220-North
Corridor Plan
Draft 2016

Revised Plan by the Board of Supervisors of Franklin County, Virginia
Draft June 30, 2016

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220-North Corridor Plan

Draft Revised Plan June 30, 2016

Background

The 220-North Corridor Plan was originally adopted by the Franklin County Board of Supervisors on February 17, 2009. The original Area Plan was a requirement of a $1 million federal grant toward the construction of a 12-inch public water line along the northern segment of U.S. Rt. 220 in Franklin County and was developed with input from the Franklin County Planning Commission, County staff, and stakeholders along the Rt. 220 corridor. The plan identified the opportunity to plan for and preserve land for a regional commerce park, the exact location of which was at the time undetermined.

In 2016, the 220-North Corridor Plan was revised to address the potential development by the County of a new regional mixed use commerce park called The Regional Enterprise Park, on parcels along Rt. 220 surrounding Brick Church Road. In addition, as part of this revision, the County also designated a portion of this corridor, where the business park will be located, as a Designated Growth Area (DGA) to meet the requirements of §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia, to accommodate higher density compact mixed use development as an urban/village development area. This designation, along with the designation of Route 220 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS), qualifies this area to potentially receive funding under State House Bill 2 legislation passed in 2014 as a qualified Urban Development Area (UDA).

The 220-North Corridor Plan seeks to guide development along this important transportation corridor with the development of the Regional Enterprise Park as a key catalyst and anchor for the corridor and for this portion of the County in the future.

In general, this revised Corridor Plan preserves all of the policy direction and intent of the original Corridor Plan. The only revisions that were made to the original 2009 plan are those that were needed to accommodate the anticipated development of the Regional Enterprise Park as a key economic catalyst and as one cornerstone of the county's economic development strategy for the long term. The original 220-North Corridor Plan called for a series of zoning overlay districts along the corridor to preserve the County's scenic beauty, concentrate commercial development into well-planned centers, and lay the groundwork for the future commerce park along Rt. 220. These zoning districts have been implemented as the following overlay districts in the Franklin County Zoning Ordinance:

- 220 North Scenic Gateway District
- 220 North Rural Development District
- 220 North Mixed-Use Commercial District

This revised Corridor Plan recommends the following changes to accommodate development of the Regional Enterprise Park:

1) Modifying the boundaries of the Regional Business and the Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Categories in a manner such that the Regional Enterprise Park is entirely contained within the Regional Business Category
2) Creating a new Regional Enterprise Park Zoning District
3) Adding language to the 220 North Rural Development and 220 North Mixed Use Commercial Overlay Districts that stipulates the zoning overlays do not affect parcels within the Regional Enterprise Park Zoning District

Further discussion of these recommended changes and other policy revisions to accommodate the development of the Regional Enterprise Park are detailed in this plan.

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan of Franklin County serves as a primary guide for decision makers on issues related to planning, development, and investment in the physical environment. Updated by the Franklin County Board of Supervisors in May, 2007, the Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's desires for the management of change over time. The Plan sets forth the rationale for zoning, though it is not in itself a zoning ordinance. The Plan is comprehensive in scope, in that it depicts a desired future for the entire geographic area of the county. Yet the Plan is flexible. It recognizes that many decisions can only be made after further study, detailed "on-the-ground" analysis, and specific policy recommendation.

To achieve this level of specificity, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the development and adoption of small area plans, including Village Plans and Corridor Plans. The 220-North Corridor Plan is an effort to refine, clarify, and build upon the values, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and to address emerging needs and opportunities along Franklin County's most vital transportation corridor.

Corridor Plan Boundaries

The area for the 220-North Corridor Plan extends from the Roanoke County line to the northern limits of the Town of Rocky Mount. (See Figure 1). It is expanded from the original 2009 boundaries to include the parcels that will comprise the Regional Enterprise Park. Figure 1 also shows the proposed future land use categories for the Corridor Plan which are as follows:

1. Scenic Gateway Future Land Use Category
2. Regional Business Future Land Use Category
3. Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category

Future Land Use Categories

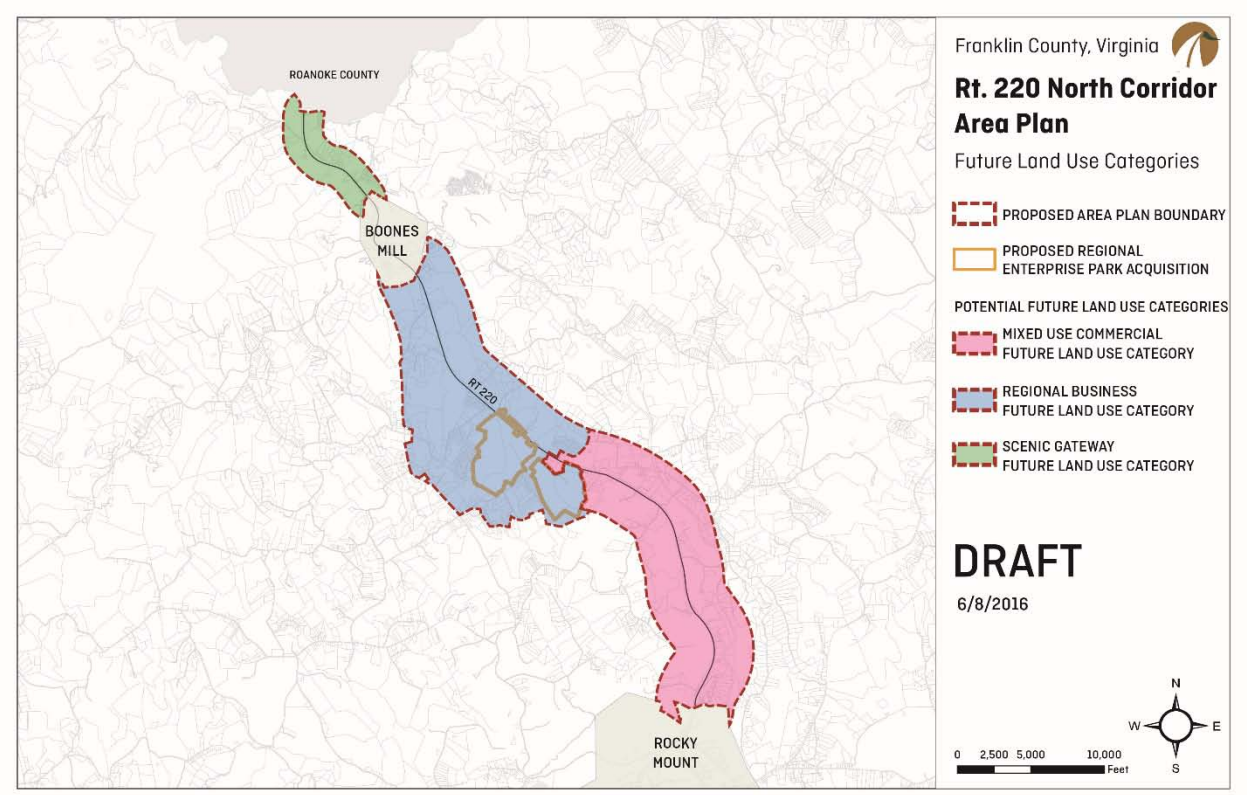

Figure 1

Process

The planning process for the 220-North Corridor Plan began in early 2008. Early scoping for the Plan included staff-level meetings with Roanoke County officials to coordinate plans, exchange information, and receive mutual feedback. Roanoke County conducted and completed a similar planning exercise for its southern length of Rt. 220 in late 2007/early 2008.

Franklin County planning staff conducted two neighborhood meetings at Boones Mill Elementary School on March 19th and 20th, 2008. At these meetings, staff displayed various maps and presented multiple planning scenarios in an effort to solicit input. Representatives from the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Earth Environmental Consultants, Inc., and various County agencies were on hand to provide information and answer questions.

Discussion at these neighborhood meetings focused heavily on the potential impact of the proposed water line. Citizens. many of whom are experiencing water quality or quantity problems with private water systems and individual wells. wanted to know how and when they might gain access to public water supplied by the proposed new water line along Rt. 220. Citizens also expressed concerns about how the water line might impact growth and development. Issues of concern included viewshed protection, increased residential development, additional highway commercial development, impacts on local and commuting traffic, and loss of rural character.

The Planning Commission held a number of work sessions throughout the spring and summer of 2008 to identify issues and consider various scenarios. The Planning Commission developed a draft Plan and held a public hearing on September 9, 2008. On November 10, 2008, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the draft Plan to the Board of Supervisors for further consideration, and approved the plan on February 17, 2009.

In 2016, the Franklin County Planning Commission held a number of work sessions to develop a revised Route 220-North Corridor Plan to accommodate the development of the Regional Enterprise Park. These work sessions were facilitated by county planning staff and a consultant team that was provided for by a technical assistance grant from the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment under the Urban Development Area Grant Program. In addition, a meeting was held on June 7, 2016 for the County to hear concerns, ideas, and feedback for development of the Park.

Two public hearings were held on _____, 2016 and _____, 2016 and the revised Route 220-North Corridor Plan, as recommended by the Planning Commission, was adopted by the Franklin County Board of Supervisors on _____, 2016.

Approach

The 2009 adopted Plan established three distinct segments as future land use planning categories along the Rt. 220 corridor:

1. **Scenic Gateway**, extending from the Roanoke County line to the northern limits of the Town of Boones Mill. The purpose of this land use category is to preserve the existing natural vegetation and rural character of this area, to create an inviting sense of arrival and departure.

2. **Regional Business**, located between Grassy Hill Road and Brick Church Road, which was amended in 2016 to include the Regional Enterprise project area. The purpose of this land use category is to preserve sufficient land for a potential regional business park, and to prevent visual clutter along the corridor.

3. **Mixed Use Commercial**, extending from Brick Church Road to the northern limits of the Town of Rocky Mount, which was amended in 2016 to exclude the Regional Enterprise project area. The purpose of this land use category is to encourage a mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses in integrated, well-planned developments.

A fourth segment, Medium Density Residential, intended to be located on both sides of Rt. 220 extending south of Boones Mill toward the Blackwater River, was not implemented.

Analysis of the Corridor Plan Area

As part of the 2016 Corridor Plan update, the consultant team prepared a series of analysis maps of the 220-North Corridor Plan area, using County GIS data that looked at:

- Existing Land Uses
- Existing Zoning
- Land Occupancy
- Transportation Conditions
- Environmental Conditions
- WVWA Existing Service Area
- WVWA Proposed Water Service Area
- WVWA Wastewater Service Area

The maps were used to better understand the existing conditions in the area and see how the policies that have been developed for the Corridor Plan relate to existing 'on the ground' conditions along the corridor.

