

## **Growth**

Good Planning and Good Government require that while growth is inevitable in a healthy community, the important role of elected and appointed officials to maintain ongoing discussion, obtain citizen input, and to actively pursue methods that best promote growth while simultaneously protecting existing citizens and the identity of the community residents wish to maintain. Just a quick glance at the number of times growth was mentioned gives insight into how important this issue is to Town Council and Planning Commission members. Due to the absence of many of the Planning Commission Minutes, I am also adding a section of quotes directly from the Comprehensive Plan. This document was written by the Planning Commission and while the discussion pertaining to certain issues may not be present, at least the summary concepts used to develop the document and to prepare for growth are there.

### ***From 2002 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. The word 'growth' (except where used to identify the "Christian Growth Center" organization is not found in these minutes.

### ***From 2002 Town Council Minutes:***

1. February 19, 2002 Town Council Minutes: "Kent Bond, a resident of Hans Meadow, said he believes that the residents have not been heard and that Council is biased concerning the developer and future Christiansburg growth."
2. December 17, 2002 Town Council Minutes: "Mr. Mark Salmon, a resident of Stafford Drive, said that there has been much growth in that area over the past few years, and due to the growth, the road is not adequate for the volume of traffic that uses it daily."

### ***From 2003 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. August 25, 2003 Planning Commission Meeting: Review of Comprehensive Plan. "Chairperson Canada asked to add Route numbers to the Growth Areas Map.
2. September 29, 2003 Planning Commission Meeting: Comprehensive Plan Review "Chairperson Wade stated under the Land Use Plan, the Commission needs to be in agreement with regards to discouraging commercial growth encroaching onto residential areas along Roanoke Street. Mr. Terpenny stated Roanoke Street is a major thoroughway and commercial uses cannot be limited. Chairperson Canada agreed commercial development should be discouraged from encroaching upon residential neighborhoods.
3. December 16, 2003 Planning Commission Meeting: Rezoning Request: "... Mr. Terpenny stated VDOT realizes Christiansburg is the third largest town in Virginia and that we are a rapidly growing community. They also realize that the 114 corridor is a primary growth corridor for the Town."

### ***From 2003 Town Council Minutes:***

1. January 7, 2003 Town Council Meeting: "MAYOR LINKOUS gave a report to Council titled "What's Going on in Christiansburg" which outlines the industrial, commercial, and governmental growth within Christiansburg in the year 2002. A copy of the report is attached herewith and made a part of these minutes."
2. January 21, 2003 Town Council Meeting: "Mr. Aldridge, a forty-year resident of Christiansburg,

said he has seen much growth within the Fire Department and Rescue Squad and believes the founders would be proud of the growth within the departments today." ... In a discussion concerning the skate park: Councilman Ballengee believes the Town's recreational growth should proceed as planned in the Recreation Master Plan.

3. April 1, 2003 Town Council Meeting: "Planning Commission Chairperson Canada stated that a public forum will be held by the Planning Commission on April 29 as an opportunity for citizens to voice their opinions on town growth and changes. He suggested providing a questionnaire to the public on the growth and changes they would like to see within the Town and the Planning Commission could then bring the completed questionnaires to Council."
4. December 2, 2003 Town Council Meeting: Rezoning from B-3 General Business, I-2 General Industrial, and R-1 Single-Family Residential to R-3 Multi-Family Residential: "Councilman Lester commented that industrial growth is a priority for him, however he realizes this property is not suitable for industrial development.

### ***From 2004 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. January 12, 2004 Planning Commission Meeting: Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan: " Chairperson Canada acknowledged Charlie Elgin and Mr. Elgin stated that he didn't have any comments other than the letter that Montgomery County Planning Director Joe Powers had sent regarding wording for telecommunications towers and the Growth Areas Map. ... Chairperson Canada stated that the second comment recommended deleting the Growth Area designation in the vicinity of the Childress Farm on Silver Lake Road. Mr. Elgin stated that this was correct and added that this area has been in Montgomery County's Agricultural and Forestal District for over twenty years and that the County foresees no change. Mr. Terpenney stated that in the near future there probably will not be a change, but that it is rolling land that would be suitable for residential development. Mr. Terpenney added that there is a sewer main trunk line near the property. Commissioner Stipes stated that this is extra territorial planning. Mr. Elgin stated that adding "Potential Future Growth Area" to the map would alleviate the concern and the Planning Commission agreed. ... "Mrs. Hess stated that 22 percent growth in residential construction is tremendous (not sure where she go the statistic; it is not from the Comprehensive Plan draft) and that the reliance on automobiles is large, but that the Town should plan more for bus routes (in residential areas). ... Chairperson Canada stated that much of Blacksburg's growth has been exported to Christiansburg. Commissioner Stipes agreed that Blacksburg has exported growth to Christiansburg."

### ***From 2004 Town Council Minutes:***

1. January 6, 2004 Town Council Meeting: Rezoning request: "Councilman Ballengee commented that Council has heard from residents on numerous occasions about the traffic dangers along Peppers Ferry Road. He agrees that additional growth along Peppers Ferry Road is not wise until road improvements have been made by VDOT, and he can not support the request at this time."
2. February 17, 2004 Town Council Meeting: Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan: "Ann Hess commended the Planning Commission's hard work and efforts to involve the public in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. She then addressed several of her concerns with the proposed plan and challenged Town Council to involve the public more by letting the public help guide decisions made concerning growth within the Town."
3. April 6, 2004 Town Council Meeting: Rezoning Request: "... Mr. Jim Stewart said that growth in the area is inevitable and a well-planned development, like the one proposed, is needed. ...

Good land use is best for long-term growth, and for the Town and its residents."

***From 2005 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. May 3, 2005 Planning Commission Meeting: Discussion of realignment of N. Franklin Street-Peppers Ferry Road Connector Route: "Mr. Terpenney reviewed the recommendation for the realignment ... 5. The "Future Land Use Map" and the "Potential Future Growth Area Map and Future Transportation Plan" of the 2003 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan should be recognized as general in nature in their alignment of the N. Franklin Street - Peppers Ferry Road Connector Route.

