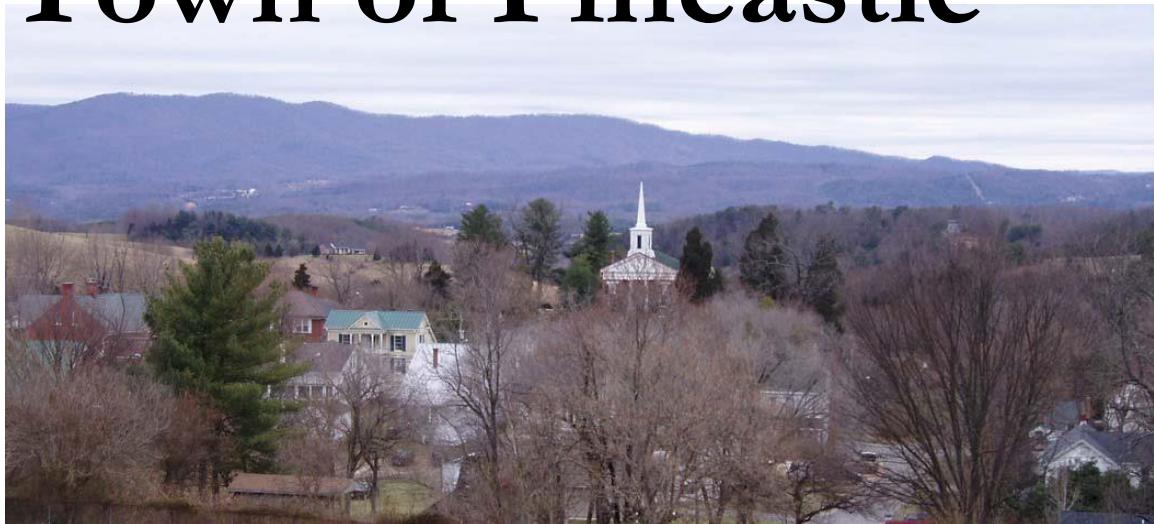


Town of Fincastle



Comprehensive Plan
2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan Update is a joint effort between the Town of Fincastle and graduate students in Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Tech. Thanks are due to the many citizens of greater Fincastle who participated in the community profile survey and planning sessions as part of the update to the Town's 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Their continued support and engagement has helped to shape the Plan into a reflection of the community's hopes for the future of Fincastle.

Town Council 2018

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Ed Bordett
Pamela Binns
Bill Gaul
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Planning Commission 2018

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*Copies of this Comprehensive Plan are available at the Town Office, 25 Bank Street, Fincastle.
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INTRODUCTION



Fig. 1-1 View of Fincastle

FINCASTLE'S PAST AND PRESENT

IN 1772, Fincastle was chartered as the seat of Botetourt County which then extended to the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan. The historic Fincastle community grew from the colonial crossroads along the valley of Town Branch and up the high roads which ascend to the surrounding ridges.

The corporate limits of the Town of Fincastle, unchanged since the 19th century, encompass approximately 150 acres and 350 residents at the center of the historic community. Municipal sewer and water utilities extend beyond town limits to serve the neighborhoods, businesses and schools of the Fincastle community under the planning authority of Botetourt County,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation reports, “*Fincastle is a living community distinguished by its unusually rich inventory of historic properties and its exceptional natural settings of rolling hills*”. Since the 1960’s the Fincastle Historic District has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. A further historic survey of the Fincastle community was done in 2005.

Beyond the town limits, suburban development under the planning authority of Botetourt County is changing the Fincastle community. Fincastle has been listed as an endangered historic site by APVA Preservation Virginia and by the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation.

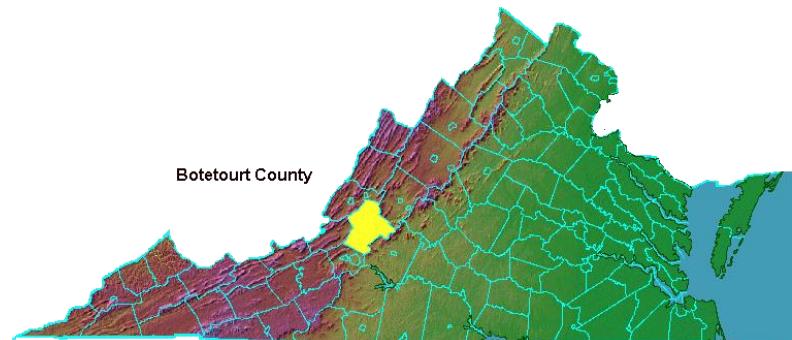


Fig 1-2 Source: <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/vacount/botetourt.html>



THE PLANNING PROCESS

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, this Comprehensive Plan provides information and makes general findings and recommendations. The contents include:

- Information on the community
- The community's vision for the future of Fincastle, both within and beyond the Town limits.
- A guide for land use and revitalization within the town limits.
- A plan for integrating population growth and new development into the historic neighborhoods and landscape of Fincastle.
- Direction and guidance for public and private decisions which affect the Fincastle community.
- Goals and recommendations for future planning.
- Other Planning Strategies as identified by the Planning Commission (through public meetings or otherwise).
- A call for Botetourt County to join in proactive planning for Fincastle beyond the Town limits.

Two series of community meetings in 2005 – 2006 were at the heart of this document.

First, the Fincastle Citizen's Initiative was organized and implemented by "out of town" residents who invited stakeholders, including officials of Botetourt County, to join in planning for Fincastle.

Next, Town Meetings were organized and implemented by the Town of Fincastle and a team of graduate students from Virginia Tech under the direction of Dr. Dianne Zahm.

A strong community of interest was manifested. High priorities include celebration of Fincastle's community spirit and preservation of Fincastle's pastoral setting and historic character; and proactive planning to integrate new development into a vibrant community that retains Fincastle's traditional harmony of community, history, and natural beauty.

Fincastle Citizens' Initiative

Fincastle residents whose homes are outside of the town initiated community-wide meetings through the fall of 2005, and planned a community meeting conducted by professional facilitators Daniel and Phyllis Merenda whose home Santillane lies outside of town limits adjacent to the Botetourt County subdivision of the same name.



The meeting held on January 22, 2006, was well publicized and well attended. Stakeholders in the future of Fincastle were specially invited, including property owners, developers, business proprietors, and officials of Botetourt County and the Town of Fincastle.

The report of this meeting calls for the Town of Fincastle and Botetourt County to cooperate in planning for Fincastle, and identifies community priorities for future development. The 220 corridor was identified as a critical planning area. The report is *Appendix A*.

Community Survey

A team from the Virginia Tech graduate program in Urban and Regional Planning developed and conducted a door-to-door survey on:

- Inter-Governmental Coordination
- Preservation of Natural Integrity
- Encouraging Proper Land Use
- Maintaining Historic Character
- Improving Local Economy
- Addressing Traffic Issues

One hundred thirteen residents of the Fincastle community, inside and outside of the town limits, were interviewed. The report of the survey is *Appendix B*.

Town Meetings

On March 19, 2006, an advertised community meeting addressed planning strategies to meet the identified goals.

On April 13, 2006, a second community meeting addressed the results of the March meeting. Planning strategies and timelines were developed to set forth actions to be taken by the Town in each of the next 5 years, as well as further into the future.

The section on *Fincastle Beyond the Town Boundaries* expresses the strong public concern over the lack of planning for Fincastle by Botetourt County and the lack of coordination between Botetourt County and the Town of Fincastle.

Other priorities identified in the Survey and Town Meetings include:

- Programs that would promote a sense of community through participation and pride.
- Improvement of the vitality and diversity of the local economy.
- Preservation and protection of the natural resources of the Town.
- Planning for future land use to be compatible with Fincastle's historic and rural character.
- Provision of public services and facilities to meet future needs in the Town.
- Preservation and maintenance of the distinct historical identity and character of Fincastle.

In November of 2010, the Planning Commission started putting the finishing touches on the document. After a few additional months of work, on March 7, 2011, the Commission felt that



the document was complete and ready for public advertisement to solicit public input. The Commission held its public meeting and workshop on Monday, April 11, 2011.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Fig 2-1 Fincastle's Viewshed

The Town Branch is the only natural area within town limits. The surrounding fields, forests, hills, water courses and distant mountain views are as integral to Fincastle as are the brick buildings and white steeples within the town limits.

