Town of Chilhowie, Virginia



Comprehensive Plan

2025

Acknowledgments

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Preamble

The Town of Chilhowie, in partnership with Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, has prepared a new Comprehensive Plan that will serve as a guide to the Town's growth and development decisions over the course of the next 10 years. The adoption and maintenance of a Comprehensive Plan is required by State law and is to be revised every five years. The Plan is a living document that should be updated regularly as conditions change and as shifts occur in public policy.

The Comprehensive Plan is the Town's principle guiding or vision document – designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the managed growth and viability of the Town. The Plan lays out the desired future for the Town and relates how that future is to be achieved. As part of this planning process, the Planning Commission participated in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis that helped to identify the areas of focus for the goals of the Town. This plan includes an extensive Goals, Objectives, and Strategies Chapter presented in an implementation matrix that will allow staff, citizens, planning commission and town council to understand the funding required, timeline for the objective to be accomplished, and the parties who are responsible for accomplishing the objective. This plan in its entirety serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by identifying the trends of the past, as well as current conditions. The key sectors of focus within this plan were Population/Demographics, Housing, Land Use, Community Facilities, Transportation, Economy, and Government.

The Comprehensive Plan was developed with input from the Town of Chilhowie Planning Commission and Town Staff. Over the course of twelve months, meetings were held with updated content being presented by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and collaborative effort being put together to forge this new plan with the visioning of the Planning Commission. Achieving this vision will require the Town and the various community partners to work together and cooperate in confronting and making progress on the issues and opportunities described in this Plan.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

A comprehensive strategic development plan guides a local government towards decisions on policies and projects that will provide efficient public services and create a better economic, physical, and social environment for its citizens. The essential characteristics of the plan are that it is comprehensive, general, and long-range.

Comprehensive means that the plan must consider all the land within the town limits and all the economic, physical, and social elements which will influence future development General means that the plan is summary in nature and does not indicate specific locations. Though the plan does have a legal status it is not an ordinance. The ordinances necessary to implement the plan may be recommended or referenced but not included. A plan will provide the goals, objectives and strategies which are important to achieve the vision for the future Chilhowie. Long range means that the plan, while addressing current issues, does not ignore future situations and strategies for the changes required to achieve the 20 to 30-year vision. Flexible means that the plan is adaptable to changing circumstances and can be revised when necessary. State law requires that the plan be reviewed every five years so that it will continue to provide the town with guidance while being sensitive to interim changes.

Legal Status of the Comprehensive Plan

Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia requires that every governing body in the Commonwealth adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction.

Section 15.2-2230 requires the local Planning Commission to review that plan at least once every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

Section 15.2-2200 of the Code of Virginia establishes the legislative intent of planning and zoning enabling authority. In summary, the State's intent is to encourage local governments to:

- improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens;
- plan for future development with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, recreational, and other facilities;
- recognize the needs of agriculture, industry, and business in future growth;
- preserve agricultural and forestall land;
- provide a healthy surrounding for family life in residential areas; and
- provide that community growth be consonant with the efficient and economic use of public funds.

Section 15.2-2223 specifically states that "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 probably future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."

It further states that the comprehensive plan shall be general in nature in that it shall:

• designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of features shown on the plan, including where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, removed, or changed; and
• show the long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory and may include such items as the designation of areas for various kinds of public and private land use, a system of transportation facilities, a system of community service facilities, historical areas, and areas for the implementation of groundwater protection measures.

In Virginia, the local Comprehensive Plan is a guide for making community development decisions and thus the governing body can exercise some discretion in how strictly it interprets and adheres to the plan. However, the Code provides that the construction of streets or other public facilities be subject to review and the extent of the proposed facility be in substantial accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Relationship to Other Plans

The comprehensive plan is a general document and is not designed to be the only guide for the development of Chilhowie. The plan must be strengthened by the support of subdivision and zoning ordinances and, most importantly, it must be upheld by decisions of the Town Council. It is anticipated that the plan will be supplemented in the future by more detailed studies of important concerns such as water and sewer improvements, solid waste collection, open space, parks and recreation, housing needs, road improvements, and commercial expansion.

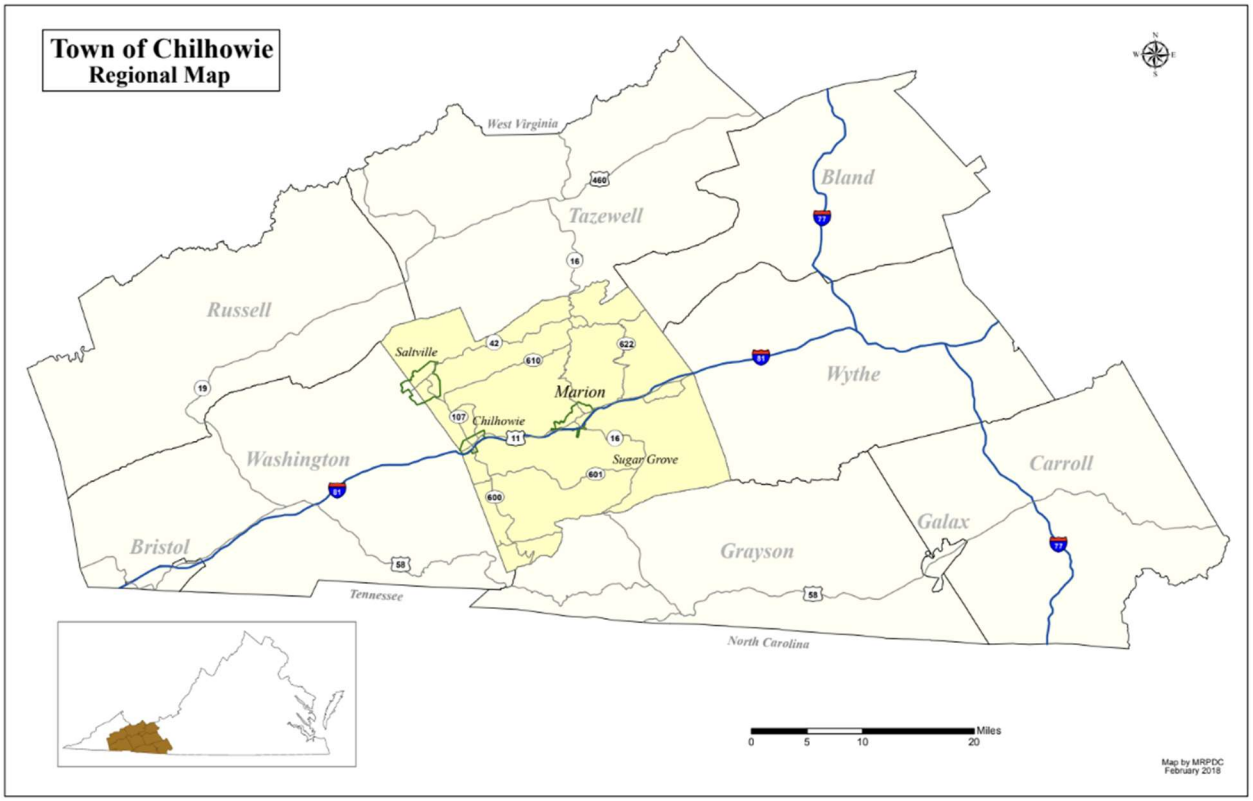
The comprehensive development plan also addresses several specific needs. It serves as a guide for efficient and coordinated improvements in public services. It provides a frame of reference for the review and evaluation of site plans, subdivision plats, special use permits, and development proposals. It officially recognizes areas of natural, historic, geologic, or archaeologic significance, which insures their conservation and protection. Finally, the plan guides the development of community services and facilities, so they will be provided in an efficient manner.

A good comprehensive plan combined with reasonable land use ordinances can prevent incompatible uses of land, enhance the attractiveness of the town, and improve the quality of life for the citizens. The fact that a town has adopted a comprehensive plan and is following that plan in its decisions affecting land use also has the benefit of upholding those decisions should the actions of the governing body be challenged in court According to the office of the Attorney General, Land Use decisions will only be upheld if they can be determined to be reasonable and not arbitrary. A court would more readily conclude that land use decisions based on a comprehensive plan meet the standard of reasonableness than such decisions made in the absence of a plan. Depending on the facts of a particular case, a locality which fails to enact a comprehensive plan pursuant to Section § 15.2-2223 could be more vulnerable to legal action seeking to overturn its decisions regarding the use of land.

Description of the Planning Area

Chilhowie is located near the western edge of Smyth County in southwestern Virginia. Smyth County is bordered by the counties of Wythe and Bland to the east, Russell County and Tazewell to the north, Washington County to the west, and Grayson County to the south. The Town is intersected by U.S. Highway 11, VA 107, and Interstate 81. The Chilhowie land area totals 1,625.6 acres or 2.54 square miles.

Figure 1-1 Town of Chilhowie/Region Map



Smyth County is a part of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC). The Commission was established for the purpose of promoting orderly and efficient development of economic, physical, and social elements of the region; to serve the Counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe and the independent Cities of Bristol and Galax.

The work of the Commission today is centered chiefly in providing technical assistance to area jurisdictions in economic and community development, public management and administration, and cartography. Economic development activities include assisting jurisdictions in preparing grant applications for economic development projects, publishing a quarterly report of economic indicators, and maintaining a comprehensive regional economic development strategy. The Commission has for several years provided circuit-riding town management assistance to member jurisdictions who cannot afford full-time managers. Our GIS Director provides mapping assistance to localities, which includes updating property maps, zoning maps, and house numbering maps.

Town History

The Town of Chilhowie was incorporated by order of the Smyth County Court in 1913 with a population of 570 people. However, Chilhowie was a thriving community long before there was any town. It was first settled during an expedition in 1748, when Colonel James Patton chose the site for a town that he envisioned to become the metropolis of a future great country. Colonel Patton built a log house, on a hill overlooking the river, as the beginning of his town and called it the Town House. This original house, the first English built house on soil drained by Mississippi streams, was later weather boarded and enlarged and its chimneys still remain near the center of the town. A Virginia Department of Historic Resources sign on Lee Highway states this was the furthest point west in 1750. The community was first called the Town House community after the house that Colonel Patton built.

Local citizens such as William Campbell, commander at the Battle of Kings Mountain during the Revolutionary War, played prominent roles in the founding of our country and Phillip Greever who is said to have fired the first shot at that decisive battle. Elizabeth Russell, Campbell's wife, was Patrick Henry's sister and played a prominent role in the area's early Methodist Church movement, lived, and traveled in the area.

The community later became known as Greever's Switch, due to the railroad siding located near the Town House. During the late 1850's, Mr. George Palmer suggested that the village growing up around Greever's Switch be named Chilhowie. He was the proprietor of Sulphur Springs Resort, north of the Town House, known as Chilhowie Springs. Chilhowie is an Indian phrase which means "Valley of Many Deer," and had been used by the Indians to refer to a portion of the Middle Fork of the Holston Valley in what is now Smyth County. The name was adopted soon after Mr. Palmer suggested it.

Chilhowie's early development was characterized by a variety of enterprises. The first store in Chilhowie was built in 1870 by Minter Jackson, who later founded the Bank of Marion, a regional banking stalwart. He also owned the first industry, which was a pottery plant. In 1890, Adams Brother's and Payne of Lynchburg built and operated a brick factory. The firm, located formerly along the railroad, was extensive and profitable for many years.

The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad came through the area in 1856. Construction began in 1852. It connected Lynchburg with Bristol, with a branch line to Saltville, and was an engineering marvel of its times traversing countless mountains, rivers, and streams. It brought considerable economic development to the area. But during the Civil War it became a target for numerous Federal raids because of its strategic importance, and because of lead and salt deposits in nearby Southwest Virginia areas. In December 1864, the area experienced turmoil, destruction, and distress with a Federal raid from Tennessee into Southwest Virginia from Union General George Stoneman's forces. For much of the latter part of the War the area was defended by Confederate General John Breckinridge, former Vice President, Kentucky Senator, and runner up to Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election.

Farming has traditionally been one of the most prominent livelihoods of the area. In particular, Chilhowie orchards produced apples and other fruits for many decades and employed scores of people. The area was known as the apple producing center of Southwest Virginia with thousands of acres in operation. The origin of the Community Apple Festival came from this reputation, and that event has been celebrated every year since 1953 in September. The last commercially operating orchard closed in the early 2000s. The Vance Company, dealers in general hardware, building and farm supplies, and fertilizers, which they also produced, was one of the first corporations locally owned. The stockholders were composed largely of local farmers.

During the 1940s and through the 1990s Chilhowie and the area became a major textile manufacturing and dyeing center, and to a lesser degree furniture manufacturing center, in Southwest Virginia and the Southeast part of the Country. At its peak over a thousand people were employed in these endeavors. Many name brand products under the trademark “Lands End”, “Buster Brown”, and “American of Martinsville” and others were manufactured here.

In the 1970’s and early 1980’s, the Town in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority and the United States Government, undertook a significant relocation effort after residents of a largely Black area on both sides of the Middle Fork of the Holston were flooded out. This occurred after two one-hundred-year floods in April and November of 1977 that devastated the area. This approximately 50-acre area on both sides of the Middle Fork is now a multi-use recreation area and park, with only the historic Black First Baptist Church remaining.

In 1989 the Town of Chilhowie, in cooperation with Smyth County, annexed an area on the north, east, south, and west of Town into the corporate limits and grew from .9 square miles to 2.5 square miles. At the time it was the largest Boundary Adjustment in the history of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Over the decades the Town has increased its reach from the Corporate Limits into Smyth and Washington Counties in providing fundamental and essential human services such as Water, Sewer, Police, and Fire / Emergency Medical Service through a variety of projects and efforts. The Town currently serves approximately 3,000 to 8,000 people in and around the Town of Chilhowie with these services.

Today the Town of Chilhowie, with an inside the corporate limits population of approximately 2,000, is a significant residential, commercial and industrial center located in the crossroads of Southwest Virginia, the Commonwealth and the mid-Atlantic / Southeast region of the nation. It is strategically located just north of one of the state’s largest recreation areas in the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, which contains the state’s highest and second highest mountains, Mt. Rogers and White Top, respectively. The Town is proud of its past and looks forward with renewed optimism to the future.

Physiography and Geology[1]

Chilhowie is situated within the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Sub-province of Virginia. Layers of sedimentary rocks underlie the Ridge and Valley Province. These rocks have been folded with the folds running northeast to southwest. As a result of erosion, the various layers of rock appear on the surface in strips of various widths running in a northeast southwest orientation. The major sedimentary rock types are sandstone, shale, limestone. and dolomite. Sandstones are more resistant to weathering than shale, limestone, and dolomites.

Chilhowie lies along the Middle Fork of the Holston River and is characterized by gently sloping hills and a low-lying floodplain with elevations ranging from 1,940 feet to 2,160 feet above sea level. The highest point is along the northeastern border of town.[2] Approximately 19.3 percent of Chilhowie lies within the floodplain. This area is the only area within the town with severe building limitations. Since much of the undeveloped land in Chilhowie is within the floodplain, development has been restricted to a minimum through the Chilhowie Zoning Ordinance.

The soils of Smyth County have been mapped and delineated into four soil associations. A soil association is a region that has a distinctive proportional pattern of soils; that is, each association has a certain repeating pattern of soils and other features that give it a characteristic landscape. An association normally consists of two or more major soils and one or more minor soils and is named for the major soils. Other soils also occur randomly throughout the area. Because of the variations, the final decision regarding development of a site should be preceded by an on-site investigation of the soil composition.

The Frederick-Groseclose Association is located within the portion of Smyth County which includes Chilhowie. Characteristics of this soil association are deep, well drained, gently sloping to steep soils on uplands. The floodplains in this association are narrow, relative to others in southwest Virginia, and the stream terraces adjoining the floodplains are small, elongated, gently sloping to sloping areas. The major limitations to development of some areas in this association are rockiness, steep slopes, and flooding.

[1] All portions of this chapter, excepting topography, were derived from the Smyth County Comprehensive Development Plan adopted October 2005.

[2] Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, Topographic Map of Chilhowie, 1976.

Climate[3]

Smyth County has a moderate climate with July being the warmest month and January being the coldest month. The average maximum temperature in July is approximately 83 degrees Fahrenheit. The average maximum temperature in January is approximately 42 degrees Fahrenheit.

The annual average rainfall in Smyth County is approximately 45.86 inches. During the six warm months, April through September, the average rainfall is approximately 27.6 inches. Average annual snowfall is approximately eighteen inches, with larger accumulations occurring in the mountainous areas.

Table 1-2: Temperature Statistics

Smyth County			
	January	**July**	**Annual**
Average Maximum Temperature (Degree F)	42.2	83.2	65.6
Average Minimum Temperature (Degree F)	20.8	58.9	39.8

[3] Information for this section was derived from the 2024 Mount Rogers Planning Districts Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Chapter 2: Goals, Objectives, Strategies

General Description

Goals are general statements of what Chilhowie as a community would like to achieve or to resolve a particular need. Objectives are specific measurable steps taken to accomplish a goal. An objective should state the level of measurement to be accomplished. Strategies are specific action statements of means for achieving particular objectives.

The Town of Chilhowie Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the actions and decision-making of our town's elected and appointed officials, staff, and community stakeholders; to monitor our progress, and to celebrate our success in accomplishing our Plan's goals and vision. Annual reviews will enable Town staff and members of the Planning Commission, and Town Council to measure our progress, refine our priorities, and ensure adequate funds and other resources are allocated to accomplish our implementation goals during each budget cycle.

Implementation Matrix

To assist ongoing monitoring, the Plan's goals and strategies are summarized below in an Implementation Matrix outlining Implementation funding, timeline, and responsible parties.

Funding

Indication of the financial resources deemed necessary to implement each strategy, using the "$" symbol to represent the relative cost of implementation.

$	≤$25,000
$$	$25,000-$100,000
$$$	$100,000-$500,000
$$$$	>$500,000

Timeline

Indication of the amount of time it may take to accomplish each strategic action.

Short-Term	1-2 Years
Intermediate	2-5 Years
Long-Term	5+ Years
Ongoing	Regular on-going efforts required.

Responsible Parties

Indication of key partners needed to accomplish each strategy.

TC	Town Council
PC	Planning Commission
TS	Town Staff
CG	Citizen Groups
PS	Private Sector Developers, Businesses & Property Owners
SCTD	Smyth County Tourism Department
SCCC	Smyth County Chamber of Commerce
SCSB	Smyth County School Board
SCED	Smyth County Economic Development
MRPDC	Mount Rogers Planning District
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
VTC	Virginia Tourism Commission
MRRP	Mount Rogers Regional Partnership
VH	Virginia Housing
WCSA	Washington County Service Authority
VHCC	Virginia Highlands Community College
WCC	Wytheville Community College

Land Use Development Goal

Provide an orderly, quality, balanced and harmonious living environment.

Objective 1 - Improve Chilhowie's Appearance.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Continue to require property maintenance for waste/trash disposal, lawn maintenance clearing vacant lots, and demolition or revitalization of dilapidated structures through the enforcement of property maintenance ordinance.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 1.2 - Participate in the Town/County sponsored Clean Community Program.	$	Ongoing	TS / CG
Strategy 1.3 - Promote the improvement and well -being of the community.	$	Ongoing	TC / PC / TS
Strategy 1.4 - Continue tree planting and maintenance along Chilhowie highways.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 1.5 - Work with private owners and civic groups to maintain the cleanliness of the community.	$	Ongoing	TS / CG / PS
Strategy 1.6 – Continue enforcement of sign and inoperable vehicle ordinances.	$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 2 - Improve the Diversity of Commercial Areas.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 2.1 - Promote the attraction of retail business and service to the commercial areas.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC
Strategy 2.2 – Frequently review and revise the zoning ordinance to codify which businesses best reflect the character of the community.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC
Strategy 2.3 - Participate with Smyth County, Smyth County Tourism Association Chamber, and other agencies in the promotion of the area.	$	Ongoing	TS / SCTD / VTC

Objective 3 - Provide for Residential Expansion and Maintain Quality of the Residential Areas.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 3.1 - Work for development of affordable housing for community citizens.	$$$$	Intermediate	TS / VH/ PS/ MRPDC/
Strategy 3.2 - Continue to improve water and sewer service to residential areas.	$-$$$$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 3.3 - Provide consistent interpretation, application, and strict enforcement of town ordinances.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC
Strategy 3.4 - Continue flood enforcement of Flood Plain ordinance in compliance with FEMA regulations so flood insurance is available to all residence.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 3.5 - Promote the expansion of broadband, cellular, and other communications services.	$$$$	Long-Term	TC / PC / TS / PS / MRPDC
Strategy 3.6 - Continue preventing encroachment into residential areas.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC

Community Facilities and Public Service Goal

Provide Chilhowie residents with the level of community facilities and services necessary for continued growth and development.

