, including routes and stops, capital expenditures, and management. Lastly, the County should seek partnerships and funding opportunities to implement an efficient transit system that operates within the Westlake Hales-Ford Area and into other necessary destinations, such as Rocky Mount and Roanoke.

At present, the Franklin County Office of Aging provides transportation primarily to qualifying seniors. This service is funded through Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA) and is intended primarily for medical and dental transportation but does include some transportation for shopping and socialization programs. In FY23, 8,053 seniors in Franklin County were provided transportation! Interested persons need to simply contact the Office of Aging to schedule a ride. Typically, services are available Monday through Friday during business hours. To learn more, visit the Office on Aging website at: [www.playfranklincounty.com/236/Transportation](http://www.playfranklincounty.com/236/Transportation).

## Goal 2: Strengthen the quality of life through increased recreational, cultural, and community facilities that provide opportunities for physical, mental, social, and community health.

Community services go beyond utilities and emergency service; community services *also* include facilities and opportunities that benefit overall community health – both personally and socially. A community's quality-of-life is determined by many elements – income, access to services, decent transportation, and recreation and community connection. The Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is prime for intentional development of community spaces, such as parks and gathering spaces to hold events. Over the next several years, and as growth is ushered in, the County must make deliberate choices to provide opportunities, and carve out spaces, specifically for recreational and social facilities.

### Strategy 2.1 Engage with partners and/or consultants to research, design, fund, and implement a system of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. (See Goal #1).

The ability to walk or bike to a destination not only provides an opportunity to recreate, which provides physical and mental health benefits, but it also affords residents and visitors the opportunity to see the Westlake area through a different lens, and perhaps discover new areas or businesses that they may have missed when traveling by car! As growth continues, the County must ensure that new development incorporates, or provides space for, pedestrian infrastructure.

### Strategy 2.2 Research and identify viable areas for future recreation facilities on County-owned property within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. Subsequently establish public-private partnerships and seek funding opportunities to create and construct identified recreation facilities.

As with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, recreation facilities are a crucial need to provide physical, social, mental, and community health. These include parks, whether larger-scale or pocket parks, athletic fields,

playgrounds, and even community gardens. At present there are several privately-owned physical fitness studios and gyms within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, as well as a YMCA, which offers a variety of indoor and outdoor classes and activities. There is a multi-use trail in the planning phase, which will be located behind the Westlake Towne Center and will connect to the Booker T. Washington National Monument. This multi-use trail is expected to be completed by 2025.

However, there is not currently a publicly owned or communal open-air park or outdoor space designated for recreation. The Board of Supervisors and County departments, particularly the Department of Parks and Recreation, should leverage partnerships, funding opportunities, and studies that would provide the necessary tools to identify and construct needed facilities on existing, available County-owned property within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. Any future partnerships for park and recreation spaces should include conceptual design and planning at early stages.

The County owns 19 acres at the end of Lakewatch Drive; as of Fall 2023, this property is undeveloped. In July 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved a request from the Smith Mountain Lake Rotary Club to construct a disc golf course at the site. As of late-2023, the Smith Mountain Lake Rotary Club and community members are diligently working to collect all funds and oversee all aspects of its construction for residents and visitors to enjoy.

### **Strategy 2.3**

**Leverage public-private partnerships to create a neutral community gathering space that can accommodate a variety of community needs - such as a space for the arts, education, special events, conferences, and "town hall" gatherings in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

As previously discussed, the Westlake Advisory Committee observed that in addition to the lack of public recreational facilities, the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area would greatly benefit from a brick-and-mortar community gathering space. This space would serve as a hub for both special interest group meetings, town hall gatherings, and even arts and culture events – among others.

Although the area will continue to develop, private development may not guarantee that a community space is ever developed. To effectively provide a community gathering space, the County should leverage partnerships with local and regional groups to identify a suitable existing structure or available land, pursue funding mechanisms, and to determine the administration of the space.

**Strategy 2.4** **Leverage a public-private partnership to identify a suitable area for, and to develop, a farmers' market within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

Farmer's markets are increasingly becoming a staple in rural communities; they serve as a means for fresh food access, a tool to support local agriculture, and they often serve as community spaces for seasonal events. For a number of years, a seasonal, open-air farmers' market has been in operation within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth area; however, this market is comprised of tents and does not have a permanent structure. The Westlake Advisory Committee concluded that members of the community have expressed interest in a more permanent farmers' market, with the potential to operate year-round. The County should collaborate with local partners in pursuit of a public-private partnership to develop a more permanent space and/or facility to host the existing farmer's market.