Existing Land Uses

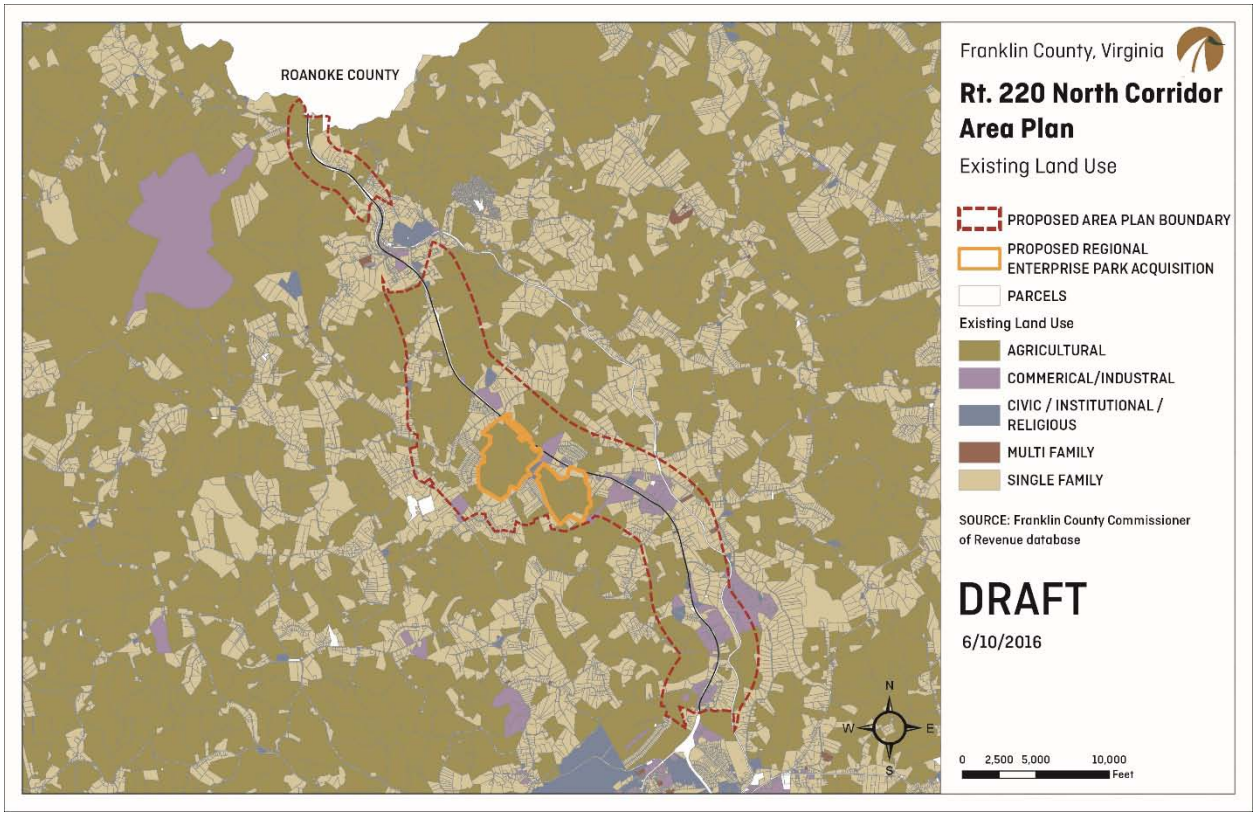

Figure 2

The area is composed almost entirely of agricultural, single family, and commercial/industrial uses. There is a noticeable land use dividing line just south of the Regional Enterprise parcels. Agricultural uses are common from the County line to these parcels, at which point the corridor becomes predominantly commercial and residential while smaller agricultural parcels are found on either side of the corridor. There are sporadic civic, institutional, and religious uses within the corridor as well, the closest of which is Brick Church, whose properties on either side of Brick Church Road divide the Regional Enterprise parcels into two distinct pieces. While multi-family uses can be found in a few places throughout the map, only one multi-family parcel in the project area fronts Rt. 220, about one mile south of the Regional Enterprise parcels.

Existing Zoning

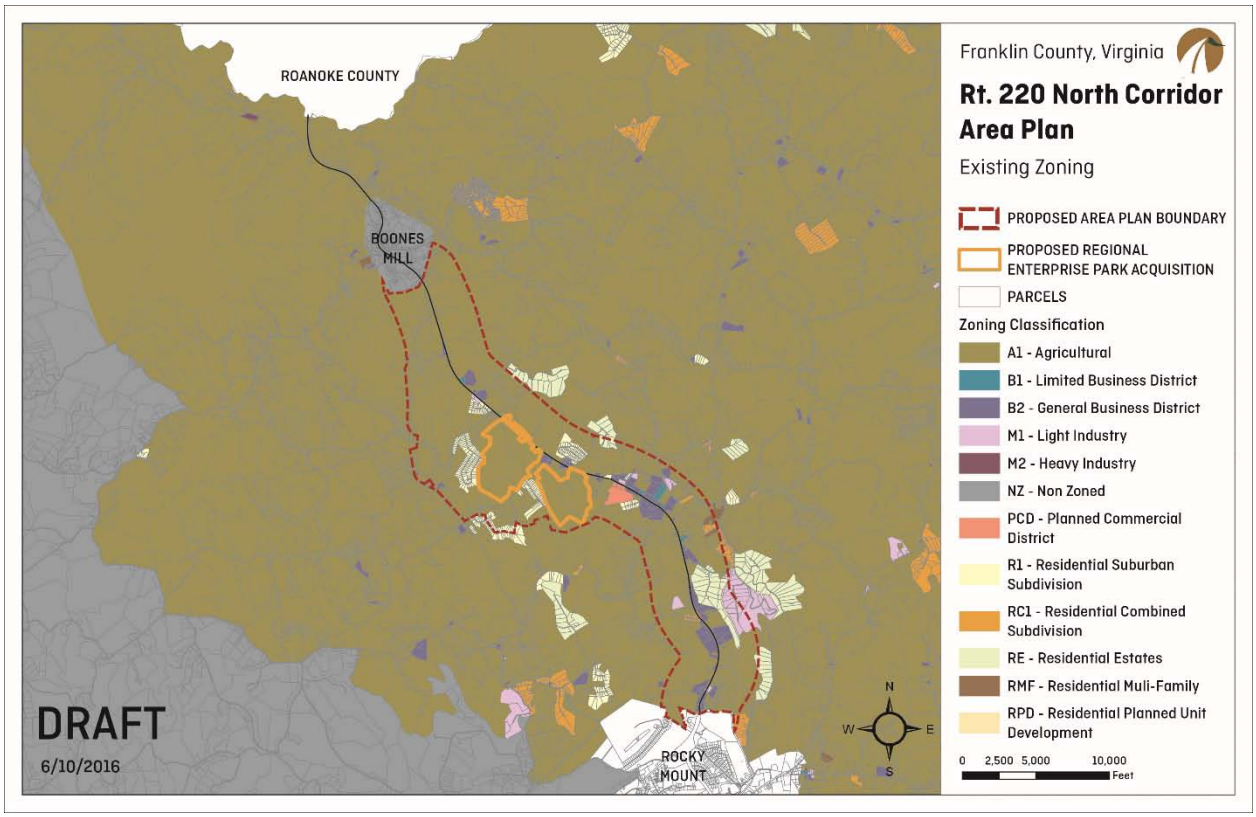

Figure 3

Agricultural (A-1) is by far the dominant zoning classification on the corridor and in this part of Franklin County. All Regional Enterprise Park parcels are currently zoned A-1.

Despite the existence of single family residential uses along the whole corridor, there is only limited residential zoning. Business (B-2) becomes a common classification just south of the Regional Enterprise parcels, again showing a dividing line between the southern border of Regional Enterprise and the more mixed use commercial corridor to the south.

In addition to Business (B-2) uses, Light Industry (M-1) and Planned Commercial District (PCD) zones are also present in the project area. The permitted uses in these two districts will likely have some similarities to any future Regional Enterprise Park District, and their presence in the corridor suggests that the inclusion of a new district would not be incompatible with existing zoning already on the books.

Land Occupancy

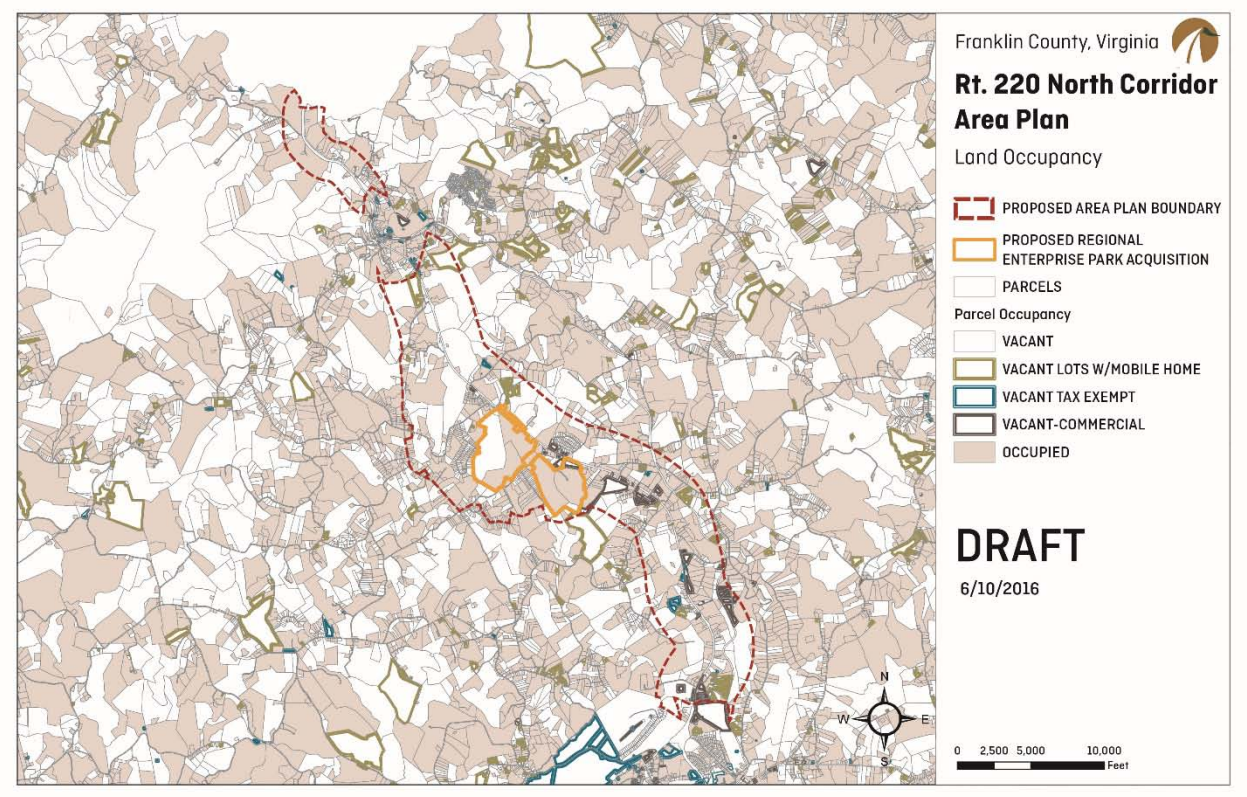

Figure 4

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 vacant lots for mobile homes, vacant tax exempt lots (such as publicly owned land that has not been built upon), or vacant commercial lots.

