BRISTOL FORWARD

THE BRISTOL, VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BRISTOL FORWARD

GUIDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

Adopted
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Many Residents and Visitors of Bristol

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INTRODUCTION

BRISTOL FORWARD

INTRO

Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? These are the key questions that this plan, Bristol Forward, seeks to answer. Bristol Forward is both a publicly visible and participatory community conversation and a document that serves as the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Bristol, Virginia.

The Comprehensive Plan is the city's highest policy document. As such, it lays out a vision for what people want Bristol to be in the future. To accomplish the vision, this document aims to:

1. Set clear priorities
2. Balance explicit direction with flexibility
3. Identify implementation strategies
4. Establish consistency in decision-making
5. Create a readable document

WHY PLAN? WHY NOW?

Planning is an important way for the community to come together, establish a vision for the future, and set a course toward achieving it. As the community itself changes over time, new plans need to be made.

The motivations behind creating the Bristol Forward Plan include:

o Assessing new economic development opportunities

o Convening both new and long-time community members

o Creating an aspirational plan with achievable and actionable steps

4 KEY PLANNING TRENDS & CONDITIONS

Bristol is impacted by constantly changing trends and conditions - economic, demographic, governmental, and others. These conditions, and the changing preferences of the local community, present the city with key challenges and opportunities. The following topics represent some of the city's high level trends and existing conditions influencing this plan.

1 New economic development opportunities

Bristol residents have access to a variety of existing business and job opportunities in both the public and private sector. The city has large manufacturers, like Electro-

Mechanical and Strongwell Corporation. The city also benefits from tourism, with visitors coming for large music and sporting events, surrounding natural beauty and trails, and the beauty of Bristol's historic downtown. Now, a new casino is also arriving in Bristol.

2 A community of comparatively low wealth

Wealth and opportunity exist throughout Bristol, however the city includes a notable number of households with low incomes or living in poverty. In 2021, the poverty rate in Bristol, VA was 18 percent, compared to 13 percent in Washington County and 10 percent in Virginia. Median household income was $44,000 compared to $55,000 in Washington County and $81,000 in Virginia.

This is not an indictment of the city, its residents, or its businesses, but simply the result of internal and external forces and historical context. As such, economic development - which requires a comprehensive strategy - is a critical issue to tackle in order to reduce poverty, raise wages, and expand opportunity and quality of life to Bristol's residents.

3 New trends in development best practices

Bristol's population did not grow or change substantially between 2010 and 2022, but the needs of residents, as well as the economy, public policy case studies, and the conditions of buildings, facilities, and infrastructure have. Across the country, the demand for more walkable places, and the specific characteristics of those kinds of places, has grown. In seeking to attract and retain businesses and meet resident demand, communities have modernized their zoning and development practices to better achieve outcomes that create quality places.

4 Changing transportation preferences

Driving is the dominant mode of transportation for people across Bristol, but participants in the Bristol Forward comprehensive plan indicated they would like to have more choices for getting around, in addition to driving. Many residents currently drive to reach their daily needs, but would prefer to have a wider variety of options available to them for getting around.

THE COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision was built through robust community input and confirmed through community engagement. It represents the highest-level policy statement in the plan and guides the goals, policies, and actions throughout the document. The Bristol community vision includes a high level statement and five additional statements representing topic areas covered by the chapters of the Bristol Forward plan.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Bristol Forward plan provides a vision, goals, policies, actions, maps, community voices, and ideas, which should all serve as input to help policymakers prioritize strategies and make decisions. The plan can be used by various community stakeholders in the following ways:

Residents and Community Members

Bristol residents played a key role in shaping this plan. Residents and other community groups such as HOAs should reference the goals, policies, and maps when seeking to understand and/or apply city policy and development related issues.

Government and Nonprofit Partners

Community partners should review the plan to understand the city's vision and carefully consider how their work will align with Bristol Forward.

City Staff

City staff should consult and cite the plan when reviewing development proposals, making recommendations, and addressing zoning, development, utility, and capital investments. Staff will also introduce the plan to stakeholders so that they may be aware of the city's vision and goals.

Developers and Landowners

Developers, landowners, and design professionals should support Bristol Forward goals when creating plans, in addition to complying with the city's development regulations.

Business Owners

Business owners should review the vision, goals, and policies of the plan when considering location, growth, economic opportunities, and the Bristol community's vision for the city's future.

Elected and Appointed Officials

Land use touches on many aspects of life in Bristol. City officials should be familiar with the plan as a way to carry out their work and mission. Some boards will regularly consult the plan for guidance on decision-making and policy formulation.

THE COMMUNITY VISION

By 2040, Bristol, Virginia will be a thriving Appalachian community with rich culture, services, amenities, and opportunities that provide a high quality of life for all its residents.

LAND USE AND CHARACTER
The design and arrangement of Bristol's buildings, streets, civic spaces, and land uses build on its rich history to foster a livable and beautiful built pattern.

TRANSPORTATION
Residents and visitors have the freedom to safely and easily navigate the city -and nearby region- by walking, biking, driving, or riding transit.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
The Bristol local economy offers a diversity of high-quality jobs, job training, and opportunities for creative entrepreneurship.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICES
The City of Bristol provides excellent government services, facilities, and interjurisdictional collaboration that supports residents.

PUBLIC HEALTH
Bristol is a green, resilient, and healthy community with clean air and water, active living for all generations, and accessible food options and health care services.

01
LAND USE AND CHARACTER

There are many reasons people love Bristol. Residents agree there are ample benefits to living in Bristol, like family ties, access to the beautiful Appalachian Mountains, great music, festivals, and events, and the historic built character.

Throughout its history, Bristol has undergone growth spurts and periods of relatively low growth. While the city experiences changes, it is important to plan carefully to stimulate opportunities that improve the local economy and foster a high quality of life while protecting the places we love and making them even better.

The city will encourage economic development and seek to expand job, education, and quality of life opportunities for its current residents. In doing so, land use policies will strive to make our special places true to our identity and accessible to all members of the Bristol community.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

This chapter provides guidance on land use planning, zoning, and development issues through the vision statement, the Future Land Use and Character Map and areas, and the goals and policies.

This policy direction should be used to support development-related decisions, prioritize planning initiatives, and amend the city's development regulations.

OVERVIEW OF INFLUENCES

The built environment of Bristol has changed slowly over the decades, as the economy and market preferences evolved. Aging of infrastructure and redevelopment projects have changed the appearance of parts of the city, while preservation efforts have sought to maintain the characteristics that residents cherish. More recent development has tended to create auto-dependent, suburban style form. With this plan, the city seeks to turn a new page and focus on high quality design and placemaking. This vision promotes development that advances "communities within a community," that is, walkable activity centers that are connected to each other along well-planned corridors, with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to adjacent residential neighborhoods. This pattern is supported by the city's historic grid.

Growth and Urban Form in Bristol

Since the incorporation of the City of Bristol, VA in the late 1800s, the population has experienced booms (doubling in population between 1900 and 1930 from 4,579 to 8,840) and periods of slow growth (decreasing in population between 1990 and 2020 from 18,426 to 17,059).

Historic growth embodied certain urban design characteristics with regard to

This aerial view of Bristol Virginia and Tennessee shows the historic pattern of development, including short, connected blocks, compact urban form, mixes of uses, residential neighborhoods accessible to commercial areas, and activity centers connected by key corridors. Source: Library of Congress

What We've Heard

What I love most about Bristol is the historic buildings, rich culture, community, shops, and restaurants!

We need public input on use of closed schools from staff, faculty, students, & neighbors

Bristol needs more diverse and affordable housing options

By 2040, Bristol will be a thriving and attractive community drawing in people from across the nation

the arrangement of buildings and uses, distances from public rights of way, design of streets, and architecture. Much of the evolution of these characteristics followed similar trends throughout the country, and resulted in greater use of private automobiles. Over time, these development patterns impacted people's choices for getting around and public preferences for great places and urban design--one of the

reasons why the walkable characteristics of State Street are cherished and visited from across the region.

Compact development, with a variety of uses in close proximity and designed with a pedestrian-friendly pattern, increases the viability of walking, transit, and biking. This was the pattern of development in the early years of Bristol.

Bristol contains a variety of commercial development. Some older commercial corridors have mid-sized buildings with one to three stories abutting the sidewalk. In general, more recent commercial development takes the form of big box and strip development, with anchor tenants and chain stores, such as The Falls.

Lee Highway, West State Street, and State Street illustrate three different types of commercial corridors. State Street is compact, mixed use, and walkable, with small-scale buildings side-by-side. West State Street has small scale buildings abutting the sidewalk, with opportunities for infill development to enhance the corridor. Lee Highway is more automobile-oriented, with opportunities for greater connectivity, infill, and transformation through urban retrofitting and mixed use development.

LEE HIGHWAY

WEST STATE STREET

STATE STREET

CASINO DISTRICTS

Bristol's new casino presents both new challenges and opportunities. The difference between the casino becoming a nuisance and it becoming an asset will be the way the city plans for the future of the casino and its surrounding areas. The city should leverage the draw of visitors from the casino for the benefit of the city, surrounding businesses, and the other economic assets in Bristol. With other casinos around Virginia, there are case studies to examine some of the tools being used to regulate casinos and spur additional investment.

Portsmouth, Virginia's casino is located in the city's High Intensity Mixed-Use zoning district with an entertainment overlay zone. The city's entertainment overlay district is intended to apply standards for entertainment and casino gaming uses, while protecting against unwanted impacts. The overlay zone especially addresses issues of signage, exterior lighting, and off-street parking. The overlay district requires a conceptual master plan and phasing plan, and restricts uses that are otherwise allowed in the base zoning district.

Norfolk, Virginia's planned casino is scoped to be located within their Downtown-Waterfront zoning district. Norfolk addresses zoning regulations of their planned casino through use-specific standards. Norfolk's use-specific standards address the need for a conditional use permit, limit certain uses, require a designated driver program, require an opt-out policy for compulsive gamblers, and provide for other standards.

The **Danville, Virginia** casino is located on a former brownfields site and within Danville's Casino Entertainment Zoning District. The district addresses specific standards for signage, exterior lighting, off-street parking, noise, open space, landscaping, external building materials, and available regulatory waivers.

Rivers Casino in Portsmouth, Virginia. Portsmouth uses a zoning overlay district to regulate the unique issues associated with casinos.

Community Direction for Development

Public input gathered during the public outreach efforts associated with Bristol Forward reflected the gap between the most realistic and comfortable modes of transportation for Bristol residents, and the way residents would like to be able to travel in the future. In response, future development patterns can be influenced to be more walkable, replicating certain characteristics of Bristol's history. Meanwhile, residents cherish the small town feel of Bristol and its cultural heritage.

Community Voices: What can Bristol do with empty buildings?

Residents had lots of ideas for what to do with opportunity areas, including empty buildings, from affordable housing to breweries, and using tools like public ownership and investment, working with BRHA, grants, tax credits, and recruiting private investors. Importantly, many residents wanted to see neighborhood meetings and engagement, including neighborhood walks to gather on-the-ground information and input.

Residents identified places in Bristol they want to see change, places they want to see stay the same, and places they want to see revitalized, which helped inform this chapter.

THE CITY OF BRISTOL FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER MAP

The Future Land Use and Character Map shows how Bristol plans to evolve. This map isn't just about what the land will be used for; it's also about how things will look and feel throughout the city. This includes things like the size and type of buildings, how they're placed on the streets, where and how people will park, and how you can get around.

It's important to note that this map doesn't show zoning districts, which have stricter rules and are linked to the city's zoning regulations.

The Future Land Use and Character areas are listed below and defined in greater depth on the following pages.

Districts

- Downtown
- Mixed Use
- Casino District
- Community Opportunity
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Professional Office
- Institutional
- Rail/Utility
- Municipal Limits

Neighborhoods

- Multi-Family
- Single-Family Attached
- Neighborhood 1
- Neighborhood 2
- Parks and Open Space

City of Bristol Future Land Use and Character Map
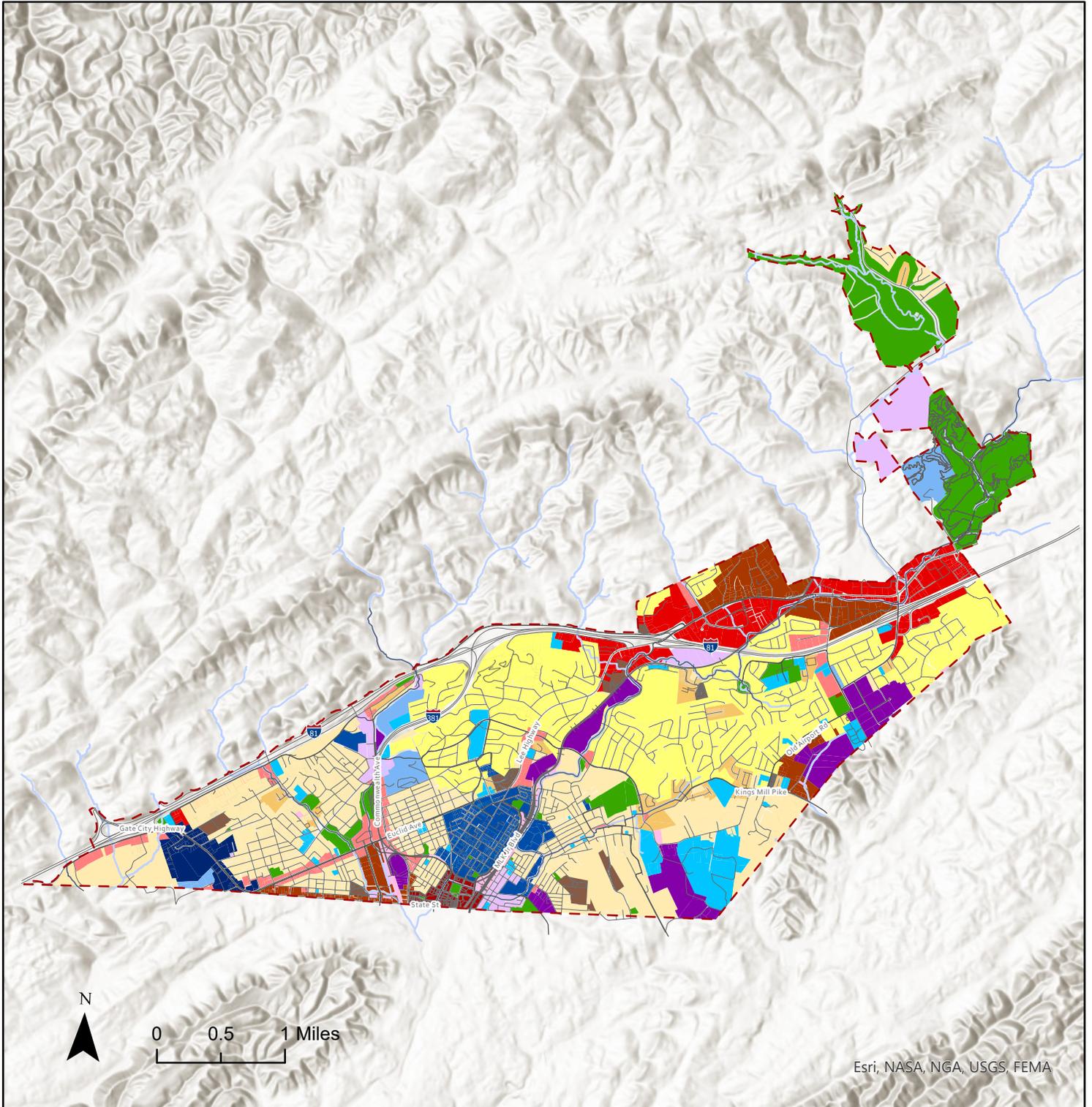
Click link for larger map

Downtown

DESCRIPTION

Downtown is the historic, cultural, and civic heart of Bristol. Development includes historic buildings, as well as buildings from the past several decades, and supports a mix of retail, restaurants, employment, and some residential. Buildings are located up to the sidewalk, are short in width, and include ample windows and doors along first floors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Retain historic character through preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings
- Ensure new development is contextually compatible and uses high quality architecture and design
- Enhance streetscapes with street trees, wider sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, and burying overhead wires where needed
- Stimulate economic development through events and placemaking

PRIMARY USES

- Commercial/mixed use
- Office
- Civic

SECONDARY USES

- Upper floor residential

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	3 - 5 stories
Building Setback	0-15 ft
Lot Width	15 - 75 ft
Block Length	300 - 500 ft
Parking	Shared parking behind buildings, on-street parking

Mixed Use

DESCRIPTION

Mixed use areas are intended to evolve over time through development and redevelopment into walkable, mixed-use corridors and destinations. These include large areas that can evolve through master planning as well as areas and corridors where infill development is the primary opportunity for enhancing the built environment. More specific descriptions are provided later in this chapter.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Contextually-cognizant infill development
- High quality urban design
- Master planning a large-scale, cohesive development
- 15-25 percent land throughout the area should be alloted for public park space
- Provide for a mix of uses and housing types

PRIMARY USES

- Vertical mixed use
- Nonresidential first floors with upper story residential and office
- Public parks and plazas

SECONDARY USES

- Institutional

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	3 - 6 stories
Building Setback	0 - 25 ft
Lot Width	30 - 250 ft
Block Length	Maximum 660 ft
Parking	Lined parking garage; on-street; rear shared surface parking

Casino District

DESCRIPTION

The casino district encompasses Bristol's casino, as well as supporting uses, and other sites within close proximity of the casino. The intent of the casino district is to ensure new development is compatible with, supports, and takes full advantage of the casino and the entertainment industry.