Goal:

Preserve and protect the natural integrity of the Town of Fincastle and its surroundings by balancing the need for new development with the desire to preserve open space and to conserve natural resources.

Recommendation:

The Town should work cooperatively with Botetourt County to guide future development outside the existing Town boundaries.

Objectives:

- Balance the need for new development with the desire to preserve open space and to conserve natural resources.
- Work cooperatively with Botetourt County to guide future development outside the existing Town boundaries



Climate

Avg. Min/Max Temperature

Winter	26.7–47.8
Spring	42.5–69.6
Summer	61.7–86
Fall	49.2–59.2
Rainfall.....	41.3/year

Topography & Slope

The valley of Town Branch is 1,170' above sea level. Within town limits, the high point is Godwin Cemetery at 1,310'. To the west, Wax's Hill rises to 1,467'. To the southeast, Prospect Hill stands at 1,360. The forests of Pine Hill frame the northeast at 1,345.

The slope in Fincastle is variable and quite steep in some areas. Land uses on steep slopes should be regulated with due regard for the instability of the soils and the potential for erosion. Construction should be limited to those areas of gentle (0-5%) to moderate (5-15%) slope.

The Hills and Ridges

Fincastle's setting is essential to the Town's character. The valley of Town Branch is less than two square miles, a manageable size for special planning. The most sensitive areas lie outside of town limits under the planning authority of Botetourt County. Cooperative planning by Botetourt County is needed to secure Fincastle's future.

Geology & Soils

There are six geological formations within the three-mile by two-mile area surrounding Fincastle.

On the south, are five formations of limestone and dolomite: the Elbrook, the Copper Ridge, the Chepullec, the New Market, and the Beekmantown. These areas are characterized by "karst" topography: rolling and steep with sinkholes and caverns. The soils in this area are characterized as rich, deep, and with a relatively balanced pH.

The entire southern half of the Town is underlined with the Elbrook Formation of fine-grained limestone. Water moves rapidly and unpredictably through this type of bedrock. Development in these areas should be subject to regulation to protect the groundwater supply.

The area on the north side of Town is predominately in the Edinburg Formation. The formation is silty shale, with some thin deposits of sandstone. Soil characteristics in the Edinburg Formation are very different from those in the limestone and dolomite areas to the south. As a result, soils in this formation have less agriculture value than those soils in the limestone and dolomite areas.



Four types of soils are found in Fincastle. The soil in the Edinburg Formation is thin, acidic, and quite poor. The upper areas of the soil are poorly drained, while the lower layers drain so fast that water quickly drains below the level at which it is of value to plant life. The Frederick Loam is characterized as rich, deep, and well-drained, with a balanced pH. The Carbo and Chilhowie soils are less deep and the Groseclose silt loam is a very deep soil and well-drained. According to geological surveys, soils found in Fincastle are not suitable for heavy construction due to their instability. Future construction in the Town has to take this into consideration.

Hydrology

The major hydrologic feature of Fincastle is Town Branch which falls 30 feet in elevation over scarcely 0.50 mile. From colonial times into the 20th century, industrial mills lined this fast flowing stream. The eastern slopes of Fincastle drain into Crush Run. Town Branch and Crush Run drain into Catawba Creek.



Fig 2-2 Catawba Creek

Fincastle was first known in history as Miller's Mill. Town Branch was once dammed and sluiced for water power to drive grist mills, lumber mills, fueling mills and machine mills. The sites of the millponds lie in the flood plain of Town Branch. New construction in this area is not advised. Consideration should be given to recreational use of these historic and natural sites.

Due to the nature of the Elbrook formation, wells are highly susceptible to pollution from septic fields and surface run-off. In the 1970's contamination of the ground water necessitated construction of Fincastle's water system.

Municipal sewer service has been extended beyond town limits to alleviate the threat of ground water from residential septic fields. Substantial upgrades were recently made to the sewer



systems which increased capacity from 75,000 gallons a day to 125,000. The sewage treatment plant has capacity for some future expansion.

Several springs have played a major role in the history of Fincastle. The “Big Spring” at the intersection of Water and Back Streets was at one time the main water supply for the Town. In the gorge of Town Branch to the west, “Federal Spring” fed into one of the mill ponds. The “Ferromagnesian Spring,” beyond town limits on the Blue Ridge Turnpike, was a major attraction during Fincastle’s period as a resort town in the late nineteenth century. Preservation and historic interpretation efforts have taken place for “Big Spring,” The other springs have the potential for this type of historic interpretation.

Opportunities

Fincastle is situated in an area of scenic beauty and natural abundance. The Town should support efforts currently underway to preserve the natural environment of the area. These include efforts by the Valley Conservation Council, a member of the national Land Trust Alliance, to promote the conservation of private property through voluntary landowner conservation easements.

Botetourt County has also established a process for communicating and promoting various preservation incentives available to landowners. All of these efforts should be supported in order to preserve the rural character, scenic viewsheds, and other natural features which are valued amenities in the Fincastle area.

Critical Issues

- Many of Fincastle’s natural resources, including the ground water supply and the structural integrity of the town’s hills, lie beyond town limits under the planning authority of Botetourt County.
- Residential development approved by Botetourt County could result in degradation of water and change the character of certain hillsides and other scenic viewsheds. Negative consequences could include permanent loss of open spaces, loss of agricultural land, permanent loss of scenic viewsheds, and loss of property values.
- Preservation of natural resources outside of the town awaits cooperative planning by Botetourt County
- Fincastle should encourage and assist private property owners in voluntary initiatives such as establishment of conservation easements.

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.



HISTORIC IDENTITY & CHARACTER



Fig 3-1 Log Cabin

Fincastle is Botetourt County's greatest historic treasure. In 1969, the Fincastle Historic District was the first Botetourt County historic site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. The survival and revival of Fincastle's historic homes and storefronts is the achievement of community spirit, and the shared values of property owners and the volunteers of Historic Fincastle, Inc.

Goal:

Preserve and maintain the distinct historic identity and character of Fincastle.

Objectives:

- Make wise use of the Town's historic resources, including any natural features that have figured prominently in the Town's history
- Encourage private sector improvement of historically significant structures. Very little has been built since the 1930s, with the exception of Route 220, which significantly altered the character of the town.

Fincastle has far more remaining of its past architecture and character than most towns. As Fincastle builds in the future, it is important to be aware of the forces which shaped the town, in order to preserve and enhance those aspects of town life which are the most valuable.

In 1772 when the Town was formally established, a small settlement already existed nearby. This settlement grew up around Miller's Mill and likely came into existence during the 1750s. A list of taxpayers prepared in 1784 reveals that growth took place quickly during these first few years. It included 59 buildings: 26 log dwelling houses, 21 cabins, 1 "double" cabin, and 11 frame dwelling houses. Court Order books record the establishment of a number of taverns, ordinaries,



and other commercial endeavors which sprang up to meet the needs of the many travelers passing through.

The building pattern during this time was regular and close. Evidence of this pattern can be seen both in documents from the period, and in the buildings from the period which still exist today, for example, along Church Street just south of Main Street, or the eastern side of Main Street.

Together, the buildings create a sense of unity and order—and an architectural composition of greater significance than any of the individual buildings standing alone.

Another building pattern which emerged very early in Fincastle's past was characterized by monumental buildings designed to stand some distance from other buildings to achieve their full effect. Quite often, these buildings are located on hilltops. Perhaps the first building in Fincastle intentionally sited this way was the Anglican (now Presbyterian) Church.

By the early 19th century, these two building patterns are in evidence in buildings of a very different type. The first fifty years of Fincastle's history had seen a transition from frontier town to the economic and governmental center for a rich agricultural area. Elegant brick and frame structures replaced the log buildings of an earlier period. The monumental building pattern was in evidence in residences (Santillane and Prospect) and in many of the public buildings that date from this period, such as the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal Churches. The County Courthouse, surely was designed and sited as a monumental building. All of these buildings are still extant and the space surrounding them has remained open.

The close and regular building pattern mentioned earlier also continued into the nineteenth century. One of the finest examples of this building type is Richard Kyle's (now Kyle House) store and residence.