***From 2005 Town Council Minutes:***

1. February 1, 2005 Town Council Meeting: New River Valley Development Corporations' request for funding: "members. Councilman Huppert said that many small businesses have a difficult time becoming successful because of the tremendous growth in Montgomery County. He would like to help the Corporation get on its feet, but is concerned with the possibility of the Corporation folding."
2. July 19, 2005 Town Council Meeting: rezoning Montgomery County Public Schools yard "Mrs. Songer said that Montgomery County planted pine trees along the property to provide a buffer for the community, but many of the trees died within one year of planting and were never replaced. When she inquired about this matter some time ago, she was told by Gary Harkrader that the intent was to move the buses to the old middle school site. She is also concerned with the condition of Rigby Street, which is used by the buses and Montgomery County employees. The road is narrow, much like an alley, and in disrepair. She is aware that the bus lot has been in this location for many years, but believes the lot has outgrown the area and is concerned with future growth."
3. November 1, 2005 Town Council Meeting: rezoning request: "Mr. Jim Cloe of Henley Drive is also concerned with traffic volume and worries that additional growth will increase the traffic flow. He suggested the Town require developers to help with road maintenance. Mrs. Jeannie Cloe insisted to Council that now is the time for an official traffic count along Cambria Street as well as on Route 11r, which will be affected by the connector road. She also would like to see a count of the children in the area, which will impact the school system. Manager Terpenney commented that the four lane connector road is a future phase of the bypass to alleviate traffic from Route 114 and the intersection at Cambria Street and North Franklin Street."

***From 2006 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. July 31, 2006: Planning Commission Meeting: Discussion of planned housing developments and other potential Code changes. "Commissioner Canada stated that he is for growth but that controls need to be in place. Mr. Terpenney stated that the Town of Christiansburg has an emphasis on family."
2. August 21, 2006: Planning Commission Meeting: Discussion of planned housing developments and other potential Code changes: "Commissioner Canada stated if the Town of Christiansburg limits the R-2 and R-3 Districts, there will be no growth. Commissioner Canada suggested designating R-2 or R-3 Districts to allow five unrelated persons to reside together. Mr. Terpenney stated in a situation with a large house having 6 bedrooms the owner could call it a boarding house with one kitchen, which is allowed in the R-3 District with a Conditional Use Permit."

### ***From 2006 Town Council Minutes:***

1. March 21, 2006 Town Council Meeting: rezoning request: "Mr. Wayne Sowers and Mr. Charles Putnam also spoke in opposition of the request and questioned the impact the development would have on the area. Manager Terpenney commented that the property is identified as a "future growth" area in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and will most likely be developed residential. Utilities, such as water, will be studied at the time the property is developed.
2. June 20, 2006 Town Council Meeting: CUP request: "Mr. Mike Miller of Harkrader Street is involved with County Government and understands the hardships associated with managing growth. He also understands the need for affordable housing, but believes the density of three hundred homes is too much for this area.

### ***From 2007 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. The word Growth does not appear in any of the provided minutes.

### ***From 2007 Town Council Minutes:***

1. February 6, 2007 Town Council Meeting: CUP for vehicle auction: " ...An automobile auction, he (Mr. Nagy) said will help keep up with the growth outlined in the town's comprehensive plan, and will bring business and resources into our community.
2. May 15, 2007 Town Council Meeting: Rezoning request: "Mr. Billy Maddy spoke in favor of the request, commenting that this rezoning will be positive for Christiansburg growth.
3. June 5, 2007 Town Council Meeting: Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Proposed Real Estate Tax Rate: " Mayor Ballengee said that a lower tax rate could impede future plans and growth. ... Councilman Huppert said that Christiansburg must maintain its standards and growth, however, at the same time the Town needs to consider its citizens. ... Councilman Wade pointed out that with Christiansburg's continued growth there are plenty of opportunities for additional tax revenue in the future. ... (from Town Manager Report) TOWN MANAGER TERPENNEY drew Council's attention to a flier placed at each of their seats regarding green infrastructure in the New River Valley. The "Green Infrastructure Initiative" was created by the New River Valley Planning District Commission to educate communities in the New River Valley on how to maintain a network of green infrastructure for healthy and sustainable community growth. An information meeting for Christiansburg is scheduled for June 21 at the Montgomery County Government Center and is open to anyone interested in learning more about this topic.
4. June 19, 2007 Town Council Meeting: NRV-PDC, Abigale Convery addressing Council regarding green infrastructure Plan. "Ms. Convery explained that the Green Infrastructure Plan was developed to guide the growth and development of environmental infrastructure. ... Ms. Convery said the New River Valley Planning District Commission wants the localities to support this effort and become involved with the growth in the New River Valley.
5. September 4, 2007 Town Council Meeting: Citizen comments: "Ms. Tacy Newell, a Christiansburg resident and business owner, asked Council to consider appointing the Central Business Committee to become active for the purpose of working with the downtown merchants in regards to sustainable growth in downtown Christiansburg, Mayor Ballengee thanked Ms. Newell for her interest and said Town Council will consider her request.
6. December 18, 2007 Town Council Meeting: Rezoning request: "Mr. L.J. White, a resident of Stafford Drive since 1973, said he has seen much growth along Stafford Drive over the years. He is not against developing the property, but he does believe that Stafford Drive needs to be upgraded before adding additional daily traffic.

***From 2008 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. There are no incidents where the word "Growth" was found in any of the available PC Minutes.

***From 2008 Town Council Minutes:***

1. There are no incidents where the word "Growth" was found in any of the available TC Minutes.

***From 2009 Planning Commission Minutes:***

1. There are no incidents where the word "Growth" was found in any of the available PC Minutes.

***From 2009 Town Council Minutes:***

1. January 6, 2009 Town Council Meeting: Citizen comments: "h. Allison Zocowski, Christiansburg resident, swim parent, and Assistant Director of Aquatics at Virginia Tech, said that Virginia Tech does provide an event schedule each swim season, and she pointed out that there are no swim meets during the summer. She is pleased to see an interest in aquatics growing in this area and believes the aquatic center will encourage continued growth."