OPPORTUNITIES

- New zoning district or overlay zoning district
- Pedestrian-oriented mixed use development and redevelopment
- Promote high quality connections between the Casino District and downtown Bristol
- Encourage workforce housing for casino employees

PRIMARY USES

- Commercial, shopping, and entertainment
- Public parks and plazas

SECONDARY USES

- Upper story residential and office

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	4 - 12 stories
Building Setback	10 - 50 ft
Lot Width	n/a
Parking	Garage, surface, on-street

Community Opportunity

DESCRIPTION

Community Opportunity areas are sites in Bristol that have special qualities, such as central locations and existing buildings with interesting architectural features and cultural importance. These sites contain unique opportunities for reuse and redevelopment, which may in some cases require public subsidies and involvement.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Public and private investments should be made to preserve the existing historic buildings; explore tax credits
- Due to the deteriorating conditions of some existing buildings may require extensive rehabilitation and investment, as well as swift and urgent action
- Contextually compatible infill development

POSSIBLE USES

- A diversity of uses should be considered on these sites
- Mixed-use development with mixed-income housing
- Artist studios, retail, and entertainment
- Event spaces, winery, brewery, cidery

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 6 stories
Building Setback	15 - 30 ft
Lot Width	n/a
Parking	Surface, on-street

Local Commercial

DESCRIPTION

Commercial areas include a variety of existing and future commercial uses, generally oriented toward the wants and needs of the Bristol residential and small business community, as well as providing goods and services to visitors. Over time, certain commercial areas may evolve through thoughtful infill development and quality design to enhance placemaking.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Modify development regulations to encourage well-designed, contextually-compatible infill development
- Support aesthetic enhancements to existing commercial properties
- Add and widen sidewalks, street trees, bike facilities
- Prioritize corridor improvements along State Street between the Casino District and Downtown

PRIMARY USES

- Community-oriented commercial
- Mixed-Use

SECONDARY USES

- Office
- Institutional

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	3 stories (More with incentives)
Building Setback	0-20 ft Consider setbacks of adjacent buildings
Lot Width	40-300 ft
Block Width	<800
Parking	Rear and on-street parallel parking; shared surface with landscaping and pedestrian facilities

Regional Commercial

DESCRIPTION

Regional commercial areas include lands along major transportation corridors with existing commercial development. Buildings in these areas typically include large setbacks from the street with surface parking located between the building and the street. These are generally expected to remain automobile-oriented in character but could evolve in the future.

OPPORTUNITIES

- New sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian facilities
- Landscaping and stormwater retrofits in parking lots
- Green building retrofits
- Redevelopment opportunities could include dedicating connected block networks that enable future infill

PRIMARY USES

- Commercial
- Office
- Light industrial

SECONDARY USES

- Mixed use and multifamily residential

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3 stories
Building Setback	15 - 80 ft
Lot Width	<800 ft
Block Width	<1,200
Parking	Shared surface parking; over time, surface parking should be converted to other uses or lined with new buildings oriented toward abutting streets

Heavy Industrial

DESCRIPTION

Areas with heavy industrial uses that may have impacts off site, such as noise, smell, vibrations, heavy freight traffic, or other externalities. Such areas should be buffered and separated from other uses to the extent possible and external impacts should be limited. Freight traffic should be planned in order to limit routes that run through residential areas. Hazardous industrial uses should be discouraged within city limits. Redevelopment may also site remediation.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Implement measures to reduce and ameliorate external impacts
- Increase and enhance natural buffers

PRIMARY USES

- Heavy industrial, manufacturing, warehousing and storage

SECONDARY USES

- Office
- Utility
- Research

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 2 stories
Building Setback	20 - 80 ft
Lot Width	No target
Parking	Surface

Light Industrial

DESCRIPTION

Light Industrial areas are typically low-impact, smaller-scale industrial uses and may include warehousing, employment, manufacturing, and assembly. These areas will have limited external impacts on surrounding uses.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Protect land within municipal limits used for employment and industry
- Provide flex spaces for potential employers

PRIMARY USES

- Industrial
- Warehousing
- Research

SECONDARY USES

- Office
- Institutional

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3 stories
Building Setback	10 - 30 ft
Lot Width	60 - 300 ft
Parking	Rear, side, on-street

Professional Office

DESCRIPTION

Professional office areas include buildings that have few external impacts, other than daily traffic and parking from employees. Offices may include corporate headquarters, medical uses, law firms, and professional service providers. Office uses are also appropriate in other land use and character areas and some other uses may be appropriate in buildings that currently contain offices.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Preservation of employment uses
- Infill development that helps frame streets and public spaces
- Property enhancements

PRIMARY USES

- Office
- Research and development
- Some commercial and other nonresidential uses

SECONDARY USES

- Some commercial and other nonresidential uses

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 4 stories
Building Setback	5 - 50 ft
Lot Width	n/a
Parking	Rear, side, on-street

Institutional

DESCRIPTION

These areas include institutional and community facilities, such as schools and other government facilities and religious and non-profit facilities. While these are existing institutional uses, adaptive reuse may be appropriate with consideration of the context. Institutional uses are also appropriate within other land use and character areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Continued support of institutional uses connected to and within walking distance of neighborhoods

• Building maintenance and enhancements

PRIMARY USES

• Government services
• Education
• Places of worship
• Community spaces

SECONDARY USES

• Office
• Some neighborhood-serving nonresidential uses

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3# stories
Building Setback	5 - 30 ft
Lot Width	60 - 600 ft
Parking	Rear, side, on-street

Rail/Utility

DESCRIPTION

Rail infrastructure is land used or once used for freight or passenger rail, including right of way corridors as well as land owned and maintained by and for the purposes of rail travel.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Some adjacent areas appropriate for heavy industry
• Potential future passenger rail

PRIMARY USES

• Rail and utilities

SECONDARY USES

• Office

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	n/a
Building Setback	n/a
Lot Width	n/a
Parking	Surface, landscaped

Multifamily

DESCRIPTION

Multifamily areas include apartment buildings or apartment complexes in which units are typically accessed through a shared entryway or hallway. Currently, these areas tend to be auto-oriented and lack walkable distances to daily needs.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Property maintenance and code enforcement
- Infill development that introduces resident-serving nonresidential uses
- Green building retrofits

PRIMARY USES

- Multifamily residential

SECONDARY USES

- Resident serving retail and services

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	2 - 5 stories
Building Setback	15 - 30 ft
Lot Width	<1,000 ft
Parking	Surface, landscaped

Single-Family Attached

DESCRIPTION

Single-family attached land use and character areas include townhomes and rowhomes where units have their own entry. While single-family attached housing can be rentals or owner-occupied, these areas can offer homeownership opportunities with less yard maintenance and at lower cost than single-family detached homes.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Property maintenance and code enforcement
- Infill development that introduces resident-serving nonresidential uses
- Green building retrofits

PRIMARY USES

- Townhomes and rowhomes

SECONDARY USES

- Resident serving retail and services

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3 stories
Building Setback	5 - 25 ft
Lot Width	25 - 60 ft
Parking	Surface; future single-family attached developments should provide for rear alley access

Neighborhood 1

DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood 1 areas are older neighborhoods within proximity to downtown and include primarily single family homes, with some additional residential types, nonresidential buildings, and some other uses. Neighborhoods within this area include several characteristics, with a mix of building sizes, ages, setbacks, and street infrastructure. In general, these neighborhoods include a relatively connected street grid pattern.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Neighborhood planning and revitalization initiatives
- Preservation and restoration of historic buildings
- New sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and street trees
- Contextually-compatible infill
- Front porches and rear alleys

PRIMARY USES

- Single-family homes
- Duplexes, townhomes

SECONDARY USES

- Home-based businesses
- Small-scale, neighborhood-serving nonresidential

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3 stories
Building Setback	10 - 20 ft
Lot Width	40 - 65 ft
Parking	driveways, on-street, rear alleys

DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood 2 areas are mostly constructed post-World War II and more recently. These neighborhoods tend to include larger lots and homes, with more car-oriented design and orientation. Streets tend to be wider, less connected, and lack facilities for multiple modes of transportation.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Neighborhood planning and revitalization initiatives

• New sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and street trees

• Contextually-compatible infill

• Front porches

PRIMARY USES

• Single-family homes

• Duplexes, townhomes

SECONDARY USES

• Home-based businesses

• Small-scale, neighborhood-serving nonresidential

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	1 - 3 stories
Building Setback	15 - 30 ft
Lot Width	45 - 80 ft
Parking	Driveways, on-street

Parks and Open Space

DESCRIPTION

Parks and Open Space areas are permanently protected active and passive open space areas. These areas can be either natural or used primarily for recreational purposes, and include fields, trails, benches, playgrounds, and other limited types of development that supports the open space use.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Permanent open space protection
- Public land acquisition or dedication
- Purchase of development rights and open space easements
- Community facilities and programming

PRIMARY USES

- Recreation facilities
- Trails and open space
- Wildlife habitat

SECONDARY USES

- LID stormwater amenities

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Building Height	n/a
Building Setback	n/a
Lot Width	n/a
Parking	Use gravel, permeable pavement

LINDEN DRIVE AREA CONCEPTUAL REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Linden Drive area currently contains hotels, retail, restaurants, and a movie theater. The area is designated as Mixed Use on the Future Land Use and Character map and intended to evolve over time through redevelopment and infill development.

The future of the site should include a more compact and walkable building arrangement with a greater mix of uses, including multiple public parks, apartments, and more nonresidential development.

The design of the buildings and streets is key to the area's success. Commercial sidewalks should be 8-20 feet in width with street trees abutting the curb.

Over time, the redevelopment of the area should include construction and dedication of a more connected street grid. Buildings should front directly onto the sidewalk and include transparent first floors.

Under this conceptual redevelopment vision, the area would add approximately 70 new attached and detached single family homes, 210 condominiums, new commercial space, and on-street, garage, and surface vehicular parking.

Commercial
Retail
Mixed Use (Retail & Residential)
Residential

0 100 ft 200 ft

Residential (townhomes)

Gazebo

Single-family homes

Greenway

Park

Duplexes

Neighborhood Center

Enhanced gateway with signage

Rooftop courts

Commercial

Commercial

Garage entrance

Garage entrance

Commercial

Rooftop lounging lawn

Rooftop community garden

Existing parking

Commercial

Open Green

Restaurants

Theatre

Comm.

Pedestrian outdoor dining terraces

Ret. & Res.

Commercial

Ret.&Res.

Res.

Res.

Res.

Ret.&Res.

Res.

Res.

Landscape improvements along I-81

Ret. & Res.

Residential

Residential

Greenway

Pergolas

Ret. & Res.

Residential

Residential

Residential

Enhanced pedestrian connections linear to development

Retail

Ret. & Res.

Residential

Residential

Residential

Landscaped central green

Comm.

Residential

Residential

Retail

Traffic Circle

Retail (big box)

Commercial

Enhanced gateway with signage

0 100 ft 200 ft

AREAS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE AND REINVESTMENT - MIXED USE

The Falls - Phase 5 Mixed Use

The Falls - Phase 5, is designated as Mixed Use on the Future Land Use and Character Map. The area is currently mostly rural residential with some commercial uses on the northeast corner of Blevins and Lee Highway.

This area should redevelop over time either as part of a large master planned project using a phased approached or several coordinated master planned projects. This area is envisioned to include a variety of residential, retail, office, civic, and other uses within an integrated, walkable built pattern. The following key principles apply to the area:

o Retail, office, or hospitality uses should front Lee Highway due to its visibility and to serve as a buffer between the road and lower intensity uses.

o The development should have high quality urban and architectural design, with features that enhance the pedestrian experience. Provide rear alleys to ensure high quality street frontages.

o New development should enhance Bristol walkability and bikeability and encourage multiple modes of transportation. Internal and external streets should align with existing streets. Blocks should be short (<800 linear feet); uses should be connected, and sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian amenities should provide connection throughout the area.

o There should be a variety of housing types that are connected, integrated, and within short proximity of one another. Housing types should include multifamily (included on upper floors with first floor nonresidential uses), quadplexes, duplexes, townhomes, and single-family homes.

o Where possible, special natural features should be protected and integrated into the development, especially by clustering development in areas that are less environmentally sensitive.

West State Street
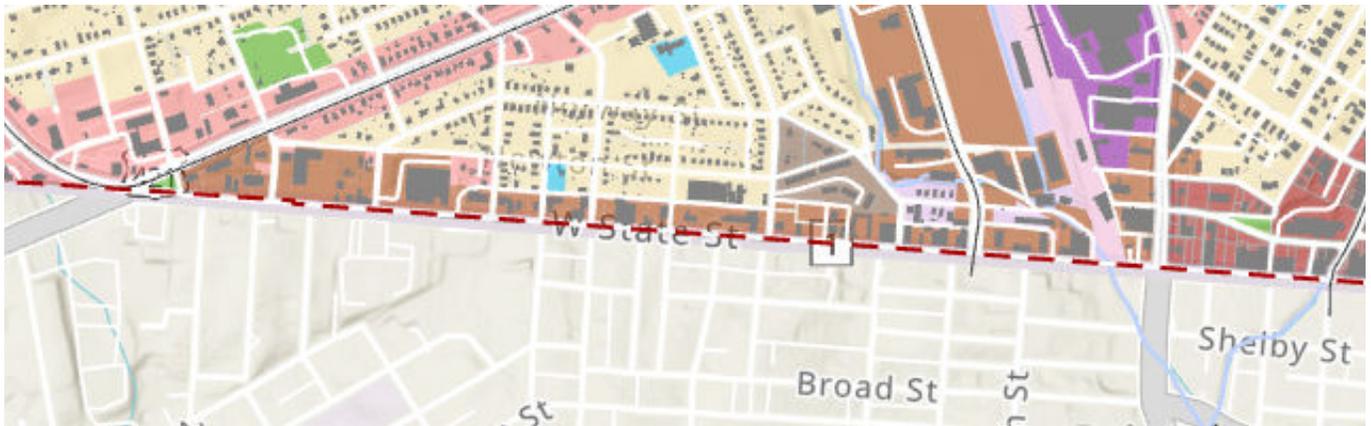
West State Street is a key corridor in Bristol. It is gateway into and out of downtown Bristol and will become a gateway and corridor between the casino and downtown.

West State Street is also an important corridor because it holds significant infill potential and includes positive characteristics, such as human-scale buildings located adjacent to the sidewalk and short blocks.

The following principles apply to new development along West State Street:

o Parking should be located to the rear of buildings

o Over time and where practical, access should be provided via dedicated rear alleys, which may also provide for solid waste and utilities

o New buildings should match and enhance the abutting and surrounding built context

o New buildings should consider upper story residential or office uses.

DOWNTOWN BRISTOL

The Vision for Downtown

State Street will continue to function as the central gathering space and destination district for all of the Bristol region. It will continue to be a dynamic, urban, mixed-use district that provides an eclectic mix of businesses alongside landmark destinations, housing, and offices. Further, the district will provide a number of outdoor plazas and public space with an attractive streetscape and public art display. In this way, State Street will be the point of entry of initial landing spot for visiting Downtown Bristol, acting as a gateway to its other districts and nodes on both the Virginia and Tennessee sides of the border.

The Sullins Block

The block of buildings located around Sullins Street and Sullins Alley are related to older industrial buildings on the south side of Goode Street. There are substantial grade changes, which is a characteristic also found in other parts of downtown Bristol. The area includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant properties. As the parcels impacted by the Sessions Hotel redevelop, as well as the BP, the city should evaluate what opportunities exist to locate parking or other downtown-supportive uses within this isolated block that abuts Commonwealth at Goode Street and leads into downtown Bristol.

Pursuing a Parking Garage

Downtown Bristol features a large amount of surface parking. Although there are locations where parking can be competitive, in general there is sufficient parking for regular usage. Even in the case of some special events the downtown area has managed parking demand relatively well. However, discussions about a parking garage should continue. As downtown Bristol continues to develop and experience infill projects, it may become beneficial to explore vertical rear parking. In the future there will likely be sufficient demand to warrant a parking structure near State Street.

Downtown Gateways

Downtown Bristol's iconic gateway is the "Good Place to Live" monument sign as visitors travel in from the east on State Street, but there is no gateway signage entering from the west. The city should consider collaborating with downtown partners to create new gateways.

Improving Pedestrian Facilities

State Street features some of the best pedestrian infrastructure in Bristol. Wide sidewalks with street trees adjacent to the curb and underground power lines are pedestrian design best practices. Most crosswalks are striped and some feature different materials and signage. There are certain intersections that would benefit from better quality crossings. The primary crosswalk on State is at Lee Street, which crosses a wide cross-section. Pedestrian refuge islands could be added at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and State Street, which is a very wide intersection of two arterials. One key area needing attention is the transition from the alleys behind State Street as pedestrians head towards Cumberland Square. Crossings at King Street and Lee Street by the library should have markings or signals and the intersection of Piedmont Avenue and Goode Street should be improved. Street design and crossings should improve pedestrian connectivity from State Street to destinations north.

Community Events

Downtown Bristol currently holds a wide variety of community events anchored on or around State Street, including Small Business Saturday, the Race Week Parade, Rhythm and Roots, Border Bash, live music concerts, and seasonal/holiday festivals, for example. These events are important cultural and community-building activities for local residents but also add vibrancy to the district for visitors. Many of these events are organized and/or sponsored through Believe in Bristol. The city should continue to act as a partner and supporter of downtown events. One potential strategy could be to host a downtown events charrette to identify which events have been successful as well as brainstorm new potential event concepts.