This building has the same relationship to the street as the earlier log structures along Church Street, and is a wonderful example of an urban commercial and residential structure from the Federal period. Following the "Great Fire" of 1871, the pattern of locating buildings close to the street and close together was continued. Although the architectural style had changed from Federal to Victorian, the relationship of the buildings to each other had essentially remained the same. This pattern of building, with structures of different styles, periods, and functions, all forming an orderly and clear architectural line, is one of the features that make Fincastle an appealing small town today. The inherent residential charm that results from this arrangement is one of the major motivating factors for current residents choosing to live within the Town limits.

Existing Conditions

The Town's built environment consists of approximately 142 (According to 2000 United States Census data) structures ranging in age from the late 18th century to the late 20th century, with the majority of the historic structures having been built in the 19th century (a list of historic structures is provided in *Appendix B*). Properties that have been restored either by Historic Fincastle, Inc. or by other parties include the Botetourt County.



Courthouse, the Old Jail Building, the Blacksmith Shop, the Douglas Building, the Helms-Ayers House, the Early Cabin, the Crowder House, and several others. It should also be noted that the vast majority of Fincastle's historic structures are active components of daily life; they house families, provide meeting places, and create spaces for commercial activity. Because of this regular use, even those structures that have not been officially restored are kept at relatively high levels of maintenance. Fincastle is an active community reflecting the various personalities and influences that have directed the Town throughout its two hundred year history and continue to direct it today.



Fig 3-2 Old Jail Building

Opportunities

In 2005, Historic Fincastle, Inc. (HFI) was awarded a cost-share grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to fund a formal architectural survey of Fincastle. Grant monies were used to hire historic preservation consultants to: 1) document the existing historic district in a standardized manner; 2) create an inventory list of both contributing (greater than 50 years old and retaining a good level of historic integrity) and non-contributing buildings; and 3) survey areas around the existing historic district that are known to contain historic buildings that have never been studied in a systematic manner. The survey has been completed and results are available in the Town Office.

While documentation of property does not result in any type of individual historic designation, nor does it result in any restriction on the use of property, it does provide a foundation for defining the historic identity of Fincastle, as exemplified by its architecture. This identity ties in



to the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, and directly influences recommendations and decisions on land use, historic preservation, economic development and tourism.

A March 2006 letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation acknowledges local efforts to preserve the unique and irreplaceable historic resources of Fincastle. The National Trust, on behalf of APVA—Preservation Virginia, Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation, and Virginia Department of Historic Resources, recognizes Fincastle's character as a source of civic pride and a potential economic asset, if properly cultivated. The National Trust offered several recommendations to support a citizen-based growth management initiative and to promote collaborative land-use master planning by the Town of Fincastle and Botetourt County.

Citizen feedback through the community profile survey and at public meetings also recommended sidewalk improvements and underground utilities to enhance and preserve the historic character of the Town.

Beginning in the fall of 2006, Reid Clontz, a member of the Town Planning Commission, gathered information regarding potential funding sources for a sidewalk improvement program. Based upon the information gathered, it was determined that the Federal Transportation Enhancement grant program (TEA) would be the best option for the Town to pursue. Since then the Town has received funding and is nearing the construction process for this project.

Anderson and Associates, an engineering and planning firm, was retained to assist in identifying the possible project area. The decision was made to have the proposed project area run from Courthouse Square to Breckenridge Elementary School.

In late October, 2008, the Town was notified that the project had been approved at a total cost of a little over \$1 million dollars. In 2008 and 2009, the Town received a total of \$173,000 for the planning, survey and design portion of the project.

The Town contracted with Hill Studios in April, 2010 for project survey and design. Survey work has been done in Town. The design phase of the project has been completed, and construction should begin in the spring of 2012.

In conjunction with the sidewalk project, the Town has met with representative of local utilities to explore the possibility of putting utilities underground in the project area. Due to the cost of placing utilities underground, and funding limitations, it has been determined that this portion of the project is not feasible at this time. It is a Town priority, however, assuming funding can be made available at some point.

The Town also received a bequest from an anonymous donor of \$10,000 for the repair and maintenance of sidewalks not included in the sidewalk project area. Work has begun on the sidewalks by community volunteers and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Critical Issues



- Owners of historic properties may be concerned that preservation guidelines would restrict them from making needed repairs or prohibit additions or other modifications to their homes and properties.
- Increased information and education on the Town's stated goal of preservation may serve to prevent the destruction of historic resources, either through neglect or through deliberate action by parties unconcerned or unaware of this goal.

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.



Fig 3-3 James M. Early Cabin, 1796

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



Fig 4-1 Fincastle Town Office



Community facilities apply to a broad range of services to the public including utilities, emergency services, health care and recreational facilities. Although Fincastle has a small population, the Town enjoys the use of many community facilities due to its role as a county seat. For example, the Town has access to a public health clinic and a public library. Breckinridge Elementary School, within the Town Limits, and Botetourt Technical School Central Academy Middle School, which are adjacent to town limits.

Goal:

Assure that public facilities and services are available to meet existing and future needs

Objectives:

- Continue to provide high quality utility services to Town residents and businesses
- Work cooperatively with Botetourt County to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient and equitable services to Town residents and businesses
- Continue cooperation with Botetourt County to provide safe and efficient water and sewer services within the town

Goal:

Provide programs and services that will support and strengthen the feeling of community in the Town of Fincastle.

Objectives:

- Encourage a cooperative relationship between local churches and other community organizations in recognition of the role each can play in meeting local community service needs.

Critical Issues

- The Town should continue to work with Botetourt County to provide safe and adequate water for the residents in and around Fincastle.
- Above-ground wiring is an issue with many Fincastle residents. Citizens feel that underground wiring would be more in line with community character.
- The Town should develop a Capital Improvements Plan to coordinate funding for necessary services and facility upgrades.



Goal:

- Continue to provide high quality utility services to Town residents and businesses.
- For those services not provided directly by the Town work cooperatively with Botetourt County to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient and equitable services to Town residents and businesses.

Recommendations:

- Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission should undertake the task of developing a five year Capital Improvements Plan based on areas of need and/or community interest that have been identified in this section. It would be advisable to include several representatives from the public in the development of this plan.

Water Services

Water for the Town of Fincastle is drawn from two wells just outside the Town boundaries, one south of Town, the other to the west. The Town is also served by a 100,000-gallon capacity water storage tank. Water quality from the wells is very good and current water supply is sufficient to meet the demands of the Fincastle community and surrounding area. There are currently 275 connections to the Town water. While wellhead protection planning is voluntary under Virginia State Law, the Town has developed a wellhead protection plan. A jointly-developed wellhead protection plan will identify the type of development that is appropriate in the vicinity of water wells to promote safe and adequate water services.

The Town entered into an agreement with the Western Virginia Water Authority to manage water services to the Town. Town water currently serves 275 water customers and 203 sewer customers. 64% of the water customers are in town and 34% are out of town.

The health department has recommended installation of a second water storage tank to ensure adequate firefighting capabilities to all areas of the Town. Although there is plenty of water to meet the current demand, water pressure could be an issue should a major fire event occur. In August of 2009 the Town Council adopted a resolution endorsing the concept of an interconnected water system with a nearby water utility. It should be noted that at the time of publication of this plan, the Town is currently in negotiations with a private water service provider for such a water interconnect system. Rates for water services may need adjustment to coincide with the rates of other localities within the State. Higher rates could provide a source of additional revenue for necessary capital investment.

Appendix D shows the Towns water service area, as well as the location of the main water lines.



Sewer and Storm Water Services

The Town of Fincastle uses the treatment facility located just west of town off U.S. 220. The sanitized effluent is closely monitored and released into Catawba Creek. There are currently over 243 connections to the Town sewer facilities in the Town and surrounding areas. Influent flow was as high as 85 percent capacity in October, 1999. The existing facility is currently operating within Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Standards. The treatment facility is located within the 100 year flood plain.

The Botetourt/Craig Public Safety Facility, including a regional jail, was recently constructed in Town. Due to the jail's sewage requirements, the County constructed a new biological nutrient system to replace the existing unlined lagoon system. It was previously thought that lagoon sludge was so dense at the bottom of the lagoon that seepage could not occur. However, unlined lagoons have now been deemed unsafe and many water treatment facilities are lining their lagoons to decrease any chance of seepage. The new system has alleviated capacity issues and provided safe wastewater treatment since it began operation in 2009.