Much of the land along the 220-North Corridor is already occupied, particularly in the Scenic Gateway and Mixed Use Corridor Future Land Use portions of the corridor. Four (4) of the eight (8) parcels that constitute the potential Regional Enterprise Park are currently listed as occupied.

The majority of the vacant parcels, particularly the large ones, are between Boones Mill and Brick Church Road; though there are several larger vacant parcels adjacent to the Regional Enterprise parcels on the east side of Rt. 220. Additionally, there are smaller vacant commercial parcels nearby, and again further south, closer to Rocky Mount.

Transportation

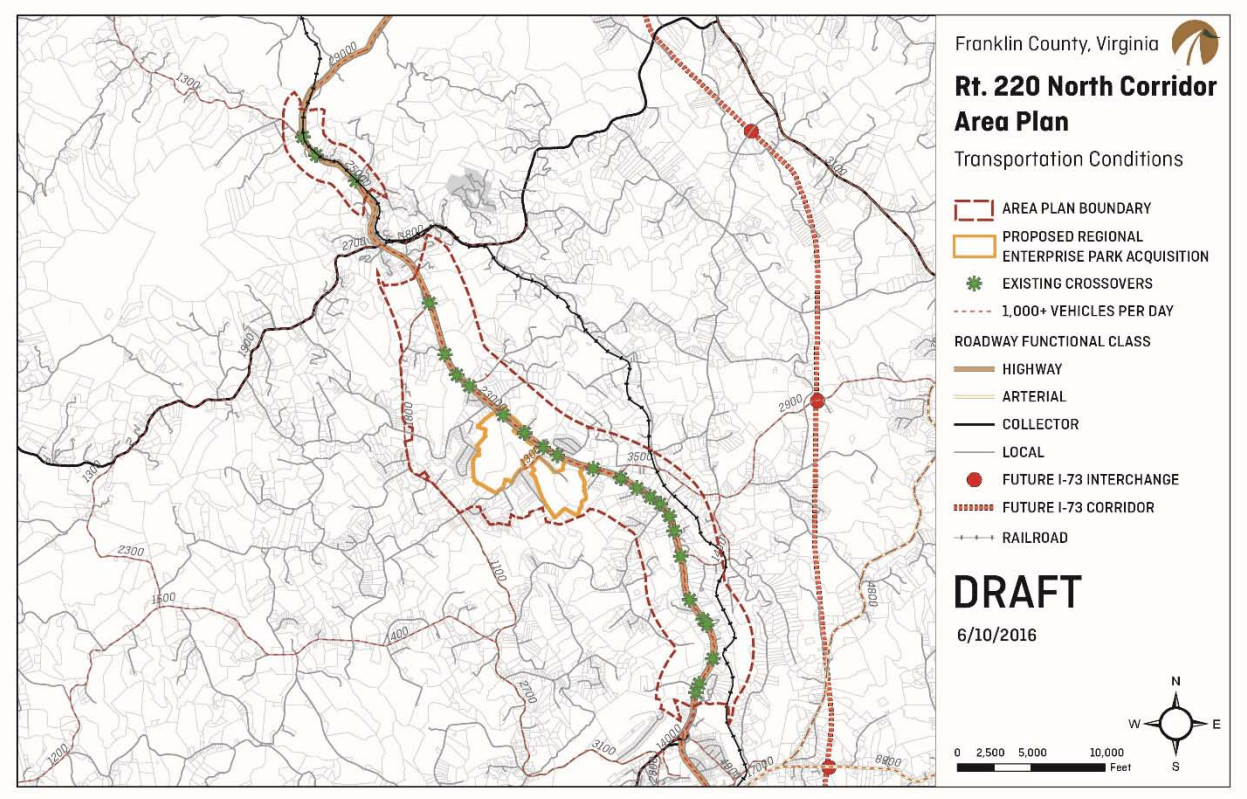

Figure 5

Rt. 220 is the only highway in the corridor area, connecting Rocky Mount and Boones Mill with Roanoke and is the only Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS) in Franklin County as defined in the Commonwealth's long-range multi-modal transportation plan, VTrans 2040. Route 220 is a major north-south commuter route, with average daily traffic loads as high as 29,000. All other roads are local roads, though several serve more than 1,000 vehicle trips per day, including Brick Church Road, and Wirtz Road. No park-and-ride facility serves the corridor, limiting public or private ride sharing (like carpools or transit).

The existing crossovers on the road show how the corridor land uses affect transportation provision. Crossover frequency is much higher in the Mixed Use Category area than in areas farther north, reflecting the density and diversity of uses on the corridor in that district.

Future I-73 will run generally parallel to Rt. 220, with interchanges proposed at Old Franklin Turnpike, Wirtz Road, and Bonbrook Mill Road. The latter two interchanges will provide easy access to I-73. However, there will be some road improvements needed along Wirtz Road and Bonbrook Mill Road to allow increased vehicle volume and truck traffic. For instance, the railroad bridge over Route 697 (Wirtz Road) has a vertical height clearance of 13 feet 9 inches (the sign posting is for 13 feet 6 inches), which may require some larger trucks to be diverted to other roads. Additionally, the horizontal clearance is 23 feet 11 inches from wall to wall, and the width between the white edge lines on the pavement surface is 19 feet 6 inches (one lane is 9 feet 6 inches and the other lane is 10 feet), which may preclude the use of oversize load trucks on the road. These and similar issues should be reviewed further in the next revision to the County's Comprehensive Plan related to transportation and economic development in the area.

Environmental Conditions

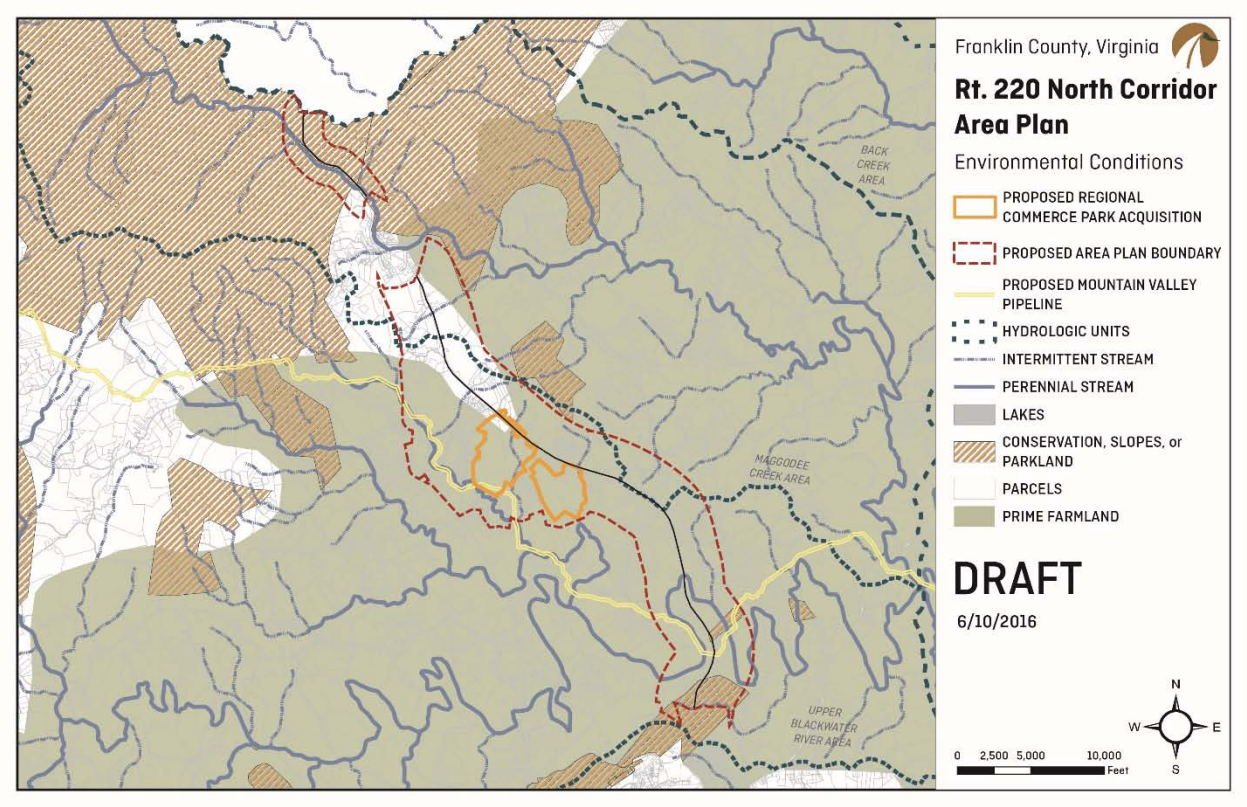

Figure 6

The entire Scenic Gateway Category is composed of nondevelopable land, while the Regional Business and Mixed Use Corridor Categories are much more conducive to development. While the area from Regional Enterprise Park to Rocky Mount is all prime farmland, so is much of the surrounding area, thereby not substantially impeding development potential along the Regional Enterprise Park and Mixed Use Corridor areas.

The proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline would intersect the Regional Enterprise Park parcels at their western edge. The pipeline also crosses the corridor close to the northern border of Rocky Mount, but otherwise is outside of this area plan's boundary.