**From the Town of Christiansburg 2003 Comprehensive Plan (reviewed in 2008 and deemed acceptable without change):**

1. (P.1) This Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Christiansburg is the result of continuing efforts by Town leaders and citizens to direct positive, orderly growth in the Town and surrounding urbanizing areas of Montgomery County. The Comprehensive Plan is the principal tool to guide growth and development in a community. It accomplishes this by examining current conditions and providing direction that will enhance the Town's functions, appearance, and livability.
2. (P.1) In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.
3. (P.3) The 2003 Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan is comprised of this Introduction as well as Chapters dedicated to Location and Historic Overview, Population and Demographics, Economy, Housing, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Utilities and Communications, and Natural Environment and Existing Land Use. These sections provide a general community profile and serve as an analysis of existing conditions. They also serve as the basis for assessing the viability of Christiansburg's economy and its potential for future growth and development.
4. (P.3) This Comprehensive Plan also contains Chapters dedicated to a Summary of Planning Factors, Land Use Plan, Transportation Plan, and Utilities and Services Plan (Chapter X), Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Chapter XI), and Policies and Plan Implementation (Chapter XII). The Summary of Planning Factors, Land Use Plan, Transportation Plan, and Utilities and Services Plan sections of the document aid in directing all future growth and development. It is a compilation of all plan elements. Its importance lies in recommendations for future land use, transportation facilities, and utilities and services.

5. (P.6) Christiansburg experienced significant growth in the early 1800's. In 1835 the population had grown to 335 and there were 45 houses and by 1840 the population was 400. Most residential growth was confined to Main Street and Cross Street (now Franklin Street). Several industrial complexes developed around the Gardner Zink Mill west of Town and the Chrisman Mill along Crab Creek on what is now State Route 661 (Chrisman Mill Road). These two mills were responsible for the centralization of a number of area milling operations in the late 1700's.
6. (P.8) A fire following a temperance march in 1900 destroyed many buildings along West Main Street in the downtown area. Despite this fire, Christiansburg experienced vigorous growth in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, growing from 659 persons in 1900 to 1,568 in 1910. The success of the Norfolk and Western Railroad's Christiansburg Depot may have been responsible for much of this growth. Many new houses were built between the Town center and the Depot, especially along Park Street.
7. (P.8) Considerable growth also occurred between the downtown and Christiansburg Depot around the turn of the Twentieth Century. The Depot was the main shipping point for a wide area of Montgomery County. Business around the Depot included five grocery stores, a drug store, jewelry store, ice plant, the Phoenix Furniture Factory, Southern Dairies, two hotels, a hospital, two hardware stores, three churches, a planing mill, N & W freight and passenger stations and a stockyard. The Depot area community was eventually incorporated as the Town of Cambria in 1906.
8. (p.10) The Town of Christiansburg continued to grow in the 1970's through natural growth, immigration, and also with the December 31, 1974 annexation which added 1,072 persons. After more than half a century of pulling the "Huckleberry" on the Christiansburg-Blacksburg branch of the Norfolk and Western Railway, No. 449, a Class M Baldwin locomotive built in 1905, made its final run in August 1978.
9. (P.10) Christiansburg today is a charming town nestled among the eastern Appalachian Mountains. Despite its recent surge of growth, it has managed to maintain the warmth and appeal of a small community. Designated by the Governor's Office of Economic Development as a Certified Business Community, Christiansburg is maintaining a proactive stance with regard to its economic future. It is a town committed to providing quality services and amenities that will enhance the lives of its citizens.
- 10.(P.14) The Town has grown greatly in the two centuries since it was incorporated in 1792. The town had a population of 16,947 according to the 2000 Census and 17,545 according to the Census Bureau 2002 estimate. The following table details that growth over the last century. (See table in the document: [2003 Comprehensive Plan](#)).
- 11.(P.15) The Town of Christiansburg has experienced rapid growth over the past three decades. As indicated in the following table, Christiansburg grew by 2,488 persons or 31.7% between 1970 and 1980. A considerable portion of this increase was due to the Town's 1975 annexation, which added an estimated 1,072 persons to the population.
- 12.(P.15) The 1988 annexation added approximately 2,727 persons according to a door-to-door survey of "soon to be annexed" areas conducted by Town employees in Fall 1987. The "to be annexed" areas had grown from a 1980 Census population of 1,970 persons, indicating a 38.4% increase in the seven year span. This growth corresponds to the growth that occurred in other undeveloped or partially developed areas of Town; residential development of large tracts as well as in-fill of existing development was the trend of the 1980's and this continued in the 1990's.
- 13.(P.15) The 1990 Census for the Town was 15,004 persons, which was an increase of 4,659 persons or 45.0% from the 1980 Census. Almost 60% of this increase was the result of the 1988 annexation. Using the Town's theoretical 1980 population of 12,312, the true population growth rate is closer to 22% from 1980 to 1990.