Solid Waste

The county landfill was located ten miles from Fincastle. Botetourt County explored options for additional facilities. This included a proposed 58-acre site to replace the existing landfill. Unfortunately, a site analysis concluded that the proposed site would only yield nine acres suitable for landfill use. The County entered into an agreement to have County solid waste accepted at a Western Virginia Resource Authority facility in Salem. Fincastle and County residents can still take trash and yard waste to the landfill for disposal.

Trash collection (but not recycling) is handled through a private contractor. Recycling bins for aluminum, paper, and plastic are located behind Breckenridge Elementary School. Any materials collected are recycled in Roanoke.

Telecommunications

Many of the telecommunication needs in Fincastle are provided by nTelos: wired phone, cellular phone, beeper, cable and various internet services. nTelos will continue to upgrade its services as new technologies become available. A new radio tower was erected in 1999 to facilitate the upgraded services. The tower included additional space for co-location of cell phone services.

The use of underground wiring has been suggested as a strategy to enhance the historic character of Fincastle. County buildings are already equipped with this type of wiring; however, the residential areas are still lined with utility poles and above-ground wiring. Further impact studies are being undertaken to determine the feasibility and timing of a conversion to underground wiring. These findings may be incorporated into a capital improvements plan.

Electric Utilities



Appalachian Power supplies electricity to the Town of Fincastle. Appalachian is part of a large conglomerate power company, capable of expanding to meeting any potential development in Fincastle.



Fig 4-2 County Public Safety Facility

Emergency Services

Fire and rescue are provided to the Town by fire and rescue squad volunteers. These services are provided to Fincastle and the surrounding area. The nearest emergency room is at the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke; therefore, rescue services play a critical role in crisis situations. In 2001, a state-of-the-art emergency communications facility was constructed. This allows for efficient emergency response to any location in the County. Law enforcement services are provided by the County Sheriff's Office. In 2010, one hundred and twenty five officers were on the force.

Community Facilities

Fincastle has access to the meeting room of the library, the local firehouse, the community center, church facilities, the courtroom and local schools to support community activities and public meetings. The churches support a local preschool, weddings and a food pantry, and provide services to senior citizens and children. The Town has community theatre and sports activities scheduled in the local school gymnasium; however, residents have recently become unhappy with the high expense attached with using this facility. A citizens' recreation committee could coordinate with the Botetourt County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Schools

Breckinridge Elementary School, in the Town Limits, and Central Academy Middle School and Botetourt Vocational Center, just beyond town limits, and are served by municipal sewer and water.





Fig 4-3 The Botetourt County Museum

Fincastle is served by the Fincastle Library where books about the Town history can be obtained. Videos are also available for rental.

Public Health Services

County clinic services include family planning, maternity services, preschool physical examinations, WIC nutritional program and children's specialty services. Immunizations, STD testing and dental care are other health services provided. The clinic facility hosts several community activities including health education programs; work site, school and home health programs; and an infant car seat program. Environmental health services are also provided. These include restaurant inspection, rabies prevention, lead poisoning prevention, sewage and water permits, and complaint investigation.

Opportunities

Many Town residents would like to see the Town's partnership with Botetourt County grow. Such a partnership could lead to improved community services, given Fincastle's limited resources and the County's dependence on Fincastle as its government center. Residents also believe that the feeling of community and the Town's character are the most important aspects of Fincastle life. Community facilities can serve as a tool to maintain this feeling and character that residents consider a meaningful contribution to their quality of life.





Fig 4-4 Church in Fincastle

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.

ECONOMY AND TOURISM



Fig 5-1 Fincastle Businesses

The factors analyzed in this Comprehensive plan affect the Town's economic structure. This section sets forth the different ways in which the Town draws in revenue, describing existing businesses and income distribution. A vital local economy is important to provide goods, services, and employment for Fincastle's citizens while generating tax revenues to pay for necessary services.



Background

Fincastle is unique as a 21st Century survivor of an 18th Century village street pattern where fields and forests surround the town, and the pastoral hills have changed little in 238 years. During the early part of the 20th century, Fincastle was viewed as a small resort town. As growth in Botetourt County flourished, Fincastle began to lose its potential for economic growth. The Town has adjusted to these changes, attempting to balance the value of its historic background with the economic challenges of a bedroom community where many residents work outside the Town during the day.

Goal:

Improve and maintain the vitality of the local economy to enhance the quality of life in Fincastle by:

- Promoting commercial development that is consistent with the historic and rural elements of the Town.
- Promoting new business development, mainly along the 220 corridor, and improve the viability of existing businesses.

Existing Conditions

The Town includes a variety of specialty shops, law offices, medical offices, construction companies, and government offices. Based on applications for business and professional licenses, there were 35 businesses operating within the Town in 2010. Additional commercial amenities are provided within the surrounding region, particularly along Route 220 toward Interstate 81.

Income

Figure 5-2 provides income and employment data for Fincastle. According to the 2000 Census (2010 Census data for this category was not available at the time of publication of this document) , few residents live below the poverty level and well over half of the working age population is in the labor force.

Town of Fincastle

Income and Employment

Median Household Income	\$ 33,438
Median Family Income	\$ 54,688
Persons Below Poverty	2.3%
In Labor Force (pop. 16 years & older)	62.4%

Fig 5-2 Source: U.S. Census 2000

Revenue Sources



Figure 5-3 summarizes the revenue available to the Town of Fincastle in 2010, which was largely received through taxes of various kinds. Residents do not pay property taxes to the Town.

Town of Fincastle - Schedule of Revenues—2010

Revenue from Local Sources

ABC tax	100
AEP utility tax	5,800
Bank Franchise Tax	42,000
BPOL	9,800
Cable franchise	2,600
copier income	100
Auto tax	3,800
Interest income	9,000
Meals tax	10,500
Rental income	1,980
Revenue sharing	12,000
Sales tax	17,000
Fire program grant	8,000
Litter control grant	850
From W S fund	2,400
Misc income	<u>100</u>
Total	126,030

**Excludes miscellaneous contributions and fireworks donations*

Fig 5-3 Source: Town of Fincastle.

Opportunities

Commercial growth and development will continue to occur along the Route 220 corridor as Botetourt County absorbs new residential development. While Route 220 has attracted franchise businesses to cater to the demands of population growth, there are opportunities for specialty shops and niche businesses within Fincastle to draw visitors looking for unique shopping in an historic setting. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, in its March 2006 letter to the Town, acknowledges that Fincastle's historic resources are a source of civic pride and can be a key economic asset, if properly cultivated. Many residents have expressed interest in developing a farmers market to complement the rural setting of the Town and promote heritage tourism.



Fincastle should work cooperatively with Botetourt County's tourism agent to highlight its historic identity and community assets, and to coordinate events throughout the region.

Attic Productions, a community theater in Botetourt County, offers opportunities in the performing arts for children and adults. Founded in 1995, the all-volunteer group has produced four plays per year using public school facilities. A 7-acre building site, just outside Fincastle, was purchased in 2001, and construction of a permanent performing arts facility was recently completed.

According to a 2002 study conducted by Americans for the Arts, there is compelling evidence that non-profit arts programming can be a significant driver of economic activity in communities.

Critical Issues

- The historic identity of Fincastle is directly tied to the Town's potential for economic development and must be given careful consideration.
- The need to attract viable businesses must be balanced with the citizens' desire to maintain compatibility with existing development in the Town.

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.

HOUSING



Fig 6-1 Fincastle Residence



The civic buildings, churches, and charming historic houses give Fincastle its distinctive character. Houses supply the community with the majority of its streetscapes, spacing and overall feel and are far more numerous than any other major type of building in the town. In formulating a housing policy, the Town must make sure to balance both issues of shelter and aesthetics to ensure that housing needs are met while preserving the Town character.

Existing Conditions

Census Data

The Town of Fincastle had 142 housing units according to the 2000 Census. As of publication of this document, 2010 Census date at the Town level was not yet available. In the Town's housing inventory, many structures have historic or architectural value and function as essential elements of the Town's charm and sense of community.