WVWA Proposed Water Service Area

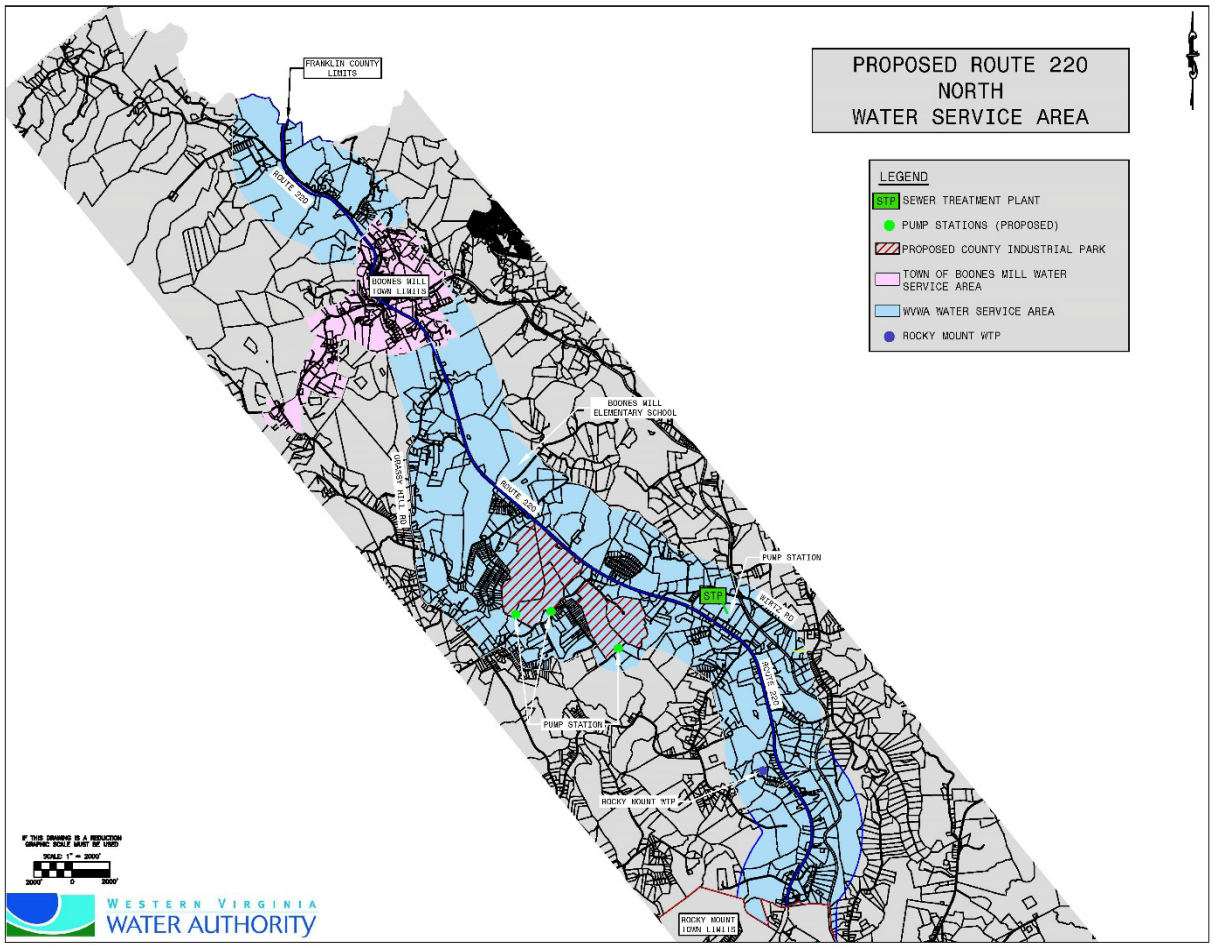

Figure 7

Franklin County joined the Western Virginia Water Authority in November of 2009. WVWA constructed a water line from the Franklin County/Roanoke County line to Wirtz Road. On June 21, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted an expansion of the water service area for WVWA. The new water service area incorporates the Regional Enterprise Park and areas surrounding the park. In addition to, WVWA is expanding the water service area to Rocky Mount Town limits. See figure 8 for the newly adopted water services area.

WVWA Proposed Wastewater Service Area

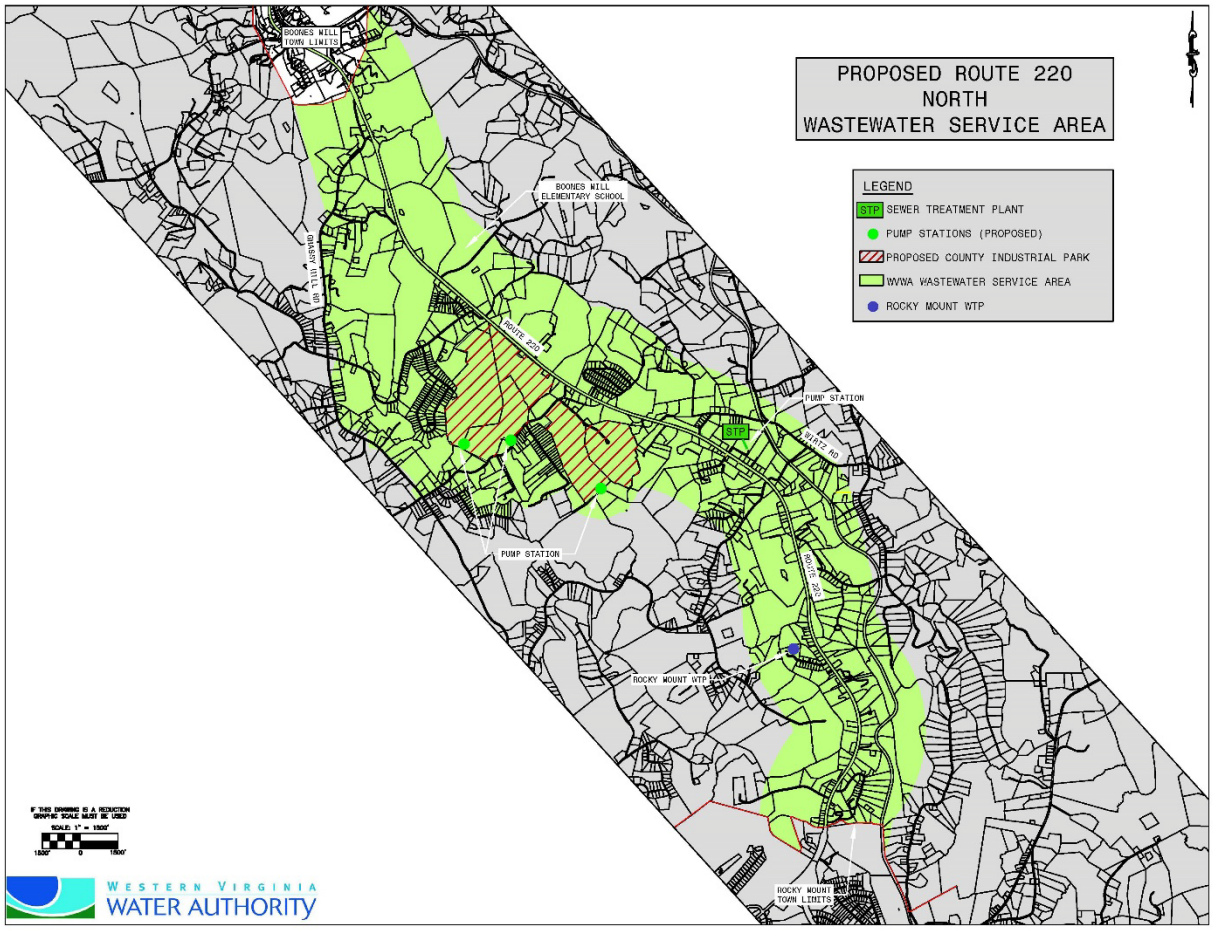

Figure 8

WVWA purchase an existing pump station, which currently serves several customers in the Wirtz area of Rt. 220. On June 21, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted to expand its wastewater service area to include the Regional Enterprise Park and surrounding areas. The expansion would consist of an area from Boones Mills town limits to Rocky Mount town limits. As well as, the construction of three pump stations at the Regional Enterprise Park to support growth as needed.

Scenic Gateway Future Land Use Category

Rt. 220 serves as Franklin County's most important transportation artery, linking Franklin County to the Roanoke Valley and south to the Greensboro/Triad region of North Carolina. Rt. 220 also plays an important role in shaping the visitor's impressions of Franklin County. Entering from the north, the traveler emerges through a dramatic mountain backdrop unto the rolling foothills beyond, characterized by fertile farmland and breathtaking natural beauty. Traveling northbound on Rt. 220, residents and visitors are rewarded with the iconic images of Murray Knob and Cahas Mountain, Franklin County's highest peaks. The experience is enhanced by the village charm of Boones Mill's local shops and quaint mountain-town atmosphere.

Boundaries

While these images are comforting, they are by no means guaranteed or assured. Encroaching development, steep-slope deforestation, congestive traffic, and the visual clutter of signs, lights, and buildings all pose a threat to the gateway experience. If it can be said that Franklin County depends on this stretch of Rt. 220 for its economic future, it is also true that "you never get a second chance to make a first impression."

The Scenic Gateway Category runs from the Roanoke County/Franklin County line to the northern Boones Mill town limits. This area is characterized by dramatic mountain views, steep slopes, mature vegetation, and limited access to Rt. 220. For the purposes of this plan, the Scenic Gateway Category shall extend ¼ mile, measured perpendicular to the centerline of the Rt. 220 right-of-way. (See Fig. 7.)