Cumberland Square Park

The area around Cumberland Square Park falls within the delineation of a small area plan. The intent of the plan is to provide a modernized redesign of the plaza and adjacent parking area, redesign of Cumberland Square Park, concept design for Piedmont Avenue's use as a festival street and destination, public improvements to Lee Street, Winston Alley, and Moore Street, identification of infill development and parking improvements, private sector facade enhancements.
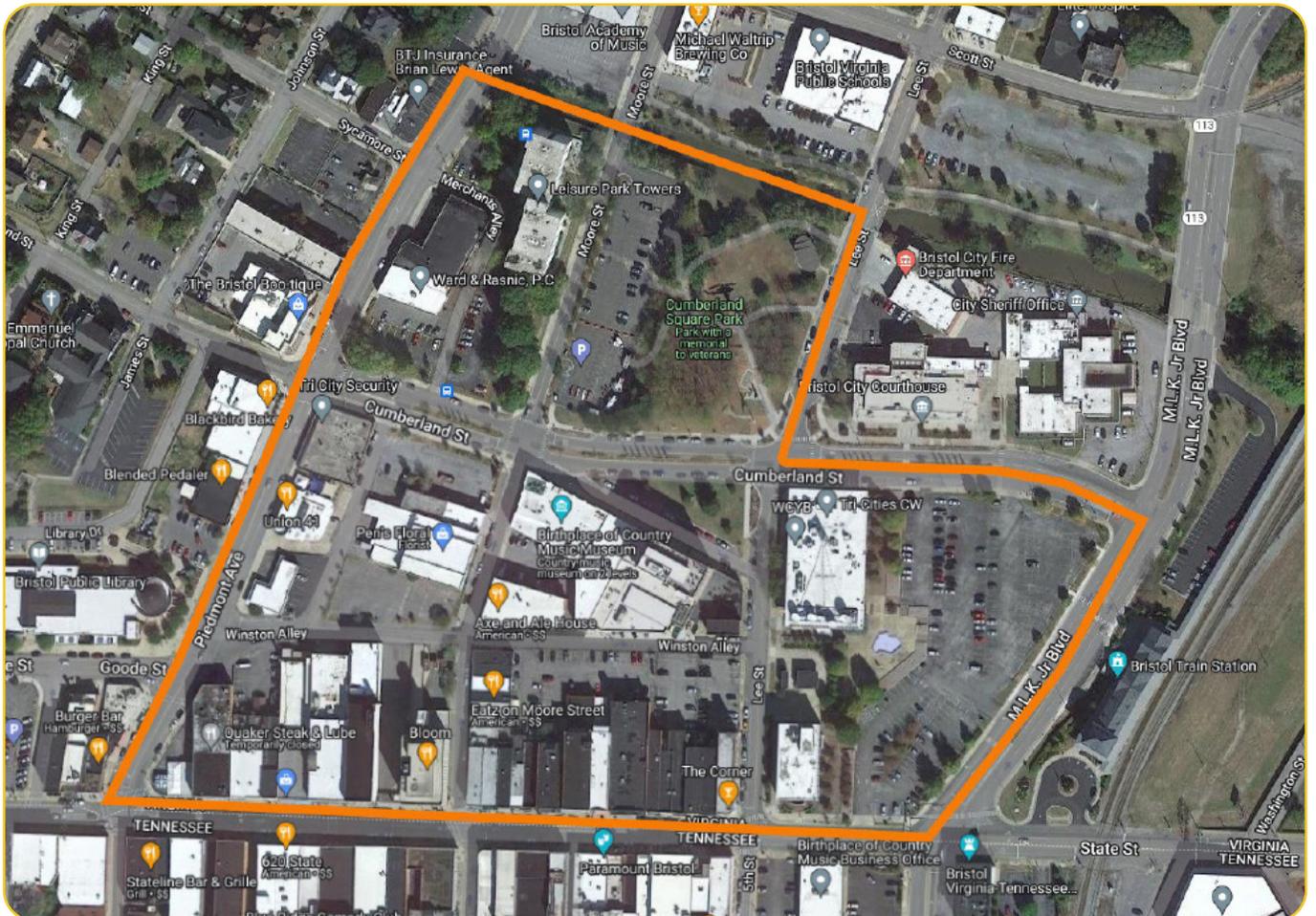
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Community opportunity areas are areas that are identified to have existing structures and characteristics that are unique, valuable, and holding potential for adaptive re-use. Today, it is unclear how these places may become redeveloped, and it is important to be flexible to creative ideas that may arise. There are valuable case studies of adaptive re-use from Virginia and across the country. The choice neighborhoods planning area includes numerous opportunities for housing, commercial, and institutional revitalization.
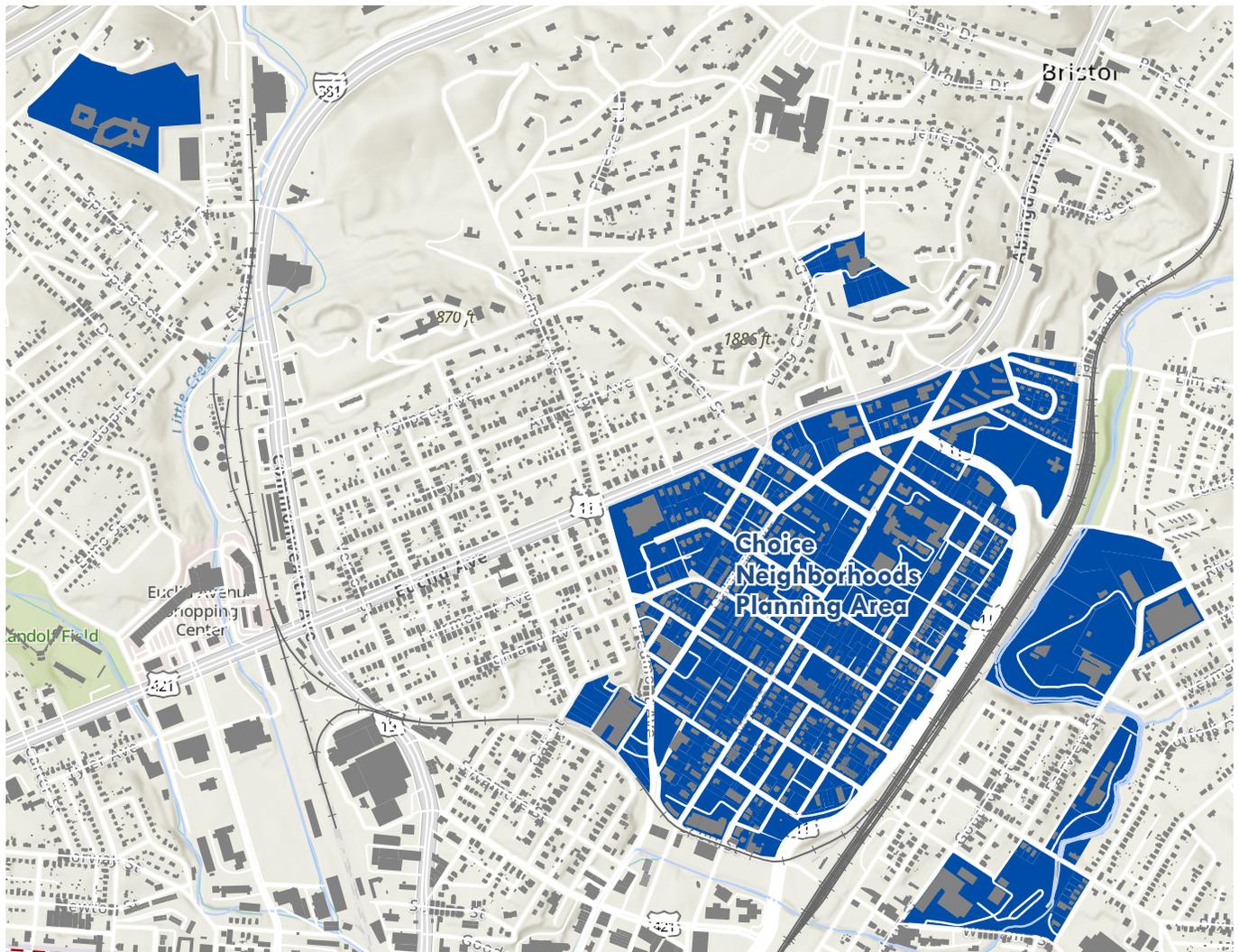
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Bristol has a variety of historic neighborhoods and architecture that give the city a distinctive identity, contribute to placemaking, and bolster the local economy.

It will be important for the city to expand the current Historic Overlay to the Virginia Hill and Euclid Avenue Districts as well as create a local historic preservation ordinance.

Existing Historic Districts

The City of Bristol contains five federally designated historic districts: the Euclid Avenue Historic District, the Solar Hill Historic District, the Virginia Hill Historic District, the Bristol Warehouse Historic District, and the Bristol Downtown Commercial District.
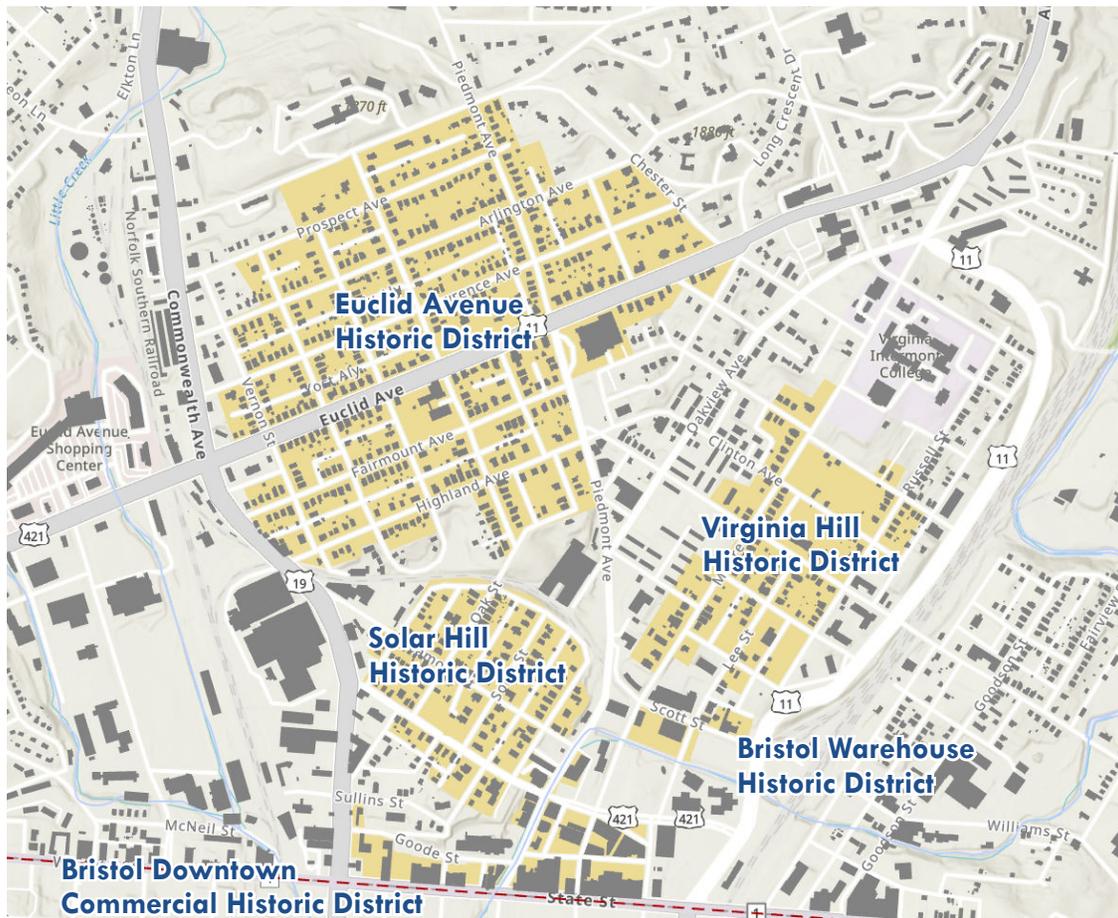
HOUSING

Bristol is home to a variety of neighborhoods and housing types, including historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown, multifamily apartment complexes, and single-family housing neighborhoods near and further away from the city core.

Neighborhoods, and the types of housing within them, serve as important city building blocks, and range from residential to mixed use areas that provide needs within short, walkable distances. To support an evolving city, it is important that Bristol provide its population with a range of housing and neighborhood choices. Diverse housing creates neighborhoods that can house individuals and families of all ages, while meeting the demand and preferences of current and future residents.

Below is a sampling of housing types that could expand the variety of housing types in Bristol, in addition to single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily buildings.

Options for Expanding Housing Types

1. COTTAGE COURT 2. SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX 3. STACKED DUPLEX 4. FOURPLEX 5. SIXPLEX

6. EIGHTPLEX 7. COURTYARD 8. TOWNHOUSE 9. LIVE/WORK

©OPTICOS DESIGN, INC.
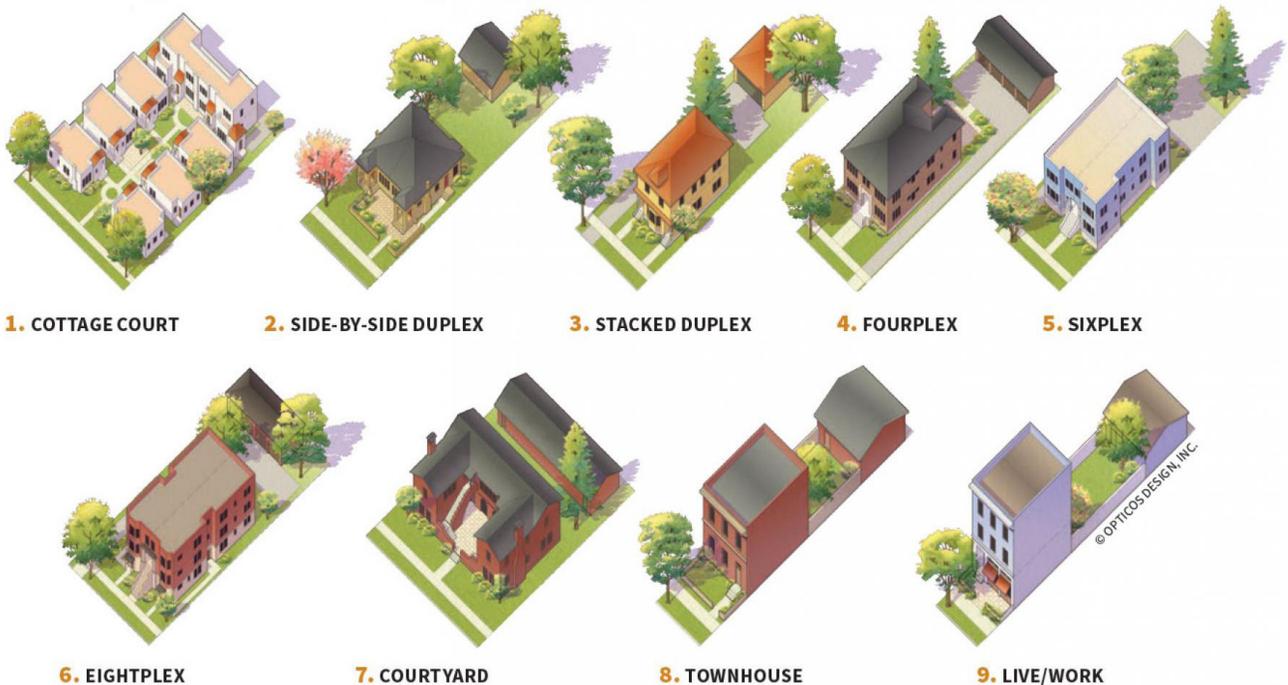
Source: Congress for New Urbanism

Bristol Housing Needs Assessment

The City of Bristol's Housing Needs Assessments provides a critical deep dive into the current trends and conditions of the city's housing and neighborhoods, as well as recommendations for addressing the needs of the city's current and future populations. The Housing Needs Assessment includes the following four goals and corresponding strategies. More case studies and implementation actions are included in the document.

Housing Needs Assessment
Strategy Recommendations

Goal 1: Decrease the number of vacant units and substandard housing stock.

o Define and address the current stock of housing that is not habitable

o Assist existing efforts to alleviate maintenance issues

o Identify additional innovative methods to address substandard housing stock

Goal 2: Increase the number of workforce rentals, targeting those who commute to Bristol for work and employees from forthcoming major developments.

o Maintain partnerships with housing development organizations to facilitate the creation of additional housing

o Consider implementing changes at the City level to facilitate the development of affordable rental stock

Goal 3: Facilitate the development of housing for seniors through modifications, service programs, and alternative approaches.

o Assist with programs that work to retrofit housing with upgrades that make less mobile persons safer

o Establish alternative senior housing options for those not ready to leave their homes

o Support the creation or expansion of a senior housing group to provide seniors and the caregivers information and options for housing

Goal 4: Create internal mechanisms that promote and enable the development of needed housing types.

o Develop or expand a communications strategy to highlight housing priorities, advertise programs, and celebrate successes

o Explore ways to increase density within the city without compromising the character of the community

o Consider additional housing policies sand practices for facilitating the building of needed housing

The design and arrangement of Bristol's buildings, streets, civic spaces, and land uses build on its rich history to foster a livable and beautiful built pattern.

To achieve the vision of a livable and beautiful community requires a variety of creative solutions. Development should support and enhance the character of the city's historic and human-scale built patterns.

Goal 1.1

A built environment that supports a high quality of life, with walkable daily needs, jobs, and services

POLICIES

1.1.1 The Future Land Use and Character Map guides zoning and development decisions and new zoning and development regulations.

1.1.2 Build a network of active mixed-use walkable activity centers, such as the casino district, downtown, and Lee Highway areas, that are well-connected by multimodal corridors.

1.1.3 In new multi-building developments, promote a variety of housing types, mix of uses, and walkable pattern.

Goal 1.2

Unique community character that celebrates the City's history, provides gateways, enhances safety, and creates active and exciting places

POLICIES

1.2.1 Support identification, stewardship, preservation, and improvements of historic properties and the city's historic districts.

1.2.2 Use the city's special historic character as a guide for design of new development.

1.2.3 Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing homes and buildings.

1.2.4 Identify, protect, and enhance views, both built and natural. Identify and protect cherished mountain views.

Goal 1.3

A city that maintains an affordable cost-of-living for all residents

POLICIES

1.3.1 Consider both the cost of housing and the cost of transportation as the city develops (transportation costs rise as distances increase).

1.3.2 Expand the variety of housing types (townhomes, small multifamily, etc.) and housing tenure (own, rent, cooperative, etc.) in appropriate locations and using contextually-compatible approaches.

1.3.3 Support the city's stock of subsidized, permanent affordable and workforce housing.

1.3.4 Support long-term affordable for-sale housing through deed restrictions and land trusts.

Goal 1.4

Revitalized neighborhoods and corridors

POLICIES

1.4.1 Analyze and amend zoning and subdivision regulations by removing unnecessary hurdles and preventing undesirable development types, in strategic locations.

1.4.2 Use incentives, tax increment financing, zoning, and other tools to promote mixed use re-investment along Bristol's key corridors.

1.4.3 Promote the redevelopment of blighted homes and neighborhoods, while seeking to limit residential displacement.

1.4.4 Support programs, like grants, that assist homeowners with emergency repairs.

Goal 1.5

A city that leverages the arts and supports creative public places

POLICIES

1.5.1 Incorporate art into new public and private development, civic spaces, gateways, and infrastructure projects.

1.5.2 Create and enhance gateways into Bristol and between different distinct areas within the city.

1.5.3 Support and carry out demonstration projects, especially using art, to test and display building and transportation retrofit opportunities.

Goal 1.6

An active environment that supports physical activity and healthy living

POLICIES

1.6.1 New development should use best practice principles of walkable design to improve human health with active modes of transportation.

1.6.2 Enhance the pedestrian realm, through high quality building design, like transparent first floor facades that face streets and public spaces and architectural detailing, where appropriate.