**Strategy 2.5** **Collaborate with County, Federal, and private partners to foster, retain, and promote the unique agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage elements within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

The Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is home to several places of unique significance, such as the Booker T. Washington National Monument, the Hook-Powell-Moorman Farm, and the Holland-Duncan House; the latter two are both on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places and are privately owned and not currently open to the public. Additionally, many of the active farms within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area and surrounding communities are steeped in agricultural history. By way of collaboration with Federal partners, such as the National Park Service, and private residents and special groups, there is an avenue to strengthen the community's quality of life through increased opportunities and activities focused on the unique agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage elements of the community.

**Strategy 2.6 Foster collaboration with the Booker T. Washington National Monument, regarding relevant recreational and cultural opportunities, in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

The Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is unique for many reasons, one being that it is home to the Booker T. Washington National Monument (BOWA), a national treasure and important local asset. The park hosts walking trails, interpretive exhibits, and demonstrations of farm life during the 1850's. Residents and visitors to Westlake area are afforded a prime opportunity for historical connection through the presence of this national monument; an average of over 20,000<sup>2</sup> visitors per year attend BOWA! The County should maintain a relationship with the BOWA and the Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument (a nonprofit organization) to collaborate on social, recreational, and cultural initiatives.

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: NPS Park Stats: <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park/BOWA>

## **Goal 3: Foster an economically sustainable village center that offers needed shopping, dining, work, education, lodging, and entertainment opportunities to residents and visitors.**

As one of the County's Designated Growth Areas, the Westlake DGA is one of the targeted areas of the County in which future growth and development is being directed. By strategically planning for, and actively working towards, the continued expansion of the Westlake "village center," an economically sustainable hub will be a destination within the County and can directly support the Westlake area residents on a daily basis. Communities benefit from thriving village centers, as they provide convenient access to goods and services, opportunities for social interaction, and reinforce the local tax-base.

The challenge of maintaining and growing viable village centers is ensuring there is enough ongoing demand from residents and visitors to support local business. The last few decades' residential and commercial development within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area – particularly Westlake Towne Center and surrounding development – has solidified the area as a viable and successful economic center. The future growth and continued expansion of Westlake's village center requires a combination of regional and local initiatives oriented around the community's existing, planned, and even potential place-based assets. Additionally, strategic and coordinated economic development efforts are essential to ensure that appropriate development continues to build on the existing Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.

### **Strategy 3.1 Consider the creation of County-funded grant and incentive programs to attract new businesses and industries to the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

The previous decades of growth within the general Westlake Hales-Ford area have resulted in a mix of local and national and/or regional businesses within the area. Many of these businesses are geared toward everyday living – such as banking, grocery, medical offices, and restaurants, among others. However, there are still businesses and industries that are missing from the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area that, if established, would provide residents and visitors with the ability to fulfill their needs without leaving the area for Rocky Mount, Roanoke, Bedford County, or other nearby locations.

By creating tailored incentivization programs for businesses of all sizes, the County can position itself to invite an increased number of businesses, ultimately resulting in an improved tax base and more options for residents and visitors within the immediate Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth area and county-wide.

**Strategy 3.2 Revise zoning regulations for the Westlake Village Center Overlay District to better accommodate "village center" development - including signage regulations, bulk and siting regulations, etc.**

In order to ensure that future development meets the concept of a “village,” existing zoning regulations should be revised to implement regulatory measures that would require certain elements that are found in “village” style developments - including uniform signage regulations, specific bulk and siting regulations, basic design elements, modern parking requirements, pedestrian infrastructure, etc.

**Strategy 3.3 Explore opportunities and initiatives to recruit businesses that would fill known gaps in the Westlake Hales-Ford Area market, such as restaurants, childcare services, retail, and tourist accommodations. Utilize the Franklin County Economic Development Strategic Plan, and accompanying research, to identify those gaps.**

At present, those businesses and industries that were noted to be the most needed include lodging, childcare, general retail, and restaurants. Specifically, lodging that is offered by a hotel(s), whether a business, conference, or resort style hotel, rather than smaller bed and breakfasts and short-term rentals. While there are a number of eating establishments, mostly locally owned restaurants, located within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, the Westlake Advisory Committee noted that a greater variety of sit-down, full-service restaurants are needed. Within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, there is one<sup>3</sup> operational childcare facility, Trinity Preschool; while the number of children living within the immediate Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area has decreased over the last decade, the overall need for childcare facilities on a regional basis has greatly increased. Many residents look for childcare facilities within a 15-minute drive, or along their work commute. As a commercial hub for the northern-end of Smith Mountain Lake, a childcare facility could be utilized by those residing in both Franklin and Bedford Counties.