Objective 1 - Continue the Improvement and Expansion of the Water Supply System to Meet Present and Future Needs			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Upgrade existing water lines and maintain adequate pressure for fire protection.	$ - $$$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 1.2 - Continue to utilize leak correlator, planned line replacement, scheduled meter replacement, discontinuation of improper taps, and scheduled leak detection efforts.	$ - $$$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 1.3 - Continue to work with WCSA to maintain the Millcreek Regional water facility.	$+	Ongoing	TS / WCSA
Strategy 1.4 – Continually monitor wholesale water sales to Smyth County at the Apple Valley and Fox Valley meters. The County is the biggest customer, and that revenue must be maintained.	$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 2 - Provide for Improvements to the Sewer System for Continued Growth of Business, Industry, and Residential Use			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 2.1 – Continue to push forward with system wide infiltration and inflow relining set to be completed in 2025.	$$$$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 2.2 - Continue to require private removal of infiltration connections as identified by the infiltration and inflow study.	$$	Ongoing	TS / PS
Strategy 2.3 - Continue maintenance of newly upgraded Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant facility with Smyth County.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 2.4 - Continue to monitor and maintain Smyth County sewer meter at Packing House Road responsible for monitoring hundreds of County customers, plus billing off of Route 107.	$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 3 - Maintain and Improve the Level of Public Safety			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 3.1 - Continue Community policing and support of the Police Department.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 3.2 - Continue the partnership with Smyth County to proportionately match the town's provision of fire and emergency services.	$	Ongoing	TC
Strategy 3.3 - Improve street lighting and traffic lights for public safety and energy efficiency.	$ - $$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 3.4 - Identify potential public safety hazards and develop viable abatement solutions.	$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 3.5 - Maintain a favorable ISO rating by providing adequate access and flow.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 3.6 – Continue funding 20-year fire replacement project and implementing same at $1 per 2,500 customers. Doing ten hydrants per year or the equivalent.	$$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 4 - Maintain and Improve the Quality and Quantity of Educational, Cultural and Recreational Services			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 4.1 – Utilize the recreation director to maintain a quality recreation program.	$$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 4.2 - Work with and support the Chilhowie Community Apple Festival in continuance of the festival.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS / CG
Strategy 4.3 - Continue development of community recreation programs to serve all population age groups within the Town of Chilhowie.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 4.4 - Continue improvements to the Chilhowie Recreation Park including new playground equipment.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 4.5 - Continue to encourage quality improvements to the high school/middle school complex.	$+	Ongoing	TC / TS / SCSB
Strategy 4.6 - Continue the renovation plan for reuse and development of the Community Center at the Old High School. Continue to upgrade the existing facilities.	$+	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 4.7 - Continue to support the Chilhowie library and any possible expansions or new facilities.	$$$$	Ongoing	TC
Strategy 4.8 - Continue support of the H. L. Bonham Smyth County Tourism Center, the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce and the Chilhowie Walking Trail connecting the Tourism Center with the Chilhowie Recreation Park and into the downtown revitalization project area.	$	Ongoing	TC
Strategy 4.9 - Continue to collaborate with Virginia DWR, US Fish and Wildlife, and the Upper East Tennessee Roundtable to enhance recreational and wildlife activities along the Middle Fork of the Holston River.	$+	Ongoing	TC / TS

Economic Development Goal

Continuously improve the economic well-being of Chilhowie and the surrounding area.

Objective 1 - Encourage the Development of More Industries in Chilhowie Community for Increased Personal Income			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Work with the County in securing more industries between Seven Mile Ford and Chilhowie and south of Chilhowie.	**$**	Ongoing	TS / SCED / MRRP
Strategy 1.2 - Recruitment and expansion of industries that utilize advanced technologies.	**$**	Ongoing	TS / SCED / MRRP
Strategy 1.3 - Work with secondary schools and community colleges to establish technology-oriented programming and training. Support Workforce Training efforts for displaced workers.	**$**	Ongoing	TC / TS / VHCC / WCC / MRRP
Strategy 1.4 - Work with local industries and businesses to identify their needs and assist in alleviating those needs.	**$**	Ongoing	TS / MRRP / PS
Strategy 1.5 - Provide and maintain land zoned for industrial development which is served by water, sewer, and transportation facilities.	**$**	Ongoing	TC / PC / TS
Strategy 1.6 - Work with Smyth/Wythe/Washington Counties to promote development in the Pathway Park industrial site.	**$**	Ongoing	TC / TS / SCED

Objective 2 - Revitalize the Downtown Business District			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 2.1 - Focus business retention and recruitment efforts on key downtown appropriate categories.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 2.2 - Leverage existing retail, restaurant, and office uses to build a concentration of downtown commercial development.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 2.3 - Utilize street pole banners to promote community identity and events.	$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 2.4 - Consider attracting additional commercial and retail business downtown and market Old Superior Mills site on East Main.	$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 3 - Improve the Quality of Main Street and Lee Highway Through Renovation and Rehabilitation			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 3.1 - Encourage property owners to continue renovation of Main Street businesses through the downtown revitalization project in better-utilizing downtown.	$	Ongoing	TC / PC / TS / PS
Strategy 3.2 – Establish and expand sidewalks throughout Town, improve streets, drainage, and flood-proofing of structures.	$$$$	Long-Term	TS / VDOT
Strategy 3.3 - Secure available grant or loan funds for the rehabilitation of property.	$$$$	Intermediate	TS / PS
Strategy 3.4 - Promote and assist in the removal of blighted properties through the DEQ brownfields program.	$ - $$	Ongoing	TC / PS / MRPDC

Housing Goal

Improve the quality, quantity, and availability of housing for all socio-economic segments of the population.

Objective 1 - Maintain and Improve Neighborhood Quality by Providing Essential Services.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Work with people in substandard housing, including mobile homes, to acquire funding for rehabilitation for substandard and deteriorating housing.	$$$$	Intermediate	TS / PS / MRPDC
Strategy 1.2 - Provide sidewalks for pedestrian use.	$$$$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 1.3 - Prevent commercial development from encroaching into older and/or possible historically significant residential areas.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC
Strategy 1.4 - Continue to maintain and enforce the building and zoning laws.	$	Ongoing	TS / PC
Strategy 1.5 - Widen the identified narrow streets to permit two-way traffic where feasible and add those streets to the state maintenance system.	$$$$	Long-Term	TS / VDOT
Strategy 1.6 - Encourage CDBG Grant Applications to refurbish older neighborhoods.	$$$$	Ongoing	TS
Strategy 1.7 - Encourage participation in the Regional Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation program.	$$+	Ongoing	TS

Objective 2 - Expand Residential Opportunities in Chilhowie.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 2.1 - Extend water and sewer services to areas suitable for residential development.	$$$+	Long-Term	TS
Strategy 2.2 - Encourage State and Federal grant applications for workforce housing development.	$$$$	Ongoing	TC / TS / MRPDC

Transportation Goal

Maintain and improve an efficient and safe transportation network.

Objective 1 - Provide for Improved Streets and Sidewalks for Efficient Movement of Traffic and Pedestrians.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Continue VDOT enhancement projects to include expansion sidewalks on U.S. Highway 11, West Lee Highway to Sulphur Springs road.	$$$$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 1.2 - Work with VDOT to develop a plan to address I-81 traffic without adversely affecting the Town and its existing businesses.	$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 1.3 - Continue to budget for the maintenance of existing sidewalks.	$ - $$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.4 – Improve lighting and safe pedestrian access under the exit 35 I-81 bridge.	$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 1.5 – Improve the drainage pipe near Berry Iron & Metal on Whitetop Road.	$$	Ongoing	TS

Objective 2 - Improve Local Access Streets.			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 2.1 - Develop a system of sidewalks.	$$$$	Ongoing	TS / VDOT
Strategy 2.2 - Work with the County, VDOT, and surrounding counties to establish a bike lane on Route 762 and Route 600 to the Mount Rogers Recreation area and Route 107 to the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management area.	$$$$	Long-Term	TS / VDOT
Strategy 2.3 - Provide private parking standards and improved parking areas. Increase exposure and access to the Town Dog Park and Bonham Trail.	$ - $$	Short-Term	TS
Strategy 2.4 - Work with property owners and VDOT to add local streets to the state system.	$	Long-Term	TS / PS / VDOT

Strategy 2.5 - Continue to encourage budgeting for the paving of town-maintained streets.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS

Environmental Goal

To improve and preserve the physical and social environment of the Town and surrounding area.

Objective 1 - Strive to keep Chilhowie a beautiful town to live, work and relax			
Strategy	**Funding**	**Timeline**	**Parties**
Strategy 1.1 - Encourage the recycling of paper, plastic and glass, tires.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.2 - Encourage the shredding of Christmas trees to be used as mulch.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.3 - Discourage littering through participation in County Litter campaigns and fines.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.4 - Continue Spring and Fall clean-up weeks.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS/ PS
Strategy 1.5 - Encourage Citizens to maintain and beautify their property.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.6 - Encourage recreation and community activities for residents of all ages.	$	Ongoing	TC / TS
Strategy 1.7 – Develop and utilize attractive signage throughout the Town.	$	Short-Term	TS
Strategy 1.8 – Ensure that the entrance corridors to Chilhowie are attractive and harmonious.	$	Ongoing	TS

Chapter 3: Population

The Town of Chilhowie experienced steady growth in population from 1950 to 1970 with only a slight decline to 1980, The Town's population then took a significant jump in 1988 due to the annexation of new residents into the Town. Chilhowie's population growth stands in sharp contrast to Smyth County which increased their population, mostly in the Marion area during the 1990s. The County saw continued growth in the 2000 and 2010 census, but the 2020 census most recently revealed a decline. Table 3-1 shows the population changes for the Town and County from 1960 to 2022, in tabular form.

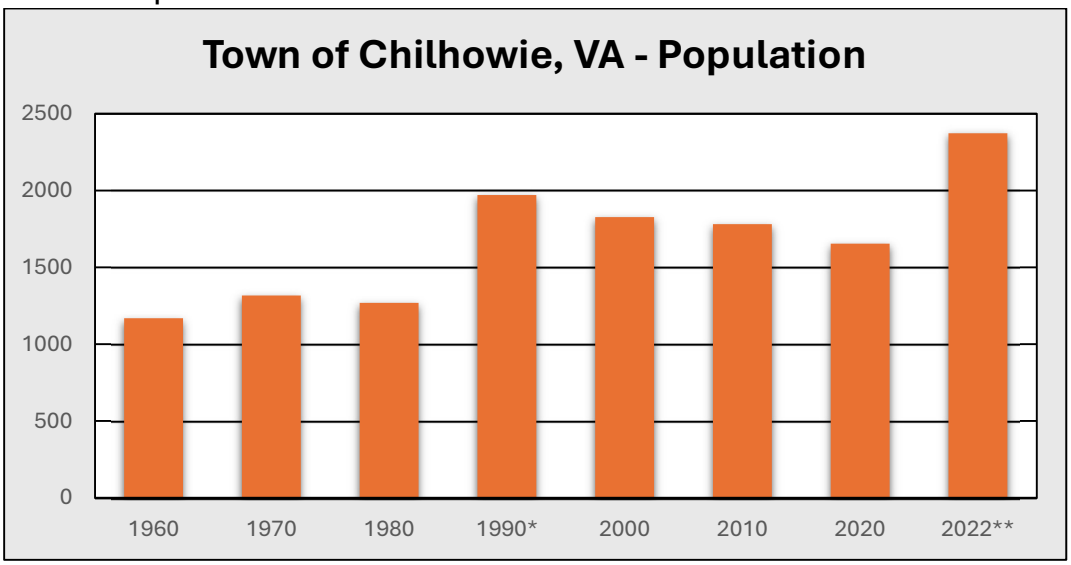
Table 3-1 County and Town Population Trends

Location	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2022**
Chilhowie	1,169	1,317	1,269	1,971*	1,827	1,781	1,654	2,371
Smyth County	31,066	31,349	33,366	32,370	33,081	33,208	29,800	29,799

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau; * Population increase reflects 1988 annexation by Town of Chilhowie, increasing the size of the Town which led to a major population increase; **2022 Numbers come from 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey, which is an estimate.*

The population of the Town has been in decline since the 1970's (with the exception of the annexation of Smyth County residents into the Town that occurred in the 1980's). The fastest rate of decline in population was during the 1990's when the Town's population fell by 144, with the next biggest decline being in the in the 2010's with the populace falling by 127. While the most recent American Community Survey estimate shows reversal of this trend and a significant growth in the Town's population, it is important to note that these estimates have historically estimated higher population totals than the next census reflects.

Chart 3-2 Population

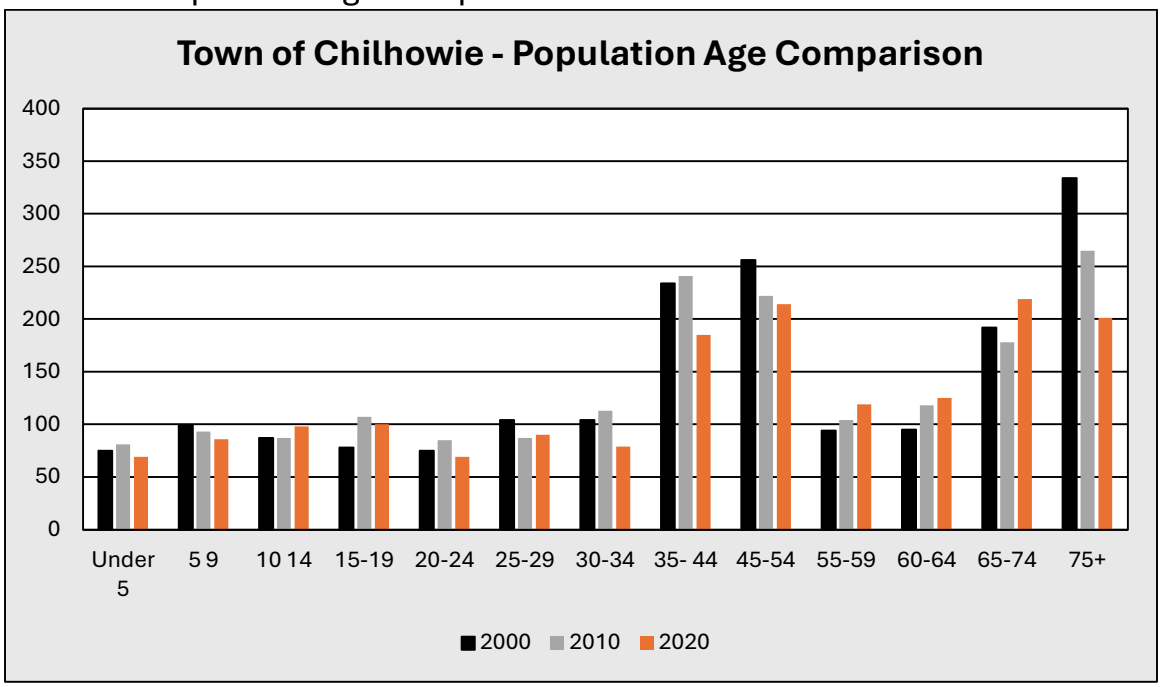


*Source: U.S. Census Bureau; * Population increase reflects 1988 annexation by Town of Chilhowie, increasing the size of the Town which led to a major population increase; **2022 Numbers come from 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey, which is an estimate.*

Age and Sex Distribution

Table 3-3 is a diagram showing the distribution of people in the Town of Chilhowie by designated age group. The graph gives an indication of growth in a community. A broad base indicates an increasing growth rate. One with a narrow base such as Chilhowie's indicates a modest growth rate. Like most communities in Southwest Virginia, the largest deficiency of population in the Town is those aged 20 to 45. The Town is also seeing a decreasing number of people ages nine and under which could result in further population decline in the future if there is no in-migration of residents.

Chart 3-3 Population Age Comparison



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2022 Data was not included as it does not conform with the prior studies age brackets

The increase in the median age in Chilhowie is shown in Table 3-4. It has increased each decade since 1970 and at a faster rate than the County and State, further evidence of the new senior citizen population base. In 1990, all four were close, but by 2000, the median age in Chilhowie was significantly higher than the others. However, this trend has slowed and the median age in 2020 was only marginally higher than it was in 2000, while the State and County have had significant increases since that time.

Table 3-4 Median Age

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2022*
Chilhowie	30.6	36.2	39.8	47.3	44.8	47.9	47.1
Smyth County	31.1	32.9	36.6	40.2	43.1	46.0	46.2
Virginia	26.8	29.8	32.7	32.7	37.5	38.7	38.7

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2022 Numbers come from 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey, which is an estimate.*

Table 3-5 illustrates the population of male and female residents, as well as their median ages. The Town of Chilhowie has a majority female population. And the ratio of females to males is at a higher concentration than that of the County or the Commonwealth of Virginia. Chilhowie also has a significant discrepancy in the median age between Males and Females, twice the difference in the County and three times that of the State.

Table 3-5 Sex/Age Distribution 2020

	Male	Female	Male Median Age	Female Median Age
Chilhowie	764	890	44.3	50.1
Smyth County	14,570	15,230	44.4	47.5
Virginia	4,220,517	4,410,876	37.4	39.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Race Composition

As is true of other counties in Southwest Virginia, Smyth County's population is predominantly white. Table 3-6 depicts the population of the County and Town by race. Black and other minorities comprise 9.5 percent of the Town's population. Likewise, only 4.8 percent of the population is of Hispanic origin. Most of the County's minority population is concentrated in the incorporated towns of the County.

Table 3-6 Town of Chilhowie – Population by Race and Hispanic Origin

Year	2010				2020			
	White	Black	Other	Hispanic Origin*	White	Black	Other	Hispanic Origin*
Chilhowie	1,627	31	108	124	1,497	40	117	80
Smyth County	30,847	640	414	527	27,939	430	1,431	558

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau; *The census definition of Hispanic origin includes persons of any race*

Chapter 4: Housing

Existing Housing Conditions

Housing may be categorized into single-family detached homes, multi-family units (which include apartments, condominiums, town houses and other types of housing where more than one residence is in a single building and manufactured homes.

The predominant housing type in Chilhowie is the single-family conventional home. The Town has a growing percentage of multi-family housing with that being the primary form of affordable housing for those who seek it. Another option is mobile homes (now termed "manufactured homes"), however, there has been a decreasing number of mobile homes in the Town as well as the county since the 2010 census. Table 4-1 shows the distribution of housing types in the County and within the Town.

Table 4-1 Existing Housing Units

	Chilhowie						Smyth County					
	2010 Census		2020 Census		2022 Estimate		2010 Census		2020 Census		2022 Estimate	
Housing Type	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
Single - Family Conventional	447	64.8	737	79.4	709	75.0	10,445	67.6	10,856	70.6	10,770	71.2
Multi Family	204	29.6	135	14.5	152	16.1	1,302	8.4	1,601	10.5	1,465	9.7
Mobile Homes	83	5.6	42	4.5	69	7.3	3,692	23.9	2,709	17.6	2,810	18.6
Total Housing Units	816	100	928	100	945	100	15,439	100	15,366	100	15,125	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey

Three fourths of all housing units in Chilhowie are single-family conventional homes. Nearly 7.3 percent are mobile homes and 14.5 percent multi-family units. Of the towns in Smyth County, the highest proportion of multi-family units are in Marion, due to the properties run by their housing authority as well as rentals built as a result of the Emory & Henry School of Health Sciences. Chilhowie's proportion of mobile homes (7.3%) is less than that of the County (18.6%). This can be primarily attributed to mobile homeowners being a more cost sensitive demographic that are seeking affordable land and fewer building restrictions that come with locating in the County.

Based off the most recent census estimates, housing conditions were remarkably similar within the Town of Chilhowie and Smyth County as a whole. Table 4-2 shows that no homes in the Town were overcrowded in 2022, but 0.7 percent of the units were substandard (the County also had 0.7%). However, there are also some other housing problems that are not so easily defined from census data.