- 14.(P.15) This rate is the still highest within the New River Valley for this period as illustrated in the table on the following page. The second and third highest growth rates for the New River Valley 20.5% and 12.9% occurred within the City of Radford and Town of Blacksburg respectively. These increases may be attributed, in large part, to rising student enrollment at Radford University and Virginia Tech. During this period, student enrollment at Radford University jumped from 5,757 to 9,489 (64.8%) while enrollment at Virginia Tech increased from 21,069 to 23,365 (10.9%).
- 15.(P.17) Population projections are useful planning tools for estimating future population and demographic characteristics. These projections are valuable for anticipating future demand for utilities and social services, as well as planning budgets and capital improvement based on anticipated revenues. The Virginia Employment Commission prepared population projections for the county level jurisdictions. Note, however, that rapid employment gains or losses may greatly affect these figures. As can be seen by the data, the population for Montgomery County is expected to experience continued growth, but at a slightly lower rate than it has been experiencing. Floyd County and Montgomery County population growth projections, both fairly comparable to Virginia, are expected to lead the New River Valley.
- 16.(P.19) Marital status can provide a view into the potential for growth. As can be seen by the data, Christiansburg has a relatively small percentage of its population 15 years and over that have never been married. Again, the universities affect the figures for Montgomery County and the New River Valley.
- 17.(P.20) Age distribution affects school enrollment, recreational and health care needs, and has a variety of indirect effects including the long-term growth and stability of a community. In 2000, the Town of Christiansburg had a median age of 35.2 years. This was older than Montgomery County's median age of 25.9 years, but this figure is skewed due to the presence of the universities. The Town's median age was slightly lower than Virginia's 35.7 years and the national figure of 35.3 years.
- 18.(P.20-21) There were 2,048 persons 65 years and over (12.1% of the population) in Christiansburg in 2000 and 8.6% in Montgomery County. Virginia and national figures were 11.2% and 12.4% respectively. The senior citizen segment of the population is expected to see growth both locally and nationally as the large number of Baby Boomers move toward retirement age.
- 19.(P.22) Christiansburg and Montgomery County have the highest population growth rates over the past several decades among New River Valley localities as well as most of Southwest Virginia. The Town's growth is particularly significant since most of these localities have lost population since 1980. Due to such factors as heavy industrialization, commercial development, housing affordability, and Virginia Tech's student population, 48.4% of the New River Valley's population resides within Montgomery County. Including the City of Radford's population, nearly 60% of the New River Valley's residents live within a roughly 12 mile radius of the Town of Christiansburg.
- 20.(P.22) This situation puts a tremendous amount of pressure upon Christiansburg's public services and facilities, but has also created a wealth of opportunities for growth. Because of its central location and proximity to Interstate 81, U.S. Highway Routes 11 and 460, and State Routes 8 and 114, access to Christiansburg is ideal for the kind of commercial and industrial growth it has been experiencing. Industries are attracted to the Christiansburg area due to the research programs at local universities as well as the available technical labor of college graduates and experienced skilled industrial workers.
- 21.(P.23) With continued unemployment in other localities, population growth along Christiansburg's industrial and commercial corridors can be expected. Given university spending capital improvements programs at Virginia Tech and Radford University slated for the

future, population trends should continue and Christiansburg's role as a commercial and industrial center will be solidified. Moreover, with the Town of Christiansburg's and Montgomery County's designation of "Growth Areas" to the north and west of the Town, continued commercial expansion and population growth in Christiansburg can be expected due to adequate water and sewer availability.

- 22.(P.24) An analysis of employment and labor statistics provides an accurate indication of the vitality of a local economy as well as some insight into its potential for and direction of future growth. The major employers within the Town of Christiansburg corporate limits are as follows: (see table in full document [2003 Comprehensive Plan](#)).
- 23.(P.27) Educational services continued to be a large employer with 1,682 jobs or 18.7% of total employment for civilian persons 16 years and over in 2000. The high percentage of persons in the education sector is attributed to the presence of Virginia Tech and Radford University, which also account for the high number of state employees in the region. Additionally, over the past decade Montgomery County has experienced an increase in the elementary and secondary school age population, in keeping with the general population growth.
- 24.(P.27) Trends suggest a continued rise in elementary and secondary educational employment. Traditionally, such employment has provided some stability to local economies during periods of economic downturn. Rising educational employment would tend to suggest that the local economy should stabilize further and lessen swings in unemployment. However, post secondary school populations are expected to decline over the next century with declines in family size and a slowing of economic growth. While school age population may continue to modestly increase, it is not expected to significantly impact employment in the future.
- 25.(P.31) The decrease in unemployment over the past decade may be attributed, in part, to continued commercial development along North Franklin Street. New business openings are fairly common. Improvements have also been noted within manufacturing, and new development has resulted in increases in construction employment. Montgomery County's shell building program has also been successful in attracting new manufacturing and distribution industries to the County's industrial parks. In addition to large business growth, the Town and County both continue to experience increases in the number of small and single person businesses.
- 26.(P.37) Montgomery County's taxable sales accounted for 62.2% of the New River Valley's total in 2002, further indicating the importance and success of the retail sector. The County's \$182,624,464 increase in taxable sales from 1996 to 2003 yielded a 32.9% change. Continued commercial growth within Christiansburg should further boost local taxable sales. Despite gains in sales within adjoining localities, Montgomery County, and therefore Christiansburg as the regional retail hub, should continue to dominate the dollar amount of taxable sales for the region.
- 27.(P.37) The Christiansburg-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1950 and in 2002, the Christiansburg-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce merged with the Blacksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce to form the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is located at the New River Valley Mall, 100 New River Road, Suite 216 and has approximately 370 members. The Chamber promotes economic development, helps develop a positive environment for the operation and growth of business and industry, and contributes to the development of a better quality of life for its citizens, including leisure time activities, community celebrations and improved civic involvement and opportunities.
- 28.(P.39) In 2000, Christiansburg was named one of America's 141 Dream Towns by Biz Journals. With an excellent quality of life and resources for growth the Town of Christiansburg is an attractive location to retail, services, and manufacturing alike. (P.43) The table on the following

page presents the number of housing units of each type within Christiansburg for the last three decades. In the 10-year period from 1980 to 1990, it appears that Christiansburg experienced significant residential growth. While new singlefamily construction remained steady through this period, the dramatic changes represented by the figures below can be attributed in part to the 1988 annexation.