---

<sup>3</sup> At the time of publication, Fall 2023.

The County's Economic Development Department and Department of Planning and Community Development, with direction and support of the Board of Supervisors, should work closely to identify tasks borne by each department, respectively, that would serve to invite businesses into the County that would fill the identified gaps.

#### **Strategy 3.4**

**Consider local funding and create partnerships to develop a shared (co-working) office space, or make existing space available, to accommodate those residents that are a part of the tele-work industry.**

In 2016, when the Area Plan was first adopted, there were 474 workers<sup>4</sup> in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, 16.2% of which worked from home. In 2021, there were 672 workers, 11.3% of which worked from home. While the percentage of tele-workers *seems* to have decreased, the increase of overall workers keeps the percentage of tele-workers steady, resulting in approximately 75 tele-working residents in both years, and assumedly in the years leading up to 2021. As the culture of tele-work continues to grow and more companies offer flexible office conditions, new and existing residents of the area may be looking for areas that offer shared office spaces to complement their tele-work schedules.

Co-working spaces can provide workers with the opportunity for social interaction that is often found in an office setting, while also providing necessities that they may not have at home, including adequate internet access, printing capabilities, and meeting spaces, among others.

#### **Strategy 3.5**

**Review and amend Zoning Ordinance regulations that can be a barrier to desired commercial development.**

A locality's zoning regulations can often be a barrier to development, particularly when processes are timely and expensive, or when ordinance regulations are burdensome or difficult to meet. In the current landscape, developers are looking to locate in areas with smooth and relatively easy permitting processes, as well as flexible regulations. Specifically, regulations pertaining to setbacks, minimum lot sizes, lot coverage, and even parking and landscaping requirements can influence where a developer chooses to locate.

---

<sup>4</sup> "Workers" are those residents that lived within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area and were in the workforce, according to the US Census.

The overall Zoning Ordinance, and specifically the Westlake Village Center Overlay District, should be reviewed and revised as necessary to provide more flexible regulations that correlate to the development within the overlay district that includes the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. More flexible and modern zoning regulations provide more leverage for the County to invite in new and expanding commercial development.

#### **Strategy 3.6**

**Pursue and foster public-private partnerships to create program(s) that provide matching façade grants for community design elements - such as benches, landscaping, and consistent signage; and village branding - such as gateway and wayfinding signage.**

Creating an identity for the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area (DGA) is imperative to inviting new businesses to the DGA. To market the area as a marketable and desired location for both residents, businesses, and visitors, the DGA must be inviting and create a sense of place that transports you from the overall boundaries of the County, into a unique community.

#### **Strategy 3.7**

**Work towards attracting more lodging development within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, through a variety of means known to be effective in attracting commercial development within the tourism industry.**

As discussed previously, the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is ripe for hotel development, to serve Smith Mountain Lake specifically, but also to accommodate all visitors to Franklin County, as there are few hotels. The County, particularly the Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Department, will need to utilize consistently proven methods to understand the barriers to hotel development, as well as how to invite more lodging into the area – namely feasibility studies, careful site selection, and appropriate incentive packages, just to name a few.

## **Goal 4: Deliver superior public services that focus on infrastructure capacity, accessibility, and efficiency to support growth pressures and that respond to the high quality of life desired by today's businesses and residents.**

Superior public services – whether water and sewer service, broadband connection, healthcare, or public amenities – are critical to ensuring a high quality of life and the success and growth of the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. As the area continues to grow and develop, more pressure and demand will be put on the existing facilities and infrastructure that are currently available. Strategic, thoughtful, and transparent planning *must* be done by the Franklin County Board of Supervisors to ensure that the needed improvements are planned, scheduled, and constructed in a fiscally sound and timely manner. These strategies in particular should work in concert with and be reviewed diligently at the time of any updates to the County budget(s), and the Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Strategy 4.1 Engage with Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) to stay informed of plans and studies for infrastructure expansion; additionally, seek partnerships with both WVWA and developers to provide increased water and wastewater infrastructure access as development continues within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

While much of the existing Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is served by water, particularly along the main thoroughfares, some areas will require further infrastructure for connection as development occurs. Additionally, the wastewater infrastructure within the DGA must be improved and expanded to accommodate more housing and commercial development, as it is ushered in. As development occurs, there should be transparent and early conversations between the County, developers, and WVWA in respect to the needs of the incoming businesses, and how partnerships may expand services.