Table 4-2 Condition Comparison of Year-Round Dwelling Units

Condition	2022	
	Chilhowie	Smyth County
Substandard*	0.7%	0.7%
Overcrowded**	0.0%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2020; 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey
**Substandard units are those units lacking one or more plumbing facilities.*
***Overcrowded units are those with more than 1.01 persons per room.*

The most active decade for homebuilders in the Town and County was the 1970's. Just over 40 percent or 379 of Chilhowie's dwelling units were constructed between 1970 and 2000. Almost 28 percent of housing units were constructed in the 1950s and 60s. Only a small percentage of homes, 3.6 percent or 34 units, have been constructed since the Great Recession.

According to a regional study conducted by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, it was identified that very few new homes have been sold since the Great Recession. This phenomenon can be attributed to homebuilders being unable or unwilling to secure the financing needed to develop new properties.

Table 4-3 Year-Round Housing Units by Year Structure Built

Year	Chilhowie	Smyth County
Built 2020 or later	6	6
Built 2010 to 2019	28	615
Built 2000 to 2009	70	993
Built 1990 to 1999	70	2,179
Built 1980 to 1989	109	2,270
Built 1970 to 1979	200	2,634
Built 1960 to 1969	96	2,015
Built 1950 to 1959	165	1,791
Built 1940 to 1949	84	934
Built 1939 or earlier	117	1,688
Total Units	945	15,125

Source: U.S. Census 2022 Five-Year American Community Survey

Tenure refers to the relationship between the inhabitant and his or her dwelling. Thus, classifications of tenure refer to whether the inhabitant is the owner or renter. Tenure figures for Chilhowie and Smyth County are shown in Table 4-5. It is interesting to note that a far smaller proportion of housing units in Chilhowie are Vacant. The Town has a significantly higher percentage of housing units that are renter-occupied, and the owner-occupied rate is comparable to the county's.

Table 4-4 Tenure of Year-Round Housing Unit

Tenure	Chilhowie		Smyth County	
	#	%	#	%
Owner-Occupied	509	53.9	8659	57.2
Renter-Occupied	346	36.6	3992	26.4
Vacant	90	9.5	2474	16.4
TOTAL	945	100	15125	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2020; 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Housing Conditions for the Elderly and Handicapped

In terms of best practices and planning principles, Housing for the elderly should be conveniently situated near community services and facilities. Housing programs for persons aged sixty-two and older have been in operation in the U.S. for more than four decades. The elderly population requires kinds of housing in locations which are convenient to community services and facilities while needing distinctive design adaptation to account for possible physical limitations while maintaining as much independence as possible. Many have problems keeping pace with inflation because of their fixed incomes. Although many of the homes presently occupied by older citizens may qualify as standard units according to census definitions, some may not meet the specialized needs of the elderly. Housing needs of the elderly fall into three basic types:

1) traditional housing for fully independent living,
2) congregate housing with limited social support services for semi-independent living, and
3) institutional housing with social, medical, and nursing care for dependent living.

Presently in Chilhowie, only one rest home provides licensed care to meet the needs of the elderly. The remainder of the elderly live in independent housing such as Heatherwood Apartments and private homes. Smyth County has an expanding senior population, and no new homes are being marketed toward this sector of the market. Many seniors could afford to purchase new, smaller homes that require less maintenance, but simply have no options. The affordable rental housing stock is mature, at full occupancy and primarily targets low- rather than moderate-income households. There are no age-restricted affordable apartments in the county or town, so the elderly population are competing with the current labor force for their affordable housing needs. Because this segment of the population comprises such a considerable proportion of the population in Chilhowie, meeting elderly needs is important to the Town.

Multi-family Rental Housing

Chilhowie has 152 multi-family housing units. These structures constituted about 16.1 percent of the Town's total housing. The percentage of multi-family units in Smyth County is 9.7 percent. Multi-family complexes are typically built near existing infrastructure with accessibility in mind, which results in most of the county's rental units being located within the three towns.

Mobile Homes

There are sixty-nine mobile homes in Chilhowie. They accounted for 7.3 percent of the Town's occupied housing units. In Smyth County, 2,810 housing units (18.6 percent) of the County's occupied housing units were mobile homes.

Cost of Renter and Owner-Occupied Housing

The price of real estate has a direct bearing on the volume and rate of production of new housing construction. The 1990 Annual Report on National Housing Goals, published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, describes how rapidly rising costs have taken their toll on the housing market in recent years. In the United States, the total monthly expenses for the purchase of the average newly constructed house financed with a Rural Development (formerly FMHA) insured mortgage were $230,000 in 1980. By 1990, the figure had grown to $450,000, a 96 percent increase. Meanwhile, median family income for the Town of Chilhowie increased from $15,231 in 1980 to $25,402 in 1990 to $34,375 in 2000 and to $38,611 in 2010, and to $$60,313 in 2022.

These cost figures illustrate why monthly expenses are critical factors in the decision to rent or buy housing. As the prices of land, labor, and materials grow, the hardest hit is the poor and families on limited or fixed income who must devote an increasing proportion of their income for adequate housing. For example, the average cost of home construction (land, labor, and materials) rose 81 percent from 1980 to 1990, a house cost $35,000 in 1980 and $63,350 in 1990 to $80,000 in 2000 to $86,900 in 2010. The most recent average cost to build a new home in Virginia in 2023 was $310,100. The rising costs do not ordinarily include such expenses as maintenance and property taxes.

All these factors are taken into consideration by private and public money lending organizations before loans are granted. Continuously rising houses expenses adversely affect these considerations.

The following tables (see Tables 4-5 and 4-6) illustrate owner-occupied units by cash value and renter-occupied units by monthly contract rent for Chilhowie.

Table 4-5 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Cash Value

Cash Value	Chilhowie			Virginia		
	2010	2020	2022	2010	2020	2022
Less than $50,000	96	35	31	113,547	89,149	86,441
$50,000 to $99,999	144	140	101	170,285	134,410	98,817
$100,000 to $149,999	125	119	88	215,253	192,396	140,807
$150,000 to $199,999	56	157	152	263,824	261,150	197,141
$200,000 to $299,999	13	47	101	423,627	459,324	440,108
$300,000 to $499,999	21	37	33	483,953	539,763	606,427
$500,000 to $999,999	13	1	3	326,446	382,830	513,343
$1,000,000 or more	0	0	0	51,274	64,749	116,215
Median (dollars)	98,500	138,600	157,800	255,100	282,800	339,800

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010. 2020; 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Figures include all renter-occupied and vacant-for-rent units, except one-family houses on ten acres or more. Less than one percent of occupied housing units had no cash rental value in 2022. The median value of monthly contract rent in the Town was about $806 in 2022, compared to $526 in 2010. This is lower than the State figure of $1,440. The median value of monthly contract rent in Smyth County was $496 in 2010 and increased to $691 in 2022.

Table 4-6 Renter Occupied Housing Units by Monthly Contract Rent

Rent	2010	2020	2022
Less than $500	133	45	44
$500 to $999	173	196	203
More than $1,000	4	32	96
No Cash Rent	38	20	3
Total	348	273	343

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2020; 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Housing Occupancy Characteristics

The increase in elderly households shows a set of special housing needs, but this is a common theme in housing needs in the region due to the aging population and out migration of young people.

Table 4-7 Occupancy Characteristics Town of Chilhowie

Household Type	Year	
	2010	2020
Single Person	201	127
Married-Couple Family	315	280
Male Head of Family (no wife present)	43	133
Female Head of Family (no husband present)	89	208
***Females Households (no husband present with related children)**	42	27
Total Households	690	671
Households with one or more persons aged 65 years and over	204	249

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2020

While there was a decrease in married couple families and single person households, there was a sharp increase in the male and female heads of household where the spouse was not present. The Town and County must be initiative-taking in working together to address the childcare and day care needs of working parents and the needs of the elderly.

Housing Affordability

There are multiple ways of measuring housing affordability. One key metric is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 30 percent rule. This is a simple ratio that states housing is affordable when an individual or family pays no more than 30 percent of their gross household income on regular housing costs, including rent or mortgage and basic utilities.

If someone is paying more than 30 percent of gross household income on housing costs, then the household is cost burdened. If an owner or renter spends more than 50 percent of gross income on housing, the household is severely cost-burdened.

Cost-burdened households have less to spend on other necessities such as groceries, healthcare, and transportation. When expenses stretch budgets to the breaking point, families and individuals make sacrifices to stay in their home that risk their health and well-being.

The two categories of homeowners are those with mortgages and those who do not. As displayed in Table 4-8 and 4-9, homeowners with a mortgage had much higher costs than those who did not, as you would expect. Over thirty percent of homeowners with a mortgage in Chilhowie fall into the category of unaffordable housing. Meanwhile, only five percent of those without a mortgage are in unaffordable housing.

Table 4-8 Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

Units with a Mortgage	Households	Percentage of Units
Total	251	251
Less than 20.0 percent	160	63.7
20.0 to 24.9 percent	12	4.8
25.0 to 29.9 percent	3	1.2
30.0 to 34.9 percent	10	4.0
35.0 percent or more	66	26.3

Source: 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Table 4-9 Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

Units without a mortgage	Households	Percentage of Units
Total	258	100
Less than 10.0 percent	172	66.7
10.0 to 14.9 percent	47	18.2
15.0 to 19.9 percent	20	7.8
20.0 to 24.9 percent	0	0.0
25.0 to 29.9 percent	6	2.3
30.0 to 34.9 percent	0	0.0
35.0 percent or more	13	5.0

Source: 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Renters are the primarily the group most affected and susceptible to living in unaffordable housing in part due to their housing cost not being fixed in the way that a mortgage is locked in for a period of time. Of all the renters living in Chilhowie, 35.4 percent are living in unaffordable housing.

Table 4-10 Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

	Households	Percentage of Units
Total	337	100
Less than 15.0 percent	117	34.7
15.0 to 19.9 percent	50	14.8
20.0 to 24.9 percent	19	5.6
25.0 to 29.9 percent	32	9.5
30.0 to 34.9 percent	45	13.4
35.0 percent or more	74	22.0
Not computed	9	

Source: 2022 Five-Year Estimate American Community Survey

Housing Resources

Department of Housing and Urban Development and Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's CDBG program is administered through the States Department of Housing and Community Development. The program offers housing rehabilitation in areas with over 50% low-to-moderate income residents. The program allows up to $1,250,000 in rehab or substantial construction to qualifying areas or scattered sites throughout a locality.

CDBG assistance is also available in support of the infrastructure development for the creation of single- and multi-family housing units targeted for low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG funding is applicable to infrastructure final design and construction, as well as for down payment assistance funding. These projects are eligible for up to $1,500,000 in CDBG assistance.

The most significant applicable HUD programs are the interest credit program for individual homes, rent supplement loans, and low-income or public housing programs funded by HUD. Rental costs of low-income families may also be subsidized under Section 8 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. Eligibility for these programs is determined by income levels and family size.

Virginia Housing (VH)

Virginia Housing, formerly the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), is a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization created by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1972, to help Virginians attain quality affordable housing. Mortgages are funded by bonds issued by Virginia Housing, not by taxpayer dollars, and are available for homebuyers and developers of quality rental housing. The group teaches free homeownership classes and helps people with disabilities and the elderly make their homes more livable. Virginia Housing works with lenders, developers, local governments, and community service organizations.

Chapter 5: Land Use

Introduction

One concern of comprehensive planning is determining how land is used within the corporate and planning boundaries of a municipality. There are usually numerous land uses that when combined create the character of a community. There are competing demands for land use - residential, commercial, office, industrial, open space, and public and semi-public institutions such as schools, medical facilities/offices, and religious uses. How the various uses are balanced and the intensity to which each land use is developed will determine the present and future character of a community.

In Chilhowie, many land use decisions are influenced by the major roadways, the river, and the railway which runs parallel to the town. Interstate 81, US Highway 11, and the Norfolk and Southern Railway combine to create a prime location for development in Chilhowie. The heavy traffic volumes along these routes make adjacent areas more appropriate for intense forms of development such as commercial, office/service, or industrial uses. The less intense uses, such as residential areas are located away from these transportation corridors.

The guiding principle behind the comprehensive land use analysis is creating a balanced community where current and future residents have a wide range of housing choices, employment opportunities, consumer opportunities, and a full range of government and quasi-public services. Residential areas should include housing for individuals and families throughout the various life-stages. Employment opportunities should include full and part- time work, provide entry-level positions, and exist in all major sectors of the economy - industrial, office/service, and retail. The consumer needs of the residents should be met by a variety of settings, including shopping centers, service-related businesses, and community centers.

In addition, the Town should encourage a broad spectrum of business interests, ranging from larger firms to small local builders and entrepreneurs. In all instances, the Town seeks to work with the private sector to protect and enhance the natural features of the area, protect existing development from incompatible adjacent development and to assure that the infrastructure necessary to serve proposed development is available. Developers are encouraged to work with the Town, and other public bodies, so that appropriate contributions of land, money, or improvements will be made in concert with the timing of development. This process ensures that development and existing development can proceed without overextending the existing infrastructure, the educational and public service systems which benefit existing residents and businesses. A creative partnership between the various governments and the private sector can provide the physical, social, and governmental structure needed to ensure an efficient and harmonious community in the future.

Current Land Use by Category

The land use information for the Town of Chilhowie was determined in February of 2023 by a windshield survey conducted by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) staff. The data for the 1982, 1998, 2012, 2018, and 2023 land use updates has also been developed by the Town's Planning Commission and the MRPDC staff and is presented in a comparative table format in Figure 5-I. Figure 5-I presented below provides a generalized breakdown of the Town's existing land use and the percentage changes of total land by classification in the Town. This data classifies the type of use and incorporates a visual analysis of the structural integrity for each building or home.

It should be noted that in June 1988 the Town readjusted its corporate boundaries (annexed) from 0.75 square miles (480 ac.) to approximately 2.54 square miles (1628 ac). The adjustment included the following areas: the Combs Addition, Sulphur Springs Heights, and the US 11 corridor to State Route 638, and the corridor adjacent to State Route 762. Because of this action, the Town adjusted its boundaries to include a compact body of land which was adaptable to the Town's long-term growth plan. Many people residing in the affected adjustment areas were already receiving water, sewer, and sanitation services from the Town. Additionally, the adjustment enabled the Town to enhance the business and residential growth of the community via the continuity and orderly development provided by its Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

Table 5-1 Comparative Land Use Analysis

Existing Land Use Classifications					
Classifications	**1982 Acres**	**1998 Acres**	**2012 Acres**	**2017 Acres**	**2024 Acres**
Residential	148	363	440	424.79	424.29
Commercial	53	69	196	66.78	74.48
Industrial	86	147	234	167.30	164.60
Public/Semi-Public	34	34	34	112.21	110.71
Vacant/Open	91	906	600	721.62	718.62
Roadways	42	88	90	90.09	90.09
River	9	13	13	13.11	13.11
Railroad R.O.W.	17	23	23	23.10	23.10
Totals	**480 AC**	**1643 AC**	**1630 AC**	**1619 AC**	**1619 AC**

Source: Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

Note: 1982-, 1998-, and 2012-acre totals were recalculated to include a roadway classification breakout. Previous Land Use studies did not incorporate this classification.

Residential

The Town of Chilhowie's residential neighborhoods are characterized by their interesting mixture of housing types and styles, i.e., single-family conventional, multi-family units, and mobile homes. MRPDC staff surveys determine that residential land use accounts for approximately 26.2% (424.29 acres] of all property use within the Town's corporate boundaries.

According to the 2022 American Community Survey completed by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were approximately 709 single-family detached homes, 152 multi-family homes, and sixty-nine mobile homes within the Town's corporate boundaries. Housing growth during this period has primarily been limited to single-family conventional homes within the boundary adjustment areas acquired in June 1988 and the Westwood Subdivision.

Commercial

Chilhowie's commercial centers and free-standing businesses provide convenience goods for residents. Commercial properties account for approximately 4.6 percent (74.48 acres) of all property used within the Town's boundaries. The commercial operations are both retail and service shops which cater to residents' daily shopping needs. The market area is primarily oriented to the neighborhoods near the facility. Typically, the Town's commercial centers will average between one and five acres of land. The centers and businesses are scattered throughout the corporate limits. These operations provide convenience to residents without the larger impacts created by more intense commercial uses. However, small sites can often lack flexibility in placement of buildings and landscape buffer treatments are often restricted. Careful attention must be given to these special elements as new growth occurs.

Industrial

The Town's industries give residents a wide range of employment opportunities in locations close to home. Approximately 10.2 percent (164.60 acres) of Chilhowie's land area is dedicated to industrial activities. The industrial land use category can include such uses as manufacturing, warehousing, and assembly plants. Deer Valley Industrial Park, on the Town's eastern boundary, contains 60.9 acres of industrial space and is near capacity. The Town's remaining industrial properties (approximately eighty acres) are located on its western boundary known as Pathway Park. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town continue to encourage industry to locate in Chilhowie through the continued development of additional industrial space. This policy is necessary to provide increased employment opportunities for the residents, and to afford a broad and diverse economic base for the Town. The industrial sites should be in large, consolidated areas to accommodate larger modern industrial practices and located to minimize their impact on residential areas. Manufactured features, such as roadways, can buffer incompatible land uses. Also, expanses of open areas serve to provide a buffer by separating the industrial land from the less intense uses. From a prospective industrial view, Chilhowie's strategic location is excellent. The existence of two major regional arterials 1-81 and US 11 along with State Route 107 can accommodate the heavy transportation demands of the larger workforces required by an industry and its related complexes.

Public & Semi-Public

The public/semi-public category includes land used for public buildings such as governmental offices, the post office, schools, as well as semi-public uses, i.e., churches. For purposes of this report, roadways and flood plains are also grouped with public/semi- public classification. In combination, these categories total approximately 6.8 percent (110.71 acres) of all land use. Land in these classifications has remained unchanged since the Town's last boundary readjustment in January 2005.

Vacant/Open Space

Vacant land accounts for 718.62 acres of land in the Town. A sizable portion of this land was determined to have limited uses for topographical reasons and a good portion of the remaining acreage was used as either residential gardens or for light agricultural purposes. Most of the acreage increase in this land use category is for more intense agricultural purposes but could readily be converted to other land uses.

Railroad Right-of-way

Land designated to the railroad right-of-way has increased slightly since the 1988 boundary readjustment. Before this action, railroad right-of-way totaled approximately seventeen acres of all land use but increased to twenty-three acres (1.4 percent) after the adjustment.

Existing Land Use Controls

Zoning is a major tool for implementation of a comprehensive plan. Article 15.2-2280 of The Code of Virginia 1950 (as amended) empowers cities, towns, and counties to adopt a zoning ordinance to regulate the use of land including the location of buildings and other structures. A zoning ordinance also controls the height, area, alteration, repair, and density of various structures. Zoning ordinances are written and enforced in the interest of the public for the purposes of promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Chilhowie first adopted a Zoning Ordinance in 1972 with revisions in 1978, 1986, 2011, 2012, and 2017. The ordinance divides the Town into four primary districts: Agriculture- Conservation (A-C), Residential-General (R-2), Business-General (B-2), and Business and Industrial (BN-1).

Agriculture-Conservation District (A-C)

According to the Zoning Ordinance for the Town of Chilhowie, this district is composed of agriculture or forest land plus low-density residential areas where future development appears likely to occur primarily as rural or exceptionally low density residential. Some of this area could have moderate to steep slopes and could be developed to moderate densities and intensity according to the Town's comprehensive plan after careful consideration of the development plans and construction design. In this classification, protection of nearby residential areas takes priority over uses permitted in this district.

Residential-General District (R-2)

This district is composed of medium density recreational areas plus certain open areas where similar development appears likely to occur. The district may be adjacent to a commercial area. The expansion of commercial development may take place on the periphery. A higher population could also be allowed along with additional conditional uses, i.e., schools, churches, playgrounds, medical or dental offices, etc.

Business-General (B-2)

In the district classification Business-General, the broad range of retail, office and service businesses with business uses taking priority over any other type of use are provided for. Their activities may generate large volumes of traffic resulting from the delivery of goods, services, and patron's usage. This district's boundaries can evolve in conformance to the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Business and Industrial District (BN-1)

This district is intended to provide areas suitable for industrial development which can be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential areas. Industrial uses that constitute a nuisance because of odor, fumes, smoke, noise, or vibrations, are not permitted; unless a conditional use permit provision, provided in the Town's zoning ordinance, can be successfully exercised by the existing or perspective business/industry. The boundaries of this district are established and can evolve over time while in conformance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Enterprise Zone

The Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ) initiative is a collaboration between the Commonwealth of Virginia and local governments, aimed at boosting job creation and investment in real property. This program seeks to stimulate economic growth and rejuvenate economically challenged areas at both local and regional levels. Local incentives for the Town of Chilhowie #51C opportunity zone include building permit fee waiver, economic stimulus grant, water, and sewer cost reductions, BPOL tax credit, partial real estate tax exemption.[4] Figure 5-4 is a map of the Smyth County Enterprise Zone within the Town of Chilhowie corporate limits.