Goal:

Promote safe, sanitary and affordable housing for town residents of all incomes by:

- Encouraging rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures, as appropriate and as structurally and economically feasible.
- Encouraging private sector investment in and improvement of substandard housing.
- Ensuring that new housing development is consistent with Fincastle's historic community character. All of the Town's dwellings should be included in a comprehensive effort to maintain and improve the quality of the housing that is available.
- Strive to insure that new housing within the town does not overburden the existing road system and available on and off street parking capacity.

The median age of a home in Fincastle is 52 years, with over 44% of the housing built before 1939. Less than 30% of the housing in Town was built after 1970. 69% of the homes in Town are owner occupied while 29% are occupied by renters. The median value for owner-occupied units in 2008 was \$229,700. The general picture emerging from these figures is that Fincastle has an older housing stock with values that are below average for the state of Virginia.

Opportunities

The many positive aspects evident in Fincastle's housing stock include historic character and high aesthetic quality of many of the Town's units, matched by a high overall level of upkeep. This high quality of the Town's housing is reaffirmed by local residents in community surveys and public meetings, which have demonstrated a very favorable overall opinion of the Town's housing. Much of the high regard for housing is owed to the dense, coherent organization of homes, churches and businesses that lend the Town its distinctive character. Community response has also shown that the general affordability of the Town's housing contributes to this



positive perception. The Town can utilize the historic character of the homes to promote civic pride. The strong community involvement culture of the Town can support efforts to cultivate Fincastle's identity as an historic landmark in the State of Virginia. The abundance of historic homes also creates the opportunity for rehabilitation through historic preservation tax credits. These tax credits not only help preserve the Town's unique historic assets, but also provide an avenue for producing affordable housing without the construction of new units. Historic easements may also provide an incentive for residents to list their homes on the national or state registers. A list of historic structures is included in Appendix B.



Fig 6-2 Fincastle Residence



Fig 6-3 Fincastle Residence

Critical Issue

- The Town has a limited number of available parcels for construction of new units.



TRANSPORTATION



Fig7-1 Fincastle Streetscape

Transportation directly and indirectly influences physical development in the Town of Fincastle. The location and character of housing, community facilities and commercial areas are all affected by the availability and quality of the transportation infrastructure. Transportation and land use have a dynamic relationship; land use and development generate the demand for transportation resources while adequate transportation facilities, in turn, allow for additional development.

Background

As a small town and the County seat of Botetourt County, Fincastle needs to be well-connected to the surrounding area for residents to access employment and shopping opportunities.

Transportation links are also essential for bringing visitors to Fincastle and to the courthouse and other county offices.

Goal:

Promote a safe, efficient and economical transportation network



Objectives:

- Maintain and upgrade roads and sidewalks as needed to safely and efficiently accommodate local traffic.
- Promote safe and efficient access for trucks and school buses.
- Assure availability of adequate parking facilities.
- Coordinate regional transportation needs with Botetourt County and other localities

Critical Issues

- Residential development along Route 630 and the location of schools east of Fincastle contribute to a high volume of traffic along Roanoke Street, Main Street, and Back Street as motorists cut through the center of Town.
- Increased noise from traffic along Route 220, particular large trucks, impacts the well-being of residents as well as the overall rural character of the Town.
- Parked cars contribute to poor visibility at the intersection of Main Street and Roanoke Street. Adequate parking facilities are not available to support business activities in the uptown area.
- Convenient transportation is not adequately provided for elderly residents who are no longer able to transport themselves.
- Ongoing communication with VDOT will continue to be a challenge and should be coordinated through County channels.

Goal:

Promote a safe, efficient and economical transportation network by:

- *Promoting safe and efficient access for trucks and school buses by completing the Springwood Road Extension on the north side of town.*
- *Creating and maintaining sidewalks and pedestrian walkways as needed to safely and efficiently accommodate pedestrian traffic.*
- *Planning for the availability of adequate parking facilities.*



Existing Conditions

Fincastle is located on U.S. Route 220, roughly ten miles north of its intersection with Interstate 81 between Roanoke and Clifton Forge. Route 220 is the major transportation link to surrounding areas and effectively divides the Town into two sections. Residents living west of the four-lane highway are cut off from residents east of the road by high speed, high volume automobile traffic. Route 630, which runs east-west, is also a significant transportation link, especially for the new development occurring to the east of Fincastle. The street system in Fincastle is the property of and is maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Opportunities

VDOT has plans to create an extension of Springwood Road from Route 220 to Route 630. This would greatly reduce traffic through the Town and provide greater pedestrian safety. VDOT does not, however, have funds to begin any construction of the extension in the foreseeable future. The Town should work with the County to ensure that this project is prioritized by VDOT. A large percentage of the through traffic in Town is County traffic from the Sheriff's Department, school buses, student traffic from the three schools and county and School Board employees.

A citizen-led meeting in January 2006 identified several opportunities to address the impacts of growth and development along the U.S. Route 220 corridor. Recommendations for a Route 220 bypass, from Brughs Mill Road to Catawba Creek, will require substantial involvement from the Town and County but creates an opportunity for improvements to Route 220 as part of VDOT's efforts. Several improvements identified by residents include a traffic light at one or more intersections of Route 220 (Main Street and/or Roanoke Street), and the addition of turning lanes on either side of Route 220. These improvements alone could significantly promote Fincastle as a "walking town" and reduce the speed of traffic along Route 220.

Figure 7-2 shows the Route 220 corridor and its relationship with the Town of Fincastle. The Town and its boundaries are identified by the lightest shaded area on the map. The darkest shaded area shows the parcels that are directly adjacent to Route 220, representing areas where commercial development and redevelopment is likely to occur. The striped area shows a 500 foot impact zone for Route 220. Residents in this area are likely to experience the majority of externalities resulting from development, and should be engaged in any public processes where issues along the Route 220 corridor are addressed. Because the Town of Fincastle is the County seat, there may be opportunities for collaborative enhancement of the Town's transportation network. New construction for County use within the Town may provide opportunities for improvement to adjacent roads and sidewalks, providing added safety for County workers and Town citizens.

Additional funding may also be obtained through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) with programs such as Community Development Block Grants or the Main Street Program. Some of these programs are designed to assist smaller communities with rehabilitation and would provide funding to improve the pedestrian corridors



in the uptown area. Both Fincastle and Botetourt County are eligible to receive funding through these programs. The Town would need to submit a proposal to the Virginia DHCD as these are competitive grants given on an annual basis.