**Strategy 4.2** **Strive for active and responsive emergency services and care; work with partners and service providers to expand the operation, accessibility, and efficiency of Franklin County and/or volunteer emergency EMS, fire services, and law enforcement.**

A community expects emergency services to be available, responsive, efficient, *and* prepared if services are required. As the workforce and population changes within a community, the make-up of personnel and volunteers can change over time. To better plan for improvements to facilities, equipment, and service, the County *must* maintain engagement between regional and local partners, volunteer organizations, and local and state agencies that provide the area's emergency services. As discussed in Strategy 4.6, below, the Board of Supervisors and County staff should ensure that the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and budget reviews reflect emergency services needs.

**Strategy 4.3** **Continue to work on increasing broadband infrastructure, accessibility, and availability, through partnerships, grants, technical assistance programs, and other support mechanisms available through Federal and State agencies and programs.**

Broadband access is a critical component of infrastructure necessary to support modern businesses, as well as those students and workforce that work and learn remotely. Broadband service within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area is continuing to expand as a result of the County's recent efforts in securing grants for planning and infrastructure. While good progress has been made, the County should continue to seek opportunities to expand and increase broadband services, as technology changes and additional grant opportunities become available.

**Strategy 4.4** **Seek initiatives and work with community and regional partners to increase access to primary healthcare.**

Primary healthcare covers a range of prevention, wellness, and treatment for common illnesses. Primary healthcare providers include doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. Typically, primary healthcare providers maintain long-term relationships with patients and may coordinate care with specialists. As such, primary healthcare providers is a staple for any community, particularly those with an aging population. While the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area currently hosts several primary healthcare

providers, such as Carilion and Lewis Gale, there remains an overall lack of primary healthcare throughout the nation, particularly for those that are under- or uninsured.

The County should work, with partners as necessary, to attract more primary healthcare providers into the area; partnerships and grants, such as those provided through the Virginia Health Care Foundation, may help bridge the gaps.

**Strategy 4.5 Continue to seek opportunities for improvements to other County services and facilities, such as enhancements to the library and waste "green box" collection site.**

While adequate healthcare/emergency services, utilities infrastructure, and broadband access are paramount to a community's overall quality of life, there are other public services that also play an important role in ensuring that residents feel supported by the County. Namely, social and education resources such as libraries, and necessary facilities, such as waste collection should not be overlooked for improvements and expansions as the area grows. While these improvements can take extensive planning of resources and funds, over extended periods of time, the County should frequently review and assess available options.

**Strategy 4.6 Annually review and work with the Board of Supervisors to update the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to ensure major expenditures are coordinated with the goals and strategies included in this Plan, alongside County-wide expenditures - so that they are planned, and programmed in a transparent and fiscally sound manner.**

The County's CIP coordinates the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period. "Capital improvements" refers to major, non-recurring expenditures such as the purchase of land, buildings, public infrastructure, and equipment. While the CIP is County-wide and not specific to each Designated Growth Area, it does include capital improvements and expenditures that may be present or needed within specific DGAs, such as Westlake.

The CIP is a working document that is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities. Moving forward, this Area Plan, in concert with the County Comprehensive Plan and other Village/Area Plans, should be included at the time of CIP review, to ensure that the goals and strategies of this Area Plan are being met through capital planning, when required.

## Goal 5: Create an inclusive, livable community that provides a balanced inventory of housing opportunities for all residents.

As defined by the [\*Virginia Blueprint for Livable Communities\*](#), a “livable community” is a community that is designed and functions in a way that facilitates well-being for all the people who live there – regardless of age, income, or ability. It is a holistic goal that is achieved through a long-term, open-ended community planning process.

<sup>5</sup>The median age in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area has remained relatively unchanged since 2016, when the Area Plan was first adopted, hovering right around 58 years old. In 2016, the median household income was \$77,115, and the current<sup>6</sup> median household income has dropped to \$54,286. In 2016, 11% of households rented and the median rent was \$848; currently 21% of households rent, nearly double from 2016, and the median rent is \$876. In 2016, for homes with a mortgage, the median monthly cost was \$2,512. This has steadily declined and the current median monthly cost for homeowners with a mortgage is \$1,455.