Virginia Main Street

This district is intended to provide areas suitable for industrial development which can be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential areas. Industrial uses that constitute a nuisance because of odor, fumes, smoke, noise, or vibrations, are not permitted; unless a conditional use permit provision, provided in the Town's zoning ordinance, can be successfully exercised by the existing or perspective business/industry. The boundaries of this district are established and can evolve over time while in conformance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

[4] Virginia Enterprise Zone GY2022 Annual Report

Figure 5 -2 Existing Land Use

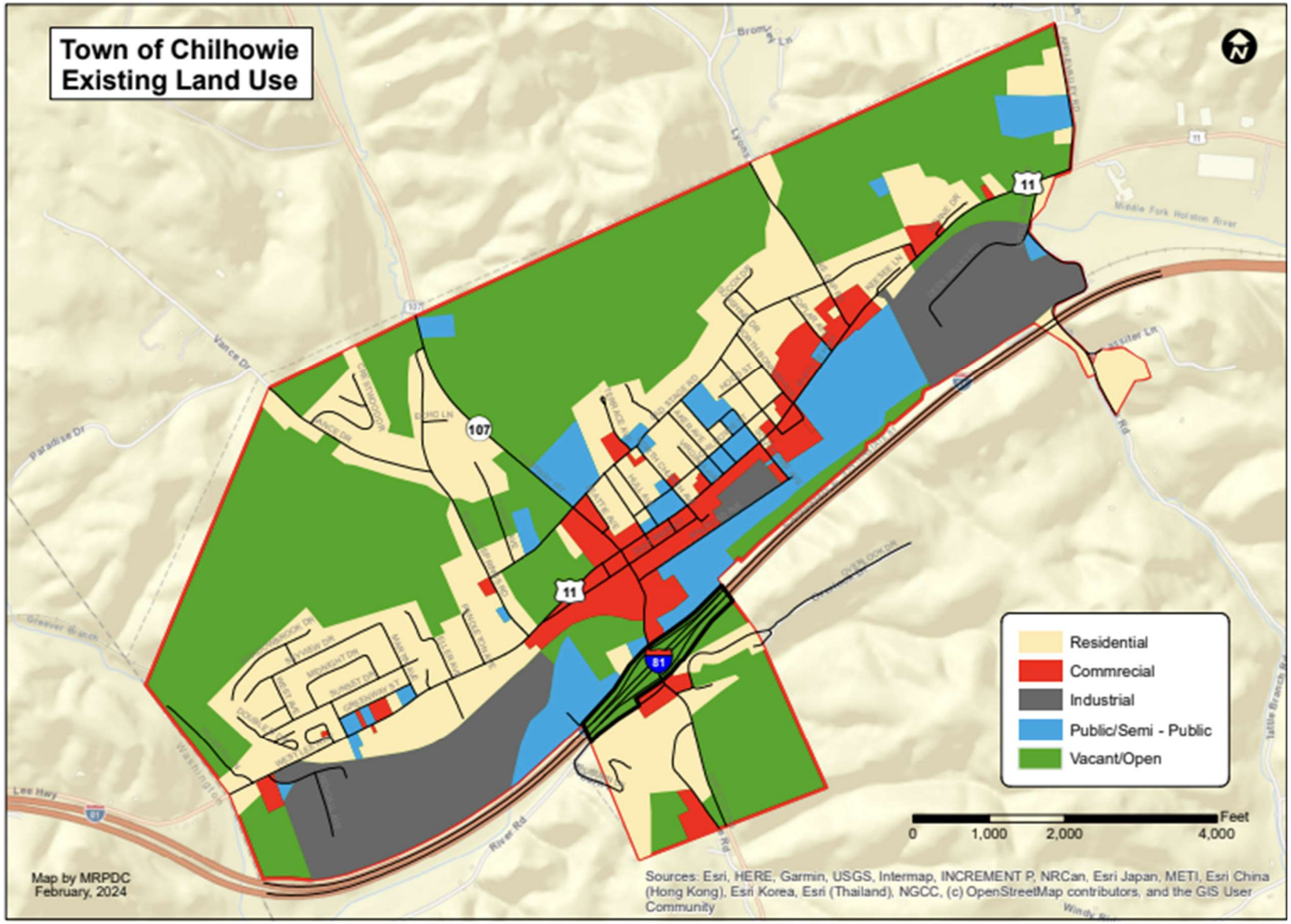


Figure 5-3 Zoning

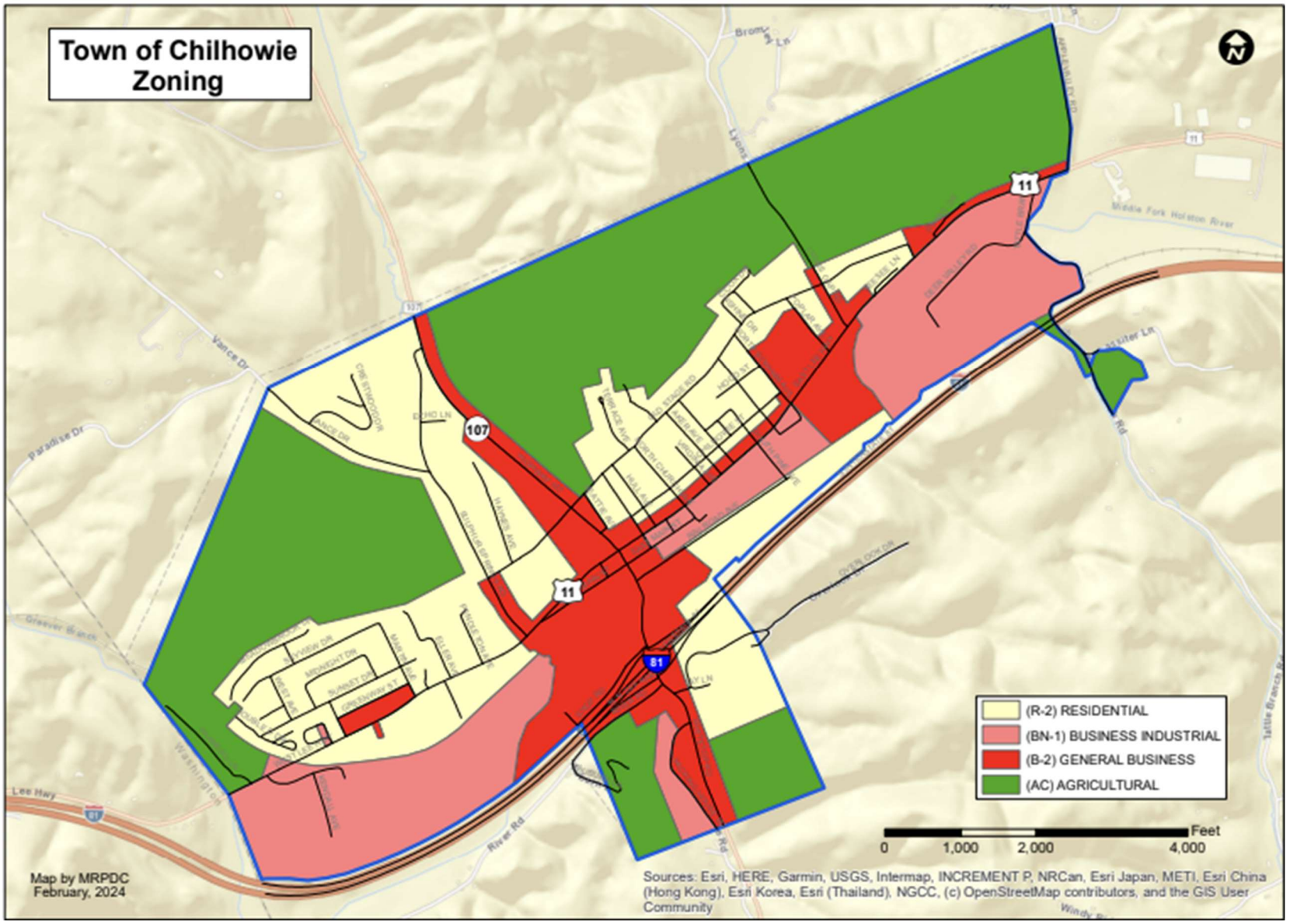


Figure 5-4 Enterprise Zone

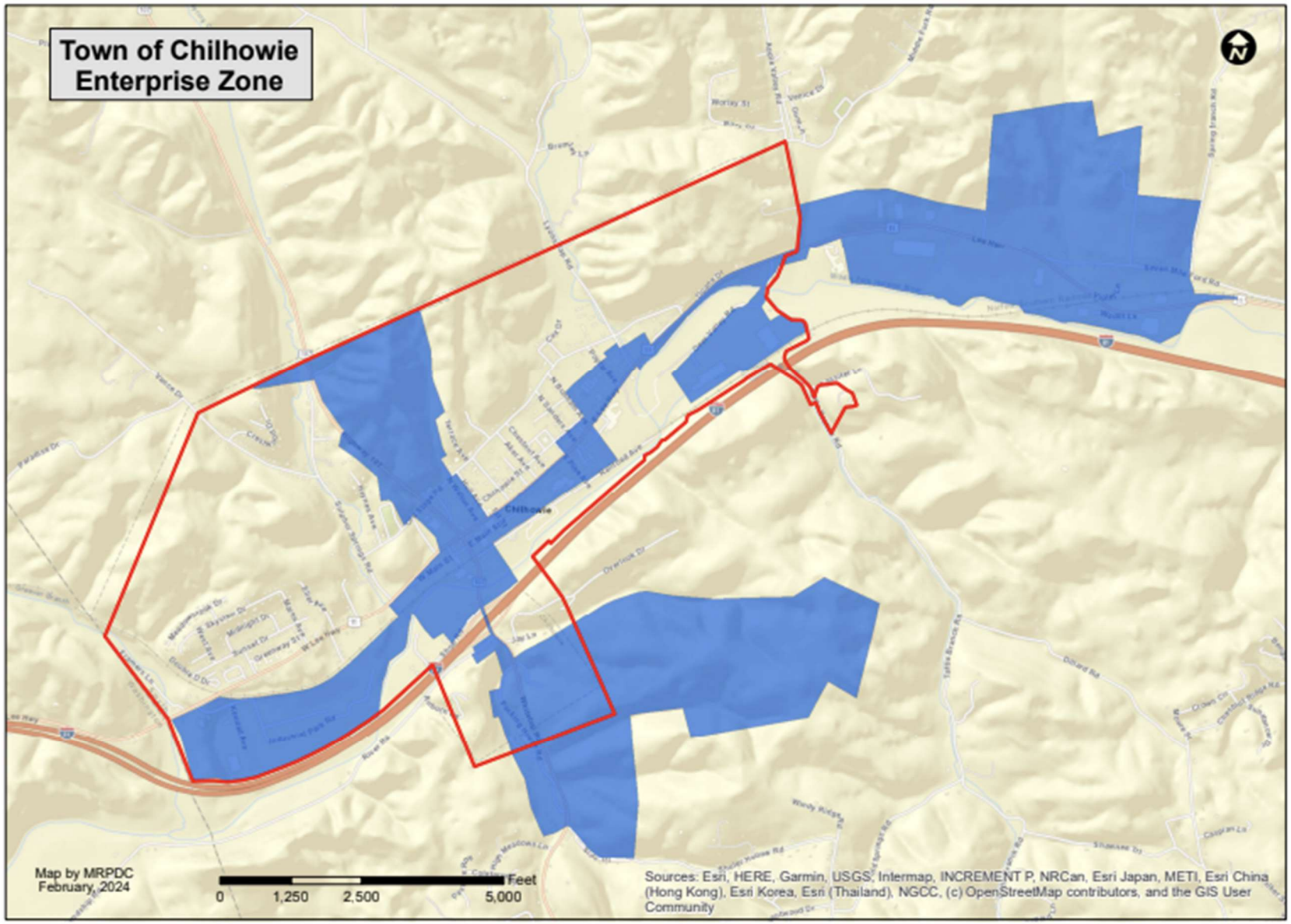
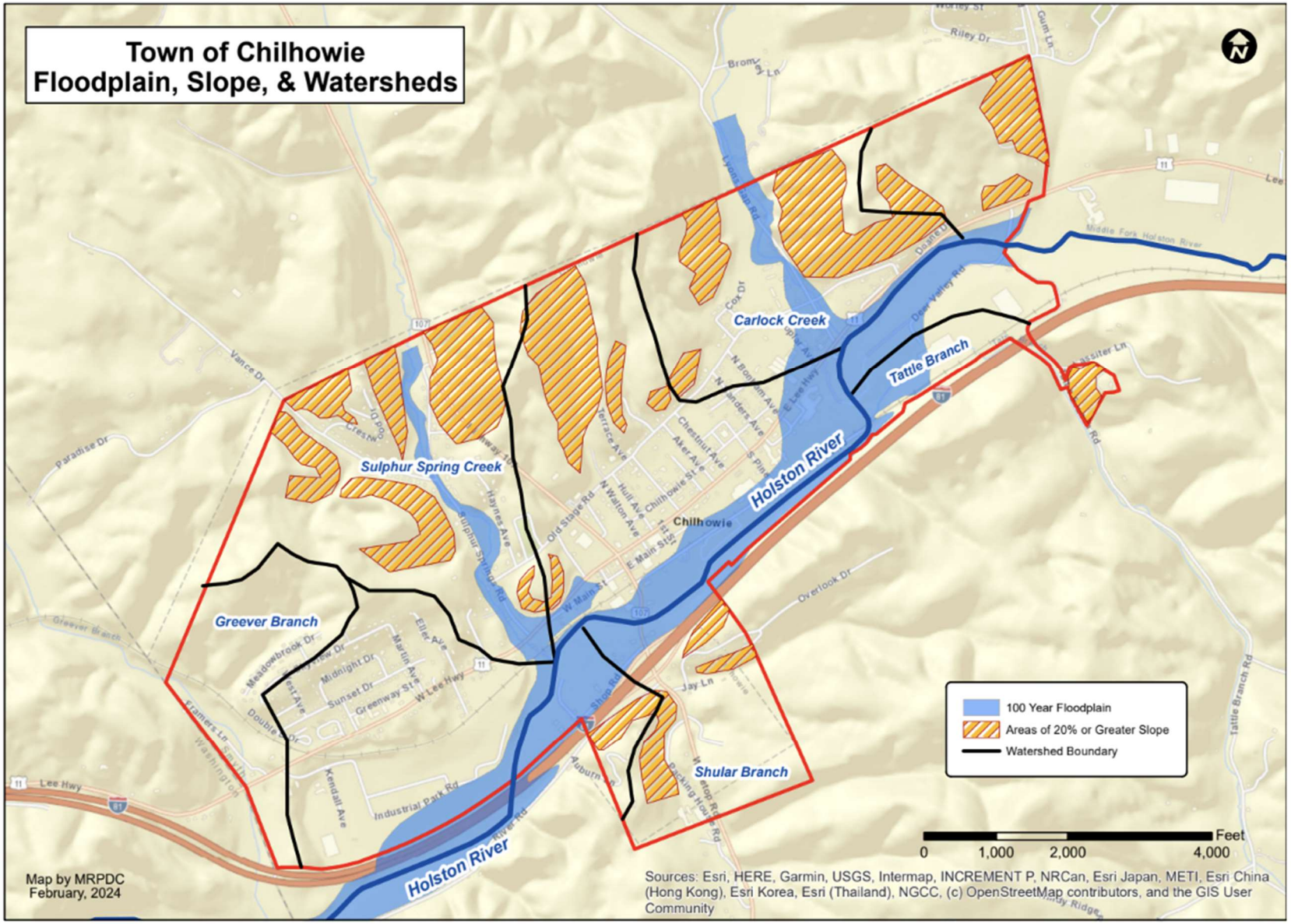


Figure 5-5 Floodplain, Slope, & Watersheds



Chapter 6: Community Facilities

Introduction

Community resources include the numerous facilities, services, and institutions in the community that support public activities and functions. Community resources underpin the overall community health and welfare of the locality. Comprehensive planning policies for community facilities normally focus on the public and quasi-public elements such as public schools, parks, libraries, utilities, and government administration. However, community facilities also include private and semi-private institutions that contribute directly to the fabric and structure of community life, including churches, health facilities, private schools, civic organizations, and service clubs. This section focuses on public and semi-public facilities and institutions that make up the Town of Chilhowie and depicts the importance of a community providing these for their residents.

Education

K-12 Education

For K-12 public education, the Town of Chilhowie is served by the Smyth County Public School System consisting of Chilhowie Elementary school, Chilhowie Middle School, Chilhowie High School, and the Smyth Career & Technology Center which serves as a county-wide vocational and technical school.

The Virginia Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools fully accredit the Smyth County system. All schools in Chilhowie have fully met requirements set by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), which have set statewide expectations for student learning in English, math, science, history and social sciences, technology, fine arts, foreign languages, health and physical education, and driver education.

Table 6-1 Illustrates historical membership data and building capacity for the various schools serving Town of Chilhowie residents.

Table 6-1: School Membership and Capacity

School	2010 Membership	2015 Membership	2023 Membership	Building Capacity
Chilhowie High School	449	427	401	639
Chilhowie Middle School	338	311	295	510
Chilhowie Elementary School	624	599	544	754
Chilhowie Total Membership	1,411	1,337	1,240	
Smyth County Total Membership	**4,855**	**4,594**	**3,894**	

Source: Virginia Department of Education Fall Membership Data

The Smyth County school system continues to improve computer facilities and skills development for students and teachers, including increasing the number of computers available to students at the elementary and middle school levels, an ongoing professional development program for teachers, more instructional technologists to assist students and teachers, more space for computer labs, and methods to encourage students to improve their solid technology skills.

Additional opportunities for students have been made available through electronic classrooms which allow students to receive college credits through dual enrollment courses, honors courses, advanced placement courses, and courses offered by the Governor's School. Students can take classes from the Linwood Holton Governor's School, a school for very able and motivated high school students who want to become part of an exciting and challenging program, from home via live audio and video feed. The A. Linwood Holton Governor's School is part of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Academic Year Governor's School System.

Adult education opportunities are also available for those who have not received a high school diploma. Since 1985, an adult high school program has provided night classes for adults to earn high school credits. Mount Rogers Adult Education Program offers day classes, evening classes, and on-line classes through Virginia Highlands Community College. Any person over the age of eighteen can enroll.

Vocational/Technical Education

The Smyth Career and Technology Center in Seven Mile Ford offers job training and preparation in a variety of career fields, including Auto Body/Technology, Building Trades, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Culinary Arts, Cybersecurity, Electricity & Electronics, HVAC, Machine Technology, Nursing, Nurse Aide, Pre-Engineering, and Welding for high school juniors, seniors and postgraduates from Smyth County and surrounding areas.

Aside from the Smyth County school system, another major educational institution in the County is the Blue Ridge Job Corps Center. Job Corps is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor - Employment and Training Administration. The program is aimed at low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The Blue Ridge center offers a wide-ranging program at no cost to the student that includes high school diplomas, general education diplomas, off-center training, advanced training, and vocational training for a variety of health occupations, including licensed professional nursing. The self-paced programs last from eight months to two years. The Blue Ridge center has sixty dorm rooms and can accommodate up to 160 female students. An additional thirty women and ten men may attend classes as non-residential students.

Higher Education

The Town of Chilhowie is in the service area of Virginia Highlands Community College. Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon, VA had a total enrollment of 2,068 students in 2022. The full-time enrollment at Virginia Highlands Community College is 740 students and the part-time enrollment is 1,328. VHCC offers more than one hundred programs of study. One benefit for recent Smyth County graduates (public, private, and home school) is the Smyth Promise Scholarship, which

provides recent high school graduates with a scholarship that covers tuition and fees for attending VHCC.