- 29.(P.44) The housing stock in Christiansburg is, on a whole, much newer than most localities. The following table displays the year of construction of residential units from 2000 Census data. As can be seen, 3,469 (46.8%) of the Town's units were built 1980 to March 2000, compared to 44.5% for Montgomery County, 36.5% for the New River Valley, 39.6% for Virginia, and 32.8% for the United States. There has been much new construction the past two decades, meaning an overall newer housing stock. The overall increase of Christiansburg's residential units has been driven by a variety of factors including growth of the nearby universities, industrial and commercial development, and the quality of life and relative housing affordability the area provides.
- 30.(P.50) With growth at Virginia Tech and resulting expansion of the retail and service sectors, there has been pressure in both Blacksburg and Christiansburg for a variety of housing types to meet housing needs. Construction of housing in Town and the surrounding County area appear to be keeping up with demand with a total of 1,552 residential units being added in Town over the past decade. But the Town must insure that all citizens have access to appropriate housing and therefore special consideration needs to be given to population groups that may not be accommodated by typical construction.
- 31.(P.50) The growth of Christiansburg's elderly population is outpacing surrounding localities; the Town must, therefore, consider carefully the needs of this group. Elderly persons are often retirees living on fixed incomes. Moreover, mobility is often limited in this age group and living space requirements are lower; proximity to services is a primary concern. There are 3 large elderly housing facilities in Montgomery County, one of which is located near downtown Christiansburg and two which are in close proximity to the Town's northern limits. Considering the availability of services in both the downtown and Route 460/114 areas, both of these areas represent ideal locations for future elderly housing projects within the Town.
- 32.(P.52) Areas, which are exhibiting signs of deterioration and change in residential character, warrant detailed analysis. Such study would identify physical problems and major housing and neighborhood issues to be corrected. The social context - including population growth and decline, household characteristics (age, size, tenure), and ratio of housing expense to income - will assist in identifying needs. An analysis of housing conditions and household characteristics can help pinpoint the need and opportunities for rehabilitation, required neighborhood infrastructure improvements, affordable housing, and ownership opportunities.
- 33.(P.69) The Town of Christiansburg is well served by rail, air, and highway systems for both commercial shipping and commuting purposes. However, due in part to the Town's central location between Radford, Blacksburg, and Roanoke, the local road network has been subject to high volumes of traffic, which will continue to tax its capacity. While destinations of much of this traffic are employment and commerce centers within Town, large volumes pass through the corporate limits en route elsewhere. Providing and maintaining a high-quality transportation network will be a challenge for Christiansburg in the future as intensified commercial and residential growth occurs. Nonetheless, efficient transportation system design will contribute greatly to the Town's economic vitality and provide an essential service to its residents.
- 34.(P.70) Within Christiansburg, Interstate 81 has Exits 118-A and 118-B (which intersect with the U.S. Route 460 Bypass and Falling Branch Road) and Exit 118-C (which intersects with Roanoke Street (U.S. Route 11/460)) as well as Exit 114 at the intersection of W. Main Street (Virginia Route 8). The recent completion of the I-81 interchange and extension of the

Christiansburg Bypass should promote growth in the southern part of Town, as easy interstate access is a feature sought by business and industry.

- 35.(P.75) As indicated by the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, the surrounding County areas between Blacksburg and Christiansburg and to the west of Christiansburg are designated as the "Mid-County Growth Area." The region near the Route 460/114 interchange has been recognized as the new "regional downtown." Data indicate that the traffic load carried by U.S. Route 460 is the highest in all of Montgomery County.
- 36.(P.75) In response to high volumes of traffic and the poor level of service experienced along Routes 460 and 114, several studies were undertaken aimed at alleviating congestion problems. In 1988, VDOT began a Route 460 Corridor Study to evaluate improvements to Route 460 and to examine the possibility of a more direct route to Blacksburg from I-81. Because the Christiansburg Bypass is heavily traveled by traffic to Blacksburg and other points north, congested conditions are experienced between the I-81 interchange and the 460 By-Pass in the southeastern part of town. While VDOT was examining possible solutions to this situation, the Route 460/114 Corridor Advisory Planning Council was formed in fulfillment of the Annexation agreement between Montgomery County and Christiansburg. Comprised of representatives of the County, Christiansburg, and Blacksburg, the Council was charged with developing a Corridor Plan addressing current and future land use, development standards to guide growth, and implementation strategies.
- 37.(P.75) The Corridor Council's efforts culminated in October 1988 with the completion of the Route 460/114 Corridor Development Plans & Standards. As a supplement to the Development Plans and Standards, the Community Design Assistance Center of Virginia Tech prepared a Visual Quality Assessment Study to guide the construction of physical improvements in the study area. The Development Plans and Standards outlined four alternatives for growth in the study area: Incremental Change, Commercial on Routes 460 and 114, Commercial on Route 460 and Residential on Route 114, and Varied Intensity Development. The recommended plan combined elements of these alternatives and was termed the Mid-County Growth Area Plan. The Corridor Council recommended adoption of the corridor Development Plans and Standards as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plans of Montgomery County, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg, from which Christiansburg adopted many standards.
- 38.(P.78) Implications of the road improvements outlined above include improved circulation within the Town limits as well as opportunities for further growth. The Peppers Ferry Road widening will accommodate existing and future volumes of traffic in the northern part of Town.
- 39.(P.83) Ensuring that community facilities and public services are phased with demand is a major component of any Comprehensive Planning process. Development intensity and location are directly linked to the availability of services. This situation is especially evident in Christiansburg's northwest annexation area where sewer extensions have spawned new development. New growth, however, increases the demand on existing services and facilities. It has the potential to create deficiencies in systems that may already be functioning at their limits. For Christiansburg, the challenge will be to provide the needed infrastructure to meet growth demands while assuring that other public services are maintained at their present, high quality levels.
- 40.(P.84) Due to the prevalence of soils within the Town of Christiansburg that are not suitable for septic systems, the availability of public sewer service has been an important determinant of the Town's growth patterns. Domestic and industrial wastewater collection and treatment is available throughout most of the Town and to a limited number of users outside the corporate limits. The Town of Christiansburg constructed its first wastewater treatment plant in 1933. Since that time, two more treatment plants have been constructed, the first in 1962 and the present one in 1980. In 1999, the Town underwent a major expansion of its wastewater

treatment plant. The sanitary sewer system also includes sixteen pump stations (with an additional station under construction and two more planned) and 76.01 miles of gravity and force main lines.