This data shows that smart housing policies are imperative for the health of the overall housing market in Franklin County, and particularly those looking for housing within the Westlake Hales-Ford DGA. This data is particularly alarming for residents that rent; while median household income has steadily decreased, rent prices have remained the same. With a near-100% increase in the percentage of renters within the area, it is crucial to ensure that housing is available within the DGA that is affordable for all residents.

### Strategy 5.1 **Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a greater diversity of housing types that would accommodate a range of incomes, lifestyles, and stages of life - including affordable and workforce housing, and housing for those aging-in-place.**

A balanced inventory of well-designed, safe, and affordable housing choices is imperative to fostering a healthy community – no matter the size. Housing can also be a source of financial security, health, and safety for residents – and provides a sense of pride. Whether the residents of Westlake are renting or looking for

---

<sup>5</sup> Note: The data included in this paragraph is sourced from US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2021 datasets.

<sup>6</sup> Note: “Current” data is reflective of the latest US Census ACS data, from the year 2021.

homeownership, there should be a variety of options available to accommodate any resident regardless of age or socioeconomic status. In order to meet this need, Zoning Ordinance regulations must be amended to accommodate a greater variety of housing types and sizes, including townhomes, patio homes, and accessory dwelling units.

It should be noted that “affordable” housing and subsidized housing are different; affordable housing is housing that is offered below typical market rate prices, geared towards residents earning 80% of the Average Median Income (AMI) or less, and is *not* subsidized by the State or Federal government. Access to affordable housing is critical to the well-being of a variety of households – from those aging-in-place with lower incomes after retirement, to those in the workforce that serve our communities (teachers, healthcare workers, hospitality professionals, etc.).

**Strategy 5.2** **Utilize the Franklin County Housing Study (2020), regional housing studies (from the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission and the West Piedmont Planning District Commission), and future housing studies, for guidance on mitigating known housing barriers and to capitalize on housing opportunities; review and amend Zoning Ordinance regulations to mitigate the identified barriers.**

Aside from the inclusion of additional housing types as permitted uses within the Westlake Village Overlay District, other regulations may need to be revised and/or introduced – such as minimum and maximum lot sizes, lot coverage, density bonuses for inclusion of affordable housing – just to name a few. With the current housing market and nation-wide housing crisis, Franklin County should stay aware of any resources and opportunities that may become available that aid in lowering the known barriers to housing. Housing barriers typically include costs, requirements for large lot sizes, strict single-family dwelling zoning regulations, public perception of affordable housing, construction costs, and more!

## **Goal 6: In concert with the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan, protect existing agricultural uses and lands to preserve and maintain the rural character and active agricultural uses that surround the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.**

While agricultural uses are not typically compatible with other land uses within Designated Growth Areas, Franklin County's strong agricultural history is a cornerstone of the County's identity, and the Westlake Hales-Ford area is no exception. As such, the County must plan carefully to strike a balance of growth and modernization within a concentrated area, while maintaining the rich farming history of the community at large.

At present, there are active agricultural operations within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, as well as on lands that lie just beyond the DGA boundary. Many of these operations are vital to the livelihood of residents, as well as the regional and state-wide agricultural industry. However, as previously noted, agricultural operations are not directly compatible with the concepts of Designated Growth Areas; agricultural operations consume larger swaths of land rather than concentrated development, and agricultural operations interspersed throughout concentrated development can cause gaps in utilities infrastructure. Yet, the Westlake Advisory Committee has stated that the community does have an appetite for both agricultural uses, and growth and denser development. In order to protect those active lands within *and* outside the DGA, deliberate consideration should be given to pursuing tools that maintain, retain, and protect working agricultural lands.

### **Strategy 6.1 During the next Comprehensive Plan update, assess and amend the Designated Growth Area (DGA) boundary for the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area to consider the agricultural uses.**

In an effort to align growth and new development to more concentrated areas, such as the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, the County should study the potential outcomes of reducing the overall boundary of the DGA to exclude some of the working farms within the DGA. As growth occurs and development continues, periodic review of both this Area Plan and the DGA boundary would allow for additional amendments to the boundary, as needed and as growth occurs in the future.

## Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix builds on the goals and strategies identified above. The Matrix is a tool to measure the progress in the implementation of those identified actions. The primary measurement of implementation is whether progress has been made in implementing an action. Implementation will need to be encouraged through capital projects, infrastructure improvements and public facility investments, regulatory revisions, as well as partnerships and engagement with and by the residents of the Westlake Hales-Ford area.