Neighboring Chilhowie's public higher education service area is Wytheville Community College. WCC had a total enrollment of 2,116 students in 2022. The full-time enrollment at Wytheville Community College is 708 students and the part-time enrollment is 1,408. Wytheville Community College operates the Smyth County Education Center in Atkins adjacent to the Mountain Empire Industrial Park. The facility offers daytime and evening continuing education classes, and daytime training programs for local industries.

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center on the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon offers four year and graduate degrees from all of Virginia's major institutions of higher education via interactive distance learning. Undergraduate and graduate programs are available at Emory and Henry College, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, and through Averett University which holds classes at Wytheville Community College.

The Southwest Virginia Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence provides training, service, and technical support to manufacturers in the region. The primary goals of the Center are to improve the global competitiveness and the economic stability of the region.

Table 6-2 illustrates notable four-year Colleges and Universities in proximity to Chilhowie.

Tables 6-2 Colleges and Universities

Virginia	
Colleges and Universities	**Miles from Chilhowie**
Bluefield University (Private), Bluefield	71
Emory & Henry University (Private), Emory	10
Radford University (Public), Radford	74
Roanoke College (Private) Salem	106
University of Virginia (Public), Charlottesville	218
Virginia Tech (Public), Blacksburg	90
Vocational/Technical Schools and Community Colleges	
Virginia Highlands Community College (Public), Abingdon	21
Wytheville Community College (Public), Wytheville	40
North Carolina and Tennessee	
Colleges and Universities	**Miles from Chilhowie**
Appalachian State University (Public), Boone, NC	56
East Tennessee State University (Public) Johnson City, TN	70
King University (Private), Bristol, TN	34
University of Tennessee, Knoxville (Public) Knoxville, TN	146
Wake Forest University (Private), Winston-Salem, NC	123

Libraries

The Smyth County Public Library System serves Smyth County and includes the main library on Sheffey Street in Marion and two branches in Saltville and Chilhowie. The Saltville branch is in an older building, a former post office constructed in 1939. In September 2003, a new branch library opened in Chilhowie in the former Chilhowie High School.

The main library is the administrative center for the library system. Technical services and processing of materials are centralized in the Marion facility. The library system is thoroughly automated with an integrated circulation system. The catalog is available on the web, and many services can be accessed from home. Patrons can also use remote databases from the online catalog. The Marion library holds two special collections, one in the Southwest Virginia Heritage Room, a resource for local history and genealogy research; and the other, The Sherwood Anderson Archival Collection. Internet access is also available for patrons.

The library system offers a host of children's programs and provides meeting space for nonprofit groups. Throughout the library system, all types of materials are available for borrowing: books, CD's, DVD's, VHS videos, and periodicals. Interlibrary loan of materials from other libraries provides patrons access to books throughout the United States. The library hosts a number of programs such as activities/reading for children, Health and Wellness, Cultural Events, among others.

Health Care

Hospital and Clinics

Ballad Health owns and operates a Smyth County Community Hospital at 245 Medical Park Drive, Marion Virginia and which opened its doors in April 2012. Smyth County Community Hospital in Marion, Virginia, includes a 44-bed acute care hospital, a 109-bed nursing care facility, and a variety of outreach programs. The facility has more than fifty physicians serving on the active medical staff.

Ballad Health also has another hospital located at Johnston Memorial Hospital at 16000 Johnston Memorial Drive, Abingdon Virginia and opened its doors July 17, 2011. The facility provides 116 beds and employs a medical staff of 175. Johnston Memorial Hospital is the first green hospital in Southwest Virginia, offering a full array of medical services. Johnston Memorial Hospital also provides the only self-sustaining blood bank in Southwest Virginia.

Family Care of Chilhowie, a privately owned family practice, is the only healthcare provider within town limits. They offer General health visits, office procedures, dermatology procedures, laboratory testing, and allergy shots/immunizations.

Long-term Care

There are two long-term care nursing homes in Smyth County. Valley Health Care Center in Chilhowie has a 180-bed capacity (with twenty-seven additional assisted living beds), while Francis Marion Manor, a division of Smyth County Community Hospital, is a 109-bed facility in Marion with three additional beds in its assisted living facility. Both nursing homes have skilled nursing beds in their facility and are operating at 95 percent or more occupancy level.

Public Health Services

The Smyth County Health Department provides comprehensive services from its offices in the Health Department building in Marion and provides programs of the Virginia Department of Health.

A health department satellite clinic is in Saltville in the former T.K. McKee Hospital building and is open five days a week. Veterans' Healthcare System, which is in this building, participates in several programs that increase the quality of health care for the local veterans. This program offers our local veterans primary health care, specialized care, and social support services.

In addition, the Health Department has a Mobile Health Unit in cooperation with the School Board to provide medical examinations at the county schools.

Mental Health Services

Mount Rogers Community Services provides a wide array of community services for individuals with mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. All services include the use of person-centered planning and embrace concepts of self-determination, empowerment, and recovery as core principles in supporting individuals to achieve their highest level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life. Founded in 1972, Mount Rogers serves the communities of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, and Wythe Counties, as well as the City of Galax. As a not-for-profit organization governed by a 14-member Board of Directors, Mount Rogers' mission is to serve the behavioral health needs of the individuals and communities it serves.

The Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute is located on a 100-acre tract in Marion and provides inpatient adult and adolescent psychiatric care, alcoholism treatment programs and extended rehabilitative residential treatment of individuals with mental illnesses. The Institute has 179 beds and is operated by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. The Institute also has a psychogeriatric treatment unit and employs 500+ full time persons.

Social Services and Other County Offices

Social services are provided through government and community-oriented agencies, such as the Smyth County Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, Virginia Employment Commission, Mount Rogers Community Services Board (discussed in the previous section on health care), Mount Rogers Alcohol Safety Action Program, Marion Redevelopment & Housing Authority, and the W.W. Scott Senior Citizens Center in Marion.

The Mount Rogers PACE Center, located at 555 South Main Street in Marion, is operated by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens, offers a variety of opportunities for healthy aging through medical assistance, social engagement, civic involvement, and learning.

Other social services are provided by non-profit organizations such as the Guardian Angel Program, Mountain Community Action Program, Project Crossroads, Retired Senior Citizen Volunteer Program, Salvation Army of Smyth County, Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, Smyth County

Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Family Resource Center (based in Wytheville), and United Way of Smyth County.

Recreation

Federal Recreation Facilities

Located in southwest Virginia, the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) manages approximately 200,000 acres of National Forest land near Mount Rogers. The area features four Congressionally designated wilderness areas; the Virginia Creeper Trail; the Mount Rogers Scenic Byway which traverses over 50 miles offering views of the National Recreation Area and open rural countryside; the 5,000-acre Crest Zone featuring elevations over 4,000 feet, large rock formations, and a mixture of mountain balds and spruce-fir forests; a herd of wild, free-ranging ponies; and the highest elevated road in the state of Virginia leading to the summit of Whitetop Mountain.

Many activities are available in the area including camping, picnicking, sight-seeing, bird watching, trout fishing, hunting, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and swimming. The U.S. Forest Service has three rental cabins and eleven campgrounds in the Mount Rogers NRA, four of which are set up for horseback riders. There are over five hundred miles of trails in the area, including sixty miles of the Appalachian Trail, eighteen miles of the Virginia Creeper Trail, and sixty-seven miles of the Virginia Highland Horse Trail. Over one million visitors come to the Lewis Fork Wilderness area to see Mount Rogers every year.

State Recreation Facilities

The county's best known recreational facility is Hungry Mother State Park, a 2,980-acre park located just north of Marion. The State Park provides facilities for camping, hiking, picnicking, swimming, boating, and fishing. The park is also the site of the Hungry Mother Arts and Crafts Festival which is sponsored annually by the Marion Arts League and County Chamber of Commerce. The Hemlock Haven Conference Center is available for meetings and retreats. A bikeway along Park Boulevard connects Main Street with the park.

Another state facility is the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Area on the northern edge of the county. This area, which includes Tumbling Creek in Smyth and Washington Counties and Laurel Bed Lake in adjacent Russell County, offers fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities.

The Blue Ridge Highlands Fishing Trail shows the abundance of Southwest Virginia's fly-fishing assets, with eighteen fishing destinations located within Smyth County and the surrounding counties of Grayson, Washington, and Wythe. Numerous outfitters provide guided trips or resources for self-guided trips are available with Virginia Tourism Corporation and local tourism organizations.

Several local roads have been designated tourist destinations including Back of the Dragon Motorcycle and Sports Car Trail, which extends thirty-two miles from Marion to Tazewell, has 260 curves and goes up to an elevation of 3,500 feet.

Figure 6-3 shows the additional motorcycle trails in the nearby area.

Figure 6-3: Southwest Virginia Motorcycle Trails



Local Facilities and Programs

There are several local recreation facilities, most of which are in and operated by the incorporated towns in the county. The county has no recreation facilities of its own nor does it operate any recreation programs.

A Town maintained park is located between the railroad and the Middle Fork of the Holston near downtown. The park was the result of a major flood relocation project that moved several families to homes out of the river floodplain. The park is fitted with a walking trail, benches, swing sets Community Stage and a number of picnic shelters. In recent years, the Town has expanded the trail by going across the Middle Fork River which leads to a Dog Park with parking and road access across from the across from the Smyth County Visitor's Center. The park also features a basketball court, pickleball court, sand volleyball court and baseball/softball field.

The Town features a farmers' market that links consumers directly with farmers and their goods. The Chilhowie Farmers Market operates from May until October and is open every Thursday from 4:00pm to 7:00pm for locally produced vegetables, meats, and more. In close proximity to the farmers market, the town unveiled in 2024, a new splash pad, with seating that located beside of the library.

The Town of Chilhowie operates an active sports program including a Recreation League program for football, cheerleading and basketball for children in the first grade through sixth grade.

Other Towns in the County have a number of amenities to provide also. The Town of Saltville has a nine-hole golf course, an outdoor saltwater wave pool, two trails and a pond. The Town of Marion has renovated its Olympic size outdoor pool and bathhouse into a waterpark that includes slides, a splash pad, and pergola with seating. Holston Hills Golf Course in Marion offers an 18-hole course with a club house featuring cuisine from the Wooden Pickle, a restaurant operating in downtown Marion.

In terms of various activities, tennis and basketball courts are available in all three towns. Indoor sports facilities, other than the county schools, are limited. Saltville and Marion each have a Lifetime Wellness Center facility, which offers membership for anyone who wants to improve their fitness and health. A membership fee is required each month for the use of exercise equipment, indoor pool (Marion only), full size gymnasium, a walking track, exercise classes, a large Jacuzzi hot tub (Marion only), massage therapy, and childcare services are provided. There are also trainers available to get people started in their new work out plan.

Town of Chilhowie Parks & Recreation Mission Statement:

The Town of Chilhowie Parks & Recreation/Special Event Department's Mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our commonwealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all in our community.

Cultural Amenities

Performing Arts

Smyth County is adjacent to the Barter Theatre, the State Theatre of Virginia and founded during the Great Depression, located in nearby Abingdon. It is estimated that half of the theatregoers are residents from within a 100-mile radius, including Smyth County residents.

The Lincoln Theatre, a 500-seat theatre in Marion, VA, re-opened in May 2004 following a $1.8 million renovation. The theatre was built in 1929 by Marion industrialist C.C. Lincoln and his sons, John D., and C.C. Jr., and soon became known as "the finest showplace in Southwest Virginia," serving audiences from Roanoke to Knoxville. The Lincoln Theatre is a Virginia Historic Landmark, and a member of the National League of Historic Theatres.

Festivals

The first Chilhowie Community Apple Festival was held on October 2 and 3, 1953. It was estimated that over 10,000 people viewed the first parade. The Town of Chilhowie is an agricultural community where the people gathered to celebrate the Farmers' harvest. Since 1953 the Apple Festival has been held annually and grows larger in population each year. Various forms of entertainment are provided for the visitors such as parades, arts and crafts, beauty pageants, band competition, pet shows, tasty food, and great family fun.

The Town of Chilhowie also hosts several events throughout the course of this three-day festival. During the Apple Festival celebration, a car show is open for the public to either display a vehicle or to come and admire the antique vehicles. Additionally, the Apple Festival hosts a tractor show during the festivities.

The Town sponsors the Annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Recreation Park. The Town of Chilhowie also sponsors a summer concert series in the park that is held monthly. The Town pays tribute to the veterans on Veteran's Day, at the Municipal Building, on November 11th. There is also a Christmas Parade followed by entertainment at the Old High School each year on the first Saturday in December that is sponsored by the Town of Chilhowie.

Another local event is the annual Hungry Mother Festival, which is the longest running festival held in a Virginia State Park. The festival is sponsored by the Art League of Marion, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of art, theater, and music. Proceeds from the festival fund a variety of cultural activities including art scholarships and a county-wide art show for high school students. The Hungry Mother Festival includes juried arts and crafts, live music, and your favorite festival foods. This festival is held on the third weekend in July and attracts an estimated 25,000 people.

Other festivals that are held in Smyth County include: Woolly Mammoth Day in Saltville, the Rich Valley Fair and Horseshow, the Saltville Labor Day Celebration, the Chilhowie Apple Festival in September, and the Hungriest Mother Food Festival in Marion.

Emergency Services

Town of Chilhowie Fire/EMS Protection

The Town of Chilhowie Fire & EMS Department is an all-hazards department that provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue, fire code inspection and enforcement, public fire education and community risk reduction, and fire/arson investigation. Approximately 85% of calls are EMS with the remaining 15% being Fire, based on historical data. As of June of 2023, the Town has an agreement between all fire companies in Smyth County, Saltville, and Marion showing Primary and Automatic Aid area. As of August of 2023, the Towns of Chilhowie and Marion also have an Emergency Medical Services agreement with Smyth County. The agreement essentially reimburses the Towns 100% for any EMS expenses incurred above reimbursement for EMS operations.

The Department operates as a combination system composed of full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel. All fire personnel are certified to NFPA 1001, Level 2 standards and EMS personnel are certified as Emergency Medical Technician Basic, Advanced, Intermediate or Paramedic. The staff is comprised of full-time, part-time, and volunteer members. The Towns' fire ISO (Insurance Services Offices) rating is a 3, which is the lowest in all of Southwest Virginia. An ISO fire insurance rating, also referred to as a fire score or Public Protection Classification (PPC), is a score from 1 to 10 that indicates how well-protected your community is served by the fire department. In the ISO rating scale, a lower number is better: 1 is the best possible rating, while a 10 means the fire department did not meet the ISO's minimum requirements.

Services provided by Chilhowie Fire & EMS Department include:

- Critical fire suppression services and emergency medical care.
- Technical teams, including technical and heavy rescue, swift water rescue, trench rescue, structural collapse rescue, rope rescue, and hazardous materials response.
- Fire prevention and public education.
- Code enforcement.
- Fire investigation.
- Mutual aid response to neighboring jurisdictions.

Table 6-4 lists the number of personnel and the equipment available for each department. The departments work in cooperation and provide automatic aid for all fire incidents.

Table 6-4: Fire/EMS Personnel/Equipment

Station	Location	Personnel	Apparatus				
			Aerial	Boat	Engine	Medic	Utility
Chilhowie	**Lee Highway**	20	1	2	2	2	2

Source: chilhowiefireva.org

Town of Chilhowie Fire & EMS Mission Statement:

The members of the Town of Chilhowie Fire & EMS Department are dedicated to those who visit, live or work in the Town of Chilhowie and surrounding areas. Through our proactive service delivery, we strive to deliver responsive and caring emergency services; mitigate emergencies and disasters; prevent the loss of life and property; and enhance the quality of life through prevention, education and community involvement.

Law Enforcement

The primary vehicle for law enforcement is the Chilhowie Police Department. It is professionally staffed and equipped with advanced training emphasized. Backup enforcement is provided by the Smyth County Sherriff's Department and Division 4 (Wytheville office) of the Virginia State Police.

Table 6-5: Local Law Enforcement in Smyth County

Department	Personnel	Vehicles
Chilhowie	6	7
County Sheriff	65	38
State Police	2,189*	N/A

*Source: Municipal Websites, Virginia State Police - Facts Figures 2023, * Number indicates total sworn law enforcement for the state.*

In 2023 the Department earned the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development (LEED) Association Agency Trilogy Award. This award is given to departments that commit to sending all command staff members through the Supervisor, Command, and Executive Leadership Institute courses. The Chilhowie Police Department was only one of five agencies in Virginia that obtained this award. The Chilhowie Police Department also commits to having 100% of its officers trained in Crisis Intervention to help those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Town of Chilhowie Police Department Mission Statement

Through growing our community partnerships, we realize mutually beneficial goals which improve the quality of life for all those who live, work, and visit in the Town of Chilhowie.

Water Facilities

Town of Chilhowie Water Supply and Treatment

The Town water system includes the adjoining areas outside of the town limits in Smyth County and Washington County, consisting of about 2,500 connections covering one of the largest geographic areas of service of any Town in Southwest Virginia. Approximately 67% of the Towns customers live outside of the corporate limits in Washington and Smyth Counties. Existing water lines in the area vary in size from one to twelve inches in diameter. The town has one water source consisting of the Chilhowie/Washington County Regional Water Treatment Plant. The treatment plant is located south of the town along State Route 604 and provides state-of-the-art membrane filtration treatment for spring water sources.

The water treatment plant was constructed in 1999 by the Town and the Washington County Service Authority (WCSA), with a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day (MGD). It was also updated in 2018 using a $3.4 million grant and low interest 40-year loan from Rural Development to a 3.1 MGD capacity. Additional improvements were completed in 2023 with another $1.1 million project. During the plant upgrade, a transfer pump was included that allows water from the WCSA System to be pumped into the TOC System in case the plant is offline for an extended period.

The Town has a 1.4 MGD capacity and the WCSA has a 1.7MGD at the plant, which is owned by the Town. For any capital improvements, and loan obligations, the Town pays 45% and the WCSA pays 55% of the cost. The plant is operated primarily with WCSA personnel, and the Town pays the monthly operational and maintenance costs based on the percentage of water it uses per month, as does the WCSA. Three springs, Jones, Cole, and Widener, supply the plant.

Water service by the Town of Chilhowie is provided to approximately 2,220 residential, industrial, and commercial customers. The water distribution system is comprised of the following:

- Five storage tanks providing 3.275 million gallons storage.
- Two pumping stations
- Eight pressure reducing valves.

These components form the six pressure zones of the Chilhowie water system. Water is conveyed from the treatment plant to the distribution system by pump. The two pump stations in the water system are Widener Spring Booster Pump Station and the Reid Store Pump Station. The Widener Spring Booster Pump Station delivers water to the Old Widener Tank at the highest gradient in the system. The lower gradient, Reid Store Pump Station delivers water to the Town tank, which is the lowest hydraulic gradient in the system. Water from the old Widener tank can flow to the Shuler Hollow Tank and into the Town Tank and is controlled by a series of pressure reducing and altitude valves. Bulk water usage by the Chilhowie water system from the water treatment plant has averaged

just over 1.0 MGD with water sales of about 0. 75 MGD., which includes bulk water sales to Smyth County.

Five storage tanks provide a total of 3.275 million gallons of storage. The combined water storage tank volume is presently sufficient to meet waterworks regulations. The Town Tank was repaired and repainted in 2017 for both interior and exterior surfaces.

Table 6-6: Water Tank Capacity

Location	Volume MG	Overflow Elev. FT	Connections Served	Daily Usage Gals
Town Tank	1.0	2,285	982	245,500
Shuler Hollow Tank	0.675	2,478	162	40,500
Old Widener Tank	0.5	2,776	693	173,250
New Widener Tank*	0.5	2,776	*	*
Widener Spring Tank	0.6	2,240	210	52,500
Totals	**3.275**	**—**	**2,047**	**511,750**

**The New Widener Tank is a secondary tank located next to the Old Widener Tank, which serves the same area.*

Source: The Lane Group

The Town of Chilhowie completed a $250,000 lead service line inventory of all its connections in October 2023, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency and Virginia Department of Health. No lead service lines were found. The Town has pending for the start of 2026, a $6,000,000 Chilhowie to Seven Mile Ford waterline replacement project and a system wide meter replacement project. The funding will be approximately 60% principal forgiveness from the Department of Health with the remaining 40% being a long-term low interest loan.

Sewer Facilities

The three towns of Chilhowie, Marion, and Saltville each own and operate wastewater treatment plants in Smyth County, with a combined capacity of approximately 5.4 million gallons per day. The county has or is constructing sewer collection lines in unincorporated areas of the county terminate into each Town's respective collection system treatment. The county has individual agreements with each of the three towns for wastewater treatment to serve these areas.