Scenic Gateway Future Land Use Category

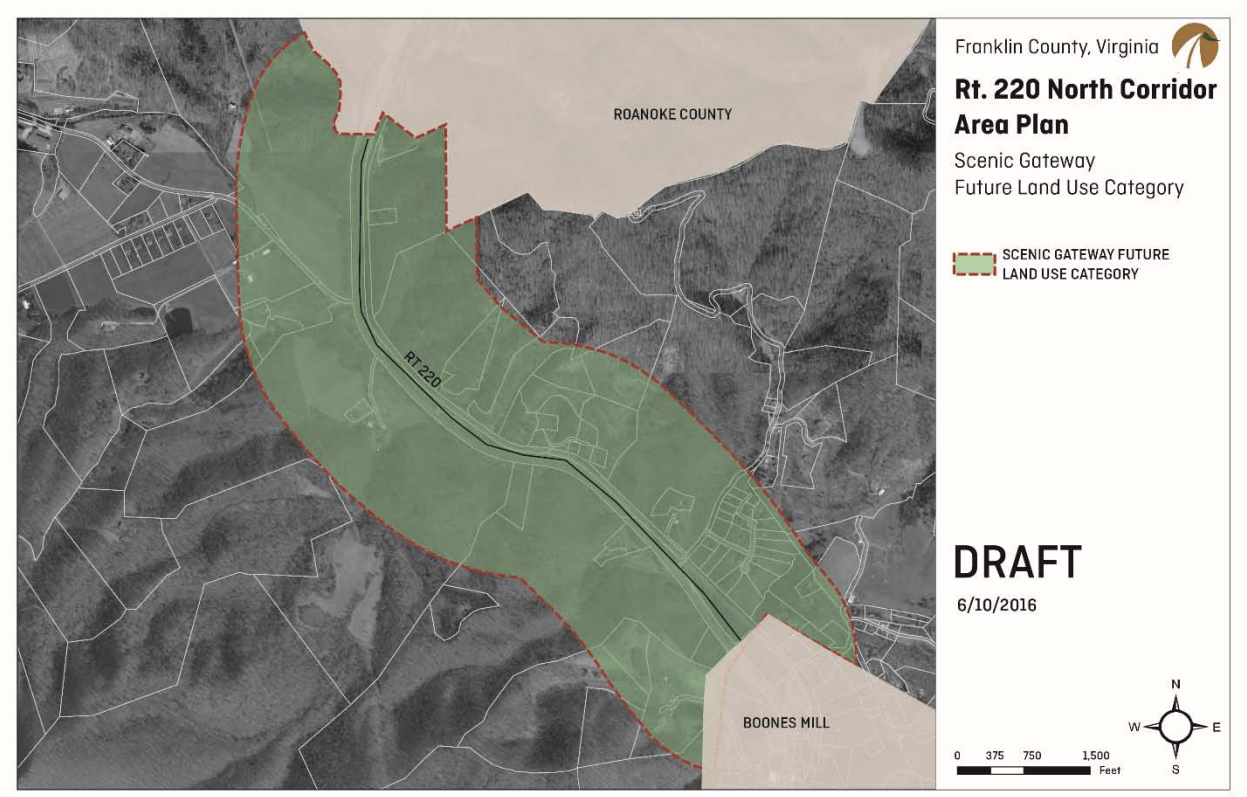

Figure 9

Existing Conditions

The Scenic Gateway Category is largely undeveloped. Existing development consists of farmland (primarily in the Naff Road area), scattered single-family dwellings, and a line of the Norfolk Southern railroad running parallel to Rt. 220. Maggodee Creek runs along the west side of Rt. 220 at the Franklin County line before crossing Rt. 220 and running east of the highway into Boones Mill. The rail line, coupled with the creek's floodplain, significantly restricts access to the highway. Beyond the creek and

railroad, this area is characterized by steep slopes and limited access to secondary roads. Opportunities for new development throughout the Scenic Gateway are therefore extremely limited.

The Comprehensive Plan designates the majority of land in this district for "Conservation Areas/Steep Slopes >25%." A smaller portion of the district, located on the west side of Rt. 220 at the Boones Mill town limits, is designated for "Agriculture, Forestry, & Rural Residential." The Comprehensive Plan states that "special protection is appropriate to ensure both the community and the individual property interests are protected" in areas designated for Conservation.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the development of additional "specific policies and standards to provide appropriate incentives and protections to ensure long-term conservation." This Corridor Plan has also recommended additional protections through a zoning overlay district that has since been adopted in the County Zoning Ordinance. This overlay district parallels Rt. 220 from the Roanoke County line to the Boones Mill town limits, and extends ¼ mile beyond Rt. 220, as measured perpendicular to the centerline of the right-of-way. (See Figure 9)

Future Land Use Policy Recommendations

This section outlines policy recommendations relevant to this future land use category. These recommendations pertain to multiple policy documents, including zoning ordinance, land development ordinance, and the comprehensive plan. Unless otherwise noted, the recommendations for the Scenic Gateway Future Land Use Category are unchanged from the 2009 Plan. As of the 2016 update, many of the recommendations herein have been implemented.

Scenic Gateway Zoning Overlay District:

Existing zoning in the Scenic Gateway District consists primarily of A-1, Agricultural District. This zoning district emphasizes farming and forestry, but also allows for residential development. A-1 is considered the lowest density zoning district in Franklin County.

The type and arrangement of uses within the Scenic Gateway Overlay District create a compatible visual relationship with the natural terrain, existing agricultural uses, and the established rural character of the area. Allowable uses have minimal traffic impact on Rt. 220, and should not distract from existing scenic views. By establishing an overlay zoning district, the Scenic Gateway Overlay District seeks to limit certain uses otherwise permitted in the A-1 zoning district, which would have an adverse impact on the natural environment, scenic views, or the transportation capacity of Rt. 220.

The following are the key elements of the 220-North Scenic Gateway Overlay District with respect to allowable uses:

- Commercial, retail or other uses requiring highway visibility and frequent vehicle trips should be prohibited.

- Residential density should be limited to 1.2 units per acre – the maximum allowed under by-right A-1 zoning based on the minimum lot size of 35,000 square feet.

- Residential clustering should be required in order to preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation and open space. Clustering provisions require a minimum of 50% open space, with density calculated based on the projected by-right yield for the underlying A-1 zoning.

- New curb cuts along Rt. 220 should be restricted; where necessary, entrances should be limited to right-in, right-out access.

Buffering:

The Scenic Gateway Zoning Overlay District was also intended to preserve viewsheds and mature vegetation along Rt. 220. To accomplish this, the overlay requirements include a required buffer along the perimeter of the Rt. 220 right-of-way to protect the tree-lined character of the corridor and to screen any new development from direct view. Buffering requirements were based on the following:

- Buffers established outside the Rt. 220 corridor for a distance of 250 feet, measured from the edge of the right-of-way.

- The buffer prohibit buildings, parking areas, or other physical site improvements, except for right-in, right-out driveway access where necessary for existing lots used for single-family residential purposes. Harvesting of timber within the buffer shall be allowed in accordance with best management practices for forestry.

- Single-family development on existing lots containing less than ½ acre, or measuring less than 500 feet in depth from the Rt. 220 right-of way, required to maintain a 100-foot minimum buffer.

Tree Preservation:

The character of the Scenic Gateway District is defined by the tree-lined and heavily forested appearance along Rt. 220. Mature trees serve to increase property values, stabilize soil, reduce stormwater runoff, provide wildlife habitat, and act as a buffer against noise and visual clutter. Significant development along the corridor would severely alter the serene character of the gateway, and should therefore be limited within the immediate Rt. 220 viewshed. The 220-North Scenic Gateway Overlay District requirements were developed that include the following principles:

- All trees located within the required buffer, and measuring 6-inches in diameter but less than 18 inches in diameter, shall be preserved. Exceptions should be allowed for timber harvesting and tree farming, in accordance with best management practices for forestry.

- Grubbing and the clearing of unhealthy vegetation and underbrush should be permitted in the required buffer.

Landscaping:

While tree preservation is limited to the required buffer (250-feet) as described above, additional landscaping standards were recommended for the entire ¼ mile Scenic Gateway area. Landscaping standards seek to screen, shade, and otherwise reduce the visual impact of parking areas; minimize noise and glare; and provide safe, attractive entrances into new developments. The 220-North Scenic Gateway Overlay District standards for landscape have been developed to include the following:

- Perimeter landscaping for parking lots should require trees to be planted at a ratio of one tree per 50 linear feet; shrubs, measuring three feet in height at maturity, should be required to be planted between trees to screen vehicle bumpers and headlights.

- Internal landscaping for parking lots should require one landscaped tree island for every 10 parking spaces, with at least one large deciduous tree required for each landscape island.

- Lighting of subdivision entrance signs should be prohibited.

Signs:

Unlike portions of the Rt. 220 corridor in Roanoke County, the entrance into Franklin County along Rt. 220 is largely free of sign clutter or off-premises advertising (billboards.) The experience upon entering Franklin County remains serene and natural. The Scenic Gateway Overlay District seeks to preserve this character with strict limitations on signage along the Rt. 220 corridor, north of Boones Mill, with the following provisions:

- Off-premises and billboard signs prohibited.

- Free-standing signs should be monument-style signs, with a solid base or pedestal, and should not be greater than 8 feet in height as measured from the base of the sign. Pole-mounted signs are prohibited.

- Residential subdivision signs should be subtle and understated. Lighting of such signs should be prohibited.

Implementation:

With the development and adoption of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to establish the 220-Scenic Gateway Overlay District, as described above, much of the policy intent for this area has been implemented in the zoning ordinance. The following are additional implementation recommendations that would build on the policy intent described above and help reinforce the scenic visual character of this portion of the Rt. 220 Corridor.

1. Explore alternatives to by-right A-1 residential subdivision development to preserve significant open space and important views.

2. Explore methods to restrict or limit development of steep slopes.

3. Explore incentives for land conservation, including purchase or transfer of development rights, and tax incentives for conservation easements.

4. Discourage rezoning within designated Conservation Areas which would result in a residential density greater than 1.2 units per acre.

Regional Business Future Land Use Category

More than 25,000 vehicles per day travel the Rt. 220 corridor between Rocky Mount and the Roanoke County line. Many of these vehicle trips are made by commuters, who leave their homes in Franklin County for jobs elsewhere in the Roanoke Valley. These commuters spend much of their incomes outside of Franklin County. The out-commute also drains valuable volunteer hours away from local schools, churches and other civic endeavors.

The 220-North Corridor Plan seeks to reverse this out-commuting trend by establishing an area for high-wage employment along Rt. 220. The Corridor Plan recognizes that, left to current market forces, the Rt. 220 corridor between Rocky Mount and Boones Mill would likely develop with a mixture of highway commercial uses and suburban-style residential subdivisions. Such uses, if located immediately along the corridor, would disrupt the natural scenic beauty of the area, consume prime real estate, and worsen Franklin County's out-commute situation. Instead, the Corridor Plan envisions a well-planned and attractive Regional Business District as a regional center of employment, bringing dollars into the community while preserving the scenic landscape along Rt. 220.