The Implementation Matrix brings the goals and strategies to life by identifying responsible parties and anticipated timeframes for completion. The Implementation Matrix should be reviewed annually by the Franklin County Board of Supervisors as part of the budgeting process to set priorities, as well as measure progress toward the Area Plan's vision. Additionally, the Implementation Matrix should be reviewed annually by the Franklin County Planning Commission, which serves the Board in an advisory capacity on matters concerning planning and development. Particularly, the Planning Commission is tasked with recommendations pertaining to long-range planning, which includes the County Comprehensive Plan and Village and Area Plans, such as this one. As such, the Planning Commission should strive to hold an annual review of each Village/Area Plan's Implementation Matrix to analyze progress and to make recommendations and progress reports to the Board of Supervisors.

While the County (Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and staff) is the primary pilot of this Area Plan, community citizen groups can be an indispensable partner in seeing many of the identified goals come to fruition. Ferrum Forward, a citizen organization formed during the Ferrum Village Area Plan process, is a local success story of residents coming together, creating a structured organization, and working with both the County and local, state, and regional partners to better their community. Citizens committees focus on myriad community aspects – including business retention and expansion, beautification and community aesthetics, and securing grant and funding opportunities. The creation of a Westlake Hales-Ford citizen committee, with members from a range of backgrounds, would be an advantageous step for the community to foster collaboration between residents, businesses, and the County.

The Implementation Matrix provides the following information, along with each strategy:

Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<p>Each strategy will require a certain tool to see that strategy implemented. “Tools” are categories that describe the specific action item and how it will be implemented. All tools assume there may be a need to contract with professionals in planning, engineering, architecture, and other consulting firms for implementation. Categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulatory Tools</li><li>• Community Outreach and Education</li><li>• Partnerships</li><li>• Capital Projects</li><li>• Programs and Services</li><li>• Plans and Studies</li></ul>	<p>The organization(s) responsible for partnering, administering, managing, and/or implementing the specific action item. These organizations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Franklin County:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Board of Supervisors</li><li>○ Planning Commission</li><li>○ Staff Departments</li></ul></li><li>• State and Federal Agencies<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ VDOT</li><li>○ Federal Highway Administration</li><li>○ Department of Housing and Community Development</li><li>○ Etc.</li></ul></li><li>• Regional and Institutional Partners<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission</li><li>○ West Piedmont Planning District Commission</li><li>○ Carilion Clinic</li><li>○ Western Virginia Water Authority</li><li>○ Etc.</li></ul></li><li>• Nonprofit Organizations</li><li>• Local Business Partners</li></ul> <p><i>Note:</i> While each strategy may list a Franklin County Staff department as the responsible party, County Administration and Finance Departments will likely be involved with each strategy.</p>	<p>Some of the actions included in the Implementation Matrix will require the approval of a governing body; particularly when it comes to allocating funds, creating programs, and pursuing initiatives.</p> <p>Typically, this will be the Franklin County Board of Supervisors, but some actions will require the approval of other entities, such as the Commonwealth Transportation Board for certain transportation-related funding scenarios.</p>	<p>The assigned priority speaks to the <i>need</i> for each strategy and is a guide for how best to plan actions over time. However, the priorities listed in this Plan also work in concert with goals and strategies of the County’s other Village/Area Plans, Strategic Plans, and Comprehensive Plan. Planning will need to consider <i>each</i> of these documents and their assigned priorities.</p> <p><b>High (Short-term) (1-3 years)</b> — short-term actions can be completed within 3 years of the Village Plan’s adoption.</p> <p><b>Medium (Medium-term) (3-5 years)</b> — medium-term actions may be initiated within 3 years but will be completed by 5 years from the Village Plan’s adoption.</p> <p><b>Low (Long-term) (5+ years)</b> — long-term actions may be initiated between 3 and 5 years from the Village Plan’s adoption but will be completed beyond the first five years of the Plan’s adoption, or later.</p> <p><b>Ongoing</b> — ongoing actions should continue for the life of the Village Plan.</p>

The following acronyms are found throughout the Implementation Matrix:

ADB –	Agricultural Development Board
BA –	Broadband Authority
BOS –	Board of Supervisors
CTB –	Commonwealth Transportation Board
DHCD –	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
FC –	Franklin County
FHWA –	Federal Highway Administration
PC –	Planning Commission
RAC –	Recreation Advisory Committee
RVARC –	Roanoke Valley Allegheny Regional Commission
VDOT –	Virginia Department of Transportation
VH –	Virginia Housing
WPPDC –	West Piedmont Planning District Commission
WVWA –	Western Virginia Water Authority

	Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 1: Improve the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area multimodal transportation network for increased safety, access, and mobility.</b>					
1.1	Maintain a working relationship with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to work on road improvements, safety needs, grant funding opportunities, and other transportation projects with the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships	FC BOS; FC Planning and Community Development; State Agencies (VDOT; CTB)	N/A	Ongoing
1.2	Seek funding opportunities to improve dangerous intersections and other safety needs along Route 122 (Booker T. Washington Highway) and Scruggs Road. Known priorities include the intersections of Brooks Mill Rd and Scruggs Rd, Village Springs Dr and Route 122, Lakewatch Dr and Route 122, Lakemount Dr and Route 122, Harmony School Road and Route 122, and Morewood Rd and Route 122; however, the County should continually assess other intersections not directly mentioned, as needed.	Partnership; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Planning and Community Development; State Agencies (VDOT; CTB)	FC BOS; CTB	High; Ongoing
1.3	Consider a study to determine the need and viability of four-lane segments along Route 122 (Booker T. Washington Highway).	Plans and Studies	FC BOS; State Agencies (VDOT)	FC BOS	Low
1.4	Ensure that multimodal interconnectivity – including pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections and mobility – is considered during development planning and design.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Developers	FC BOS	Ongoing
1.5	Revise zoning regulations to encourage pedestrian and vehicular connections at the time of new development – including connector roads within developments, sidewalks and crosswalks, and multimodal paths.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Planning Consultants	FC BOS	High

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 1: Improve the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area multimodal transportation network for increased safety, access, and mobility.</b>				
1.6 Assess the existing gaps and opportunities for pedestrian infrastructure within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area; and seek funding through grants, public-private partnerships, and other revenue streams to design and install signalized pedestrian infrastructure and sidewalk/trail connectivity between developed areas. Additionally, seek funding opportunities pertaining to pedestrian safety at the intersection of Parkcrest Dr and Route 122.	Plans and Studies; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Planning and Community Development; State Agencies	FC BOS CTB	High
1.7 Pursue and foster public-private partnerships to offer shared transportation options, such as micro-transit or other transit services, particularly for the aging-in-place population.	Partnerships; Capital Projects	FC BOS: State Agencies; Regional Partners	FC BOS	High / Medium

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 2: Strengthen the quality of life through increased recreational, cultural, and community facilities that provide opportunities for physical, mental, social, and community health.</b>				
2.1 Engage with partners and/or consultants to research, design, fund, and implement a system of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. (See Goal #1).	Plans and Studies; Capital Projects	FC BOS; State Agencies (VDOT); Regional Partners	FC BOS	High
2.2 Research and identify viable areas for future recreation facilities on County-owned property within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area. Subsequently establish public-private partnerships and seek funding opportunities to create and construct identified recreation facilities.	Plans and Studies; Capital Projects; Partnerships	FC BOS; FC PC; FC RAC; FC Parks and Recreation; Regional Partners	FC BOS	Medium
2.3 Leverage public-private partnerships to create a neutral community gathering space that can accommodate a variety of community needs - such as a space for the arts, education, special events, conferences, and "town hall" gatherings in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships; Capital Projects	FC BOS; Regional Partners; Local businesses and developers; Nonprofit Organizations	FC BOS	High
2.4 Leverage a public-private partnership to identify a suitable area for, and to develop, a farmer's market within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships; Capital Projects; Programs and Services	FC BOS; Regional Partners; Local businesses and developers	FC BOS	Medium
2.5 Collaborate with County, Federal, and private partners to foster, retain, and promote the unique agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage elements within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships; Community Outreach and Education	FC BOS; Regional Partners; State and Federal Agencies	N/A	Ongoing
2.6 Foster collaboration with the Booker T. Washington National Monument, regarding relevant recreational and cultural opportunities, in the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships	FC BOS; Federal Agencies	N/A	Ongoing