- 41.(P.87) Urban development patterns in Christiansburg are strongly influenced by the area's physical characteristics: topography, drainage, floodplains, sensitive soils, and the location of active agricultural and forested areas. While many of these features may inhibit development, they also help form and define the character of the man-made environment. Nurturing a harmonious relationship between urban and natural systems will help to ensure appropriate growth and minimize development problems over the long term.
- 42.(P.95) Residential growth in Christiansburg will continue on both the north and south sides of Peppers' Ferry Road, NW (Virginia Route 114). Vacant land in this part of the Town is subject to the fewest environmental restrictions and public utilities are currently in place and capable of accommodating new development.
- 43.(P.95) Most commercial uses in Christiansburg are located along the major transportation routes such as Roanoke Street (Route 11/460), Franklin Street (Business Route 460), Radford Street (Route 11), and West Main Street. Prior to the 1988 annexation, 515 acres within the Town were devoted to commercial uses. The Town has experienced rapid growth in this sector, with commercial uses having more than doubled since then.
- 44.(P.96) Elsewhere within the Town limits, general commercial uses such as hotels, motels, restaurants and car dealerships are located near the I-81 interchange. Growth will continue eastward with completion of public sewer lines along Route 460/11, construction of which is currently in progress.
- 45.(P.98) One of the primary goals of the 1988 annexation of land by the Town was to obtain vacant land suitable for future growth. Prior to the 1988 annexation, there were 1,830 undeveloped acres, of which approximately 340 acres were part of Agricultural and Forestal Districts and, therefore, not readily available for development. The Town of Christiansburg currently has no Agricultural or Forestal District Conservation program, though Montgomery County maintains one.
- 46.(P.99) Christiansburg's role as a regional growth center will continue to evolve and solidify in future years. The currently vacant lands in the northwest and southeast quadrants of town will take on increased importance for long-range growth as proposed road improvements are undertaken and adjacent commercial and industrial expansion occurs. Pressure for new residential growth will continue in the Peppers Ferry Road area and west of North Franklin Street. The North Franklin Street/Pepper's Ferry Road area will remain the primary center of commercial growth. The completion of the U.S. 460 Bypass in this area (see Chapter 7 "Transportation" of this plan) has created a logical zone for commercial expansion.
- 47.(P.99) The Town of Christiansburg, located in the center of Montgomery County, serves as the Montgomery County Seat and is the New River Valley's regional retail center. Christiansburg's rapid growth in recent years can be attributed to factors such as expansion of public water and sewer facilities, its geographic location with respect to major road systems, proximity to nearby localities, and expansions of area universities. The Town has three interchanges on I-81 and Routes 460, 11, and 114, serve as major routes to Radford and Blacksburg. Nearby Virginia Tech and Radford Universities have undergone expansions in recent years that have regional implications. Radford University has committed itself to becoming a cultural center for Southwest Virginia. With Virginia Tech's ability to attract research funds as the top research institution in the state, the vitality of Christiansburg's business and industry is undeniably linked.
- 48.(P.101) The Town of Christiansburg has undergone phenomenal growth since 1980, experiencing a population increase of 45.0% from 1980 to 1990. While the Town's 1988

annexation of land was responsible for much of that growth, data indicates that Christiansburg's population grew at approximately 22% discounting the annexation population. This increase represents the largest rate of growth in the New River Valley and is nearly twice the rate of the state's population growth for the same period.

- 49.(P.101) Growth trends continued in the 1990's, with a 12.9% population increase for Christiansburg to a total of 16,947 persons in 2000. With its proximity to Radford and Blacksburg, approximately 60 percent of Montgomery County's entire population resides within a 12-mile radius of the Town of Christiansburg.
- 50.(P.101) The Town's land use pattern reflects the significance of its geographic location. The Town's primary growth centers capitalize on their proximity to major road intersections: at Routes 460 and 114, and along Route 460, between the Bypass and the I-81 interchange. New residential growth has been most significant in the Town's northwest annexation area due to the extension of sewer and water services. A moderate amount of infill has occurred elsewhere and growth can be expected as services are extended eastward. Light industrial uses are scattered throughout the Town with concentrations on the western side of N. Franklin Street, near the Depot/Roanoke Street intersection, north of Roanoke Street in eastern Christiansburg, and in the Falling Branch Corporate Park. Significant amounts of vacant industrial land will accommodate future demands.
- 51.(P.101) The downtown is comprised of a solid mix of commercial/retail and professional services anchored by government offices. Demand for downtown growth can be accommodated to the east along Roanoke Street and the relocation of County offices to the new County Government Center should help spur activity. Retail, office, and service demands resulting from industrial expansion in the Falling Branch area would be well served by downtown growth in this direction.
- 52.(P.101-102) Concentrated commercial/retail uses and the convergence of major highways within the Town contributes to the strain on Christiansburg's roadway system. The completion of the 102 Route 460 Bypass extension provides a direct route from the Blacksburg Bypass southward to I-81, and has helped relieve bottlenecks at Routes 460/114 and west of the Route 460/I-81 interchange. Circulation in the downtown area has been aided by the extension and widening of Depot Street on the western side of N. Franklin Street. The planned widening of Peppers Ferry Road, which has been necessitated by westward residential growth, will facilitate western travel.
- 53.(P.102) Until proposed road projects are completed, however, existing traffic flow will continue to be severely congested. Due to the completion of the Route 460 Bypass extension, the Town should consider a future boundary line adjustment to take advantage of the potential for eastward growth afforded by the realigned road.
- 54.(P.102) Christiansburg's housing needs are currently being met by residential growth in the northwest annexation area. Future needs will be accommodated by eastern residential development as services continue to be provided.
- 55.(P.102) The extension of public sewer and water service following the Town's 1988 annexation was the most potent contributor to Christiansburg's western and northern growth. By contrast, development east of the I-81/460 interchange has not been significant since public sewer installation by the Town has been an on-going project. While the capacity of existing sewer and water systems can accommodate projected residential and commercial growth in the north and west, industrial development east of I-81 may not easily be accommodated. The completion of the new interchange on I-81 will catalyze growth in the Falling Branch area. Future developments in Montgomery County's Falling Branch Corporate Park will assist this area's potential for future growth.