1.6.3 Support access of industrial properties to regional roads through transportation and land use planning.

02

TRANSPORTATION

VISION

Bristol is a community where:

- **people can easily reach services using a variety of mobility options,**

- **residential neighborhoods are well connected to commercial areas through enhanced transit services and an extensive network of bicycle and pedestrian routes spanning the city, and**

- **the roadway network is safe for everyone, whether they drive, walk, bike, or use transit.**

Bristol's innovative transportation choices attract new residents and employers, enhancing the city's appeal as a desirable place to live and work.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

This section provides an overview of Bristol's roadway network, road safety, travel patterns, and the multimodal network. The chapter summarizes projects in some phase of planning, and makes recommendations to improve the ways in which people in Bristol can travel from place to place.

INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan sets the direction for physical planning in a community. Central to this planning is the designation of projected land uses, defining how development should occur in various areas across the city and how the transportation network should enhance connectivity, accessibility, and mobility within these areas. This section provides an overview of Bristol's transportation network, summarizes projects in various planning stages, and makes recommendations to improve the ways people can travel from place to place.

Figure 1 shows public responses about current and preferred transportation modes at one of the community meetings.

Figure 1. Transportation Input. The community provided input on their priorities for transportation improvements and helped identify important needs for residents and visitors.

What We've Heard

"Bristol needs a bikeway and walking trail system."

"Keep it safe to walk around the city."

"Build a parking garage downtown."

"We need better transportation options."

"Trail connectivity and green space are important."

"AMTRAK service!"

"Let's focus on building pedestrian infrastructure."

"I would love to see passenger train service in Bristol."

"A trail along Beaver Creek from Sugar Hollow park to downtown!"

"We could have user-friendly wayfinding signage."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout *Bristol Forward*'s community engagement activities, the planning team identified a few consistent transportation themes. Many people in Bristol expressed a desire for a multimodal transportation system that enhances safety, increases mobility choices, and improves economic opportunities and quality of life in the city.

While the automobile is expected to remain the primary and preferred means of travel, developing a multimodal transportation network that enhances public transit and expands the bicycle and pedestrian network can promote flexibility, reduce dependence on cars, and enhances overall mobility for everyone. This approach also provides more opportunities for those in Bristol who do not have access to a vehicle or prefer alternatives to driving.

Figure 2 shows attendees at the first community meeting.

WHAT DOES MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION MEAN?

Multimodal transportation refers to a system that incorporates various modes of travel, including walking, biking, public transit, and driving. It emphasizes connectivity and accessibility, ensuring that people have multiple, efficient options for getting from one place to another.

Figure 2. Community Meeting #1 at the Bristol Train Station. People were enthusiastic about this planning project and the opportunity to provide input throughout the process.

ROADWAY NETWORK COMPONENTS

When the people involved in transportation planning and project development want to understand how a roadway network operates, they look to a variety of factors. Some of the factors, which are covered below, include functional classification, roadway capacity, and the amount of traffic on the roadways.

Roadway Management

According to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)'s FY24 Urban Municipal Mileage Payments summary, Bristol maintains approximately 275 lane miles of roadway throughout the city.

The City receives funds through VDOT's Urban Maintenance Program for "the urban system for maintenance, construction and reconstruction of roads and streets meeting specific criteria and under certain conditions." Bristol's Urban Maintenance funds totaled around $5.2 million for FY24.

To receive these funds, Bristol's roadways must be functionally classified based on the Federal Functional Classification system. The City has five types of roadways (functional classes), each intended to serve a specific purpose (Map 1). This classification is generally defined by the volume, or amount of traffic, traveling on the road, as well as the land uses the roads are designed to provide access to.

Figure 2 shows the number of roadway lane miles by functional classification.

Map 1 shows Bristol's roadway network by functional classification.

Roadway Lane Miles in Bristol

Figure 3. **Bristol Roadway Lane Miles.** The City of Bristol is responsible for maintaining approximately 275 miles of roadways. Bristol Forward examines how to align land development and transportation goals to enhance connectivity and mobility throughout the community.

Map 1. City of Bristol Roadway Network - Functional Classification

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 1 · Exit 3 · Exit 5 · Exit 7 · 19 · 81 · 58 · 381 · 11 · 421 · 113

DOWNTOWN AREA

TOPIC LEGEND

Functional Classification

- Interstate
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation
Functional Classification on LRS 22.1

Understanding functional classification is essential to planning Bristol's future because aligning land uses with the function of a roadway is important. For example, extensive development with numerous access points along a principal arterial can undermine the roadway's purpose of efficiently and safely carrying high traffic volumes. Lee Highway exemplifies a land use pattern mismatched with the functional purpose of a roadway.

However, it is important to note that the function of a roadway may change, necessitating a reevaluation of its classification. A case to monitor is Gate City Highway, currently classified as a Principal Arterial. With the anticipated growth and development surrounding the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Bristol and VDOT may want to evaluate the function of the road - does it remain as a road with a primary purpose of carrying high volumes of traffic or should it evolve into more of a complete street? This change could enable the roadway to better serve the Casino activity node, accommodating drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users who are accessing services along the roadway. The Appendix provides a summary and examples of the functional classifications found in the City of Bristol.

Bristol Forward does not have functional class recommendations, but does encourage the City to monitor roadways and work with VDOT to respond to transportation and land use changes.

Figure 4 shows varying levels of access versus mobility with different roadway types.
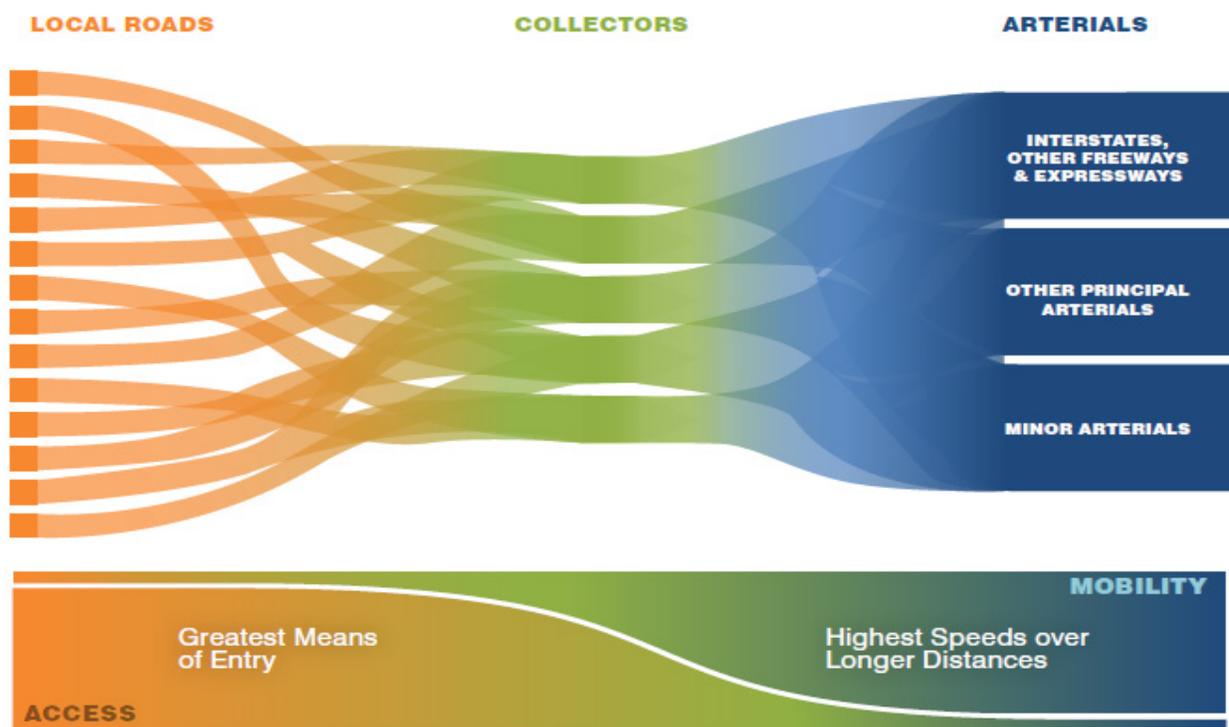
Figure 4. The Road Type Continuum. Local roads, collectors and arterials provide a range of access and mobility. Local roads have the greatest means of entry and arterials have the highest speeds over long distances. Source: FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines

Congestion

Roads can only handle a certain number of cars at a time - their maximum capacity. This capacity is influenced by factors such as the number of lanes, traffic signals, and other roadway characteristics. Capacity is a crucial metric as it indicates the total volume of vehicles a road can support.

Traffic volume measures the number of vehicles passing a specific point over a set period, often expressed as vehicles per hour or anual average vehicles per day (AADT). When traffic volume exceeds a road's capacity, congestion occurs. The negative effects of congestion include increased travel time, more crashes, delays for emergency vehicles, and reduced air quality.

However, in some areas like Downtown Bristol, a certain level of congestion can be expected and managed as a typical aspect of urban life. This is due to the concentration of businesses, entertainment venues, and other attractions that draw large numbers of people. A moderate amount of congestion is often viewed as a sign of economic vitality and vibrancy, reflecting a bustling community where people want to be. While efforts are made to minimize severe traffic delays, the presence of some congestion is an inherent part of the urban experience.

Figure 5 shows typical traffic levels on State Street.

Figure 5. Traffic on State Street. Manageable congestion is expected on urban corridors like State Street, reflecting the area's economic vitality and vibrant community.

Annual Average Daily Traffic

Another key metric in transportation planning is AADT — Annual Average Daily Traffic. This is a measure of the average two-way traffic on a road segment over a year. Map 2 illustrates VDOT's available volumes for 2022. Some highlights from Bristol's AADT include:

o Interstate 81and I-381carry the highest volumes of daily traffic in the region, reaching 60,000 in both directions between Exits 3 and 5.

o Closer to Downtown, Euclid and Commonwealth Avenues see the highest AADT counts, ranging from 14,000 to 16,000. The high AADT in this area is not surprising given that people traveling on I-26 in Tennessee use the US 19W/11E/VA 381 corridor and I-381 to reach I-81 North.

o Other high AADT areas include State Street (14,000), Lee Highway (12,000 west of Downtown; 11,000 north of Downtown), and Bonham Road north of I-81 (8,300).

o All other road segments in Bristol have an 8,000 AADT count or lower.

AADT provides a point-in-time snapshot of traffic volume at a specific location over a year. Unlike real-time data, it does not tell us if traffic is increasing or decreasing, or if the amount of traffic is too much for the roadway, exceeding its capacity. Nonetheless, AADT remains helpful in pinpointing high-traffic zones, guiding transportation planners in allocating resources and improving traffic management strategies effectively.

Figure 6 shows Bristol's urban context.

Map 2 shows traffic volumes in Bristol.

Figure 6. City Traffic. Urban traffic is a critical aspect of city life, influencing economic activity, mobility, and the overall quality of life, requiring effective management to balance efficiency and livability.

Map 2. Annual Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 3
Exit 5
Exit 7
Exit 1
19
81
58
381
11
113
421

TOPIC LEGEND

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

- 40 - 1,700 vpd
- 1,701 - 4,000 vpd
- 4,001 - 7,900 vpd
- 7,901 - 12,000 vpd
- 12,001 - 17,000 vpd
- 17,001 - 60,000 vpd

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, 2022 AADT
Vehicles Per Day (vpd)

DOWNTOWN AREA
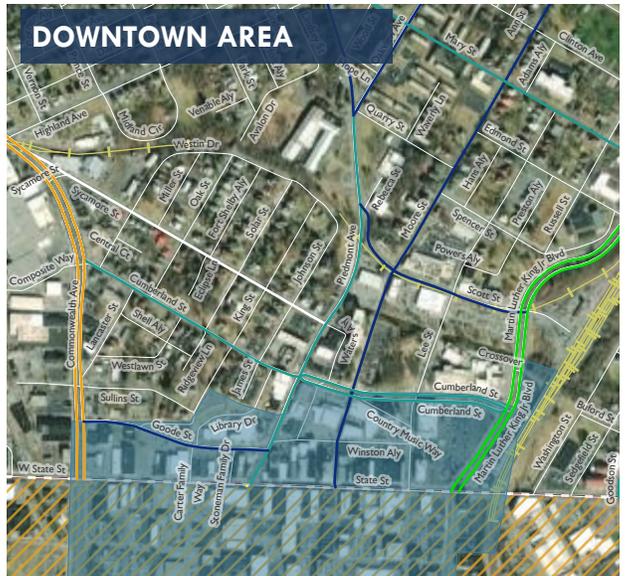
Corridors of Statewide Significance

The designation and study of these multimodal corridors of statewide significance (CoSS) 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."*

CoSS component facilities include a primary facility (generally an Interstate or US Highway Route) and the major facilities/services (typically within approximately five miles of the primary highway) that provide multiple modes and parallel routes connecting major centers of activity along the corridor. 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.

Figure 7 shows VDOT's eleven Corridors of Statewide Significance.

Map 3 shows the two Corridors of Statewide Significane within the Brisol city limits.

Figure 7. Corridors of Statewide Significance.

Map 3. Corridors of Statewide Significance

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Crescent Corridor

Southside Corridor

Exit 1
Exit 3
Exit 5
Exit 7
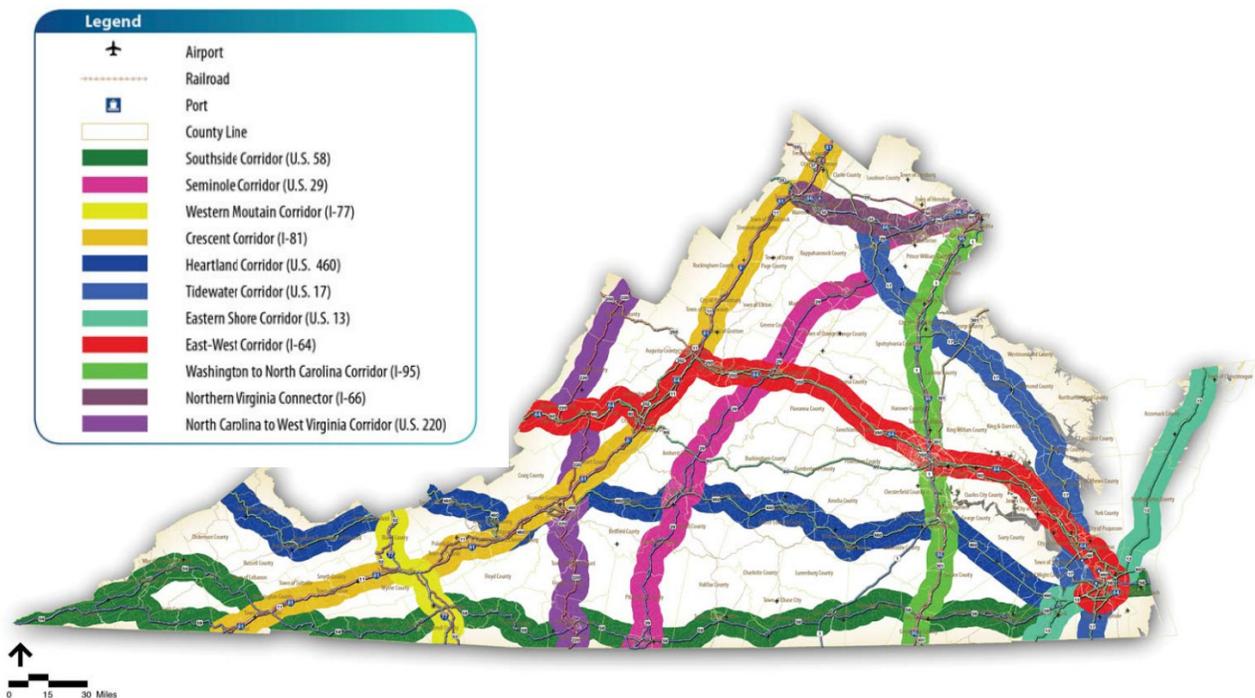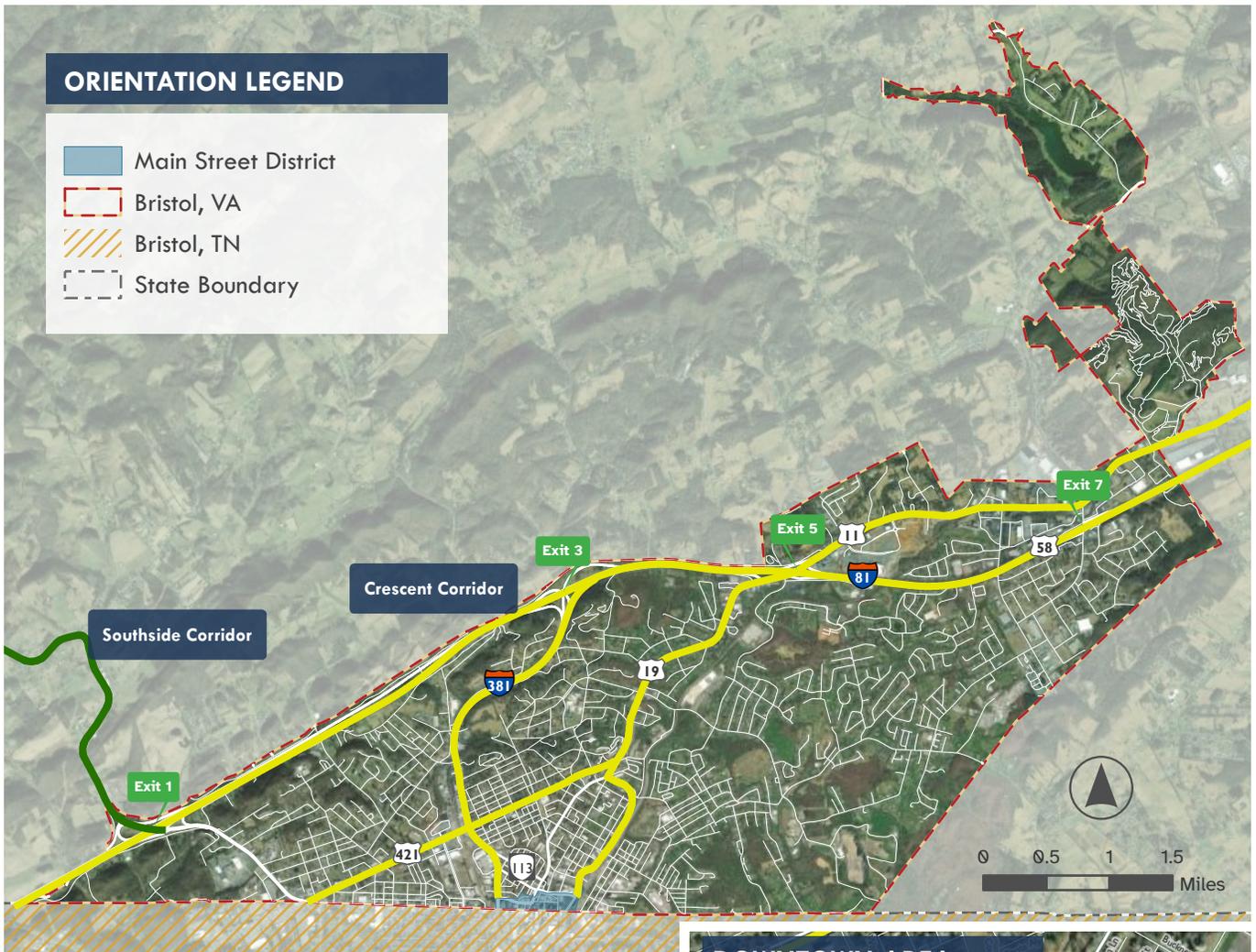
TOPIC LEGEND

Corridors of Statewide Significance

— Crescent Corridor
— Southside Corridor

Source: Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), VDOT - Transportation Planning and Mobility Planning (TMPD)

DOWNTOWN AREA

ROADWAY SAFETY

Motor Vehicles

Understanding the location and characteristics of traffic crashes is an important way to assess the performance of a transportation network, and it is a key factor in project evaluation. Crashes involving people driving, walking, and bicycling highlight problematic areas that may need consideration for further design and operational improvements.