Town of Chilhowie Sewer Facilities

Chilhowie operates an extended aerated wastewater treatment plant that was constructed in 2001. The treatment plant has a flow capacity of 999,000 gallons per day. The Town no longer uses the aerated lagoon for wastewater treatment. The treated effluent is discharged into the Middle Fork of the Holston River adjacent to Interstate 81. The collection system serves an estimated 95 percent of all housing units in town. The town also provides sewer service to the Seven Mile Ford community to the east. There are approximately 790 sewer customers in town and 460 customers outside of town. The average daily flow is 750,000 mgd. The $4,000,000 infiltration and inflow study scheduled to be completed in 2025 should have a significant impact on costs and aging of equipment.

Smyth County Sewer Facilities

Smyth County owns and operates a sewer collection system in a residential area south of town (Green Hill and Shuler Hollow) that is connected to the town system. The projected average daily flow average is 10,000 gpd flow to the treatment plant and about 30,000 gpd during rainfall conditions. The system has an excess capacity of approximately 470,000 gpd. Currently, the Town is under no violations or consent orders from the Department of Environmental Quality.

Town of Chilhowie Public Works Mission Statement:

The mission of the Chilhowie Public Works Department is to provide, maintain and improve these services to citizens of our Town and area in the most cost efficient and effective methods possible; and, in times of outages and emergencies, provide timely response to these situations.

Solid Waste Disposal

For residents within the corporate limits and some adjacent county residents, the town provides a contracted garbage pick-up service contracted through GFL (contract expires on December 31 2024), primarily for residential customers while commercial, industrial, and institutional solid waste in the towns is handled via or private collection.

Smyth County operates a solid waste transfer station to accommodate the non-hazardous solid waste disposal needs of its residents, businesses, and industries. Smyth County's transfer station is in the western portion of the county. The transfer station is a facility where solid waste is unloaded and temporarily stored until it is reloaded onto large transport vehicles for shipment to a landfill.

Collection System

The County manages eleven staffed convenience stations located throughout the County for use by citizens. Convenience stations allow citizens to drop off both household trash and recycling. The County does not charge residents to use these facilities. Currently, there are convenience stations at the following locations:

- Old Quarry 120 Old Quarry Road, Saltville
- McCready's Gap, 135 Upper Poor Valley Road, Saltville
- McMullin, 120 Browns Subdivision Road, Marion
- Fish Hatchery, 1717 Hwy 16, Marion
- Sugar Grove (Dickey's Knob), 5995 Sugar Grove Hwy., Sugar Grove
- Hungry Mother, 206 Walker's Creek Road, Marion
- Wilkinson's Mill, 39347 Loves Mill Road, Chilhowie
- Camp, 1236 Camp Road, Sugar Grove
- Atkins/Groseclose, 6725 Lee Hwy., Atkins
- Locust Cove, 5943 Blue Grass Trail, Saltville
- Old Wilderness Road, Saltville.

Recycling

Smyth County convenience stations are no longer accepting glass, plastic, or newspapers for recycling because there is no longer a place readily available to recycle the items. Citizens of Smyth County should include these items with their other household trash. The county does, however, accept electronic recycling at convenience stations apart from TV's, computer monitors and vacuum cleaners.

Utilities

Electric Power

Appalachian Power (an American Electric Power operating company) is the provider of electric service to the Smyth County area. AEP is one of the largest electric utilities in the United States and owns the nation's largest electricity transmission system. Appalachian Power has over 3,200 employees serving one million customers in Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Appalachian Power has multiple programs which can support the needs of new and expanding industrial and commercial businesses. The company also provides a wide range of offerings for businesses interested in exploring clean energy solutions.

Natural Gas

Atmos Energy is Smyth County's natural gas provider and is the country's largest natural gas-only distributor. Atmos Energy safely delivers dependable, affordable, efficient, and abundant natural gas to more than three million distribution customers in over one hundred communities across eight states located primarily in the South.

Telecommunications

The primary telecommunications partners for the County are Xfinity/Comcast, Point Broadband, Brightspeed (formerly Century Link).

Chapter 7: Transportation

Introduction

Transportation planning is vital to any community and should be an integral part of townwide comprehensive planning. Transportation systems should seek to provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and between the Town and other areas. Transportation planning additionally influences economic activity and patterns of growth by providing access to land. Planning of this type should be accomplished with a view towards safe and convenient access to and from specific sites as well as to and from major collector streets and arterial roadways. Much of this transportation planning is completed through the Rural Technical Committee (RTC), hosted by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, and responsible for producing the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP). RLRTP is a formalized effort on behalf of the state to improve communication with local officials in small urbanized and rural areas (areas with less than 50,000 people), giving them a stronger voice in transportation decision making and programming, including the VDOT Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The format resembles that of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which coordinates transportation planning and programming in Virginia's urbanized areas as mandated by federal law. The benefits of involving local stakeholders in rural transportation planning include increased trust in government, better plans and programs, stronger support for actual implementation and improved performance of transportation systems. The current RLRTP is the 2045 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan, adopted in 2024.

Most of the Town's roads are managed and funded by VDOT and fall into the jurisdiction of VDOT's Bristol District. The town is rural in nature and currently has not identified any Urban Development Areas (UDA) in accordance with CODE OF VIRGINIA § 15.2-2223.1. Urban development areas are characterized as areas suitable for higher density development and can be designated by localities to meet projected residential and commercial growth for a period of 10-20 years. The boundaries and size of these areas must be reviewed every five years in conjunction with the comprehensive plan.

Functional Classification

The roads in the town perform distinct functions according to their size and location. Most travel occurs through a network of interconnected roadways, with each roadway segment moving traffic through the system toward identifiable destination points/areas. Roadways are assigned into classifications within a hierarchy according to the character of travel service each roadway provides – planners and engineers use this hierarchy to properly channel transportation movements through a transportation network.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) classifies roads in the following manner.

Principal Arterials -Roads serving as high-speed connecting links in interstate travel between the county's major population centers and for statewide travel between the larger cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The two categories of principal arterials are:

Interstate, Freeways, and Expressways. These routes have the highest design standards possible, including control of access. Full control of access is required on interstate routes and freeways, but expressways may be constructed with partial control.

Other Principal Arterials. These routes have lower design standards than interstate or freeways. Except for unusual circumstances, access control will be limited to bypasses and major relocations.

Minor Arterials - The function of these roads is to link urban areas with towns not situated on principal arterial routes and to form a network providing interstate and inter-county service. This system is designed to provide high-speed travel, even though in many cases multi-lane facilities will not be required.

Collectors - This system consists of those routes that, regardless of traffic volume, primarily are of intra-county rather than statewide importance. Since trip lengths will be much shorter than on arterial routes, design standards provide for moderate travel speeds. Although some collector corridors may run through several counties, trip lengths within the corridor are usually relatively short. Collectors are also subdivided into two categories:

Major Collectors. These routes have three main functions: to connect the locally important travel generators, to link travel generators to nearby towns on higher-class roads, and to serve the more important intra-county travel corridors.

Minor Collectors. These routes form a network bringing all remaining developed areas within reasonable distance from a major collecting route. There are a number of minor collectors in the county.

Local Roads - The local road system serves primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land parcels. These roads are designed for low travel speeds.

Interstate System

Interstate 81 is located immediately adjacent to Chilhowie. 1-81 provides a superlative east/west passageway that can reach 50 percent of the USA's total population and many of its major industrial centers. 1-81 extends from just East of Knoxville, Tennessee where it connects with Interstate 40, which provides multiple east/west and north/south interstate connections.

The interstate travels Smyth County for approximately 23.14 miles. In 2022, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) per mile of roadway in the County was 34,342 vehicles. To the west, in neighboring Washington County, the ADT over its 26.76 miles of interstate roadway during 2022 was over 47,675.

Three interchanges, from west to east, provide excellent access points into the Town; these are located at Exit 32 at US 11 to the west; Exit 35 at VA 107, which gives direct access to the central business district; and Exit 39 (Seven Mile Ford) at US 11 to the east.

Interstate 77 provides a north/south passageway to complement 1-81. 1-77 links Cleveland, Ohio to Columbia, South Carolina. Interstate 77 is approximately thirty-seven miles east of Chilhowie and can be readily accessed by 1-81 at the Town of Wytheville.

Primary System

The Town of Chilhowie has two primary roadways, US 11, and VA 107, within its corporate limits. Traffic volumes on these roads vary from light (35 AADT) on Hillview Avenue, to heavy (6,449 AADT) on Lee Highway.

Secondary System

For Chilhowie, secondary roads are an integral element of the transportation system. Secondary roads in and around the Town have a direct impact on Smyth and Washington Counties can be identified by type: these are solid surface (asphalt), all-weather surface (surface treat), light surface (gravel), and un-surfaced. None of the secondary roadways reviewed for this study are of the gravel or un-surfaced variety.

The following table displays the vehicle count data for the roadways in Chilhowie

Figure 7-1

Street Name	Start Label	End Label	AADT
I-81		SR 107 White Top Ave	31,683
I-81	SR 107 White Top Ave	Boundary: Chilhowie/Smyth County	31,442
Ramp I-81 N Exit 35 to SR 107	I-81 North	SR 107 Whitetop Rd	2,107
I-81		SR 107 White Top Ave	31,683
I-81	SR 107 White Top Ave	Boundary: Chilhowie/Smyth County	31,442
Ramp I-81 S Exit 35 to SR 107	I-81 South	SR 107 White Top Ave	1,839
White Top Ave	I-81	US 11 Lee Hwy	11,186
White Top Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	Boundary: Chilhowie/Smyth County	4,921
Ramp to I-81 N at Exit 35	SR 107; 86-762	I-81 North	1,946
Ramp to I-81 S at Exit 35	SR 107 White Top Ave	I-81 South	2,011
Lee Highway	Boundary: Washington County/Smyth County	SR 107 Whitetop Rd	3,132
Lee Highway	SR 107 Whitetop Ave	Boundary: Chilhowie/Smyth County	6,374
	Boundary: Smyth County	86-762 White Top Ave	300
Sulphur Springs Rd	US 11 Lee Highway	86-731 Old Stage Rd	1,065
Sulphur Springs Rd	86-731 Old Stage Rd	86-640	920
Sulphur Springs Rd	86-640	SR 107 White Top Ave	432
	86-639 Sulfur Springs Rd	86-736 Crestwood Ave	502
	86-736 Crestwood Ave	Dead End	90
Old Stage Rd	86-639 Sulfur Springs Rd	NCL Chilhowie	460
Old Stage Rd	NCL Chilhowie	86-774 Lyons Gap Rd	995
Old Stage Rd	86-774 Lyons Gap Rd	US 11 Lee Highway	99
Crestwood Ave	86-640	86-737 Hillview Ave	339
Crestwood Ave	86-737 Hillview Ave	Dead End	35
Hillview Ave	86-736 Crestwood Ave	Dead End	20
White Top Rd		86-608	6,449
White Top Ave	86-608 River Rd	I-81	10,593

Lyons Gap Rd	US 11 Lee Highway	86-731 Old Stage Rd	2,086
Lyons Gap Rd	86-731 Old Stage Rd	Boundary: Chilhowie/Smyth County	1,831
Church Ave	86-1004 Main St	US 11 Lee Highway	224
Church Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1002 Chilhowie St	389
Church Ave	86-1002 Chilhowie	86-731 Old Stage Rd	575
Chilhowie St	86-1023 Walton Ave	86-1005 Hull Ave	112
Chilhowie St	86-1005 Hull Ave	86-1001 Church Ave	411
Chilhowie St	86-1001 Church Ave	86-1007 Park Ave	497
Chilhowie St	86-1007 Park Ave	86-1008 Pine Ave	206
Chilhowie St	86-1008 Pine Ave	86-1003 Sanders Ave	212
Chilhowie St	86-1003 Sanders Ave	86-1009 Bonham Ave	198
Sanders Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1002 Chilhowie St	224
Sanders Ave	86-1002 Chilhowie St	86-1010 Hood St	321
Sanders Ave	86-1010 Hood St	86-731 Old Stage Rd	195
West Main St	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1006 Depot Ave	1,168
West Main St	86-1006 Depot Ave	SR 107 White Top Ave	1,722
West Main St	SR 107 White Top Ave	86-1023 Walton Ave	234
West Main St	86-1023 Walton Ave	86-1005 First Ave	143
West Main St	86-1005 First Ave	86-1001 Church Ave	121
First Ave	86-1004 Main St	US 11 E, Lee Hwy	66
First Ave	US 11 W, Lee Hwy	86-1002 Chilhowie St	696
Depot Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1004 Main St	508
Park Ave	86-1002 Chilhowie St	Dead End	140
Pine Ave	Dead End	US 11 Lee Highway	832
Pine Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1002 Chilhowie St	685
Bonham Ave	US 11; 86-9812	86-1002 Chilhowie St	712
Bonham Ave	86-1002 Chilhowie St	86-1010 Hood St	711
Bonham Ave	86-1010 Hood St	86-731 Old Stage Rd	624
Hood St	86-1009 Bonham Ave	86-1003 Sanders Ave	55
Hood St	86-1003 Sanders Ave	Dead End	60
W Sunshine Dr	86-731 Old Stage Rd	86-1013 Sunshine Dr	95
E Sunshine Dr	86-731 Old Stage Rd	86-1013 Sunshine Dr	68
Sunshine Dr	86-1011 Sunshine Ave	86-1012 Sunshine Ave	52
Beattie Ave	SR 107 White Top Ave	86-731 Old Stage Rd	189
Greever Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1028 Greenway St	587
Greever Ave	86-1028 Greenway St	86-1016 Sunset St	601
Sunset St	86-1020 West Ave	86-1022 Midnight Dr	399
Sunset St	86-1022 Midnight Dr	86-1015 Greever Ave	692
Sunset St	86-1015 Greever Ave	86-1018 Midnight Dr	158
Sunset St	86-1018 Midnight Dr	86-1017 Martin Ave	262
Sunset St	86-1017 Martin Ave	Dead End	30
Martin Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1028 Greenway St	774
Martin Ave	86-1028 Greenway St	86-1016 Sunset St	529

Martin Ave	86-1016 Sunset St	86-1019 Skyview Dr	372
Midnight Dr	86-1016 Sunset St	86-1021 Midnight Dr	75
Skyview Dr	86-1020 West Ave	86-1025 Cress Ave	173
Skyview Dr	86-1025 Cress Ave	86-1017 Martin Ave	321
West Ave	86-1016 Sunset Dr	86-1019 Skyview Dr	488
Midnight Dr	86-1022 Midnight Dr	86-1018 Midnight Dr	116
Midnight Dr	86-1016 Sunset St	86-1021 Midnight Dr	93
Walton Ave	86-1004 Main St	US 11 Lee Highway	421
Walton Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-1002 Chilhowie St	254
Walton Ave	86-1002 Chilhowie St	86-731 Old Stage Rd	80
Industrial Park Rd	Dead End	US 11 Lee Highway	590
Cress Ave	86-1019 Skyview Dr	86-1026 Meadow Brook Lane	311
Meadow Brook Lane	Dead End	86-1025 Cress Ave	25
Meadow Brook Lane	86-1025 Cress Ave	Dead End	110
	Dead End	86-1024 Industrial Park Rd	281
Greenway St	86-1015 Greever Ave	86-1017 Martin Ave	42
Poplar Ave	US 11 Lee Highway	86-731 Old Stage Rd	477
Packing House Rd	86-762 White Top Rd	86-762	65
Overlook Dr	86-762	86-1036 Overlook Dr	397
Overlook Dr	86-1035 Overlook Dr	Dead End	239
Haynes Ave	86-731 Old Stage Rd	Cul-de-Sac	80
	86-1004 Main St	US 11 Lee Highway	1,009
Williams St	Chilhowie High School	US 11; 86-1009	1,421

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

Road Maintenance for Inclement Weather

Responsibility for road maintenance during inclement weather varies by road. Most roads are maintained either by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), by the Town of Chilhowie, or by a private entity.

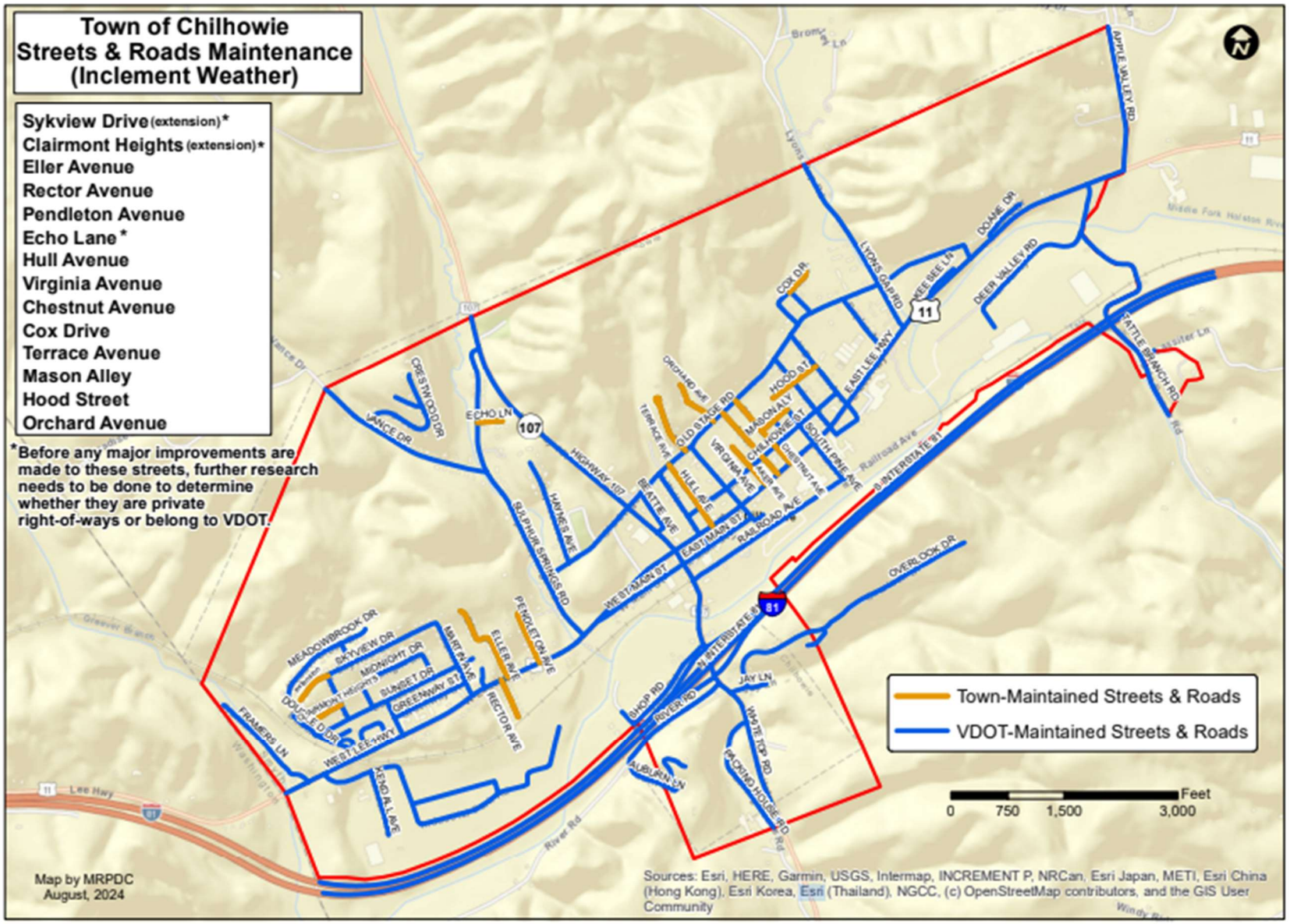
The following table and figure illustrate the inclement weather road maintenance responsibility of the Town.