- 56.(P.102) In summary, the Town of Christiansburg will continue to see expansion of its commercial/retail areas, primarily in the Route 460/114 and 460/I-81 areas. Although its public facilities are adequate for current needs, the potential for expanded water and sewer capacity should be identified in Capital Improvements Programs as development increases. New road improvements will reduce the strain on the existing transportation system and provide better access to new commercial and industrial growth, which will insure the Town's economic viability in the future.
- 57.(P.103) Christiansburg's role as a regional growth center will continue to evolve and solidify in future years. The currently vacant lands in the northwest and southeast quadrants of town will take on increased importance for long-range growth as proposed road improvements are undertaken and adjacent commercial and industrial expansion occurs. Pressure for new residential growth will continue in the Peppers Ferry Road area and west of North Franklin Street. The North Franklin Street/Peppers Ferry Road area will remain the primary center of commercial growth. The recently completed U.S. Route 460 Bypass project in this area (see Chapter 7 "Transportation") will create a logical zone for commercial expansion.
- 58.(P.103) As businesses are attracted to the New River Valley Area through the efforts of area economic development organizations and Virginia Tech's Corporate Research Center programs, vacant lands in the Town's industrial parks will be developed. Various road improvements will also further new and infill commercial and professional services development, especially in the Falling Branch area as Montgomery County's commitment to development of an industrial park here is realized. Concentrating high-density growth within the Town limits will provide significant savings on utility extensions for potential development. The 1988 annexation agreement restricts the Town from future annexation until 2003 and incorporation as an independent city until 2013. While the year 2013 is not within the Town's short-term planning range, long range planning should not lose sight of the potential opportunities for the future as development pressures in surrounding areas escalate.
- 59.(P.104) Currently the most rapidly expanding commercial area is the Peppers Ferry Road-N. Franklin Street corridor. Continued growth is encouraged in this area with designation of significant amounts of vacant land to general commercial use in this area. The completion of the Route 460 Bypass will solidify the focus on this region as a retail consumer "destination" for the New River Valley. Development plan review for this commercial district should place particular emphasis on excellence of design for stormwater management, circulation, buffering, landscaping and signage.
- 60.(P.105) Potential industrial growth east of Falling Branch Road may increase pressure for expanded strip commercial development along Roanoke Street. General commercial uses west of Depot Street NE should be limited to lots fronting Roanoke Street in an effort to preserve existing residential neighborhoods. Re-use of existing residential dwellings for offices and professional services where possible would serve as a transition between residential uses and the Downtown. The visual appearance of this entrance into downtown would be enhanced by a focus on streetscaping during the development plan review phase for new construction.
- 61.(P.105) The targeted commercial development districts in Town are defined largely by retail and small service industry, as it exists today. In the future, these areas will be the focus for continued commercial developments. These areas will merit close evaluation for pedestrian walkways and opportunities for public transportation. Creating easier and safer pedestrian access to these commercial districts is important to their continued growth and development. Christiansburg has allowances for increased building heights in conjunction with increased setbacks from all property lines. This allowance is intended to encourage maximization of activity and optimization of useful open space.
- 62.(P.109) The Future Land Use Map illustrates the proposed generalized land use pattern for the

Town of Christiansburg and surrounding area for the year 2023. This plan is not intended to be site specific but rather general in nature, showing predominant land use patterns and their general location. Mostly, the pattern reflects an expansion of the current land use and growth trends but also delineates the extent and appropriateness of such development in the foreseeable future, and highest and best land use for key areas within the community as envisioned by the Town. The plan depicts the general direction the Town wishes to follow in its future land use development pattern. The major land use features for the community at large are summarized as follows: **Peppers Ferry Road Area**

- \* New development and expansion of low-density larger lot residential use in the northwestern area.

- \* Continuation of general commercial uses flanking North Franklin Street and abutting the Route 460 Bypass.

- \* Minor expansion/enhancement of general industrial uses near the Corning facility.

- \* Mixed use corridor centered on Rt. 114.

#### **Downtown and Western Area**

- \* Continuation of retail, service, and office uses within the Downtown Commercial district.

- \* Consolidation of strip commercial development along Routes 8 and 11 and at Route 8/I-81 intersection.

- \* Encourage residential development in and near the Downtown area.

#### **South of I-81**

- \* New low-density residential development.

#### **Bypass/I-81 Area**

- \* Principal auto-oriented strip commercial use accommodated along Roanoke Street with some growth restriction. Requires corridor design and controls.

- \* Industrial uses north of the strip commercial development and extending to the northern corporate limits.

#### **Eastern Area**

- \* Low-density residential development facilitated by extension of sewer service.

#### **Areas of the Land Use Plan which reflect a departure from existing uses are most evident in the Depot Street and Falling Branch Road areas:**

##### **Depot Street Area**

- \* Continued industrial near Roanoke Street but restricted to lands adjacent to railway on north side of Roanoke Street.

- \* Conversion of existing industrial land on south side of Roanoke Street for future general commercial development.

##### **Falling Branch Road Area**

- \* Additional general commercial uses on the east side of Falling Branch Road.

- \* Continued development of Montgomery County' Falling Branch Corporate Park.

- 63.(P.113) Virginia Route 114/Peppers Ferry Road Project: Scheduled to begin in 2007, the Virginia Route 114/Peppers Ferry Road project will four-lane the entire portion in Town and continue outside the corporate limits to Dominion Drive. The project will provide sidewalks, landscaped medians, turn lanes, two storm water management facilities, crosswalks, and roadside landscaping. Implications of these road improvements include improved circulation within the Town limits as well as opportunities for further growth. The Peppers Ferry Road widening will accommodate existing and future volumes of traffic in the northern part of Town.
- 64.(P.113) The widening of Peppers Ferry Road will accommodate future residential development designated in the western part of the Town. It will also ease access to nearby commercial growth. New residential development on both sides of Peppers Ferry Road should be encouraged, where possible, to connect with existing road networks. These interconnections

will provide opportunity for residents to access major roadways by more direct routes as well as provide multiple access roads for emergency service purposes.