However, looking only at crash locations, as shown in Map 4, does not tell a full story. A better approach involves evaluating crash rates, which are available through VDOT's Crash Summary Book on a District and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) level. This data, encompassing the entire city of Bristol, allows for a broader analysis of safety trends and helps prioritize areas for targeted interventions and enhancements within the transportation network.

Bristol Area Crash Trends

The following points, summarized from data tables in VDOT's Crash Summary Book, document crash trends occurring between 2018 and 2022 that involved motorized vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

o 275 roadway users were killed in crashes in the Bristol District compared to 22 in the Bristol MPO.

o 1,630 and 199 people were seriously injured and in the District and the MPO, respectively.

o Of the nine Districts in Virginia, the Bristol District has the fourth highest fatal crash rate and the fourth highest serious injury crash rate. For the combined Fatal + Injury Crash Rate, the Bristol District ranks second. The Bristol District has the highest Total Crash Rate of all Districts.

o Of the fifteen MPOs in Virginia, the Bristol MPO has the second highest Fatal Crash Rate, the fifth highest Serious Injury Crash Rate, and the second highest Total Crash Rate.

Map 4 shows crash locations and severity within the Bristol city limits from 2019-2023. *Map 5* shows the severe and fatal crashes in Bristol from 2019-2023.

**Map 4. Crashes Within the City of Bristol (All Types)**

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
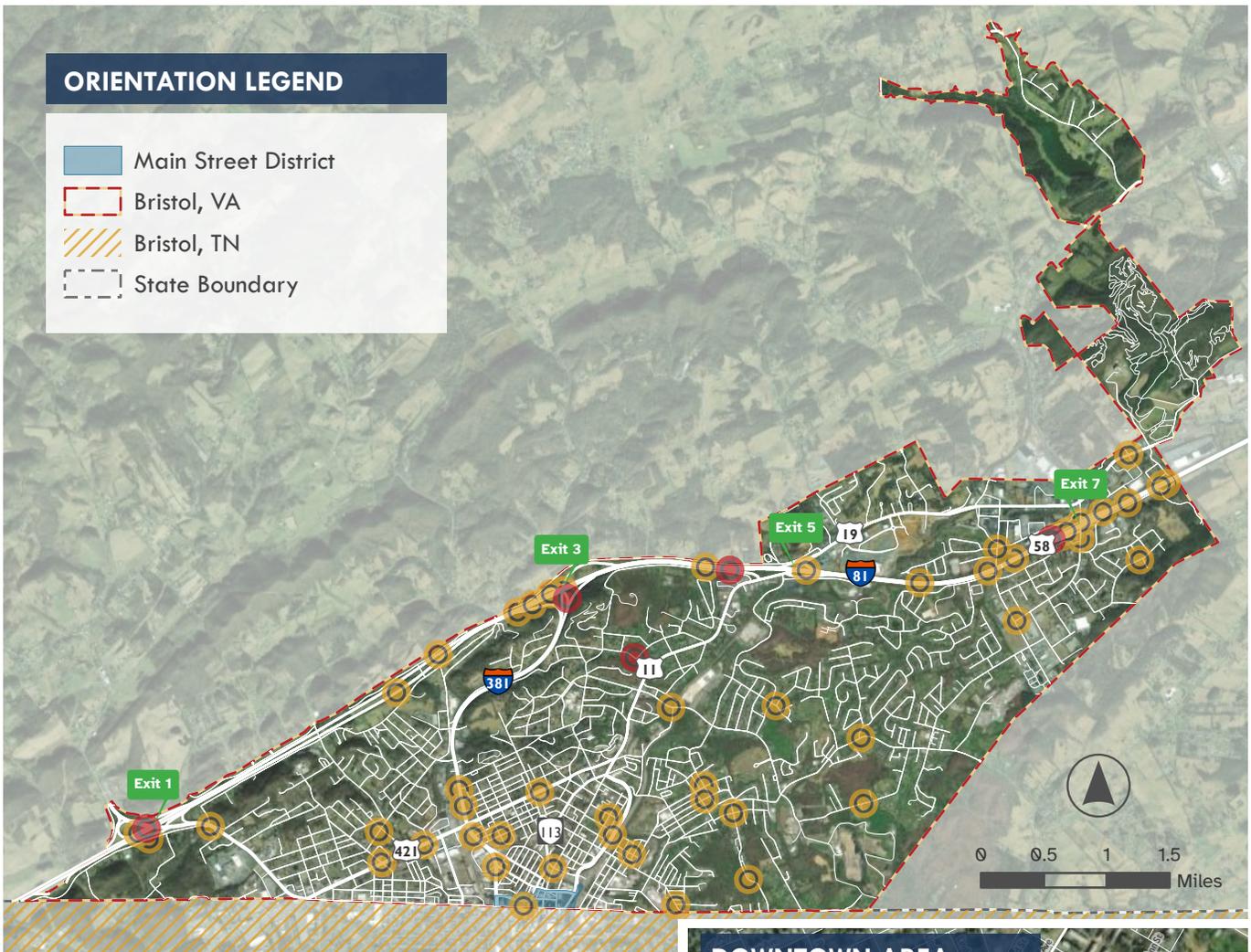- State Boundary

DOWNTOWN AREA

TOPIC LEGEND

2019 - 2023: All Injury Types

- A. Severe Injury
- B. Visible Injury
- C. Nonvisible Injury
- K. Fatal Injury

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Crash Map; Property Damage Only (PDO) are Not Included
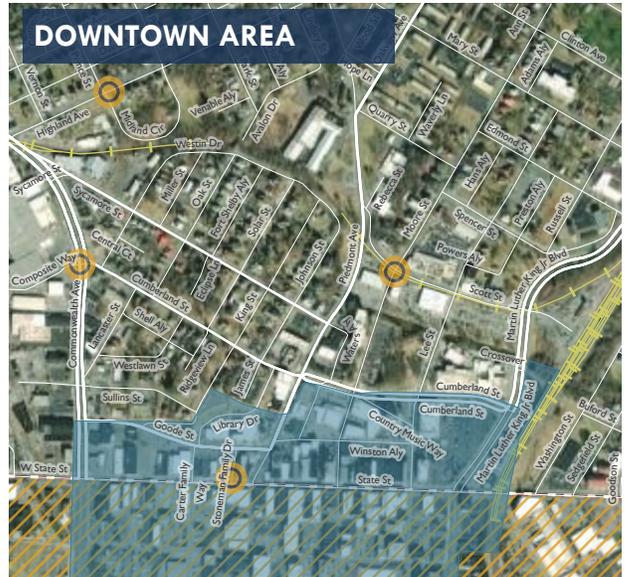
Map 5. Severe and Fatal Crashes

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary
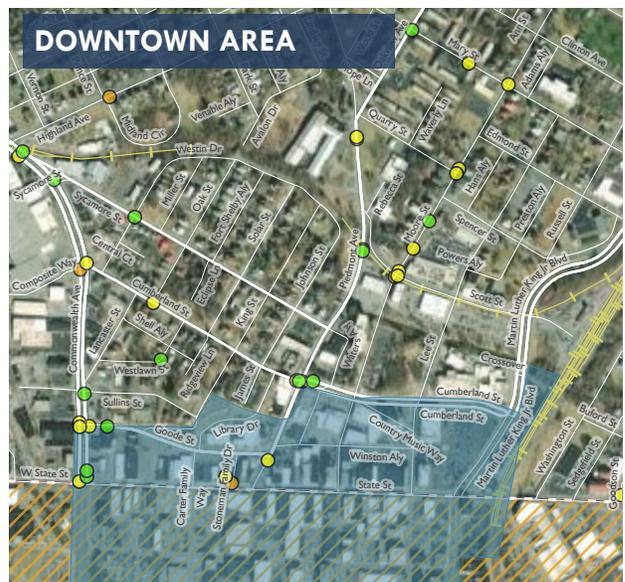
TOPIC LEGEND

2019 - 2023: Severe and Fatal Crashes

- A. Severe Injury
- K. Fatal Injury

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Crash Map

DOWNTOWN AREA

Roadway Safety - Bicycles and Pedestrians

People walking and biking are often referred to as vulnerable road users because they are not protected in the event of a crash or collision on roadways and typically travel at lower speeds compared to motorized traffic. This combination of factors increases their susceptibility to injury.

The crash sample size in Bristol is small, so looking at trends across Virginia is a good strategy.

Figure 9 is a page excerpted from VDOT's Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment (VRUSA). *The figure illustrates that killed and serious injury crashes are on the rise for people who walk and bike, as well as for all types of crashes.*

Bristol Area Crash Trends

VDOT's Crash Map contains pedestrian and bicycle crash data. Crashes occurring between 2019 and 2023 show that:

o **Three pedestrians were killed** in crashes with motor vehicles and **5 were severely injured.**

o The **highest concentration (around 60%)** of bicycle and pedestrian crashes occurred in the **quadrant bounded by Commonwealth Avenue, Euclid Avenue, MLK, Jr. Boulevard, and State Street.** However, **none of the fatal crashes occurred** in this area.

o VDOT's **Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan** (PBSAP) 4.0 examines a variety of factors relating to roadways, the built environment, the community, and crashes to develop a composite score and ranking for all roadways in the Commonwealth. These locations represent the highest priority roadway segments. **Bristol has segments that correspond with the First (Top 1% Segments) and Second (Top 5% Segments) Statewide Priority tiers** in the 2023 corridor analysis.

Figure 8 shows the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Euclid Avenue.
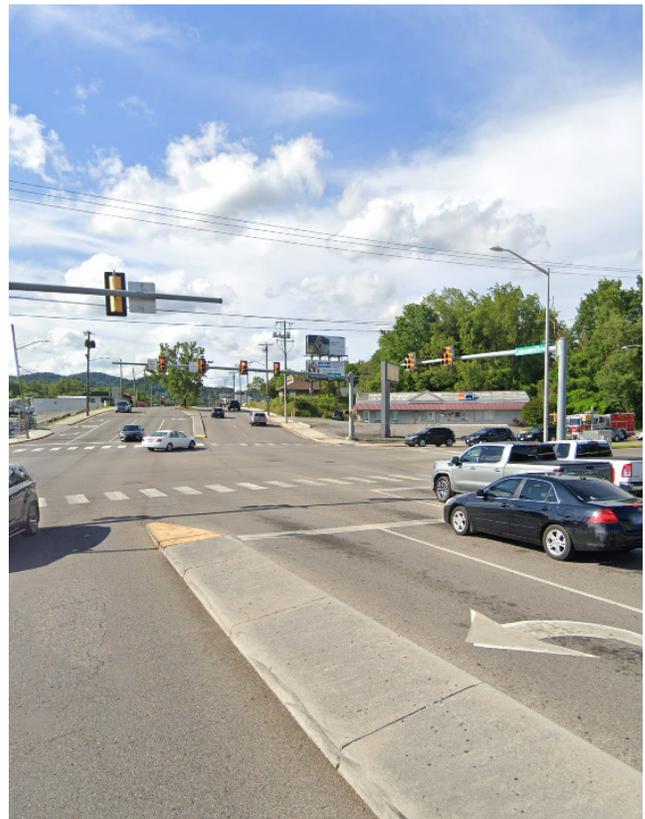
Figure 8. Lack of Bicycle Infrastructure. Many primary roadways are dangerous to navigate on a bicycle.

PEDESTRIAN CRASHES ALL INJURY SEVERITIES

BICYCLIST CRASHES ALL INJURY SEVERITIES
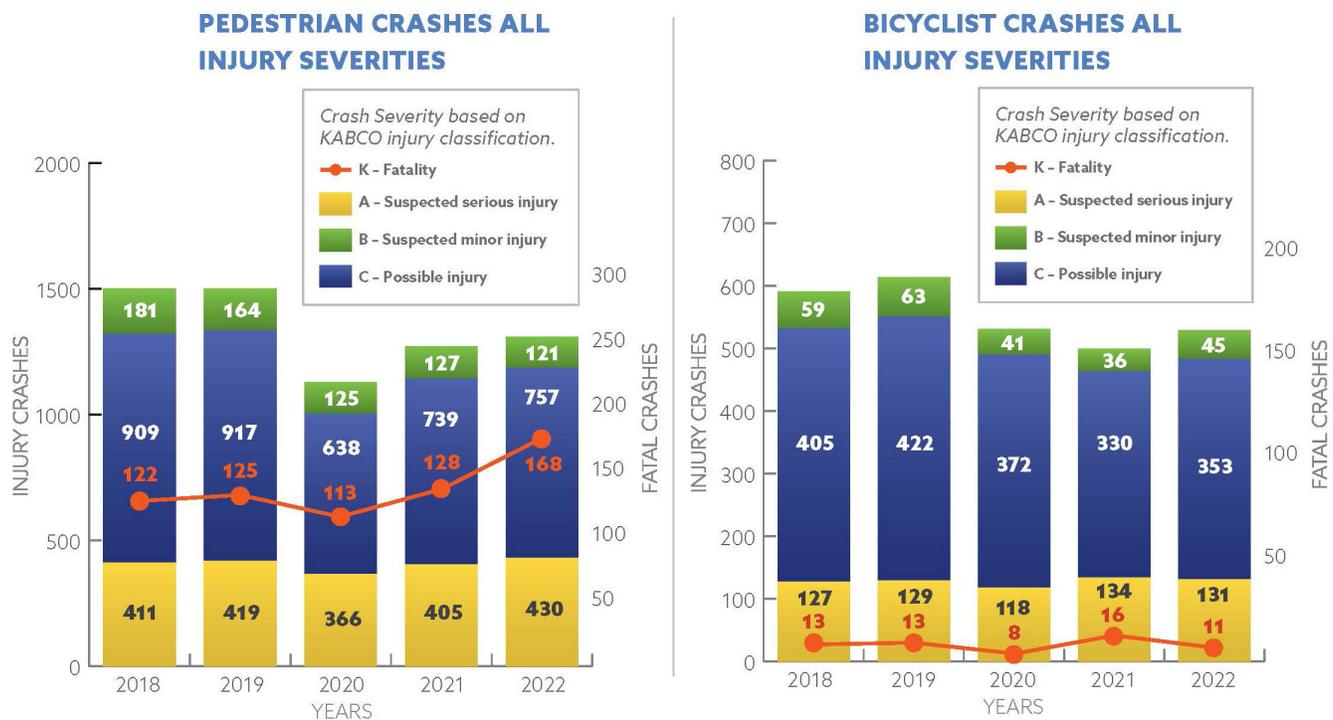
Figure 9. Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. These charts show that Virginia was experiencing fluctuating pedestrian and bicyclist total crash numbers and that fatal (K) and serious injury (A) crashes were increasing again in 2021 after seeing a decrease from 2018-2020. Bicyclist fatal and serious injury crash numbers have risen after a drop in crash numbers in 2020. Meanwhile, fatal and serious injury crashes for all traffic have experienced similar growth trends.

Key Findings

While detailed crash analysis will be addressed in upcoming plans, such as the Multimodal Transportation Plan (MMTP) and the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) plans, below are key findings from a sample of crash data in the region:

Pedestrian Crashes:

- 89% of crashes (17 out of 19) occurred in dry conditions.

- 42% of crashes occurred during daylight, and 47% took place at night on lighted roads.

- 84% of crashes (16 out of 19) happened outside of intersections.

- 37% of crashes (7 out of 19) involved hit-and-run incidents.

Bicycle Crashes:

- 80% of crashes (7 out of 9) occurred in dry conditions.

- 60% of crashes occurred during daylight, while 40% occurred at night on lighted roads.

- 80% of crashes occurred at intersections, with 70% of those at 3- or 4-way intersections.

- 33% of crashes (3 out of 9) involved hit-and-run incidents.

These patterns highlight key areas of concern for pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Map 6 illustrates the locations of vehicle crashes in Bristol involving a person walking or biking.