Boundaries:

The Regional Business Future Land Use Category area encompasses an area of immediate frontage along Rt. 220, from the southern Boones Mill town limits to Brick Church Road. For the purposes of this plan, the Regional Business Category shall extend ½ mile, measured perpendicular to the centerline of the Rt. 220 right-of-way, with the exception of extending further than this distance in the vicinity of the proposed Regional Enterprise Park to include all of the proposed Park parcels and those between the park and the Rt. 220. (See Figure 10)

Regional Business Future Land Use Category

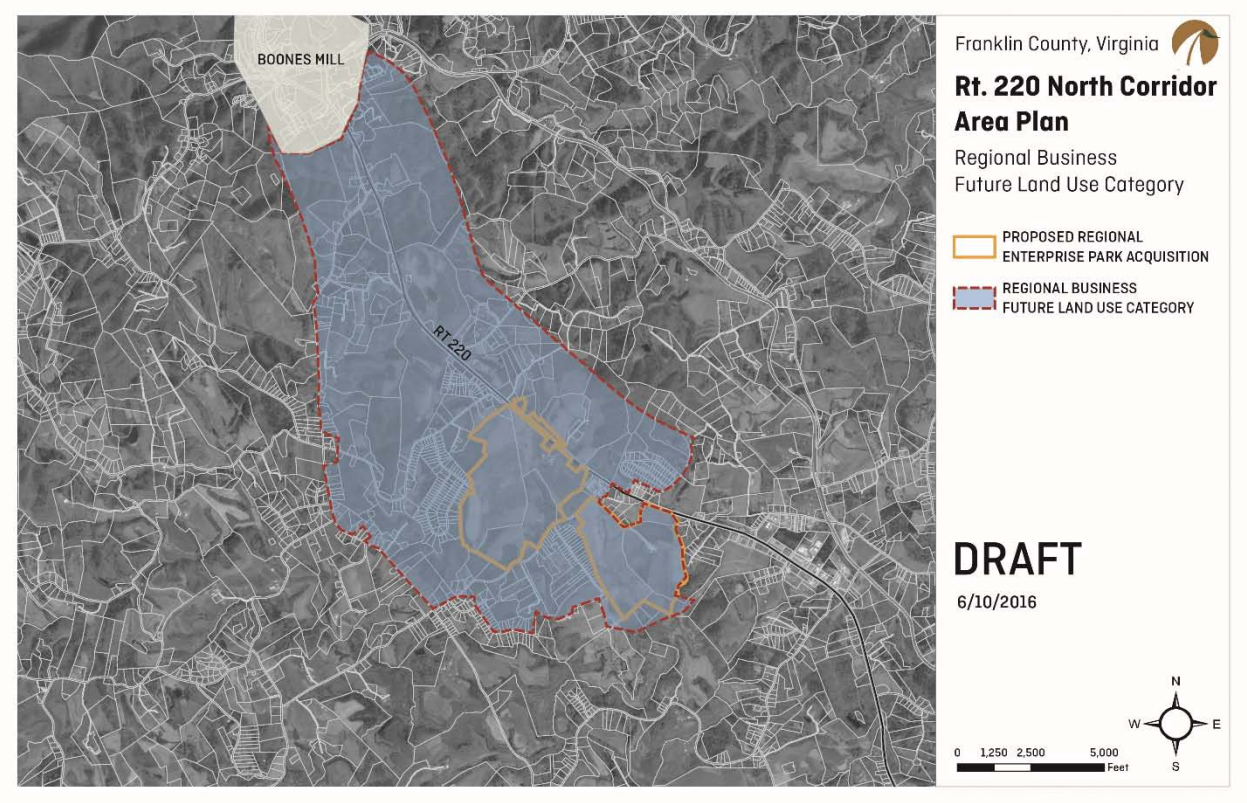

Figure 10

Existing Conditions:

The Regional Business Future Land Use Category is characterized by rolling fields and several large farms. The area is scattered with single-family home sites and a few residential subdivisions. Vehicular access to Rt. 220 is extremely limited in this area due to topographic constraints; the area features a series of "peaks" and "valleys" between Boones Mill and Brick Church Road, with limited sight distances and minimal turning lanes.

The Regional Business Future Land Use Category contains several uses of broad community interest, including Boones Mill Elementary School and a branch medical clinic associated with Carilion healthcare. Residents of this area have expressed a desire to see more local amenities, such as expanded medical offices, pharmacies, and other local services. Poor vehicular access and concerns for traffic safety, however, place significant limits on the development potential of this area immediately along Rt. 220.

Much of this area is currently zoned A-1, Agricultural District. With the availability of public water and expansion of sewer, it is likely that market forces will demand a combination of highway commercial and suburban residential development in this area.

The Comprehensive Plan for Franklin County specifically restricts highway commercial development along Rt. 220 to areas south of Brick Church Road. The Plan seeks to concentrate commercial

development into well-planned nodes, and to avoid “strip”-style commercial development along the entire length of the Rt. 220 corridor.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for this area to develop residentially at a low density of 1 to 2 units per acre. Without public water, residential density in this area was constrained and limited by the availability and arrangement of suitable well and septic drain field sites. With public water and expansion sewer available, however, greater residential densities are possible – and likely – through the rezoning process.

As an alternative to highway commercial or suburban residential development in the immediate vicinity of the corridor, the 220-North Corridor Plan calls for the establishment of a Regional Business Future Land Use Category for the segment of Rt. 220 between Boones Mill and an area just south of Brick Church Road, taking in the proposed Regional Enterprise Park area and other large undeveloped parcels with immediate frontage along Rt. 220. This Plan has called for the establishment of a zoning overlay district, which has since been adopted, to prevent visual clutter and preserve sufficient land for a potential regional commerce park.

Future Land Use Policy Recommendations

The Regional Business Category envisions a center for high-wage regional employment, with good access to Rt. 220 – and thus to the Roanoke Valley and the Greensboro/Triad area of North Carolina. This corridor is already served by significant broadband capabilities and by public water and expansion of sewer. A preliminary plan has been developed for the Regional Enterprise Park that incorporates more than 500 acres of existing undeveloped land, of which a portion will be dedicated to civic and recreational uses and the remainder for building sites.

The area identified in this Corridor Plan for the Regional Enterprise Park is subject to the finalization of contractual arrangements with property owners, as well as further site planning, transportation and engineering studies. Until final site plan is developed, the Rt. 220-North Corridor Plan seeks to preserve a general area along Rt. 220 where the Regional Enterprise Park is intended to be developed.

The Future Land Use Map (figure 13) in this plan specifies more detailed land use types for the Regional Business Category. The future land use types will help guide growth along the Rt. 220 North Corridor.

Regional Business Park Zoning District

Due to the regional impact and importance of the proposed park, it is recommended that a new zoning district be created that promotes traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles into any future regional business park. Encouraging TND principles in new development will help position Franklin County for growth and economic development, while maintaining its rural look and feel. Relevant TND principles include:

- 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 (including tree preservation, context-sensitive landscaping standards, and appropriate signage regulation)
- Mixed-use developments
- 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.

Rural Development Overlay Zoning District:

The 220-North Corridor Plan seeks to preserve, to the extent possible, the open rural character and scenic views of the corridor. The Plan called for the establishment of an overlay zoning district ranging from Boones Mill to Brick Church Road, and extending ½ mile as measured perpendicular from the centerline of Rt. 220. The purpose of this overlay is to prevent visual clutter and to preserve sufficient land for a potential regional commerce park.

The following are key elements of the Rural Development Overlay Zoning District:

- Off-premises advertising (billboards) prohibited.
- Residential density should be limited to 1.2 units per acre – the maximum allowed under by-right A-1 zoning based on the minimum lot size of 35,000 square feet.
- Residential clustering should be required in order to preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation and open space.
- Clustering provisions should require a minimum of 50% open space, with density calculated based on the projected by-right yield for the underlying A-1 zoning.
- New curb cuts along Rt. 220 should be restricted; where necessary, entrances should be limited to right-in, right-out access.

The proposed overlay zoning district has since been adopted.

This Plan update recommends the modification of the Rural Development Overlay Zoning District so that it excludes the parcels that will be developed as the proposed Regional Enterprise Park. This will allow the development of a new Regional Enterprise Park base zoning district, also recommended by this Plan, that will incorporate all of the standards in the Rural Development Overlay Zoning District but as a new base zoning district, rather than an overlay zone.

Transportation:

This section of Rt. 220 features generally poor vehicular access due to steep topographical constraints, limited sight distances, and minimal turning lanes. The Regional Business Future Land Use Category seeks significant investment in transportation infrastructure, including the following potential improvements:

- Explore the potential for a full-movement interchange along Rt. 220 between Grassy Hill Road and Brick Church Road.
- County should explore alternative intersection and interchanges in conjunction with VDOT to improve safety and traffic flow through the Rt. 220 corridor.
- Consider restricting existing secondary road to right-in-right-out access, and the closing of existing median crossovers with poor sight distances or minimal turning lanes.

Implementation:

With the development and adoption of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to establish a Rural Development Overlay District, as described above, much of the policy intent for this area has been implemented in the zoning ordinance. The following are additional implementation recommendations that would build on the policy intent described above, provide a foundation for continued economic growth for the county and help reinforce the scenic character of this portion of the Rt. 220 Corridor.

- Complete the site planning and implementation for the Regional Enterprise Park, including site-selection, land acquisition, development financing, transportation requirements, and other infrastructure needs.
- Expand the boundaries of the Regional Business Future Land Use category to just south of Brick Church Road, to include the Park parcels and extending ½ mile as measured perpendicular to the centerline of Rt. 220.
- Create a new zoning classification - Regional Enterprise Park – that allows for the orderly and appropriate development of the Regional Enterprise Park.

Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category

Given its status as Franklin County's primary transportation artery, it stands to reason that Rt. 220 is extremely attractive to commercial interests wishing to capitalize on the highway's high traffic volumes and high visibility. Too much highway commercial development, however, often leads to traffic congestion, unsafe traffic conditions, visual clutter, and the disruption of the natural scenic landscape.

The Comprehensive Plan of Franklin County seeks to limit highway commercial development along Rt. 220 by restricting commercial uses north of Brick Church Road, and by encouraging well-planned and attractive commercial nodes north and south of the Blackwater River.

The 220-North Corridor Plan builds on this concept by encouraging a mixture of office, commercial, retail, service and residential uses along Rt. 220, from the area around Brick Church Road, just south of the Park project to the Rocky Mount town limits. The Corridor Plan seeks a mixture of uses that meets the needs of local residents, supports the Park project, and produces an attractive gateway into the Town of Rocky Mount.