Figure 7-2 Town Maintained Roads

Chilhowie Roadways	
Sykview Drive (extension)*	Virginia Avenue
Clairmont Heights (extension)*	Chestnut Avenue
Eller Avenue	Cox Drive
Rector Avenue	Terrace Avenue
Pendleton Avenue	Mason Alley
Echo Lane*	Hood Street
Hull Avenue	Orchard Avenue

**Before any major improvements are made to these streets, further research needs to be done to determine whether they are private right-of-ways or belong to VDOT.*

Figure 7-3 Town of Chilhowie Streets & Roads Maintenance (Inclement Weather)



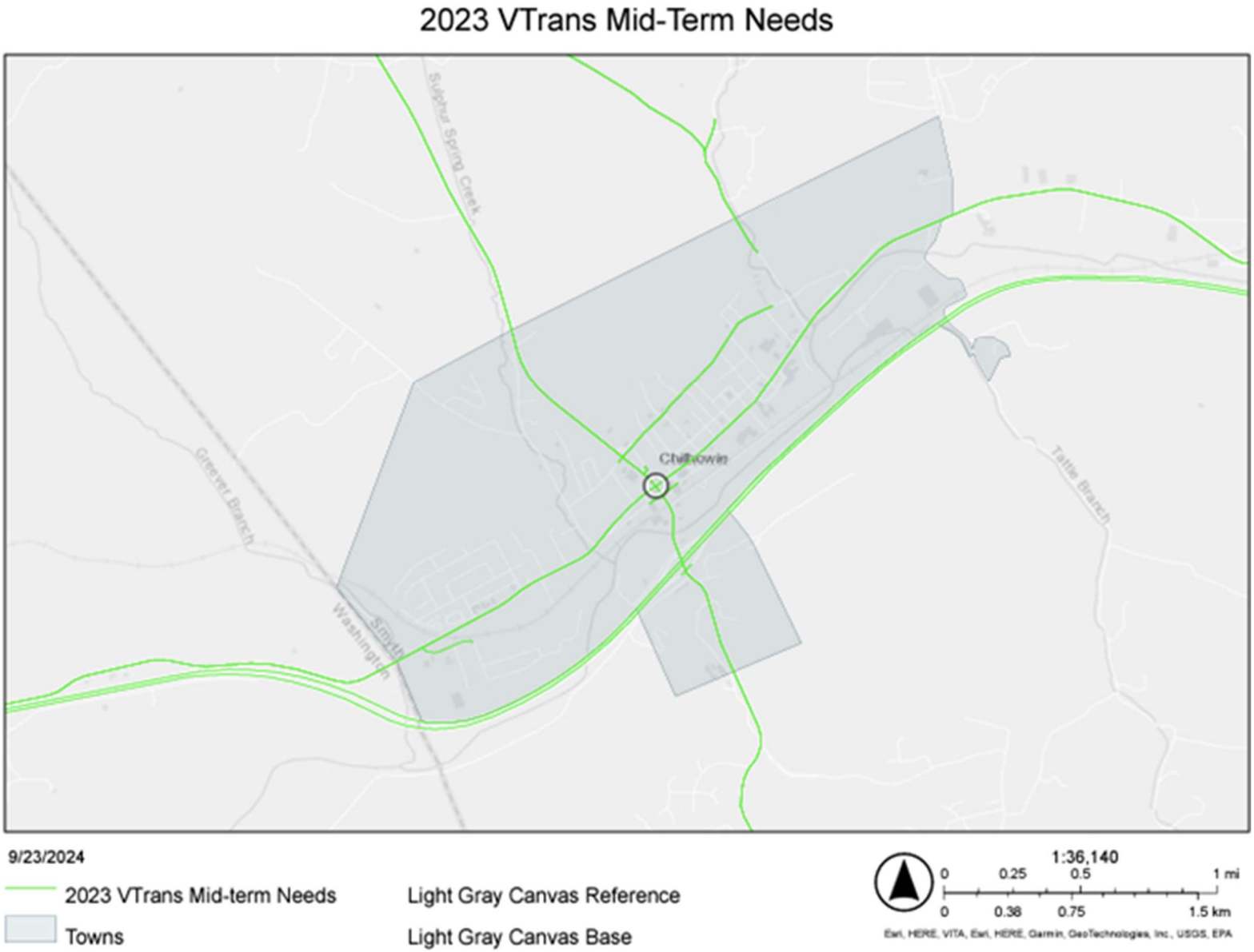
VTrans

Virginia has the nation's third largest system of state-maintained highways, totaling approximately 58,000 miles of arterial, collector, and local roads, including around 20,000 bridges and structures – this does not include independent cities and towns, and counties authorized by special legislation to maintain their own local transportation systems, receiving funds from VDOT to do so according to accepted standards.

The transportation network is managed by VDOT in accordance with Virginia's Transportation Plan (VTrans), which has four focus areas: vision, mid-term planning, long-term planning, and strategic actions. Additionally, this plan develops a long-term risk and opportunity register for to prepare for Megatrends including climate change, technological advancements, consumption patterns, and socio-demographic patterns. The current version of the state's transportation plan is titled the VTrans 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan.

As a critical part of the SMART SCALE Process, the bi-annual release of the 2023 Mid-term Needs was completed in February 2024 for SMART SCALE Round 6, following its presentation to the Commonwealth Transportation Board on January 16th, 2024. VTrans, Virginia's Transportation Plan, identifies mid-term (next 10 years) transportation needs; these needs are periodically updated, and the most recent map of needs is shown below as Figure 7-4 2023 VTrans Mid-Term Needs – Town of Chilhowie. The needs assessment can be reviewed more in-depth utilizing Interact VTrans.

Figure 7-4 2023 VTrans Mid-Term Needs – Town of Chilhowie



VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program & Safety Improvements

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocates public funds to transportation projects over six fiscal years, comprising the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Projects include improvements to the interstate, primary, secondary, and urban highway systems, public transit, ports, airports, and other programs. The CTB updates the SYIP each fiscal year. As revenue estimates are updated, new priorities are identified, and existing projects advance. Every fall, public meetings are held across the state on project priorities and the SYIP. Public input is taken into consideration as the next update of the SYIP is drafted and presented to the CTB in the spring. Public meetings are held on the draft SYIP and the CTB adopts the final program in June.

Corridors of Statewide Significance

The VTrans2035 plan, as adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (via a resolution dated December 17, 2009), initially designated 11 CoSS; a 12th corridor was subsequently added (via a CTB resolution dated May 18, 2011). The designation and study of these multimodal corridors is a responsibility of the Commonwealth Transportation Board in accordance with the Code of Virginia §33.2-353. The official definition of a CoSS as defined in VTrans2035 is:

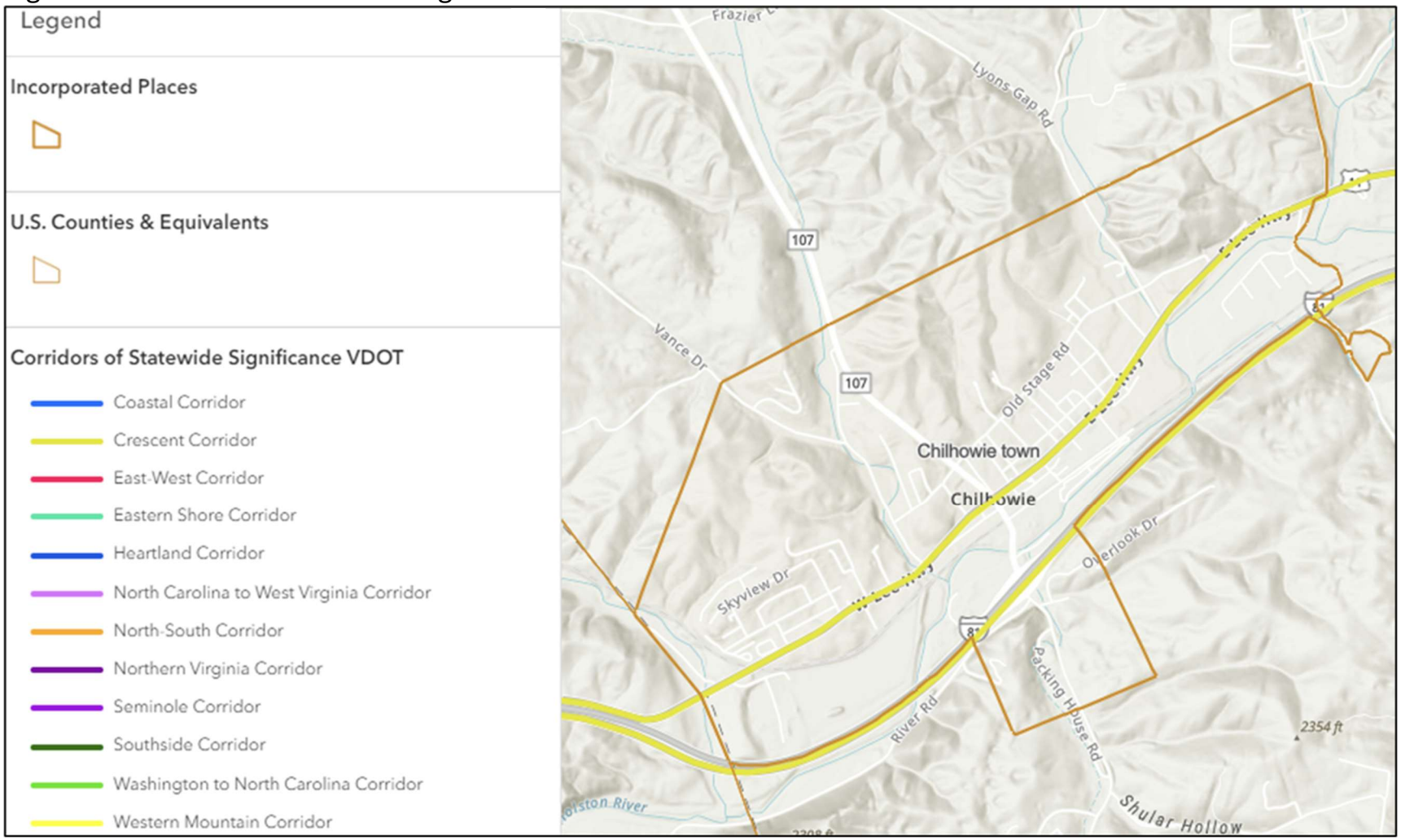
"An integrated, multimodal network of transportation facilities that connect major centers of activity within and through the Commonwealth and promote the movement of people and goods essential to the economic prosperity of the state."

To be considered a CoSS, a corridor must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Multimodal – must involve multiple modes of travel or must be an extended freight corridor.
2. Connectivity – must connect regions, states, and/or major activity centers.
3. High Volume – must involve a high volume of travel.
4. Function – must provide a unique statewide function and/or address statewide goals.

The Town of Chilhowie has two Corridors of Statewide Significance that pass through the Town limits, including US 11 and Interstate 81, which can be seen in Figure 7-5.

Figure 7-5 Corridors of Statewide Significance - Town of Chilhowie



Air Transportation

Commercial Service

The Tri-Cities Airport near Blountville, Tennessee is 59 miles southwest of Chilhowie via Interstate 81. Delta and American Airlines provide direct service to major U.S. cities daily, including Atlanta and Charlotte, while Allegiant provides direct service to Tampa/Clearwater-St. Petersburg and Orlando. Charter aircraft services are also available for passenger travel. The Airport's property covers approximately 1,290 acres, including a 113,532-sq-ft.-terminal, seven gates, three commercial airlines, eight national rental car brands, a fixed based operator, corporate hangars, FAA air traffic control tower, and TRI Aerospace Park with an Air Cargo Logistics Center.

A fixed based operator (FBO) operates on Airport property to accommodate private and corporate aircraft operations. The Tri-Cities Air Cargo Logistics Center houses U.S. Customs Port No. 2027 and Foreign-Trade Zone No. 204. These departments facilitate cargo transportation and serve as the Airport's economic development tool for cities, counties, and economic development boards regarding regional trade and logistics.

The Roanoke Regional Airport is located approximately 109 miles northeast of Chilhowie and offers direct air transportation service to national and international destinations.

General Aviation

Located approximately 20 miles from Chilhowie is Mountain Empire Airport, designated a Regional Airport in 2004 by the state. The airport has a 5,252x75 This airport does not have a tower (automated) and has a published localizer for GPS approaches. Although unmanned, MEA offers a terminal building with a waiting lounge, flight planning area, and conference room. This airport also offers full-service fuel for both 100LL and JetA. Operated by the Smyth Wythe Airport Commission, MEA has oversight from Smyth and Wythe County residents through a commission that meets once a month on-site.

Rail System

The Town of Chilhowie has excellent commercial rail service. A Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) mainline runs parallel to 1-81 and extends throughout Smyth County. Currently NS provides bulk, mixed freight, containerized piggyback and team track service to several major industries and businesses in Chilhowie, Marion and Atkins area. Pathway Park, located within the Town of Chilhowie, offers 70 acres of graded greenspace with 2,500+ linear rail siding on site (with space for second spur).

In 2021 the Virginia General Assembly tasked the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to provide an assessment of total project and implemental costs resulting from the extension of intercity passenger rail to Bristol, Virginia. Virginia currently contracts with Amtrak to operate passenger rail service between Roanoke and Washington, D.C., along Norfolk Southern Railway's mainline and N-line. This corridor experienced increased ridership and revenue since the start of the Lynchburg service in 2009, and a 16% growth in ridership since the service extension to Roanoke in

2017. Now the Commonwealth is committed to add a second frequency along this route and further extend Amtrak service to the New River Valley through the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative. This study forecasts a further expansion southwest to Bristol and into Tennessee.

However, as of now, the nearest passenger rail service is Amtrack which has a train station 115 miles northeast of Chilhowie in Roanoke Virginia. This line has stops in Richmond, Norfolk, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and other destinations in between.

Public Transit System

District Three Government Cooperative

Mountain Lynx Transit provides public transportation in Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe counties, as well as the City of Galax. Fixed-route loops and demand-response routes serve Abingdon, Marion, Wytheville, and Galax. Mountain Lynx Transit provides demand-response service to areas of each county at least once per week. These weekly routes provide county residents with transportation to a commercial center. Services are available to all citizens regardless of age or income. Citizens use the bus service for a variety of reasons including transportation to shopping centers, restaurants, parks, entertainment venues and medical appointments. Other popular destinations include the wellness center, senior centers, schools, libraries and government offices.

District Three operates a bus service on Tuesdays in Chilhowie and the surrounding area. In terms of fees for the users of the service, Mountain Lynx currently has a zero-fare program. The zero-fare program was one of 15 projects approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board for a total of $4.4 million funded through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Transit Ridership Incentive Program, or TRIP in Fiscal Year 2024.Taxi and Bus Services

Taxi and Bus Services

There are two privately-owned taxi businesses operating in Smyth County that serve Chilhowie (Eller Taxi Service, Diamond Cab,).

Virginia Breeze Bus Lines is your connection to small towns and cities throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. With stops at Dulles International Airport and Union Station, it allows you to catch a plane, a train, or another bus. From Union Station, you can take Megabus or an Amtrak train to cities along the Northeast Corridor, including Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston. With affordable and convenient service, making it easier to explore, visit friends and family, and get things done. Virginia Breeze offers a northbound route, with seven stops between Bristol and Washington, D.C. This route offers a northbound and one southbound trip every day, except in severe weather and other extenuating circumstances.

Pedestrian and Bike System

The Town of Chilhowie recently completed the Bonham Trail, which stretches from the H.L. Bonham Regional Development and Tourism Center thru the Chilhowie Recreation Park. The Town has also developed a Historic Walking or Driving Tour of the Town for which pamphlets are available with directions and historic facts.

Hungry Mother State Park offers visitors nine trails with difficulty ranging from easy to difficult and lengths from an easy 0.2 miles (Ridge Trail) to a more strenuous 4.0 miles (Clyburn Ridge Trail). Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, located in the southern portion of Smyth County, offers a trail system for recreational hiking and horseback riding.

In 1976, a national effort created the Trans America Bicycle Trail. The "Trans Am" is a 22,000-mile bikeway system that follows existing lightly traveled roadways across the United States. Virginia's portion of this network is known as Bike Route 76 and runs concurrent with Smyth County roadways for approximately twenty miles across its southern portions.

Additionally, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a public footpath across 2,144 miles of the Appalachian Mountain ridge lines provides the novice/advanced hiking pedestrian a scenic and challenging opportunity to see America's first frontier. More than five hundred miles of the Appalachian Trail lies in Southwest Virginia and can be reached on the southern edge of Smyth County near Sugar Grove and Groseclose. This section of the Trail is well known for its mature timber and wilderness with high summits. There is public parking for the trail nine miles from town that can be accessed from Whitetop Road.

Lastly, the Salt Trail is roughly 8.7 miles from end to end and connects communities Glade Spring and Saltville. While now used as a walking trail, The Salt Trail used to be a part of the Norfolk & Western rail spur. Previously being used to bring assets from Saltville to Glade Spring. The trail was established in 2008 as a part of the Rails to Trails program, which also was the leading program behind the Virginia Creeper Trail.

Chapter 8: Economy

General Description

The Town of Chilhowie's economy is heavily influenced by its access to transportation by way of U.S. Highway 11, Interstate 81, and the railroad. This connectivity, availability of developable land for industrial parks, and adequate water and sewer infrastructure to support industry growth has resulted in a local economy that is perfectly suited for manufacturing. Accessibility from the interstate has also strengthened the local economy by allowing consumers to travel to the commercial business sector that offers a variety of goods.

The development pattern in Chilhowie is lineal along the U.S. Highway 11 West corridor. Business, homes, and industry are located along the highway both inside and outside Town. State Route 107 passes through the Central Business District and connects Interstate 81 to Chilhowie and Saltville.

In terms of overall employment, Town residents' employment is concentrated in the manufacturing sector. The Town's labor force continues to be dependent on the jobs of surrounding Smyth and Washington County, forcing many in the Town's workforce to commute. Ideally, self- sufficiency in a community is attained when residents both live and work in the community.

Income Levels

In 1988, the Town boundary adjusted part of Smyth County, bringing new vibrancy and potential for population growth and revenue. As of the 1990 Decennial Census the Town's population had leaped to 1,971, a gain of 703 residents over 1980. However, the Town's population has been on a steady decline every census since 1990. As of the 2020 Census, the population was 1,654.

The income level for households in Chilhowie has been trending upward in recent years. The chart below demonstrates the household income levels for those within the Town of Chilhowie with a comparison of 2017 and 2022. The percentage of households that made below 25,000 saw a consistent decrease during this period. The most significant decrease by percentage in a category was in the number of households making between 35,000 to 49,999. In contrast, the greatest increase was seen in the number of households making 100,000 to 149,000.

Income distribution in 2017 versus 2022 is shown in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1: Town of Chilhowie Income Distribution

Household Income	Number of Households		Percent	
	2017	2022	2017	2022
Less than $10,000	55	61	8.1%	7.1%
$10,000 to $14,999	39	36	5.7%	4.2%
$15,000 to $24,999	84	60	12.4%	7.0%
$25,000 to $34,999	89	121	13.1%	14.2%
$35,000 to $49,999	134	99	19.7%	11.6%
$50,000 to $74,999	129	123	19.0%	14.4%
$75,000 to $99,999	82	120	12.1%	14.0%
$100,000 to $149,999	62	163	9.1%	19.1%
$150,000 to $199,999	0	57	0.0%	6.7%
$200,000 or more	6	15	0.9	1.8%
Total Households	680	855	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Median and per capita income for Chilhowie is compared with figures for Smyth County and Virginia in Table 8-2. The Town of Chilhowie is ahead of the County averages in per capita income as well as median family income. The most significant difference can be seen in the median family income, which can be attributed to the higher household density within the Town.

Table 8-2: 2022 Per Capita and Median Household Incomes

Jurisdiction	Per Capita Income	Median Family Income
Chilhowie	$28,761	$60,313
Smyth County	$26,660	$45,061
State of Virginia	$47,210	$87,249

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Income by type of household income and the number of persons determined to be below the poverty level are shown in Table 8-3 and Table 8-4. Evidence of an aging population in Chilhowie be found as 40% of households in the Town receive Social Security income. However, just over 30 percent of households have retirement income (besides social security) the discrepancy between the two can leave households highly susceptible to financial hardship. Especially during high inflationary periods such as the ones that have been occurring between 2020 and 2024.

Table 8-3: Per Capita and Median Family Incomes

Chilhowie	Total	Percent
Households (#)	855	N/A
With Wage and Salary Income (#)	586	68.5%
Mean Wage and Salary Income ($)	$73,793	N/A
With Social Security Income (#)	338	39.5%
With Social Security Income ($)	$22,907	N/A
With Retirement Income (#)	270	31.6%
With Retirement Income ($)	$30,170	N/A
With Public Assistance Income (#)	40	4.7%
With Public Assistance Income ($)	$1,805	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Table 8-4 compares the poverty statuses of Smyth County and the Town of Chilhowie. The statistical comparison of the two has inversed since the data in 2017. The County now has a higher poverty rate amongst all demographics. The County had 19 percent of its residents determined to be below poverty, whereas the Town had just over 11 percent. This situation gets far worse when one look at demographic groups relating to female householders, with over one out of three female householder families with related children under 18 years being below poverty in the County.