Map 6. Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes
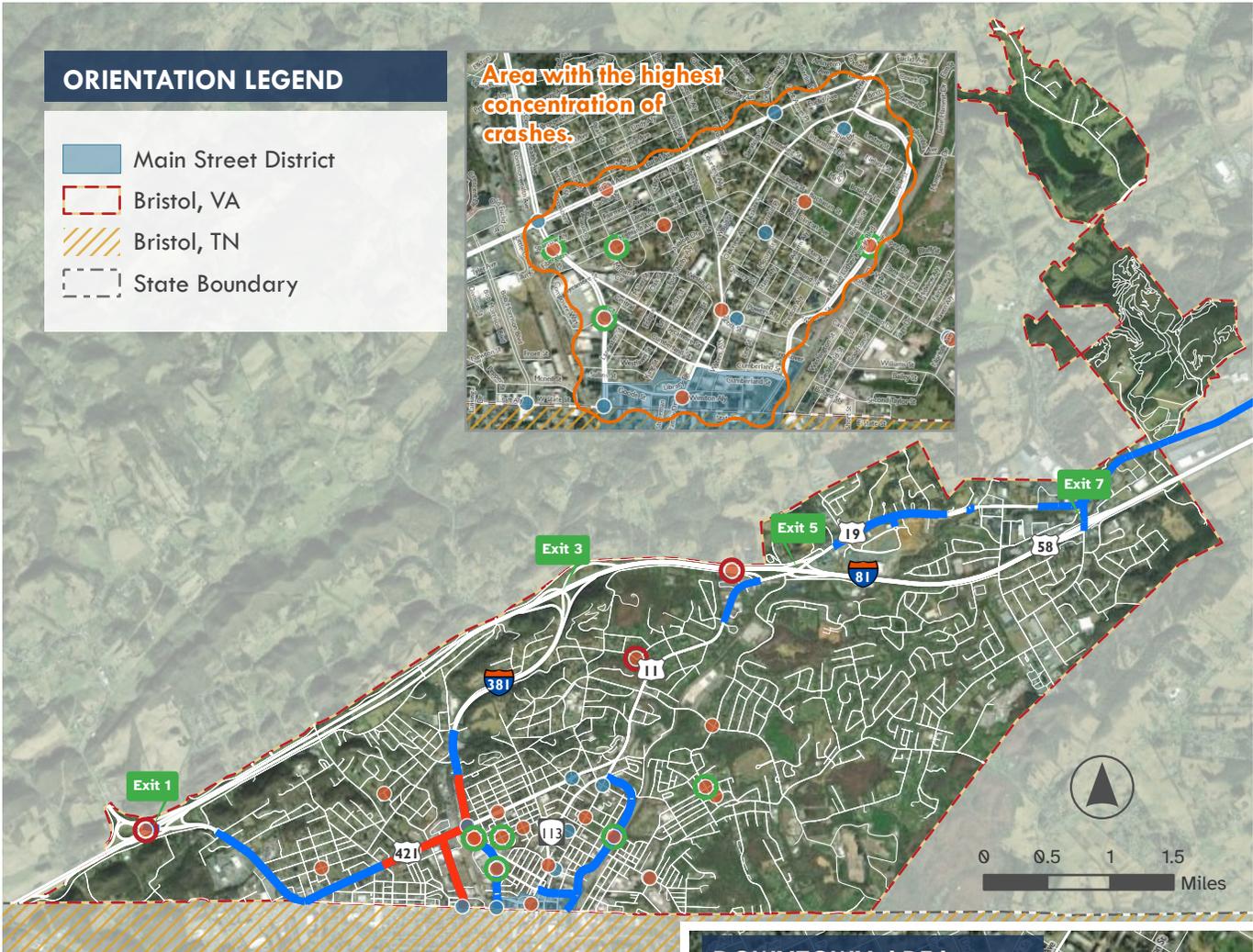
ORIENTATION LEGEND

▆	Main Street District
▭	Bristol, VA
▨	Bristol, TN
▯	State Boundary

Area with the highest concentration of crashes.
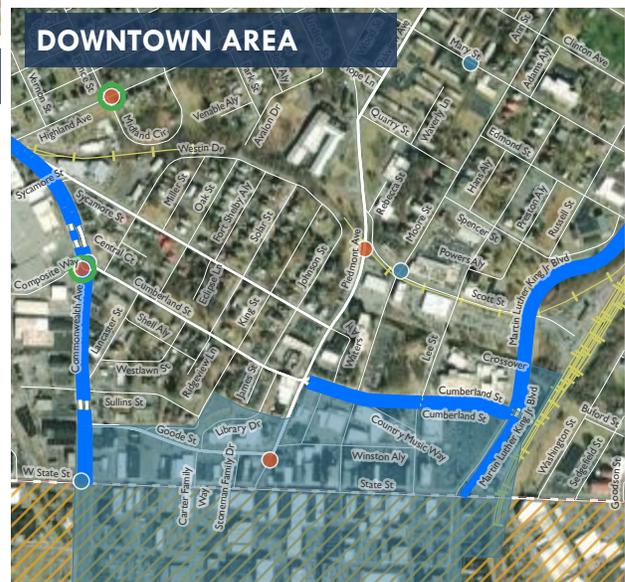
TOPIC LEGEND

2019 - 2023: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

- ● Bicycle Crash
- ● Pedestrian Crash
- ◯ A. Pedestrain Severely Injured
- ◯ K. Pedestrian Killed

VDOT PBSAP 4.0

— Top 1% of Priority Road Segments Across VA

— Top 5% of Priority Road Segments Across VA

Source: VDOT, VA Crash Map; VDOT Crash Data Dictionary 2022, VDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan 4.0

DOWNTOWN AREA

While there is not a clear reason why the high crash area highlighted on the map presents itself, access to a vehicle is likely a significant factor. According to Census figures, 10% of Bristol workers 16 years and older do not have access to a vehicle. In Census tract 202.01, which is the quadrant in question, 21% of 16+ workers do not have access to a vehicle.

Opportunities to Incorporate A Safe Systems Approach

Research shows that when streets are designed to be safer for people walking and biking, they become safer for all road users. A possible outcome of *Bristol Forward* could be projects and strategies to improve safety for all and a reduction in fatal and severe crashes across the city.

While the Bristol area's crash trends are concerning, the timing of *Bristol Forward* aligns well with state and regional efforts designed to improve roadway safety for all users. A selection of these initiatives follow.

To improve safety for all roadway users in the city, the City of Bristol can:

o Incorporate the Safe Systems Approach to roadway network projects as outlined in the following VDOT Programs:

➲ VDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

➲ Virginia Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

➲ VDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan

o Actively participate in the upcoming Bristol MPO Safe Streets for All (SS4A) effort to identify high-crash areas and countermeasures for safety improvements.

Figure 10 shows the Birthplace of Country Music museum pedestrian access.

Figure 11 shows VDOT's Safe System Emphasis Areas.
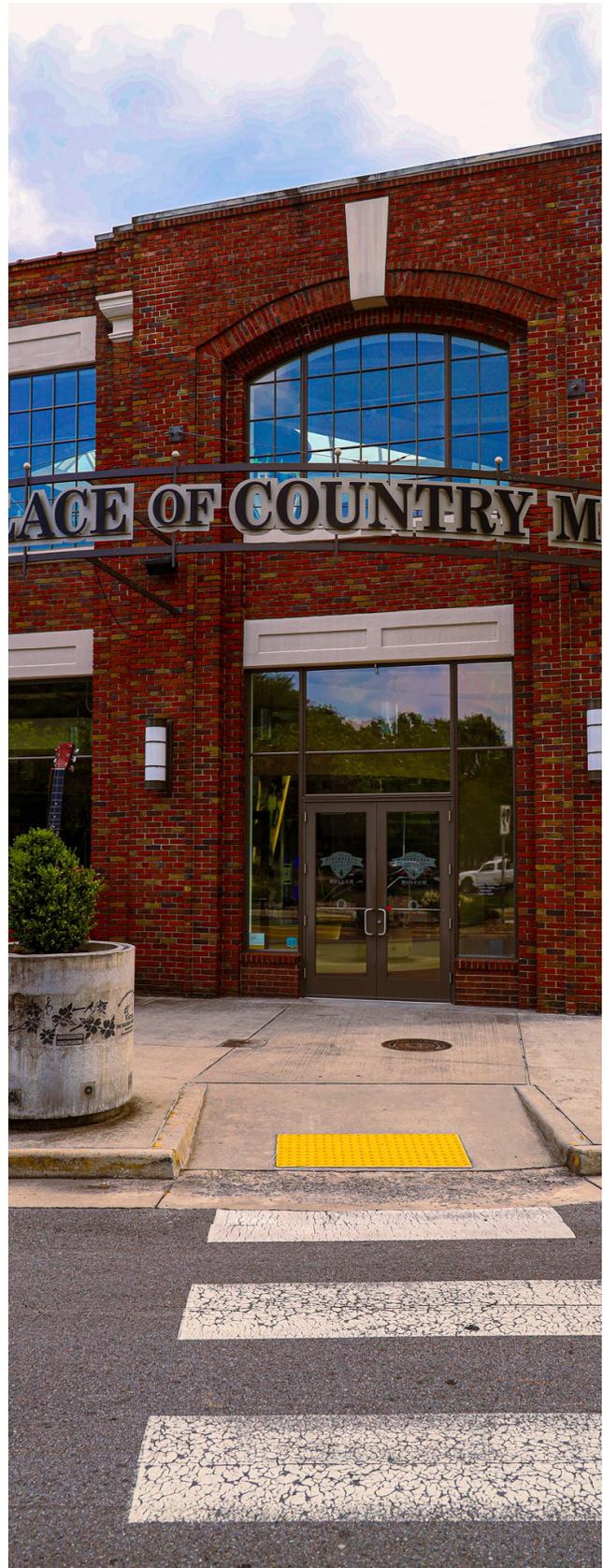
Figure 10. Pedestrian access to the Birthplace of Country Music Museum.

Figure 11. VDOT's Safe System Emphasis Areas from the SHSP.

SAFE ROAD USERS

- Pedestrians & Bicyclists
- Young Drivers
- Aging Road Users
- Occupant Protection
- Impaired Driving
- Motorcyclists

SAFE VEHICLES

- Heavy Vehicles
- Connected & Automated Vehicles

SAFE SPEEDS

- Speeding

SAFE ROADS

- Roadway Departure
- Intersections

POST-CRASH CARE

- Emergency Response & Medical Services

SUPPORTING

- Data & Analytics

Safe System Element

Emphasis Area

New Emphasis Area for 2022-2026 SHSP

TRAVEL PATTERNS

Commuting Characteristics

An evaluation of work commute patterns in Bristol underscores the city's pivotal role in regional travel. Bristol serves as the origin, destination, or both for many commuters, reflecting its significance in the regional travel network. According to the U.S. Census data from 2021, a total of 9,772 workers were employed in Bristol, with 83% (8,156 individuals) residing outside the city. Conversely, 6,458 workers lived in Bristol, and 75% (4,842 individuals) commuted to jobs outside the city.

Figure 12 illustrates Bristol's commuting patterns (inflow and outflow).

These findings indicate a greater influx of commuters into Bristol compared to residents commuting out. A smaller segment of 1,616 workers both live and work within the city limits, underscoring Bristol's role as a hub for local employment.

Remote Work

Nationwide, remote work increased during 2020's Covid-19 events. As shown in Figure 12, this trend appears in Bristol and the surrounding region.[i]

Remote work has both economic development and transportation implications. Studies investigating pre- and post-Covid work from home effects on the transportation network are


8,156

WORKER INFLOW
(Live Elsewhere,
Work in Bristol)

Worker inflow decreased by 7% between 2017 and 2021.

1,616

LOCAL WORKERS
(Live and
Work in Bristol)

Local workers decreased by 17% between 2017 and 2021.

4,842

WORKER OUTFLOW
(Live in Bristol,
Work Elsewhere)

Worker outflow decreased by 5% between 2017 and 2021.
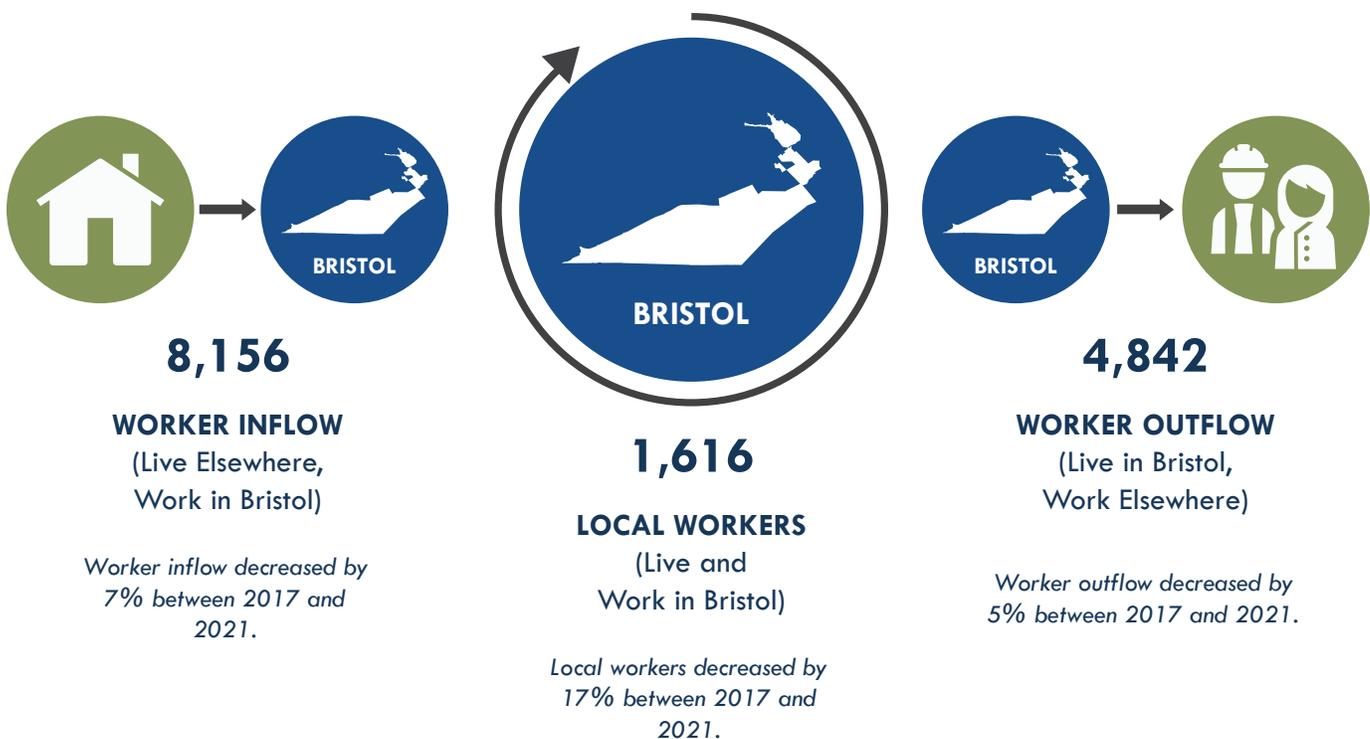
Figure 12. Worker Inflow & Outflow. More jobs are filled by people who live outside of the City of Bristol than those who live in and travel out of the city. combined. Source: OntheMap, U.S.Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

beginning to emerge, and the effects on the transportation system remain inconclusive.[ii] For example, while people report traveling less for work, they report traveling more for services, shopping, and recreation. Likewise, some people elected to move to more remote areas where they travel greater distances to reach essential services. Therefore, the overall effect on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is unknown. Other studies note that work from home has led to a decrease in transit use, which can be detrimental to small transit systems (see more about Bristol's transit system in a later section).

The need to retain existing employment opportunities, to attract new residents, and generate new jobs in Bristol likely outweighs any concern over any negative effects of an increasing work from home population. In fact, many rural communities and small towns are tailoring their marketing and economic development strategies to attract remote workers.

Figure 13 shows the change in percentage of people working from home.
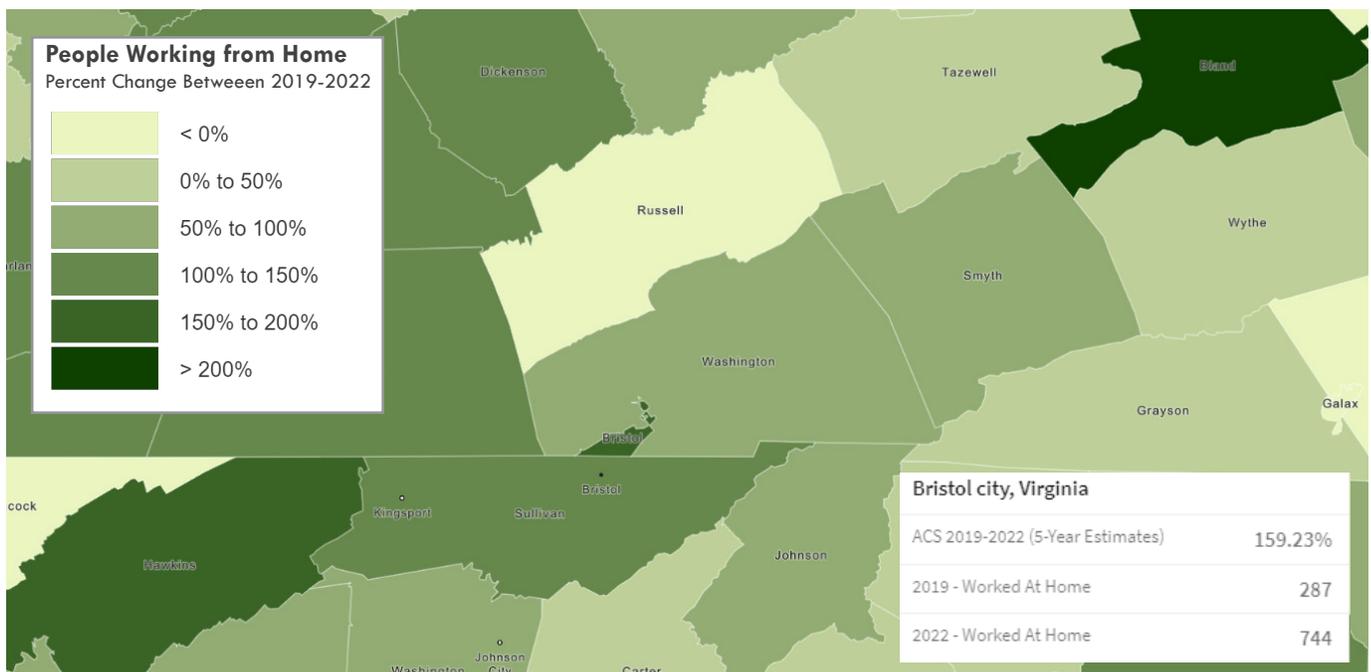
Figure 13. Working from Home Percent Change (2019-2022). The number of people working from home in Bristol has more that doubled since 2019. Source: Social Explorer, https://www.socialexplorer.com/283d4ed39d/view

Vehicle Availability

In Bristol, 47% of households had access to two or more vehicles. Forty-two percent (42%) had access to one vehicle, and 10% of Bristol's households did not have access to a vehicle. This is higher than the comparison areas and demonstrates the need for alternative modes of transportation for Bristol residents.
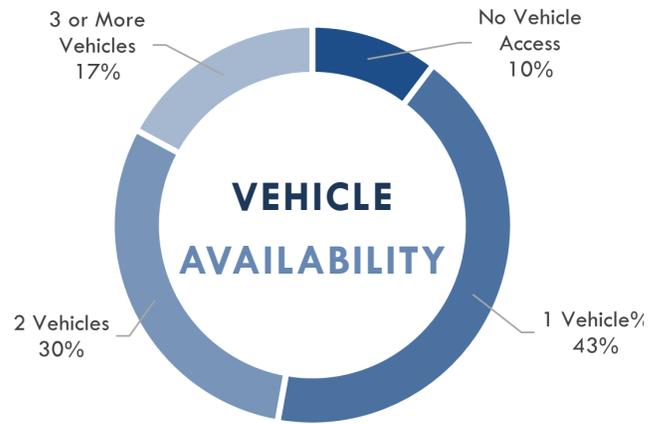
Figure 14 shows vehicle availability for households.