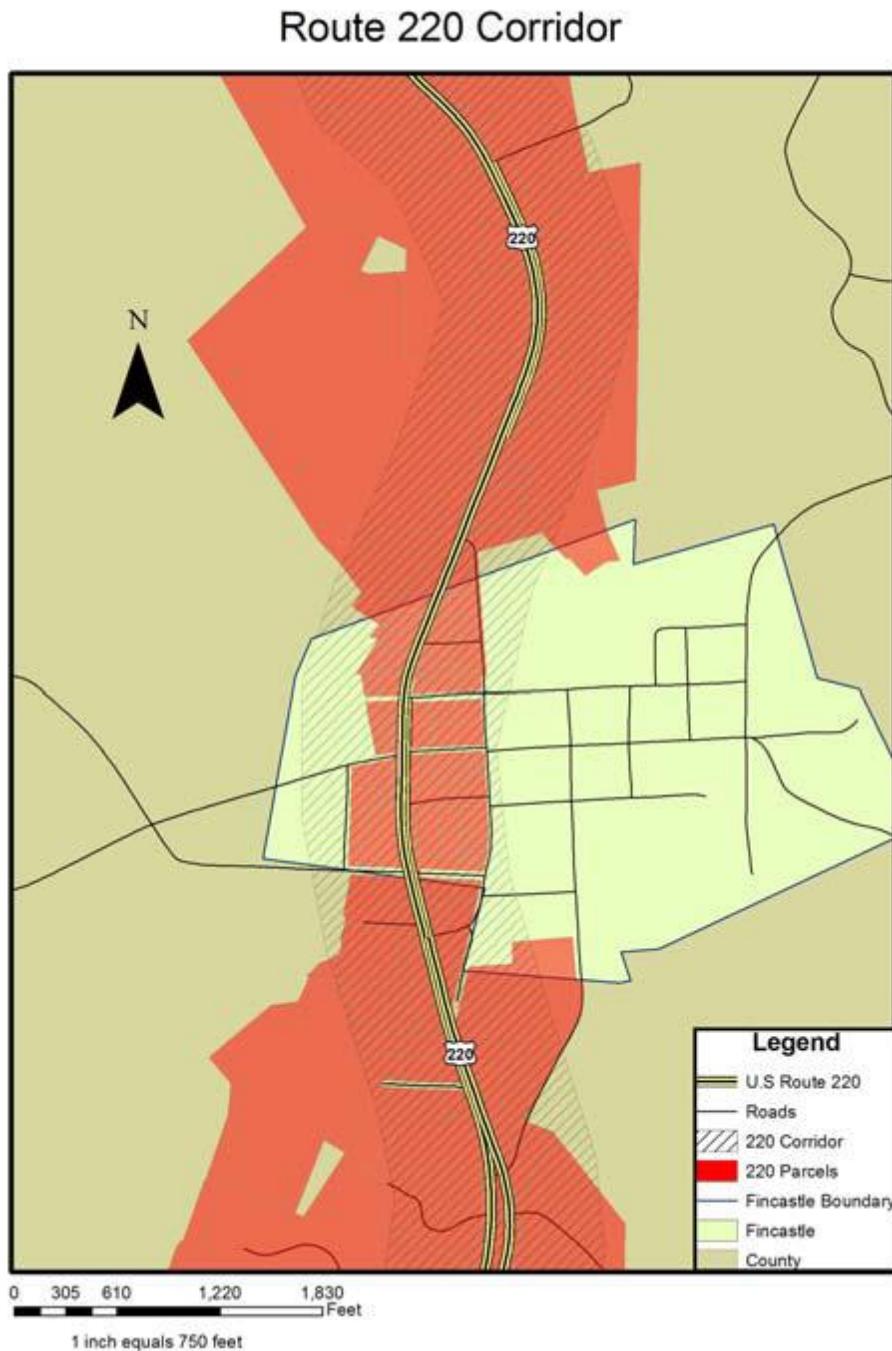


Fig 7-2 Town Boundaries and U.S. Route 220 Corridor



Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.

TOWN ZONING AND LAND USE



Fig 8-1 Residential Land Use

FINCASTLE'S FUTURE – THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Goal:

Preserve and enhance historic patterns and characteristics of land use within Town limits by:

- Identifying and defining the distinctive characteristics of design and site location for each block of town.
- Preserving and protecting important historic and natural resources from inappropriate development.

The incorporated Town is the core of the historic Fincastle community which extends beyond the 19th Century town limits to the neighborhoods along Blue Ridge Turnpike, Springwood Road, Poor Farm Road, Roanoke Road, and Blacksburg Road; and the newer neighborhoods of Pine Hills and Santillane. Within the town limits, planning must focus on redevelopment and preservation of the historic village core, including the commercial zone centered on the Courthouse at Main and Roanoke Streets. It is hoped that Botetourt County will proactively plan the new development occurring outside of the Town boundary to shape a rural village with integrated neighborhoods interconnected by streets, parks and pedestrian ways centered on the old village and on new commercial zones.

Fincastle and Botetourt County should join to preserve the fields and forests of the high ground which frames Fincastle by offering owners information, assistance and incentives to retain open spaces.



The residential core of the old village should be preserved. New infill construction within the Town, and new developments in Botetourt County beyond the own boundary should be planned to harmonize and coordinate with the historic character of Fincastle.

The historic commercial center on Main and Roanoke Streets should be renovated and preserved. Distinctive and harmonious businesses should be encouraged to make Fincastle a destination for shoppers.

Fincastle should welcome and encourage vendors of local produce and products. Botetourt County should join the Town in planning for commercial development along the 220 corridor and for a new neighborhood commercial center on the west side of 220 beyond the Town boundary.

The 220 corridor is an integral part of Fincastle. An appearance of a rural byway can be achieved with trees and grassy berms, appropriate setbacks, coordinated highway entrances, and consistency in the design of signage, lighting, and architecture. A reduced speed limit of 35 miles per hour would be appropriate. A traffic control is needed for safety in entering and crossing 220. Highway entrances should be minimized by planning for internal connections among businesses along 220. Pedestrian ways should be provided along both sides of the highway.

CURRENT LAND USE PATTERNS

Community Profile

- Total Population	353
- Male	190
- Female	163
- Avg. Family Size	2.31
- Total Housing Units.....	142

Residential

Residential structures account for approximately 40% of land use in the Town of Fincastle (excluding mixed-use). These structures are dispersed throughout the town, with concentrations in all but the civic/commercial center of town.

- Single Family Residential—structures that contain only one dwelling unit—account for approximately 39% of all land use.
- Multi-Family Residential accounts for approximately 1% of total land use and 3% of residential land use.
- Rental property, both single unit and multi-family, account for approximately 29% of available housing within the town and immediate surrounding areas.



Commercial and Retail

Commercial and retail land use consists of retail stores, business offices, and service providers, among other things. A high concentration of these uses can be found around the Town center (Roanoke and Main Streets) as well as along Route 220. Commercial and retail land uses account for 3.75% of total land use in the Town of Fincastle.

Government Use

This land use occupies a total of 19.25% of the Town of Fincastle. Botetourt County government offices are concentrated around the County Courthouse. A school, Breckenridge Elementary, is located in the northeast corner of the town.

- Churches and cemeteries occupy 8%, with the majority of this in Godwin Cemetery.
- Town and County government offices occupy 13%.
- Breckinridge Elementary School occupies 6%.
- Parks 0.25%.
- Mixed commercial and residential. 3%

Open Space

The National Trust for Historic Preservation noted the Fincastle community's *exceptional natural settings of rolling hills*. It must be noted, however, that very little of this natural setting lies within town limits.

Pasture land on the west side of Fincastle occupies approximately 2% of the total land area.

The remaining open spaces in Fincastle are undeveloped lots which account for a total of 14% of the area within town limits.

Parking, Rights of Way and Circulation

The Town of Fincastle is well served by a transportation network, with approximately 18% of its land area being dedicated to vehicular travel. Rights of way account for 17% of total area. These include residential roads as well as U.S. Route 220. Dedicated parking accounts for 1% of total land area. These parking areas primarily serve the courthouse, retail establishments in the Uptown area, and churches. Additional parking is needed in the Town center.

FUTURE LAND USE

A variety of factors will affect the future land uses within the Town limits. The Future Land Use Map serves as a general guide for the future development patterns in town. Ideally a Future Land



Use Map will assist the Planning Commission and Town Council in making decisions related to the development and redevelopment of parcels, properties and buildings within town. Specific guidelines and standards for the pattern, style and character of development should be contained within other regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance, Building Code, and Capital Improvement Program.

Designated Future Land Uses represent what the Commission and Council view as the highest and best use for an individual or set of properties. Those designations have been determined through careful research into existing conditions and patterns, analyses of demographic and economical data, surveying and predictions of future needs and desires of land within the Town of Fincastle. A successful Future Land Use Map will be an evolving document, changing and amending with the ever-changing environment. With this in mind, Future Land Uses are broken down into four specific use types:

1. Single-Family Residential: Individual homes designed for the occupation by one distinct family unit on independent and separate lots.
2. Multi-Family Residential: A structure, or set of structures, designed for long-term occupation by a combination of individuals or family units, within one lot or a series of lots. Uses include, but are not limited to, townhomes, apartments, duplexes, boarding houses and condominiums.
3. Civic/Government: Public use and gathering facilities for the purposes of conducting public business, providing services to the community and citizens, and offering opportunities to an individual or group of individuals. Uses include, but are not limited to, municipal and governmental offices, schools, churches, parks, parking areas, Masonic and other lodges, nonprofit organizations and other charities, fire departments and rescue squads, and post offices and libraries.
4. Mixed Use/Commercial: General commercial district with properties designed to provide a service, use or product for public or private consumption. Uses include, but are not limited to, general retail, product sales and (limited) servicing, professional offices, medical offices, convenience stores, specialty shops, mercantiles and restaurants. Ancillary uses include above-store residences and/or apartments as a secondary use to the primary commercial use.