- 65.(P.114) Identified Needs Identified needs are those that the Town and County are considering for submission to VDOT for future funding. The Potential Future Growth Area Map and Future Transportation Plan on the following page identifies projects such as the previously mentioned N. Franklin Street-Peppers Ferry Road Connector Route as well as the previously mentioned Parkway Drive Extension-Chrisman Mill Road Connector. The map also includes the Peppers Ferry Road Extension, which is currently in long-term planning phases.
- 66.(P.114) Growth Areas: The Town has identified potential future growth areas based on past development trends, location of prohibitive factors such as Floodplain and topography, and potential for facilities to support growth such as water, sewer, and streets. The result is the map on the following page, which also illustrates the planned future transportation improvements.
- 67.(P.114) As can be seen, the Town has specifically identified undeveloped areas on the eastern and southern areas for growth potential. The map identifies several areas within Montgomery County as potential growth areas. Future extension of Town services to these areas should be accompanied by boundary adjustment or annexation.
- 68.(P.115) Town of Christiansburg Potential Future Growth Area Map and Future Transportation Plan (see in document)
- 69.(P.116) The availability of public services is a primary determinant of the timing, location, and quantity of growth. This section of the plan presents broad recommendations for accommodating and defining growth through the provision of public services.
- 70.(P.116) Water and sewer are presently available to nearly all residents of the Town as well as to a limited number of users outside the corporate limits. There are no plans currently for significant expansion of water service within the Town limits. Eastern end residents will be provided with sewer service upon completion of the Public Works Department's sewer extension in the eastern part of Town. This project is in progress and will be completed in the near future. Ongoing sewer repairs consist primarily of correcting infiltration and inflow problems. In terms of future growth, current sewer capacity is able to meet the needs of approximately 18,000 new residential users or an equivalent commercial/industrial demand. Recognizing the potential for urbanization in the Falling Branch area of Montgomery County, the Town should maintain close contact with Montgomery County officials and thoroughly analyze the potential impacts of extending the Town's services.
- 71.(P.117) As Christiansburg is the County Seat, Roanoke Street and the downtown area are home to a large number of Montgomery County's administrative offices. In 2002, Montgomery County relocated its administrative functions from the Courthouse to 755 Roanoke Street, giving the County needed space and a new home with high visibility. With the County government offices relocated, there are now plans to renovate the Courthouse. The Town Municipal Building reconstruction project at 100 E. Main Street is scheduled for completion in 2003, which should provide the Town's administrative offices with opportunity for growth for decades to come.
- 72.(P.119) Objectives: 1. Provide adequate land areas for orderly, compatible, and efficient economic and physical growth.
- 73.(P.119) d. Consider expanding the present Town corporate boundaries to include areas most suitable for new development and to obtain additional land for future urban growth per the stipulations of the existing annexation agreement. (Note: The Town's 1988 Annexation Agreement may be reviewed at the Town Manager's office).
- 74.(P.135) Strategies: a. Continue to review the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years so that it can be a useful, up-to-date guide for future growth and development and revise the Plan as needed.

- 75.(P.136) The Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan update represents the continuation of formal, organized planning for the Town and the immediate planning area. The Plan serves as a foundation for addressing local problems and recognizing future needs and demands of growth. The Plan offers an opportunity to the Town leaders to apply appropriate controls and direct both public and private investments in a logical manner to achieve short-term objectives and long-range goals.
- 76.(P.136) However specific the state laws and local ordinances may be, or however carefully planning procedures may be followed, all of the laws and procedures, text, maps, special studies and outside funding programs cannot substitute in effectiveness for the support of the people of Christiansburg. The awareness of the Town's citizens of the advantages of a comprehensive long-range view in dealing with the problems and opportunities of the Town is an important tool. Maintaining such a long-range perspective is critical when the pace of growth is accelerating and the future of development depends upon the impacts of the changes occurring. The careful handling of growth management and facilities planning within a long-range view sets a favorable precedent for the Town.
- 77.(P.136) With growth, the requirements for planning staff assistance will increase. Routine administration and review of building and subdivision proposals, enforcement of Codes, periodic revision of the Comprehensive Plan, participation in funding programs and special studies require full-time staff. Staff services will need to be supplemented at times by consultants and the New River Valley Planning District Commission.
- 78.(P.140) A. In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the local planning commission shall survey and study such matters as the following:
1. Use of land, preservation of agricultural and forestal land, production of food and fiber, characteristics and conditions of existing development, trends of growth or changes, natural resources, historic areas, ground water, surface water, geologic factors, population factors, employment, environmental and economic factors, existing public facilities, drainage, flood control and flood damage prevention measures, transportation facilities, the need for affordable housing in both the locality and planning district within which it is situated, and any other matters relating to the subject matter and general purposes of the comprehensive plan.
- 79.(P.140) 2. Probable future economic and population growth of the territory and requirements therefor.
- 80.(P.141) 1. Maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan. Unforeseen changes in development trends, population growth or effects of economic changes resulting from new industrial commercial development, annexation or consolidation; all would have a major impact on long range community planning which would need to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.
- 81.(P.142) 1. Development of a brochure or graphic foldout depicting the Future Land Use Map and Potential Future Growth Area Map and Future Transportation Plan.
- 82.(P.143) **The extent to which zoning can improve living conditions and guide the growth of Christiansburg in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan will be largely dependent upon the attitudes and interests of the people of Christiansburg as expressed by them and expressed through their leaders in enactment of regulations and subsequent sustained enforcement of regulations. The problems will be varied since Christiansburg is an urbanizing community with the potential for different kinds of development. If the people of Christiansburg truly desire an orderly, efficient land use development pattern which is an objective of the Comprehensive Plan; and if they wish to channel development to designated areas, and protect the water resources and environmentally sensitive areas, then zoning is available to implement a program which, over the long run, can accomplish these objectives.**