Mode Share: How People Get to Work

Of workers aged 16 or older, most in Bristol traveled to work by driving alone (79%) or carpooling (7%). The remaining share of 16+ workers used public transportation (0.4%), walked (4%), rode a bicycle (0.4%), or took a taxi, motorcycle or other means (1%). Finally, 10% of the 16+ workers worked from home.

The combined percent of workers who walk, bike, or bus to work is 5%, which is higher than most comparison areas, and again underscores the need for a variety of transportation options in Bristol.

Figure 15 shows how commuters traveled to work.

VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

- 3 or More Vehicles 17%
- No Vehicle Access 10%
- 1 Vehicle% 43%
- 2 Vehicles 30%

Households Without Vehicles

Virginia	Bristol, TN	Abingdon, VA	Washington County, VA
⊍ (6%)	⊍ (5%)	⊍ (7%)	⊍ (4%)

Figure 14. Household Vehicle Availability. Source: Household Size by Vehicles Available. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, 2022,

MODE SHARE

- Taxi, M'cycle, Other 1%
- Walk or Bike 4%
- Public T'port 0.4%
- Carpool 7%
- Work from Home 10%
- Drove Alone 78%
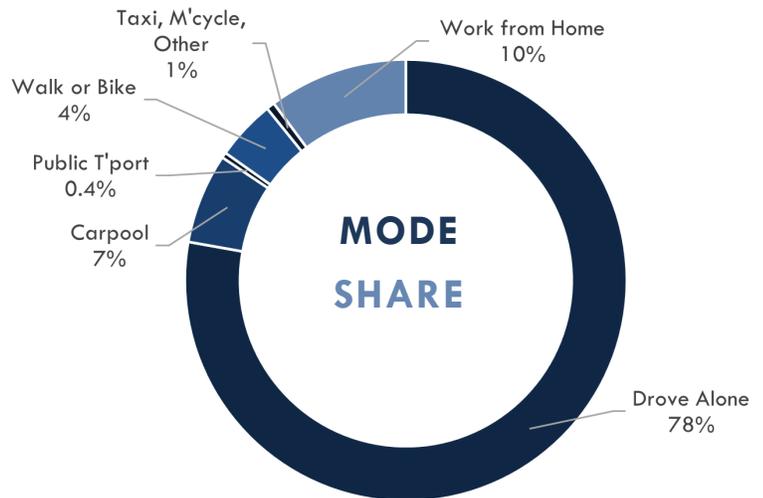
Workers Who Walk and Bike to Work

Virginia	Bristol, TN	Abingdon, VA	Washington County, VA
⊃ (5%)	⊍ (2%)	⊍ (3%)	⊍ (2%)

Figure 15. Commuting Characteristics by Sex. Source: American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022.
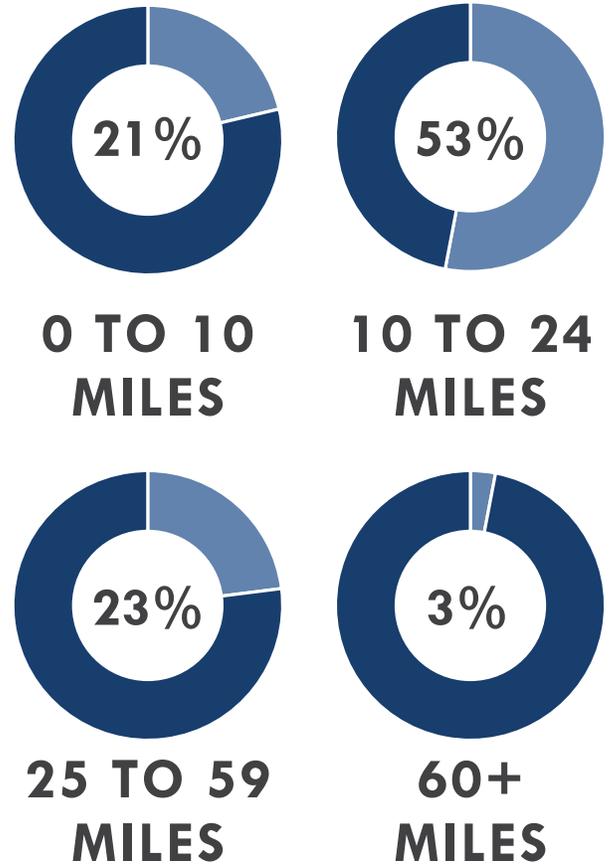
Comparison Key

⊃ Is Equal to Bristol	⊍ Is Less Than Bristol	⊎ Is Greater Than Bristol

Travel Time & Distance

Travel time is another common measure used in transportation. The measure quantifies in minutes the amount of time it takes to travel from home to work or vice versa. Bristol's 16+ workforce spent on average 20 minutes to commute to work. This is comparable to other jurisdictions in the area, but lower than the overall Virginia average.

Almost 80% of Bristol's 16+ workers travel ten miles or more to work.

Figure 16 illustrates the average travel distance to work.

21%

0 TO 10 MILES

53%

10 TO 24 MILES

23%

25 TO 59 MILES

3%

60+ MILES

Average Travel Time to Work in Minutes

Virginia	Bristol, TN	Abingdon, VA	Washington County, VA
⭥ (28)	⭥ (22)	⭥ (18)	⭥ (24)

Figure 16. Commuting Distances. Source: American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022.

Comparison Key

⮌ Is Equal to Bristol	⭥ Is Less Than Bristol	⭥ Is Greater Than Bristol

MULTIMODAL NETWORK

The topics covered in this section first cover active transportation options including pedestrian, bicycle and trail infrastructure; followed by an overview of transit, rail, air, and park and ride transportation options.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The core component of Bristol's pedestrian infrastructure is its network of sidewalks, plus the associated curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and signage. The completed sections of the Lee Highway Multiuse Path doubles as a facility for people who walk *and* bike.

Bristol's Public Works Department maintains around 43 miles of sidewalk across the city. The City does not have an ADA Transition Plan for the public right-of-way to address accessibility concerns. Most sidewalks (45%) are north of downtown between State Street and Euclid Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue. Newer sidewalks, and the Lee Highway Mulituse Path, are in the northeast portion of the city near I-81. There are large sections of the city, such as Lee Highway and King Mill Pike that do not have sidewalk connectivity.

Map 7 shows Bristol's existing sidewalk network.

New sidewalk or sidewalk improvements in Bristol are funded through a number of avenues, such as:

o Through the City's capital improvement planning program, most often paired with VDOT funds to support the project.

o New development such as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that require sidewalk development, although there are currently none in Bristol.

o While they tend to be pedestrian in nature, Bristol does a good job of incorporating multimodal projects with roadway improvement through SMART SCALE and other avenues.

Bicycle Infrastructure

While there are few dedicated facilities for on-street bicycling in Bristol, many people who involved in the *Bristol Forward* planning process expressed a need for more places to bike around Bristol for recreation and transportation. People in Bristol are bicycling throughout the city. While the Census data presented earlier indicates that few people commute for work, there are people who are using their bicycle as a primary means of transportation in the downtown area.

Other than the existing and planned Lee Highway Multiuse path sections in northeast Bristol, there are no dedicated bicycle or other multiuse facilities in Bristol. The bicycle network also includes portions of the planned Beaches to Bluegrass cross-state trail that has planned on-road and off road segments.

Figure 17 shows walking and bicycling patterns from the fitness tracking app Strava.

Map 7 shows Bristol's existing sidewalk network.

Map 8 shows Bristol's planned and existing bicycle and trail network.

Figure 17. Walking & Bicycling in Bristol. The Strava Heat Maps above illustrate walking and bicycling patterns in Bristol, with red indicating areas of higher recorded activity. (A) highlights walking trips, which are largely concentrated around the existing trail system and within the downtown core, showing limited activity beyond these areas. (B) focuses on bicycling trips, revealing a similar trend of activity clustered around trails and streets connected to downtown. However, unlike walking, bicycling trips extend beyond the central area, with some cyclists using major collector streets to travel longer distances.

Strava is a fitness tracking app used primarily by runners and cyclists to record their activities via GPS. The app collects data on routes, distances, and speeds, allowing users to analyze performance and share progress. Strava's heatmaps aggregate this data from millions of users over the past two to three years to show areas with higher concentrations of walking, running, or cycling activity. These heatmaps are valuable for transportation planning, as they highlight popular routes and potential gaps in infrastructure for active transportation.

Map 7. Sidewalk Network

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 7
Exit 5
Exit 3
Exit 1
19
58
81
381
11
113
421

DOWNTOWN AREA

0   0.5   1   1.5
Miles

TOPIC LEGEND

Sidewalk Network

— Present

— Pending

Source: Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area
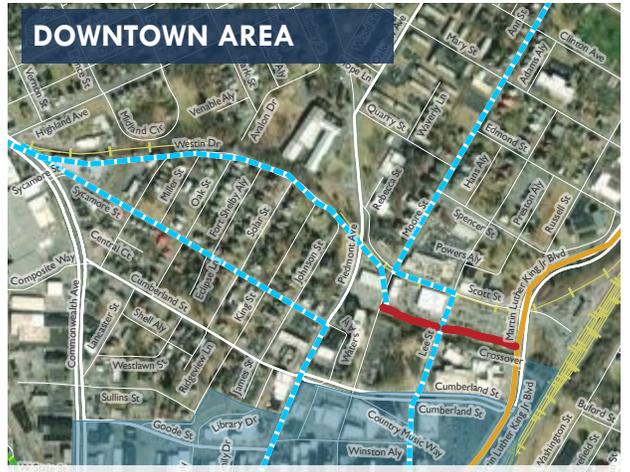Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Map 8. Bicycle and Trail Network

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary
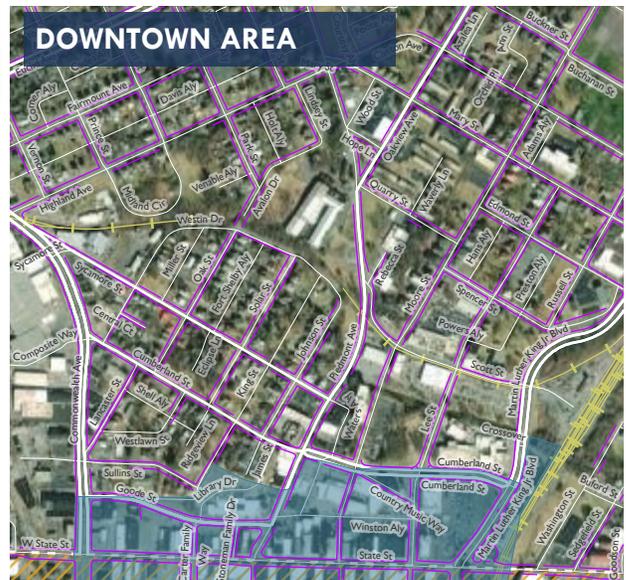
TOPIC LEGEND

Bicycle and Trail Network

- ——— Greenway
- ——— Off-Road Trails
- - - - Mendota Trail Connector Trail
- ——— B2B On Road Segments
- - - - B2B Planned Off-Road Route

Lee Hwy Segments

- - - - Gap - Funded Smart Scale Project (6ft Sidewalk)
- - - - Gap - Unfunded
- ——— Existing Multiuse Path

DOWNTOWN AREA

Source: Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); MTB Project;
VDOT/DCR (Beaches to Bluegrass - B2B)

Trails Infrastructure

There are three named trails or trail networks in Bristol. **The Mendota Trail** is a 12.5 mile (one-way) trail that connects the Island Road trailhead in Bristol to the small community of Mendota northwest of Bristol.

The gap between downtown Bristol and the Island Road trailhead is a planned project, for which the City has received grant funds to assist with the next phases of design. While the Mendota Trail is more of a recreation destination, the Connector would expand trail access and serve as a transportation amenity for the community, possibly by creating new on- and off-road facilities that are more urban in nature.

The two other trails in Bristol include the recreational **Sugar Hollow Park trails** and the small **Beaver Creek Greenway** that parallels Moore Street to MLK, Jr. Boulevard near Cumberland Square Park. Bristol's recreation assets are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this plan.

Figure 18 shows someone bicycling on State Street in unsafe conditions, highlighting the need for new facilities and connections.

Figure 19 shows people walking on the Mendota Trail for recreation/fitness.

Figure 20 illustrates the concept of a connector between downtown and the Mendota Trail.
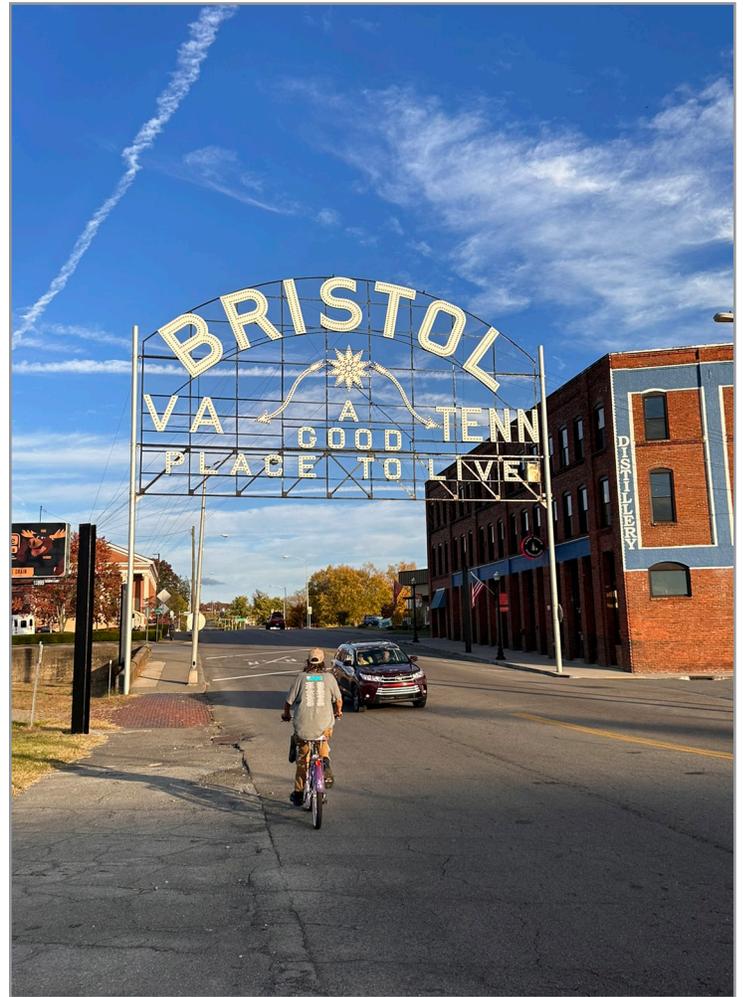

Figure 18. Bicycling in Bristol. Many people in Bristol are bicycling as their primary means of transportation. Education centered around safe cycling should be considered.

Figure 19. The Mendota Trail. A group of walkers enjoys the scenic views along the Mendota Trail, a popular route for outdoor recreation and active transportation in the Bristol area.

Source: The Bristol Herald Courier
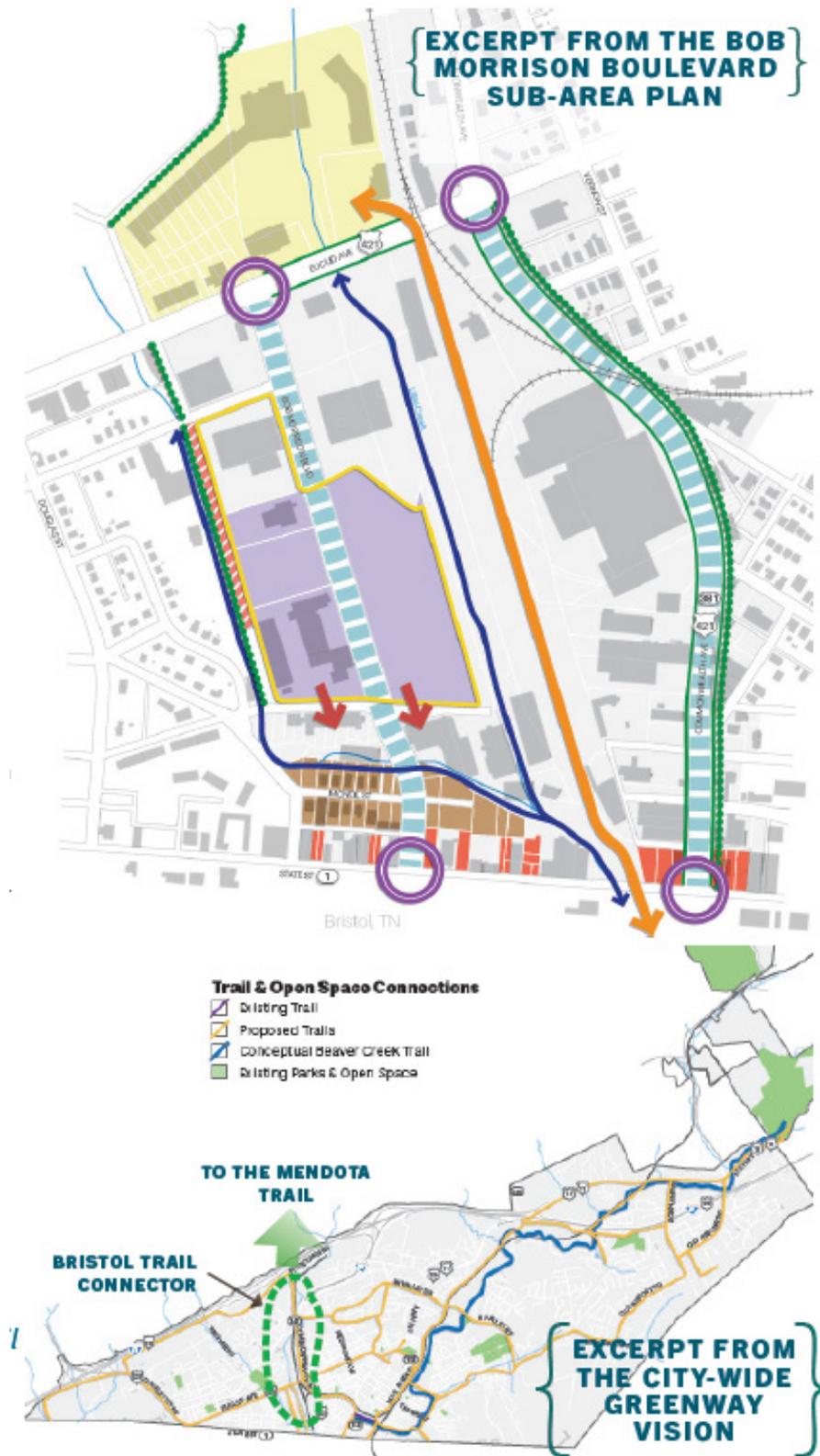
Figure 20. Mendota Trail Connector Concept. Taken from the Mendota Trail Master Plan, the map presents options to connect Downtown Bristol to the Mendota Trail.