Table 8-4: Poverty Status

	Percent Below Poverty	
	Chilhowie	**Smyth County**
Total Persons Below Poverty	11.1%	18.8%
Persons Aged 65 and Older	8.4%	12.5%
Female Household Families	13.2%	26.7%
Female Household Families with Related Children Under 18 Years Old	19.6%	34.3%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Education, Labor Force, and Employment Distribution Analysis

Education

By all measures, the quality of the workforce and the ability of a community to recruit higher paying diverse skilled and job industry, is in large part affected by educational attainment in the community.

Table 8-5 shows the educational level of Chilhowie's population versus Smyth County and the State. For Chilhowie, a total of 152 persons (8.6 percent), age 25 and over had less than a ninth-grade education. Illiteracy is a problem across rural Southwest Virginia. This compares to 5 percent in Smyth County and 3.6 percent for Virginia. An additional 4.4 percent of Chilhowie residents had a 9th to 12th grade education without a high school diploma. The percentage of people aged twenty-five and over with less than a high school diploma in the Town exceeds the State percentage. The proportion of high school graduates was less than Smyth County and more than the State. The number of persons with a college degree (Associate, Bachelors, Graduate, or Professional) was lower than Virginia as a whole, as 40 percent of persons in Chilhowie had obtained a degree, as compared to 48.8 percent for the Commonwealth. The Towns' workforce has the potential to be trained and have skilled and semi-skilled talents; however, there is still concern over the number of persons with no high school diploma and less than a ninth-grade education. It is worth noting that the discrepancy between the Commonwealth and the Towns rate of residents with a degree has been closing in recent years as Chilhowie residents have attained more formal education. This provides the capacity to take more technically reliant roles and provide a certain category of labor force that has been missing in the past.

Table 8-5: Educational Level for Persons Over 25 Years Old

School Years Completed	Town		Smyth County		Virginia	
	Persons 25 & up	Percent of Total	Persons 25 & up	Percent of Total	Persons 25 & up	Percent of Total
Less than ninth	152	8.6%	1,086	5.0%	212,554	3.6%
High School 9th to 12th Grade – No Diploma	78	4.4%	2,248	10.3%	313,263	5.3%
High School Graduate	631	35.8%	8,390	38.5%	1,411,884	23.9%
College Some College – No Degree	198	11.2%	3,946	18.1%	1,094,753	18.5%
Associate Degree	192	10.9%	2,319	10.6%	461,866	7.8%
Bachelor Degree	319	18.1%	2,431	11.2%	1,366,160	23.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	194	11.0%	1,372	6.3%	1,058,662	17.9%
Total	1,764	N/A	21,792	N/A	5,919,142	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Labor Force

Table 8-6 delineates the labor force by employed and unemployed. The figures show that unemployment levels have almost fallen back to that of 2010.

Table 8-6: Persons in Labor Force Age 16 and Over

Smyth County	2010	2017	2022
Total Civilian Labor Force	15,634	14,956	13,686
Employed	14,906	13,244	12,817
Unemployed	728	1,712	869
Percent of Unemployed	4%	11.4%	6.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2017, 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Smyth County's 2024 annual unemployment rate stood at 2.8 percent, which is lower than the national average. However, it remains higher than the rest of the Commonwealth, and Mount Rogers Planning District as a whole. Smyth County and the Town should look for further diversification of its manufacturing sector and foster continued commercial and service sector development.

Table 8-7 Historical Unemployment Rates

	2005	2010	2017	2024
U.S.	5.1%	7.7%	4.4%	3.5%
Virginia	3.5%	5.5%	3.8%	2.3%
MRPDC	4.7%	10.5%	4.6%	2.5%
Smyth County	4.5%	8.6%	5.4%	2.8%

Source: Virgnia Employment Commission

Table 8-8: Smyth County Persons in Labor Force - By Sex

LABOR FORCE STATUS	Number of Persons		
	2010	2015	2022
Persons 16 years and over	26,141	26,130	24,786
In labor force	13,996	14,192	12,323
Percent	53.5%	54.3%	49.7%
Civilian labor force	13,954	14,190	12,323
Employed	13,025	13,278	11,921
Unemployed	929	912	402
Percent Unemployed	7.1%	6.9%	3.3%
Armed Forces	42	2	0
Not in Labor Force	12,145	11,938	12,463

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2015, 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Table 8-8 indicates full employment for the labor force with a mere 3.3% unemployment rate. However, Labor force participation has seen a significant decline, less than 50% of the persons above the age of sixteen opting to participate. This could be in part due to the aging population of the region. As the previous generations retire, there has not been a steady supply of working age individuals opting to remain in Smyth County.

A review of female labor force participation follows in Table 8-9. Economic developers look at these patterns and ratios in evaluating the adequacy of labor supply for communities. Labor force participation jumps substantially when the family includes working parents with children.

Table 8-9: Smyth County Female Labor Force

LABOR FORCE STATUS	NUMBER OF PERSONS	
	2010	2022
Females 16 years and over	13,376	12,501
In labor force	6,310	5,824
Civilian labor force	6,310	5,824
Employed	5,916	5,602
Own children of the householder under 6 years	1,725	1,488
All parents in family in labor force	1,042	1,092
Own children of the householder 6 to 17 years	3,803	3,743
All parents in family in labor force	2,401	2,848

Source: U.S. 2010 Census Summary Tape File 3, 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates

Table 8-10 shows a breakdown of the employed labor force by industry group in Smyth County. Manufacturing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance accounted for well over half of the total employment for County residents in 2017 and became even more prevalent in 2022. Public Administration was the largest loss of jobs within the sector with a decrease from 893 to 540 employees.

Table 8-10: Smyth County Labor Force by Industry

Industry	2017		2022	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	12,817	N/A	11,921	N/A
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	289	2.3%	133	1.1%
Construction	716	5.6%	567	4.8%
Manufacturing	2,554	19.9%	2,588	21.7%
Wholesale trade	238	1.9%	282	2.4%
Retail trade	1,726	13.5%	1,700	14.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	427	3.3%	515	4.3%
Information	162	1.3%	107	0.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	368	2.9%	219	1.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	843	6.6%	824	6.9%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	3,177	24.8%	3,167	26.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	896	7.0%	786	6.6%
Other services, except public administration	528	4.1%	493	4.1%
Public administration	893	7.0%	540	4.5%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau 2017, 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Table 8-11 depicts employment by occupation. 4.4 percent of the labor force in the county is self-employed, which decreased from 6.6 in 2017. The trend for both the County and Town is that more people are attaining private wage/salary positions, and fewer are opting for self-employment or unpaid familial work. The Town of Chilhowie abides by this trend more so as 81.5 percent of the labor force holds private sector wage and salary jobs.

Table 8-11: County and Town Percentage of Employed Labor Force

	Smyth County		Chilhowie	
Occupation	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Employed Persons Aged 16 and Older	11,921	N/A	1,089	N/A
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	3,139	26.3%	385	35.4%
Service occupations	2,124	17.8%	140	12.9%
Sales and office occupations	2,247	18.8%	279	25.6%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	1,033	8.7%	73	6.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3,378	28.3%	212	19.5%
Class of Workers				
Private wage and salary workers	9168	76.9%	888	81.5%
Government workers	2198	18.4%	184	16.9%
Self-employed workers	529	4.4%	6	0.6%
Unpaid family workers	26	0.2%	11	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate

Table 8-12 shows the Top 7 Employers within the Town of Chilhowie. The employers listed in this chart are indicative of the trends that the county is seeing as a whole with Manufacturing and education services making up most of the employment in Smyth County.

Table 8-12: Top 7 Major Employers in the Town of Chilhowie

Employer	Number of Employees	Product or Service
SIG (Formerly Scholle IPN)	250 to 499 employees	Plastics & Rubber Products
Valley Rehabilitation & Nursing Center	100 to 249 employees	Rehab & Nursing Center
Longwall Associates Inc.	100 to 249 employees	Conveyor Manufacturing
Smyth County School Board	100 to 249 employees	Educational Services
Food City	50 to 99 employees	Food and Beverage Stores
Innovative Millwork Tech.	50 to 99 employees	Wood Product Manufacturing
Berry Enterprises, Inc	50 to 99 employees	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, 4th Quarter 2023 Employment, Company Websites

Balance of the Employment Sector

Basic industries are defined as those performing an essential export function: that is, because of these basic activities, capital flows into a given region to pay for whatever goods and services are produced. Agriculture, mostly manufacturing, and mining, among others, are classified as basic industries. On the other hand, non-basic industries provide services, such as retail facilities, local medical facilities, schools, and others.

The present industrial mix of Smyth County has brought more service-related jobs as evidenced by employment trends in Table 8-10. Basic industries in Smyth County represent approximately 28 percent of total employment. Wholesale and retail trade represent 12 percent and services, including hospitals and medical comprise 16.7 percent of total employment.

When the employed labor force constitutes a low percentage of the total population (age 16 years and over), it indicates that there are insufficient employment opportunities. In Smyth County, however, the employed labor force is 49.7% percent of the County's population over the age of sixteen. The unemployed labor force for the county is 3.3 percent of the population age 16 years and over.

Most of the increase in manufacturing employment has been absorbed by male labor and those switching from agricultural employment. The population growth capacity of Chilhowie should also be considered. Census data on labor force and unemployment theoretically, shows there is a sizable unutilized labor pool available in the County and Town and further gains in manufacturing will have a direct impact on population gains. Given the right conditions, this unutilized labor could become productive and active members of the labor force.

To foster healthy economic growth, the employed labor force of Chilhowie should be brought into greater balance by continued industry diversification with a mix of higher pay/diverse skilled manufacturers, commercial, and service-oriented industries.

Wholesale and Retail Trade

Table 8-13 displays retail sales data for the County comparing 2003 with 2023 and the percent change with that of the state.

Table 8-13 Sales Tax Distribution Smyth County+

	2003 Sales Tax	2013 Sales Tax	2023 Sales Tax	Change 2003-2023
Smyth County	$5,335,762	$6,344,596	$8,759,748	64.2%
Virginia	$1,579,481,101	$2,173,533,270	$2,390,529,106	51.4%

Source: Virginia Department of Taxation, Annual Report

+ One percent of state sales and use tax is distributed among counties and cities based on school age population of the locality. One percent local option is returned to the counties and cities based on the point of sale.

As shown, the County's retail sales have increased by 64.2 percent over the period as compared to 51.4 percent for the state. This higher rate of increase in sales tax revenue illustrates that while Smyth County and Southwest Virginia have often fallen behind the rest of the state economically, that is a reversing trend due to the investments in economic development and marketing of the region as a tourism destination.

Travel and Tourism

The tourism industry is often an overlooked element of the local economy. Smyth County, with the presence of Interstate 81 and its proximity to state and federal recreational attractions, benefits economically from tourism. Table 8-14 provides a glimpse at travel- related data including expenditures and jobs, comparing 2016 with 2022 (the latest data available).

Table 8-14 Smyth County Direct Economic Impact of Tourism by Industries, 2022

	2016	2022	% Change	State Totals 2022 (in millions)
Total Travel Expenditures	$24,647,000	$28,300,000	14.8%	$30,344.28
Travel-Generated Payroll	$4,993,000	$8,800,000	76.3%	$8,553.84
Travel-Generated Employment	245	326	33.1%	210,721
State Tax Receipts	$1,490,000	$2,100,000	40.9%	$2,173.84

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2022 Direct Visitor Impact for Virginia Localities

The county has experienced increases in travel-related expenditures over the last decade, due in large part to increased travel along the 181 corridor and Virginia Tourism Corporation's campaigns and assistance in Southwest Virginia. Smyth County increased by almost 14.8% in travel-related expenditures from 2016 to 2022. The number of travel generated jobs has increased significantly over the same period, and travel-generated payroll has seen even greater increases at over 76.3%.

Another measure of tourism dollars in the community is the retail sales data for restaurants, which is the second largest revenue stream behind utilities billing. Table 8-15 demonstrates meals tax for the Town of Chilhowie.

Table 8-15 Town of Chilhowie Meals Tax Collections

Fiscal Year	Meals Tax Collected*
2012 – 2013	$318,594.45
2013 – 2014	$357,497.93
2014 – 2015	$414,096.47
2015 – 2016	$479,214.69
2016 – 2017*	$541,462.88
2017 – 2018	$554,111.62
2018 – 2019	$576,102.47
2019 – 2020	$584,989.88
2020 – 2021	$656,497.35
2021 – 2022	$717,543.55
2022 – 2023	$795,251.15
2023 – 2024	$865,262.40

*Note: *Starting in 2016-2017 the Meals Tax percentage increased from 6% to 6.5%. In fiscal year 2024-2025 the meals tax was raised from 6.5% to 7%.*

Agriculture

An important aspect of the local economy of this region is agriculture and agriculture support businesses. Smyth County has a total of 568 farms encompassing 117,159 acres. The total market value of all agricultural products sold was $48,231,000. Of these products sold, the share of sales by type is 89% Livestock, poultry, and products, with the remaining 11% of sales being attributed to crops.

Smyth County sales ranks in the state of Virginia (data from Census of Agriculture 2022)15th in livestock, poultry, and products:

- 5th in cattle and calves
- 16th in sheep
- 20th in aquaculture
- 14th in other animals and animal products
- 23rd in hogs and pigs
- 22nd in hay and other crops

Economic Development Opportunities

Industrial Sites

Pathway Park, located within Town limits, is jointly owned by Smyth, Washington, and Bland Counties. The site offers seventy acres of graded and pad ready greenspace for a build-to-suit project. The site is rated Tier 4 through the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program and offers all necessary infrastructure for a successful project. Adjacent to Interstate 81 Zoned Industrial Level and cleared 2,500+ linear rail siding on site (with space for second spur). In addition to the park being served by Chilhowie waterline (eight inch line) and sewer, the site also houses a well capable of producing 400,000 gallons per day of non-potable water.

Deer Valley Industrial Park is a fifty-eight-acre industrial site, located within the limits of the Town. The site houses SIG (Formerly Scholle) and Innovative Millwork Technologies, LLC. This Business Industrial (BN-1) site is adjacent to Interstate 81 and accessible from exits 35 and 39. Deer Valley Industrial Park runs parallel to the railroad with a rail spur serving SIG.

Incentives

The Virginia Enterprise Zone (VEZ) initiative is a collaboration between the Commonwealth of Virginia and local governments, aimed at boosting job creation and investment in real property. This program seeks to stimulate economic growth and rejuvenate economically challenged areas at both local and regional levels. Local incentives for the Town of Chilhowie #51C opportunity zone include building permit fee waiver, economic stimulus grant, water, and sewer cost reductions, BPOL tax credit, and a Partial real estate tax exemption.

Another potential incentive for potential investors locating in Chilhowie is the Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones are a federal economic development and community development tax benefit established as part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act available to investors with capital gains designed to encourage long-term private investment in low-income urban, suburban, and rural census tracts such as the one Chilhowie is located in. Taxpayers can get capital gains tax deferral for making timely equity investments in Opportunity funds that then deploy capital into Opportunity Zone business and real estate ventures. This is an economic and community development tax incentive that provides an avenue for investors to support distressed communities to address areas of the Commonwealth that have experienced uneven economic growth and recovery. The tax incentive offers three benefits: tax deferral, tax reduction through long-term investment, and exclusion of certain capital gains tax.

Chilhowie is also an eligible site for Tobacco Commission funding such as the Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund. The purpose of the TROF program is to help make localities in the Tobacco Region more attractive to potential business expansion or attraction projects. It accomplishes this goal by providing performance-based monetary grants and loans to localities for the purposes of supporting specific projects. Projects are evaluated based on job creation, workforce participation rate, community affluence, prevailing community wage, and newly created taxable assets.

Chapter 9: Government

Town Government

The Town Government is the local legislative and administrative body serving the community's citizens. All Towns in the Commonwealth of Virginia are expressly granted to the Town its powers and functions which are specifically detailed in the Code of Virginia. To this end, the Town only has these specific powers or those necessarily implied.

The Town of Chilhowie utilizes the mayor-council system of local government which combines strong political leadership of elected officials in a mayor and a six-member Town Council with the strong managerial experience of an appointed Town Manager. This form establishes a representative system with all the power concentrated in the elected council members. The Council employs a Town Manager who is delegated such powers as the Council deems necessary to oversee the delivery of public services.

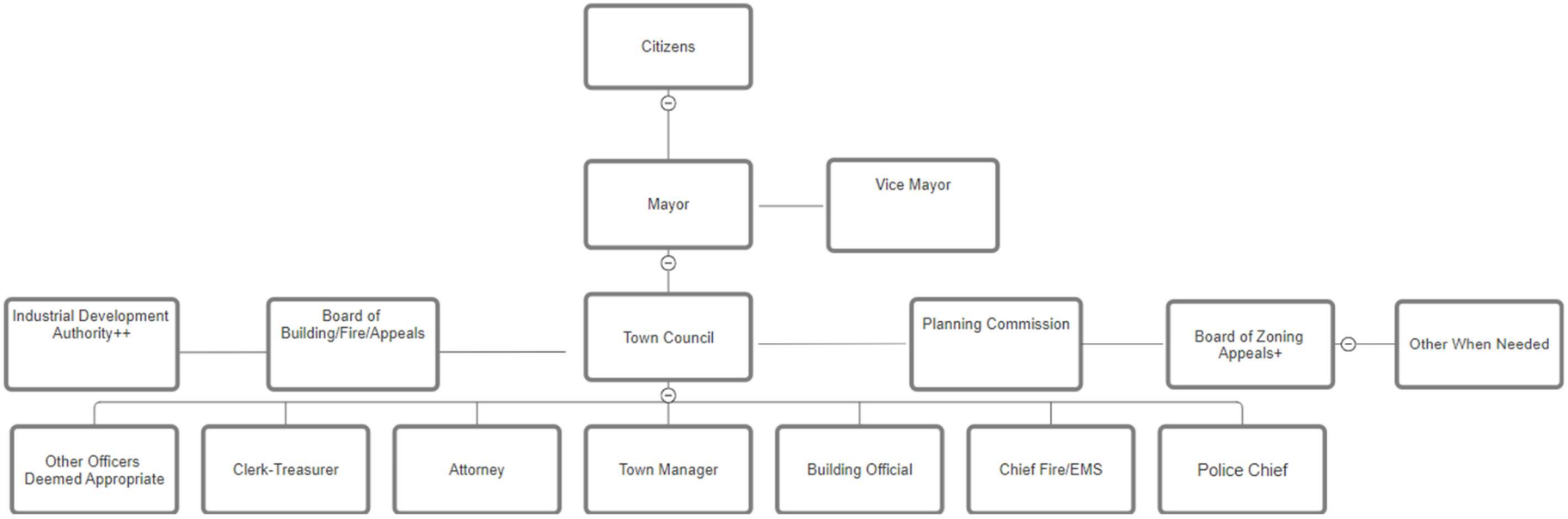
In the mayor-council form of government, the mayor-council body are the legislative leaders, and the policy makers elected to represent various segments of the community. They concentrate on policy issues in response to citizens' needs and wishes. The role of the Town Manager is to conduct all council-determined policies and ensure that the entire community is being served.

By authorization of its charter, the Town Council also appoints a Clerk, Treasurer, Police Chief, and has an attorney on a retainer as its legal counsel. The council may also appoint any additional officers as it deems necessary to conduct the needs of the community's citizens. All the Town's appointed officers serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and Council.

The appointed members of the Planning Commission advise the Council on matters related to growth, development, planning, zoning, and are also responsible for preparing the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Professional Town staff manage the planning process and administer the zoning ordinance throughout the Town's jurisdictional boundaries.

Figure 9-1 and Figure 9-2 detail the Town's organizational structure. In Figure 9-1, the organizational chart of the mayor and town council is displayed. In Figure 9-2, the organizational chart details the Town's classification chart of operations as of Feb 1, 2024.

Figure 9-1: Organizational Chart of Mayor and Town Council as of Feb 1, 2024



+Recommendation to the Circuit Court

++Not Currently Filled

Figure 9-2: Town's Classification Chart of Operations as of Feb 1, 2024