Boundaries:

The Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category runs from the area around Brick Church Road, just south of the Park project to the northern Rocky Mount town limits. This area is characterized by relatively flat terrain, with an established commercial character near the Wirtz Road "Plateau Plaza" area. For the purposes of this plan, the Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category shall extend ½ mile, measured perpendicular to the centerline of the Rt. 220 right-of-way. (See Figure 11)

Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category

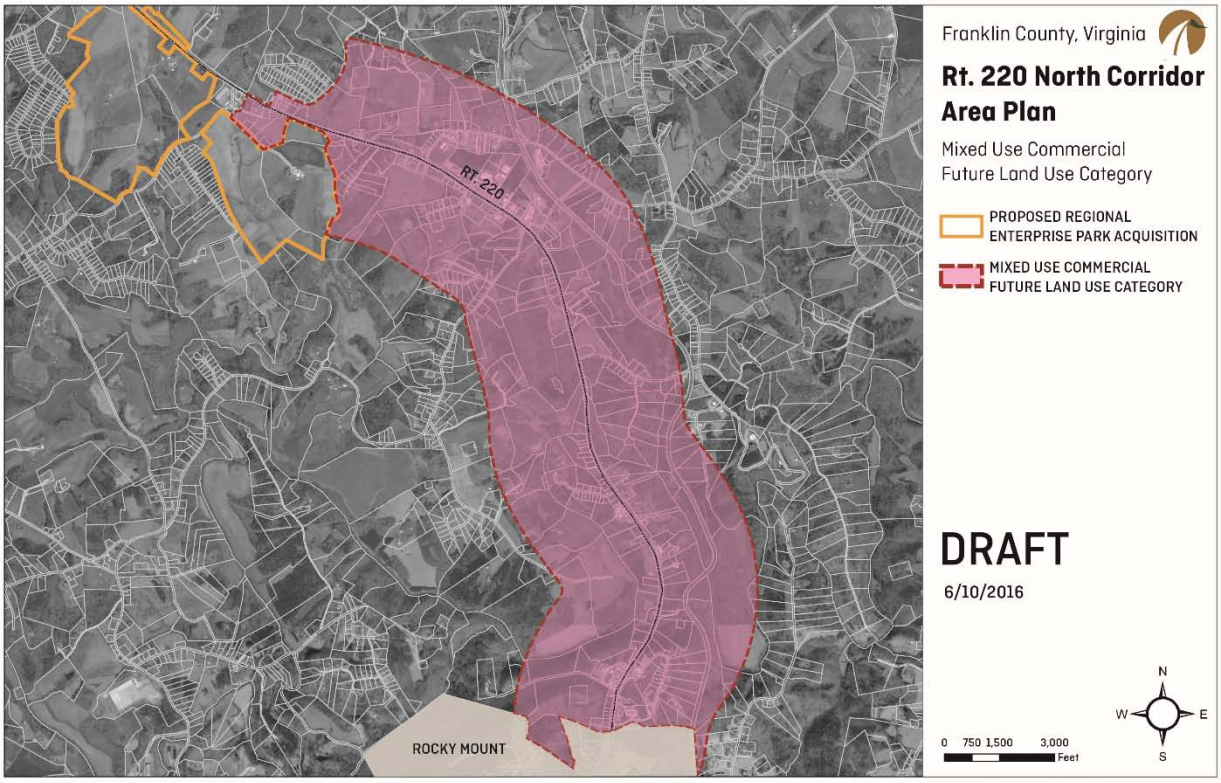

Figure 11

Existing Conditions:

The Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category area is characterized by relatively flat terrain on either side of Rt. 220. This segment of Rt. 220 features an established commercial character, with a concentration of highway commercial uses located near the Wirtz Road "Plateau Plaza" area. The Blackwater River runs west-to-east under Rt. 220, with steep slopes leading down to the river. South of the Blackwater River, commercial development is intermixed with scattered single family home sites with access directly onto Rt. 220.

Most commercial properties located along Rt. 220 are zoned B-2, General Business District. Significant areas of undeveloped land along the corridor are zoned A-1, Agricultural District. It is important to note that many of the existing commercial uses were developed prior to the adoption of zoning, and are therefore grandfathered if they do not meet current zoning regulations.

As public water becomes available along the corridor (public sewer is currently proposed in the area), it is likely that market forces will demand a combination of highway commercial and suburban residential development in this area. Redevelopment of existing commercial is more likely if served by public water. The Comprehensive Plan for Franklin County specifically restricts highway commercial development along Rt. 220 to areas south of Brick Church Road. The Plan seeks to concentrate

commercial development into well-planned nodes, and to avoid “strip”-style commercial development along the entire length of the Rt. 220 corridor.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the area ranging from Brick Church Road to Iron Ridge Road, as well as the area south of Shady Lane to the northern limits of Rocky Mount, to develop as “Highway Commercial Corridors.” The Comprehensive Plan encourages access management to consolidate curb cuts and share parking areas.

Future Land Use Policy Recommendations

This section outlines policy recommendations relevant to this future land use category. These recommendations pertain to multiple policy documents, including zoning ordinance, land development ordinance, and the comprehensive plan. Unless otherwise noted, the recommendations for the Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category are unchanged from the 2009 Plan. As of the 2016 update, many of the recommendations herein have been implemented.

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 13) in this plan specifies more detailed land use types for the Mixed Use Commercial Category. The future land use types will help guide growth along the Rt. 220 North Corridor.

Mixed Use Commercial Zoning Overlay:

The 220-North Corridor Plan called for the establishment of an overlay zoning district, ranging from Brick Church Road to the northern Rocky Mount town limits, and extending ½ mile as measured from the centerline of Rt. 220. This overlay zoning district has control for signage, landscaping, setbacks, vehicular access, and site planning. It was envisioned that the overlay district would accommodate a mixture of uses to meet the needs of local residents, support the nearby Regional Enterprise Park, and produce a well-planned, attractive, and heavily landscaped corridor. This update modifies the previously adopted overlay zoning district to exclude parcels zoned for the development of a regional business park.

Allowable Uses:

The Mixed Use Commercial Category was intended to promote a mixture of commercial, retail, office, service, and residential uses in planned developments. In addition to taking advantage of the corridor’s high visibility and heavy commuting patterns, this Category also seeks to provide goods and services to local residents, and to support the nearby Regional Enterprise Park. High quality hotels, restaurants, business services, regional shopping, and local convenience uses are desired.

Areas of existing commercial development are generally zoned B-2, General Business District. The Corridor Plan seeks to redevelop existing commercial sites that do not meet modern zoning standards for setbacks, signage, landscaping, parking, or site development.

Undeveloped areas zoned A-1, Agricultural District, are encouraged to develop with a mixture of uses in well-planned commercial developments. Rezoning to PCD, Planned Commercial District, is strongly encouraged for new development. Areas containing less than five acres (the minimum required for PCD) may seek rezoning to B-2 only if developed to PCD standards.

Areas within 250 feet of the Blackwater River should be preserved and protected as open space. Such areas should be identified as open space on any concept plan brought forward through the rezoning process.

Landscape Yards:

The 220-North Corridor Plan seeks to push commercial development off of Rt. 220, and to provide adequate buffers along secondary and frontage roads. This is meant to promote traffic safety, avoid visual clutter, and accommodate future expansion of Rt. 220 and any associated secondary (approach) roads. The Corridor Plan calls for the establishment of a landscape yard along all public rights-of-way. Landscape yard requirements in the Mixed Use Commercial Overlay Zoning District are based on the following:

- A 50-foot landscape yard required adjacent to Rt. 220; a 25-foot landscape yard required adjacent to all other public roads.
- No buildings, parking lots, or other physical improvements located in the required landscape yard.
- Landscape yards allow for the placement of signs, and perpendicular driveway access conforming to VDOT standards.
- Outdoor storage and display prohibited within the required landscape yard.

Landscaping:

Landscaping standards were incorporated in the Mixed Use Commercial District. Landscaping serves to screen parking areas, provide shade to reduce “heat island” effect from large impervious areas, and to promote a pleasant and attractive appearance for the corridor. Landscape standards in the Mixed Use Commercial District were based on the following:

- Perimeter landscaping for parking lots require trees to be planted at a ratio of one tree per 50 linear feet; shrubs, measuring three feet in height at maturity and required to be planted between trees to screen vehicle bumpers and headlights.
- Internal landscaping for parking lots should require one landscaped tree island for every 10 parking spaces, with at least one large deciduous tree required for each landscape island.
- The required landscape yard shall be commensurate with the required buffer, measuring 50 feet from the edge of right-of-way.
- The required landscape yard planted with a combination of large deciduous trees, medium ornamental trees, and shrubs to screen bumpers and headlights in parking areas.

Signs:

In order to promote an attractive appearance and avoid visual clutter, the Mixed Use Commercial overlay zoning district was established with overlay zoning standards related to signage based on the following:

- Freestanding signs limited to 30 feet in height.
- Off-premises or billboard signs prohibited.
- Sign design reviewed through the rezoning process. A signage plan should be required in conjunction with the required concept plan, demonstrating an attractive sign theme that is cohesive with the development.

The County should also coordinate with VDOT and local businesses to establish an attractive public wayfinding sign program within the Rt. 220 right-of-way, similar to interstate signage programs for food, gas, lodging and points of interest.

Access Management:

The Mixed Use Commercial District seeks to implement best practices for access management in order to improve traffic safety and provide efficient access to businesses and secondary roads. Access management standards are intended to improve traffic flows along Rt. 220 by providing greater separation between curb cut entrances, and by reducing turning movement conflicts at critical intersections and median crossovers.

The Mixed Use Commercial District is based on the following standards:

- Develop a network of secondary streets parallel and perpendicular to Rt. 220. These streets should form a block / grid pattern off of Rt. 220.
- Establish a minimum corner clearance of 400 feet between driveways and intersecting streets.
- Establish spacing of at least 300 feet between commercial driveway entrances.
- Limit properties with less than 500 feet of frontage to only one access point.
- Require interconnectivity between parking lots on adjoining properties.

Implementation:

The 2009 adopted plan recommended the development and adoption of an overlay zoning district for the Mixed Use Commercial District, including standards for:

- Allowable uses
- Concept plan requirements
- Required landscape yards
- Landscaping
- Signage

- Access management

This overlay district has since been adopted.