FUTURE ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS AND PERMITTED USES

Given Fincastle's historic character, future land use should generally follow the pattern and character of existing uses (which are given in the Existing Land Use map). Three types of development districts are proposed for the future; these are shown in the Future Land Use map, and described in greater detail below. Each of the districts is intended to preserve the positive aspects of the Town's existing character and assist the community in making decisions that will maintain and improve its overall appearance and organization, as well as working to ensure historic and natural resource preservation.



Commercial District

The commercial district provides for a lively and varied uptown area. The uses appearing in this district provide the opportunity to create a viable commercial base for the town along Route 220, while offering convenience to Town residents and visitors. Development within the commercial district should be compatible with the historic, small-town character of Fincastle. There should be a commercial overlay district for the 220 corridor.

Residential Density.

The integrity of the existing single family residential neighborhoods is to be maintained. At the same time, commercial and high density residential uses may be permitted and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. These uses should be scored according to criteria such as impact on the water and sewer system, effects on circulation patterns, fitting in with the character of the adjoining properties and neighborhood, parking and lighting and compliance with the goals of this Plan. Residential uses should continue to predominate in this district, and infill development must be compatible with the prevailing character of the neighborhood.

Government/Church and civic.

A significant portion of the Town of Fincastle is occupied by these use types, which include churches, government offices, parks and lodges. While not necessarily discouraged, as the uses present the Town with no revenue source, maintaining the uses is important to the long-standing character of the Town.

Opportunities

Fincastle is home to diverse land uses that serve the community needs. The Town should review and consider a newly proposed zoning ordinance that identifies additional districts to address the transitional nature of some areas, such as commercial land uses along the Route 220 corridor and land use between the uptown and residential areas. Further, the Town citizens and representatives should take advantage of the mechanisms that exist in the Botetourt County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning update processes in order to voice their interests and concerns about land use in the vicinity of Fincastle and to promote consistency in new land development or redevelopment.

Critical Issues

- It is necessary to address citizen concerns about development in the Fincastle area which is not in accordance with the scale and character of the town.
- Land use planning must respect property owner rights and work in collaboration with land owners and Botetourt County.
- A common long term vision for the greater Fincastle area must be developed in order to encourage beneficial development which is channeled into desired areas.





Fig 8-2 Commercial and Retail Land Use

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation on page 41.

FINCASTLE BEYOND THE TOWN LIMITS

While this Plan addresses issues within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Town of Fincastle, it must be recognized that conditions on the periphery of Town will likely result in development at the edge of the Town Boundaries. Some of these conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Availability of larger undeveloped parcels.
- Proximity to Route 220 and other significant County arterial roadways.
- Proximity to the population center of Fincastle and subdivisions in adjoining areas.
- Closeness to existing services, both commercial and civic, such as restaurants, convenience stores, numerous County facilities and complimentary uses, schools, churches, parks and recreational facilities.
- Availability of water and/or sewer services from the Town system.
- Redevelopment possibilities for existing parcels along Route 220.

Fincastle has a cooperative arrangement with Botetourt County for the review and inspection of new construction projects in the Town. Botetourt County Development Services provides a multitude of services for the Town including all residential and commercial construction related reviews and inspections (Erosion and Sediment Control, Building Permits). Fincastle has its own Zoning Ordinance, and zoning approval process, so building permit approval must be



coordinated between the Town and County Staff when there is a zoning issue. Additionally, because the Town owns its own water and wastewater treatment systems, review of plans and inspections of new hook ups or changes to the system must be performed by the Town or an agent of the Town. These issues may occasionally present a slight challenge to a developer. However coordinated efforts between the Town and County have minimized these impacts.

It is likely that much of the development that Fincastle will experience over the next ten years may be in areas just outside the Town Limits, but within its water and sewer service area. Due to this, and other community factors, the Town will take seriously, and evaluate the possibilities of, extension of its municipal boundaries sometime in the near future.

Because of this, the Town should work with Botetourt County to develop a carefully thought out plans for development at the edge of the Town Limits, that takes into account factors such as infrastructure capabilities, circulation patterns (both vehicular and pedestrian), residential and commercial densities, environmental factors and land carrying capacities, County facility needs and/or expansion possibilities, public and commercial needs, other possible development scenarios.

In the coming years, it will be critical to the success of this Plan to coordinate development activities on the edge of the Town limits, and within the Town's water and sewer service areas, with Botetourt County. Ways in which this could be accomplished include, but are not limited to:

- Inclusion of goals and objectives for both the Town and County's current and future Comprehensive Plans into each other.
- Development of a uniform set of land use goals and objectives for the Town of Fincastle and areas on the edge of the Town within Botetourt County.
- Coordinated review of development activities in areas both in and at the edge of Town, particularly within the Town service areas.
- Continued communication between County and Town staff on proposed developments both in the Town of Fincastle and at the edge of Town within the County.
- Collaborative efforts between the Town and County Planning Commissions, and Town Council and the Board of Supervisors, to create a uniform vision for this area of Botetourt County.
- Creation of consistent land use regulations for the Town of Fincastle and Town edge areas within Botetourt County (this could include overlay districts).
- Inclusion of County staff and elected officials in capital facilities and other planning activities within the Town of Fincastle.



- Research into reciprocal agreements, mutually beneficial operating procedures, collaborative funding and grant opportunities, and other cooperative ventures for accomplishing the goals of the Comprehensive Plans for the Town and Botetourt County.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION



Fig 10-1 Botetourt County Courthouse

Botetourt County is under the pressure of suburban growth from the Roanoke Valley to the south. Close coordination between the government of Botetourt County and the smaller dependant governments of the towns of Buchanan, Troutville and Fincastle is advisable to promote the wise planning of residential development with efficient utilization of municipal sewer and water utilities.

Goal:

Promote ongoing coordination between Fincastle and Botetourt County planning efforts by:

- Working cooperatively with Botetourt County to address inter-jurisdictional issues
- Working cooperatively with Botetourt County to guide future development outside the existing Town boundaries.



Existing Governmental Structures

The Town of Fincastle has a six-member Council and a Mayor elected every four years. The Town also has a five-member Planning Commission with members serving four-year appointed terms. Botetourt County has a five-member elected Board of Supervisors which oversees most of the County's government-related operations. The members are elected from five election districts and a board chairman is selected annually by those five members. In addition, Botetourt administrative staff serves under the direction of the County Administrator. The County Administrator is hired by the Board of Supervisors to run day-to-day operations.

Inter-Jurisdictional Issues

Where lines of responsibility are clearly drawn in Town/County coordination of activities and services, such as schools and law enforcement, there have been few complications. However, the lack of formalized collaboration on land use, growth management and historic preservation has impeded planning efforts between the two governments and has, at times, conflicted with citizen interests. It has become clear that there are common issues facing the citizens in the greater Fincastle area regardless of the political jurisdiction in which they reside. In addition to facing issues collaboratively outside of the Town limits, the Town and County must cooperate inside the Town as well. Four County buildings occupy a significant portion of the Town's land, suggesting that the Town and County must make joint decisions about the future use of these properties. In order to address these issues in an equitable manner, an intentional and formalized means of joint decision-making between the Town and the County is recommended.

Goals of Coordinated Planning

The primary goal is to bring about a collaborative structure and process for making decisions in the greater Fincastle area. This process should be driven by citizen input and cooperation on critical issues of interest to residents in the Fincastle area. This process has already begun with citizen input on the development in the U.S. Route 220 corridor as well as through citizen participation in the Town's comprehensive plan update. Residents of the Fincastle area have indicated a desire to establish a joint committee from the Town and the County to guide cooperative decisions on these issues. This committee would work to synergize goals and objectives through involvement in the Town and County comprehensive plan process. The committee would tackle issues concerning open space preservation, land use planning, economic and tourism planning, and address traffic and safety concerns along the U.S. Route 220 corridor, with consideration of property owners' rights in Botetourt County. In order to establish a joint committee, several issues will need to be addressed including the criteria for selection and composition of the committee. The committee may be composed of government representatives from Fincastle and Botetourt County and/or citizens from each jurisdiction. The level of authority granted to the committee may depend largely on the committee structure and extent of the territory to be considered as the "greater Fincastle area." If it is decided that the committee will be advisory in nature, a formal method of reviewing and adopting committee recommendations should be considered by both the Town and the County. In short, the nature



and authority of the joint committee must be determined through a public participation process engaging the citizens and governments of Fincastle and Botetourt County.