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 3: Foster an economically sustainable village center that offers needed shopping, dining, work, education, lodging, and entertainment opportunities to residents and visitors.</b>				
3.1 Consider the creation of County-funded grant and incentive programs to attract new businesses and industries to the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Programs and Services; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Economic Development	FC BOS	High
3.2 Revise zoning regulations for the Westlake Village Center Overlay District to better accommodate "village center" development - including signage regulations, bulk and siting regulations, etc.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Planning Consultants	FC BOS	High
3.3 Explore opportunities and initiatives to recruit businesses that would fill known gaps in the Westlake Hales-Ford Area market, such as restaurants, childcare services, retail, and tourist accommodations. Utilize the Franklin County Economic Development Strategic Plan, and accompanying research, to identify those gaps.	Plans and Studies	FC BOS; FC Economic Development; Regional Partners; Local businesses	FC BOS	High
3.4 Consider local funding and create partnerships to develop a shared (co-working) office space, or make existing space available, to accommodate those residents that are a part of the tele-work industry.	Partnerships; Capital Projects; Programs and Services	FC BOS; FC Economic Development; Regional Partners; Local businesses and developers	FC BOS	Medium
3.5 Review and amend Zoning Ordinance regulations that can be a barrier to desired commercial development.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Planning Consultants	FC BOS	High
3.6 Pursue and foster public-private partnerships to create program(s) that provide matching façade grants for community design elements - such as benches, landscaping, and consistent signage; and village branding - such as gateway and wayfinding signage.	Partnerships; Programs and Services; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Economic Development; FC Planning and Community Development	FC BOS	High
3.7 Work towards attracting more lodging development within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area, through a variety of means known to be effective in attracting commercial development within the tourism industry.	Plans and Studies; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Economic Development; Developers	FC BOS	High

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 4: Deliver superior public services that focus on infrastructure capacity, accessibility, and efficiency to support growth pressures and that respond to the high quality of life desired by today's businesses and residents.</b>				
4.1 Engage with Western Virginia Water Authority to stay informed of plans and studies for infrastructure expansion; additionally, seek partnerships with both WVWA and developers to provide increased water and wastewater infrastructure access as development continues within the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.	Partnerships; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC County Administration; Regional Partners; Developers	N/A	High; Ongoing
4.2 Strive for active and responsive emergency services and care; work with partners and service providers to expand the operation, accessibility, and efficiency of Franklin County and/or volunteer emergency EMS, fire services, and law enforcement.	Programs and Services	FC BOS; FC Public Safety; Volunteer Fire Departments	FC BOS	High; Ongoing
4.3 Continue to work on increasing broadband infrastructure, accessibility, and availability, through partnerships, grants, technical assistance programs, and other support mechanisms available through Federal and State agencies and programs.	Partnerships; Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC County Administration State and Federal Agencies	FC BOS	High; Ongoing
4.4 Seek initiatives and work with community and regional partners to increase access to primary healthcare.	Partnerships; Programs and Services	FC BOS; FC County Administration; Regional Partners; Local businesses and developers	FC BOS	High
4.5 Continue to seek opportunities for improvements to other County services and facilities, such as enhancements to the library and waste "green box" collection site.	Capital Projects	FC BOS; FC Public Works; FC Public Library	FC BOS	Low
4.6 Annually review and work with the Board of Supervisors to update the County's capital improvement plan (CIP) to ensure major expenditures are coordinated with the goals and strategies included in this Plan, alongside County-wide expenditures - so that they are planned, and programmed in a transparent and fiscally sound manner.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC County Administration	FC BOS	Ongoing

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 5: Create an inclusive, livable community that provides a balanced inventory of housing opportunities for all residents.</b>				
5.1 Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a greater diversity of housing types that would accommodate a range of incomes, lifestyles, and stages of life - including affordable and workforce housing, and housing for those aging-in-place.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Planning Consultants	FC BOS	High
5.2 Utilize the Franklin County Housing Study (2020), regional housing studies (from the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission and the West Piedmont Planning District Commission), and future housing studies, for guidance on mitigating known housing barriers and to capitalize on housing opportunities; review and amend Zoning Ordinance regulations to mitigate the identified barriers.	Plans and Studies; Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development Regional Partners (RVARC, WPPDC); State Agencies (DHCD, VH)	FC BOS	High

Strategy	Tool	Responsible Party	Approving Authority	Priority
<b>Goal 6: In concert with the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan, protect existing agricultural uses and lands to preserve and maintain the rural character and active agricultural uses that surround the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area.</b>				
6.1 During the next Comprehensive Plan update, assess and consider amending the Designated Growth Area (DGA) boundary for the Westlake Hales-Ford Designated Growth Area to reflect the agricultural uses.	Regulatory Tools	FC BOS; FC PC; FC Planning and Community Development; Property Owners	FC BOS	High