The update of this Plan also recommends the modification of the Mixed Use Commercial Overlay Zoning District so that they exclude the parcels that will be developed as the proposed Regional Enterprise Park. This will allow the development of a new Regional Enterprise Park base zoning district, also recommended by this Plan that will incorporate all of the standards in the Mixed Use Commercial Overlay Zoning District but as a new base zoning district, rather than an overlay zone.

In addition, with the development and adoption of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to establish the overlay district zones in the Zoning Ordinance, as described above, much of the policy intent for this portion of the Rt. 220 Corridor has been implemented in the Zoning Ordinance. The following are additional implementation recommendations that would build on the policy intent described above, provide a foundation for continued economic growth for the county and help reinforce the scenic character of this portion of the 220 Corridor.

- Explore alternatives to by-right A-1 residential subdivision development which would preserve significant open space and important views
- Coordinate with VDOT to identify potential road improvements, including:
    - Desired ROW for Rt. 220
    - Turn lane improvements
    - Closure of median crossings, where appropriate

Future Land Use

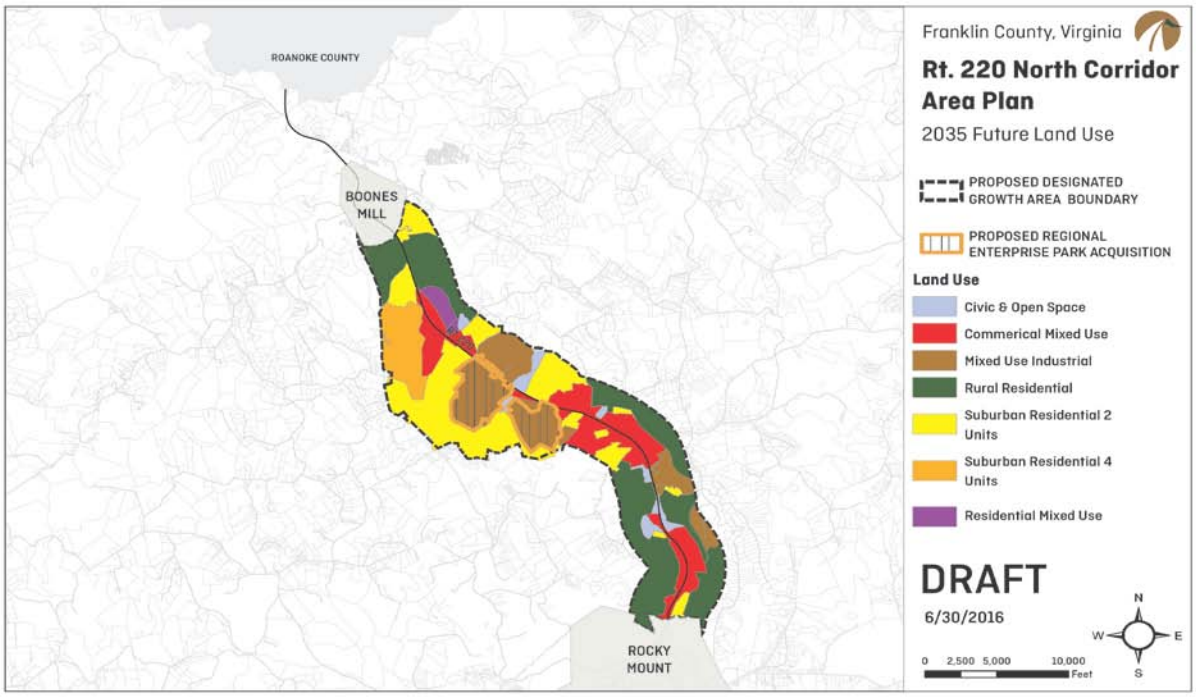

Figure 13

The 220-North Corridor Future Land Use Map establishes more specific land uses for the Regional Business Future Land Use Category and the Mixed Use Commercial Future Land Use Category identified earlier in this Plan. The Future Land Use Map identifies seven (7) land use categories in the corridor from the southern town limits of Boones Mill to the northern town limits of Rocky Mount. These categories are as follows: Civic and Open Space, Commercial Mixed Use, Mixed Use Industrial, Rural Residential, Suburban Residential 2 Units, Suburban Residential 4 Units and Residential Mixed Use. In addition, the Future Land Use Map shows the boundary of the Designated Growth Area (DGA).

The 220-North Corridor Future Land Use Map shows a large portion of the Rt. 220 corridor to be either Commercial Mixed Use or Mixed Use Industrial with Rural Residential or Suburban Residential 2 Units surrounding the corridor. The proposed Regional Enterprise Park would be located in the Mixed Use Industrial Future Land Use Type. The area know as Plateau Plaza to be located in the Commercial Mixed Use Future Land Use Type.

The Future Land Use Map is meant to compliment the visions of both the town of Boones Mill and town of Rocky Mount Future Land Use Maps. Both towns adopted new comprehensive plans in December of 2015. The town of Boones Mill designates the entire 0.8 square miles as a Designated Growth Area (DGA); whereas the town of Rocky Mount identified the Downtown Uptown as their Urban Development Area (UDA).

The town of Boones Mill's Future Land Use Map identifies Highway Commercial/Mixed Use along the corridor of Rt. 220 and the area outside the corridor as Neighborhood MU/MI at the southern end of the town. This will be a nice transition to the County's Rural Residential and Suburban Residential 2 Units located outside of the town's limits along the corridor and surrounding areas. The town of Rocky

Mount's Future Land Use Map identifies the northern area of the town along the Rt. 220 corridor as General Business with the surrounding area to be mostly Parks and Open Space with a small amount of Residential. The County's Future Land Use Map identifies Commercial Mixed Use Future Land Use Types along the Rt. 220 corridor near the town limits with a small amount of Suburban Residential 2 Units and Rural Residential Future Land Use Types planned for most of the surrounding area of the corridor near the town of Rocky Mount.

Designated Growth Area:

As discussed in the Background Section of this revised Corridor Plan, one purpose for the revision of the 220 North Corridor Plan is to designate a portion of this corridor, where the Regional Enterprise Park will be located, as a Designated Growth Area (DGA) to meet the requirements of §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia, to accommodate higher density compact mixed use development as an urban/village development area. This designation, along with the designation of Route 220 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS), qualifies this area to potentially receive funding under State House Bill 2 legislation passed in 2014 as a qualified Urban Development Area (UDA).

There are very few areas in the county that are suitable for mixed commercial development of a regional scale. However, the stretch of Rt. 220 between Rocky Mount and Boones Mill is being positioned to be one of the county's primary mixed commercial development corridors. This change is due primarily to the proposed Regional Enterprise Park and extension of the water and wastewater service areas. These two infrastructure improvements are very likely to bring with them additional growth pressures, for which a DGA designation valuable. As a result, the proposed DGA as proposed and shown in Figure below incorporates the proposed Park project parcels and the proposed water and wastewater services boundaries.

Designated Growth Area

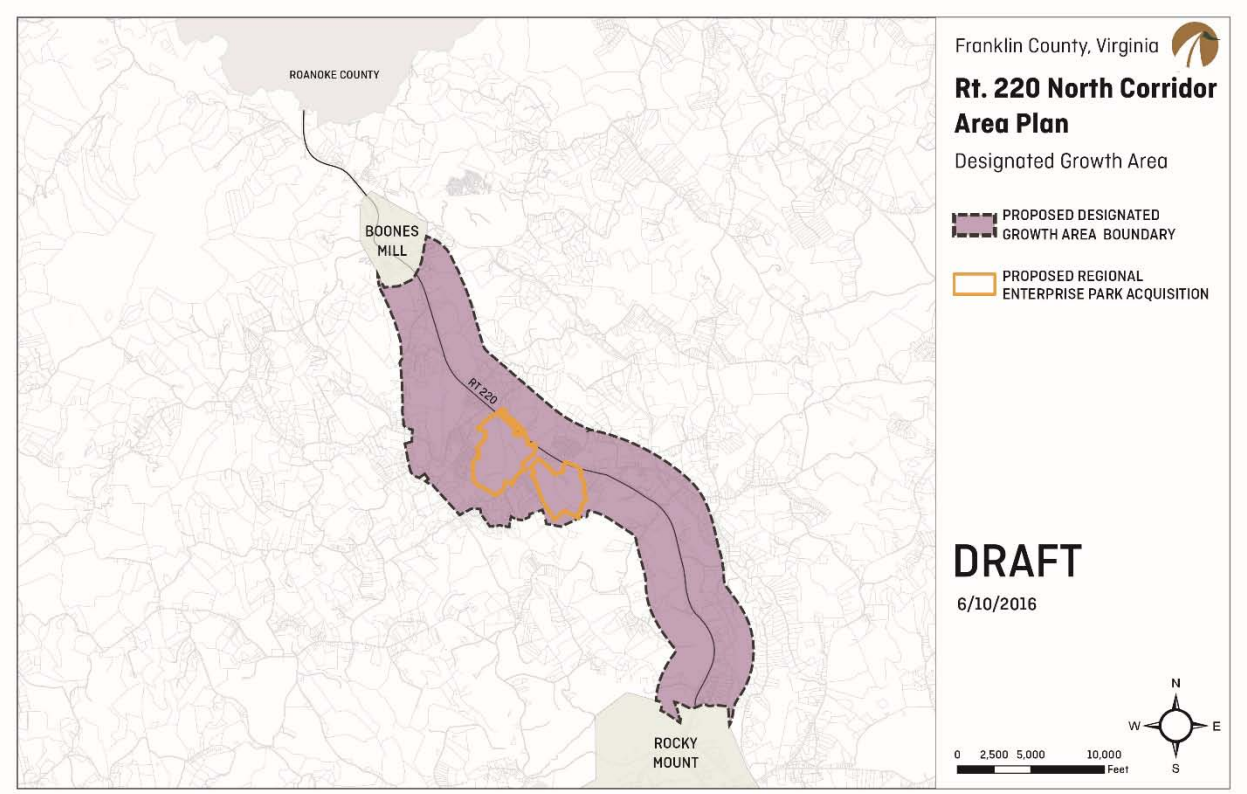

Figure 14

The DGA designation should signify that future land development should be done in accordance with context-appropriate traditional neighborhood design concepts that limit sprawl, curb inefficient use of infrastructure, and promote attractive, safe, and environmentally friendly growth. DGA boundaries will follow WVWA wastewater service area.

Route 220 North Corridor Plan

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