Opportunities

As a small community, Fincastle is well-situated to be responsive to resident interests. However, this involves keeping citizens informed about the planning and decision-making process. When given the chance to be involved in decision making, citizens of the greater Fincastle area have shown a strong willingness to devote time and energy in order to let their voices be heard. This is an inherent strength of the community. Fincastle should take advantage of opportunities to be involved in County decision-making processes, particularly in the County Comprehensive Plan and zoning updates. The Town and County should collaborate on issues where common interests are clear, such as transportation and water quality.



Fig 10-2 Botetourt County Courthouse

Critical Issues

- Ensuring that growth in the greater Fincastle area is based on a common vision articulated by an informed citizenry with access to government decision-making in this area.
- Establishing an inclusive decision-making process for issues important to the residents of the greater Fincastle area.
- Increasing collaboration between the planning bodies of the Town and County.
- Ensuring Town and County collaboration on properties and buildings within the Town of Fincastle.

Specific strategies to address opportunities and critical issues are outlined under Strategy Implementation.



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

A series of strategies have been developed through a public participation process to address the goals and objectives outlined under Inter-Governmental Coordination and within each of the plan sub-sections. Timelines for each group of strategies describe short-range action items to be taken within the five years leading up to the next comprehensive plan update. The purpose of these implementation timelines is to provide strategic direction and a mechanism for ongoing assessment of progress.

Since many of the strategies address inter-jurisdictional issues and require collaboration and coordination between the Town of Fincastle and Botetourt County, it was determined as a priority that a joint committee should be established to provide the foundation for strategy development, assessment and implementation. A set of clearly-defined criteria will need to be developed for this joint committee, including composition of members, selection process, role definition, recommendation protocol and level of authority. Frequent assessment and evaluation of joint committee activities will ensure that areas of concern are addressed in a timely manner with a high degree of citizen involvement. Active monitoring of all action items, with ongoing updates and evaluations of accomplished steps, will guide the process of defining long-range strategies and may lead to additional short-range action items, as necessary.

1. Fincastle and Botetourt County should develop a joint plan for development around Fincastle.

- Establish Joint County/Town Committee:
- Develop a mechanism to encourage better dialogue through the joint committee, including a means of public participation to provide citizen input to both planning commissions.
- Establish a process for tracking areas of critical importance that require cooperation with the County.
- Establish a mechanism for citizen participation in inter-governmental activities (i.e. citizen advisory group, newsletter)
- Establish a regular schedule of meeting times between Town and County planning commissions.
- Define common ground on which to make recommendations for guiding growth in the area around the Town.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation with annual review of priorities and revisions as necessary.
- Make recommendations for county-wide planning around the Town.



- Participate in Town comprehensive plan update
- Coordinate/participate in update of county comprehensive planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances
- Establish County/Town planning as integral part of county comprehensive planning process

Additional strategies involving inter-governmental coordination are outlined in each subsection timeline.

2. The Town should encourage property owners to take advantage of incentives to permanently protect their land from development

- Support and encourage the County's educational process to communicate easements to landowners.
- Work with the County to identify and prioritize areas of farmland and open space around Fincastle that should be protected from development.
- Review and evaluate possible avenues (private sector foundations, organizations or individual benefactors) in the event that identified areas become available.
- Review and share outcomes of County easement program as part of the Town/County comprehensive plan update process

3. Adopt a zoning ordinance with design guidelines for new construction and rehab/reuse in the historic district

- Appoint an advisory committee.
- Encourage homeowners to register homes as historic structures through information and education.
- Examine other opportunities for historic preservation funding such as historic preservation tax credits or historic easements.
- Examine federal grant programs for Main Street improvement.
- Establish design guidelines for signage.



- Establish design guidelines as part of zoning ordinance, incorporating recommendations from architectural survey.
- Review and share outcomes of design guidelines as part of the Town/County comprehensive plan update process

4. *Review options for moving utilities underground and improve sidewalks in the historic district.*

- Solicit and complete a streetscape study for the uptown area and the gateway corridor on Route 220.
- Research funding sources for moving utilities underground and additional sidewalk improvement.
- Select areas for streetscape beautification.
- Establish an improvement plan that prioritizes areas for improvement through public input and town need.
- Review the priorities in the improvement plan while creating a budget for construction and rehabilitation.

5. *The Town should work with the County to regulate types of businesses, size and design of new development along the US 220 corridor.*

- Promote citizen participation in county comprehensive plan update
- Revisit outcomes and citizen recommendations from the January 2006 meeting on US 220 development; expand participation base and opportunities for input.
- Review models of corridor development in other towns and conduct site visits.
- Promote citizen participation in County zoning update.
- Prioritize citizen recommendations for US 220 development ("Winner's Circle") and submit to the joint committee.
- Develop a long-term US 220 corridor plan as part of the Town/County comprehensive plan update process.
- Review and share outcomes of current US 220 corridor development with residents of greater Fincastle area.



6. *Solicit a market study to identify the potential for new business and commercial development*

- Secure source of funding for market study
- Work with the County on economic development; assess availability, interest in new business, and potential changes to the area around Fincastle.
- Work with the County to address long-term use of existing County facilities in the Town .
- Survey residents regarding desired business and commercial development.
- Establish mechanisms for regular updates to citizens on new business development.
- Develop a long-range plan for parking to accommodate new development.
- Review and share outcomes of new development in greater Fincastle area as part of comprehensive plan 5-year update.
- Survey residents regarding current and future business/commercial development as part of comprehensive plan 5-year update.
- Solidify and streamline Town and County collaboration on economic development initiatives.

7. *Work with the County to address tourism and recreational opportunities.*

- Establish communication with County tourism agent re: continued coordination of tourism and recreational opportunities, farmers' market/rural atmosphere development.
- Coordinate tourism efforts with conference and visitors center in Roanoke.
- Collaborate with the County to establish historic Fincastle Identity for promoting tourism.
- Survey residents regarding recreational and tourism opportunities.
- Establish mechanisms for regular updates to citizens on tourism and recreational opportunities.
- Review and share outcomes of new recreational and tourism opportunities in greater Fincastle area as part of comprehensive plan 5-year update.



8. *The Town should jointly develop with Botetourt County a source water overlay district for wellhead protection.*

- Obtain copy of County's wellhead protection plan for joint committee to review.
- Develop recommendations for coordination of County/Town wellhead protection plan.
- Assess status of joint committee recommendations for wellhead protection.
- Include jointly-developed wellhead protection plan for the Town with the County.

9. *The Town should develop a capital improvements plan for upgrades to community services.*

- Identify portions of the Town which may benefit from underground wiring and assess potential cost of conversion.
- Review impact study results and potential cost of capital improvements.
- Joint committee to identify and assess funding alternatives for capital improvements.
- Joint committee to develop a capital improvements plan with recommendations for funding and implementation
- Joint committee to implement capital improvements plan and schedule periodic review and assessment.
- Include status of capital improvements plan in Town comprehensive plan update

10. *Representatives should meet regularly with VDOT to address regional transportation issues.*

- Coordinate US 220 traffic studies with the County with a special emphasis on the corridor within the Fincastle town limits (Catawba Creek to Baptist Church).
- Work with Botetourt County to make the Springwood Road extension a priority; identify citizen recommendations for improvements to Route 220 that can be addressed with VDOT as part of this process (i.e. traffic light).
- Assess status/results of VDOT traffic study on US 220.
- Revise and submit recommendations to address traffic and safety measures on US 220 corridor.
- Follow up with VDOT on status of joint committee recommendations for US 220 corridor.



- Include traffic and safety recommendations and/or actions taken in Town Comprehensive Plan update.

11. The Town should perform a comprehensive analysis of the feasibility, benefits and costs of extension of its municipal boundaries

- Engage in active community discussions with citizens, businesses, churches, the schools, representatives from Botetourt County and other civic organizations in and near the current Town limits of Fincastle to determine ways in which Fincastle currently serves, and could serve better, these groups.
- Perform an all-encompassing Cost Benefit Analysis, for both the Town and County citizens, of adjusting the municipal boundaries.
- Work, through the newly-created Infrastructure and Community Planning Committees to determine costs and benefits of a boundary adjustment to all individual and groups involved.