Complete Streets

For decades, roads have been designed primarily for motor vehicles, with little consideration for the needs of other users. National, regional, and local transportation decisions have focused on accommodating motor vehicles and ensuring efficient traffic flow, typically measured as Level of Service (LOS). The prevailing belief was that the only solution to congestion was to build more roads.

While roadway improvements remain necessary, focusing solely on motor vehicles comes with significant financial, environmental, and social costs. Although accommodating automobiles is still essential and they will continue to be the dominant mode of transportation, 21st-century transportation planning should also provide additional transportation choices. Bristol can prioritize improved mobility and accessibility for all users, including youth, older adults, those who cannot afford an automobile, and those who choose alternative modes of transportation.

The concept of complete streets involves designing transportation systems that accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and all types of motor vehicles, aiming to enable safe and efficient travel for all users, regardless of age or ability.

Figure 21. State Street Pedestrian Crossing. A Complete Street works for people of all ages and abilities.

In 2013, the Virginia State Department of Rail and Public Transportation adopted the Multimodal System Design Guidelines. The guidelines offer a framework for improving Bristol's transportation system, promoting a more integrated and user-friendly network, including numerous examples of complete street designs within existing built environments.

Applying these concepts where possible will enhance overall mobility and create a more enjoyable urban environment. Implementing complete streets can improve the city's street network, making it safer and more efficient for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Complete streets incorporate various design techniques, many of which include the following features:

o Reduced lane widths

o Sidewalks and multi-use paths

o Consolidated driveways

o Raised medians with pedestrian refuges

o Enhanced pedestrian crossings with continental-style crosswalk markings and countdown timers

o On-street parking

o Intersections with small turning radii to reduce vehicle speeds

o Bike lanes separated from travel lanes by physical barriers or striping

These design elements make streets more attractive, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle use, increasing safety, and potentially easing congestion. Complete streets can also become vibrant public spaces that invite people to walk, meet neighbors, and engage in community life. By creating a sense of place, they attract development and stimulate local economic activity, yielding a positive return on investment.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) now requires that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be considered and integrated into any roadway project. In many cases, to receive state and federal funds, these accommodations must be included in the overall plan.

Aligned with VDOT's policy, the Comprehensive Plan encourages the development of new or retrofitted "complete streets." A complete street is designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit users, and the disabled.

Figure 21 shows State Street as a walkable destination.

Transit

Bristol Virginia Transit (BVT) is the City's transit system, providing fixed-route service and paratransit service.

Bristol Virginia Transit (BVT)

BVT completed its new *Transit Development Plan (TDP)* in March 2023. This section summarizes some of the key highlights related to BVT operations.

o BVT operates three routes with 60-minute headways departing from the Downtown Transfer Center (DTC), with fares of $1.00 per ride. Rates are discounted (50 cents) during off-peak hours and for those who are 60 years or older, have a disability, or are Medicare cardholders.

o The routes operate on the following schedule with the following operation times and days. Weekend and later evening service is not provided.

- ➲ **West Bristol** - 7:00am - 6:00pm, Monday - Friday.

- ➲ **Falls/Walmart** - 7:00am - 6:00pm, Monday - Friday.

- ➲ **East Bristol** - 10:00am - 6:00pm, Monday - Friday.

o BVT, operated by the City and Bristol, VA and Bristol Tennessee Transit (BTT) operated by the City of Bristol, TN coordinate on transit efforts; the two systems converge hourly at the DTC on the Tennessee side of State Street near the Farmers Market. BTT also provides three routes. Transfers between the systems costs 50 cents.

o Three routes carried 14,126 passenger trips in Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020 through June 2021).

o The TDP notes that areas without sidewalk "make it challenging for riders to get to and from bus stops, making accessibility to the system more constrained."

Paratransit

BVT also provides complementary origin-to-destination paratransit service to persons unable to use the regular fixed-route bus service. Paratransit riders must be certified as specified by ADA guidelines. The paratransit service carried 990 passenger trips in Fiscal Year 2021.

Virginia Breeze

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) operates the Virginia Breeze Bus Lines to connect rural Virginia communities with the national bus network. The Breeze serves Bristol through its Highlands Rhythm Route. The route makes one round trip each day from the park-and-ride lot near Island Road and I-81 Exit 5, and makes stops in seven other locations between Bristol and Washington, DC's Union Station. From there, customers can connect to national carriers for travel to other destinations. A one-way ticket from Bristol to DC, at the time of this report, was $60.

Map 9 shows the existing transit network in Bristol, with three routes and many bus stops.

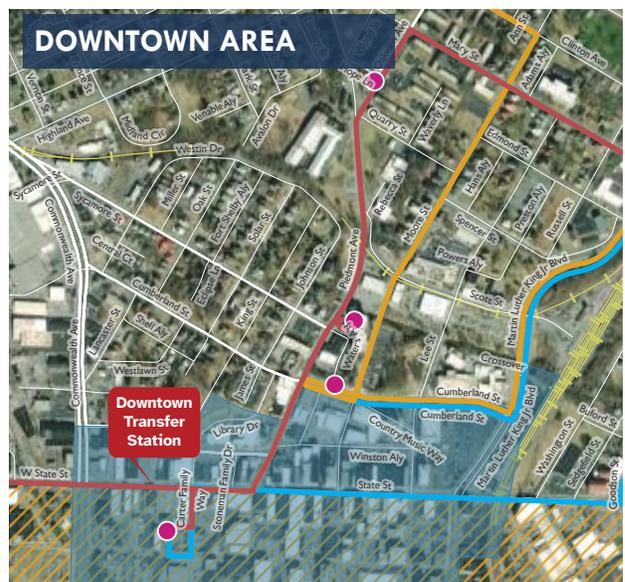**Map 9. Transit Network**

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

TOPIC LEGEND

Transit Network

- Transit Stops
- East Bristol Route
- Falls/Walmart Route
- West Bristol Route

Source: Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), GTFS Data

DOWNTOWN AREA

Microtransit

In 2024, the City of Bristol developed the Bristol Microtransit Feasibility Study (BMFS) to analyze the City's fixed-route and ADA paratransit systems and recommend microtransit options. The study identifies two microtransit zones, provides ridership projections, estimates costs, and outlines an implementation strategy.

The BMFS defines microtransit as a "technology-enabled service, typically using shuttles or vans, to provide pooled, responsive transit with dynamic routing." Microtransit is envisioned as an alternative to traditional demand response and fixed-route transit for some mobility markets, with the potential to serve lower-density areas that are difficult to reach with fixed routes and provide first-mile/last-mile connections to existing transit.

Bristol plans to implement microtransit in the proposed East Bristol Zone, replacing the current East Bristol fixed route, and in the proposed Evenings and Weekends Zone to facilitate travel to popular destinations, including hotels, recreational areas, and major attractions like the Birthplace of Country Music Museum and the Bristol Train Station.

Figure 22 shows the recommended East Bristol Microtransit Zone.
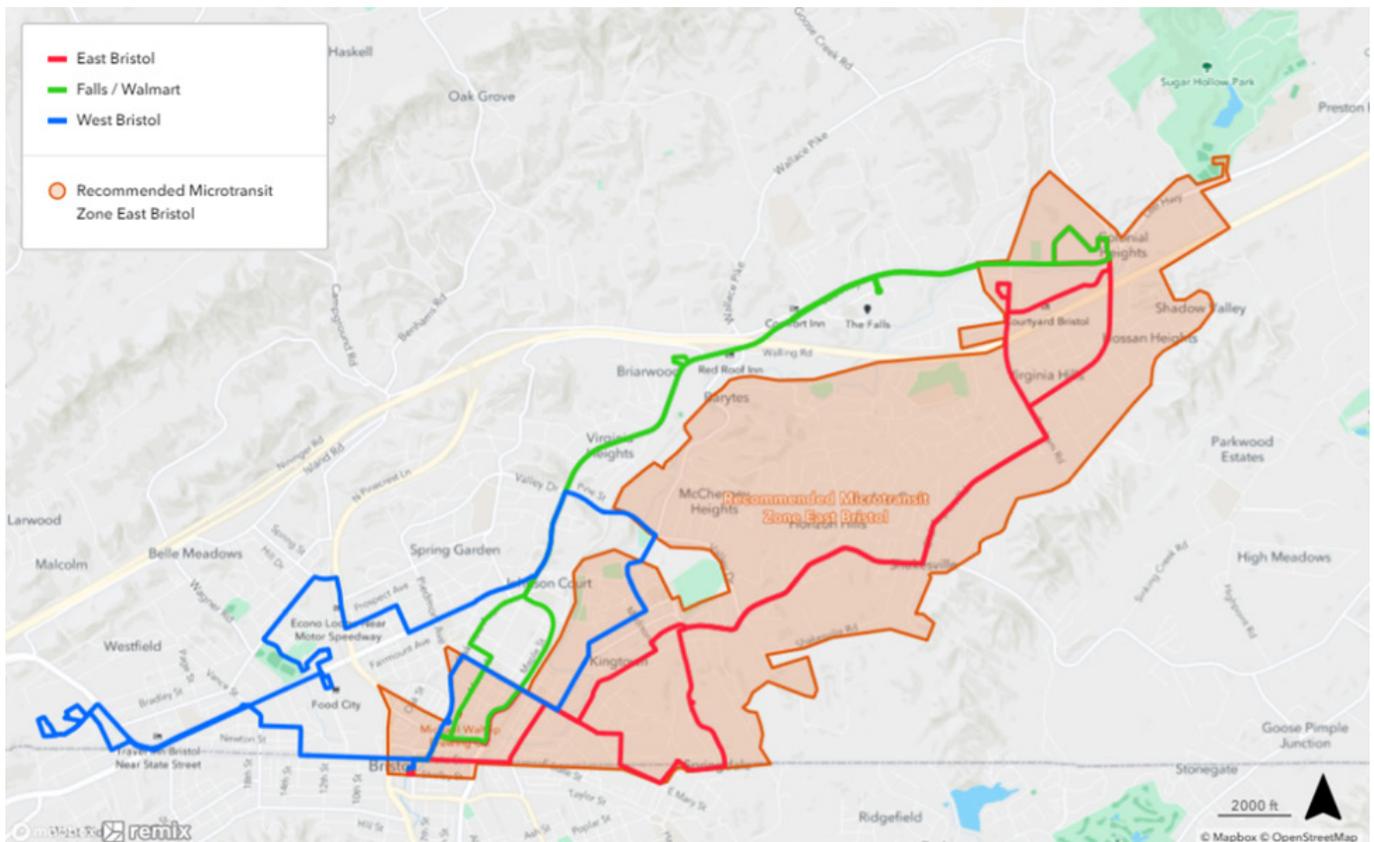
Figure 22. Potential Microtransit Zone to Replace the East Bristol Route. Source: Bristol Microtransit Feasibility Study

Figure 23. Microtransit Trip Example.

Source: Bristol Microtransit Feasibility Study

The BMFS details how to implement these zones within seven to eight months, aligning with Bristol Forward's goals of improving accessibility, service frequency, safety, and multimodal connectivity.

Figure 23 shows an example of how microtransit trips can work.

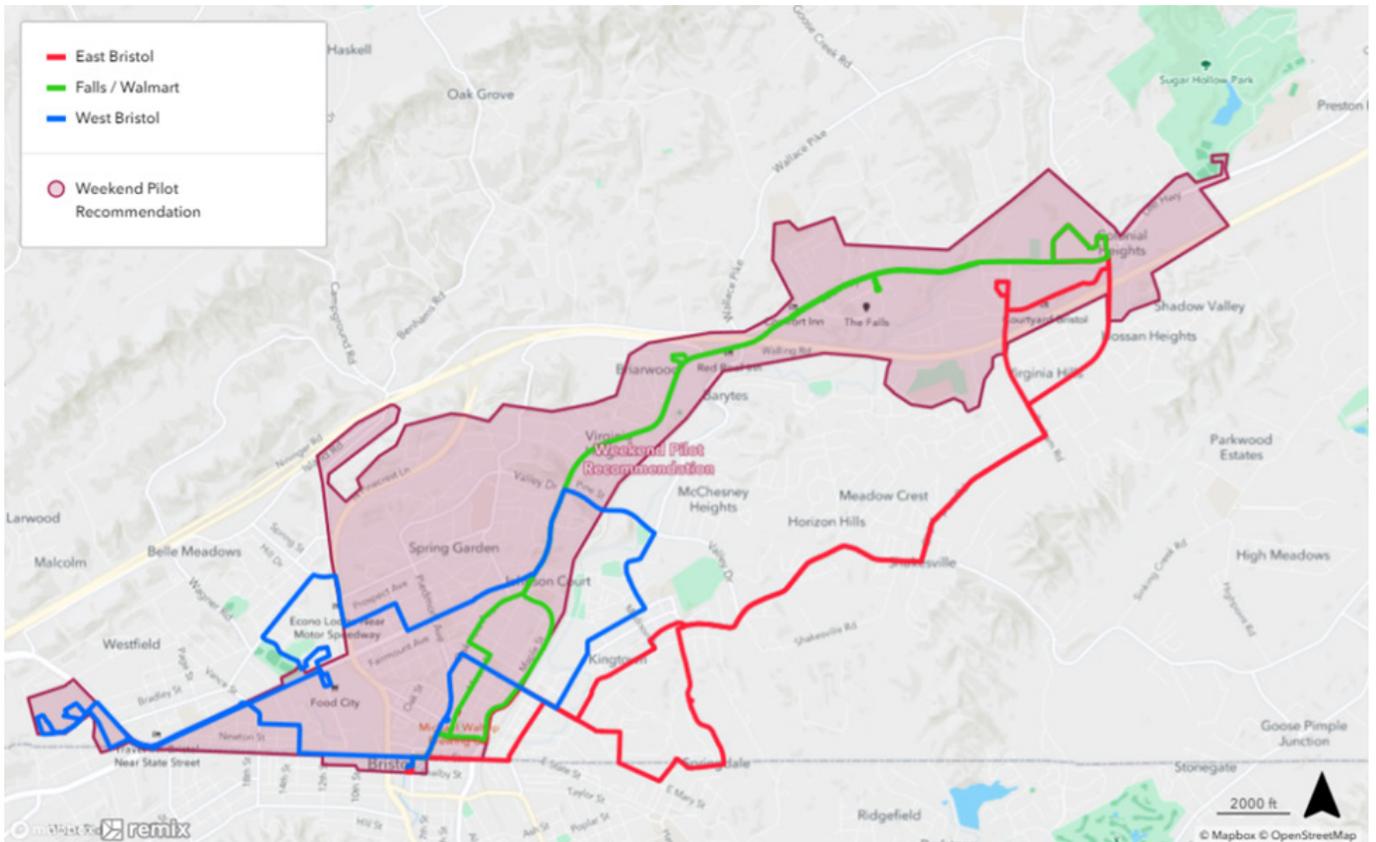*Figure 24* shows the recommended Weekend Pilot Microtransit Zone.

Figure 24. Potential Microtransit Zone for Evening & Weekend Pilot.

Source: Bristol Microtransit Feasibility Study

Commuter & Passenger Rail

In Tennessee, the 2023 *Back on Track? Intercity Passenger Rail Options for Tennessee*[iii] report identifies the Chattanooga to Bristol connection as a Tier 2 project. While the timeline is uncertain, Bristol is in an excellent position to benefit from passenger rail efforts occurring in both VA and TN.

Virgina and Tennessee have aggressively pursued options to expand commuter and passenger rail service.[iv]

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) is in the process of solidifying a plan to complete the New River Valley project, which would return passenger rail service to the region for the first time since 1979. This project will fund the infrastructure necessary to operate passenger trains from Roanoke to the New River Valley, including track, signaling, and a passenger station platform. Once completed, people will have access to continuous rail service from Christiansburg to the Washington, DC area.

VRPA's completion of the New River Valley project opens the door for service expansion through the remainder of Southwest Virginia, including Bristol. DRPT recently completed the *Bristol Extension Capital & Operating Cost Analysis* as an early step in extending a passenger rail service from the future New River Valley station to the City of Bristol.[v]

Bristol and its leaders have advocated for rail expansion and should continue to explore avenues to bring passenger rail to Bristol.

Figure 25 shows the restored train depot and well-maintained rail line.

Map 10 shows the railroads in Bristol.

Figure 25. Bristol Train Depot.

Map 10. Rail Network

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 3
Exit 5
Exit 7
81
19
58
381
11
Exit 1
421
113
Bristol Train Station

0   0.5   1   1.5
Miles

DOWNTOWN AREA

Bristol Train Station

TOPIC LEGEND

Rail Network

- Railroad Lines

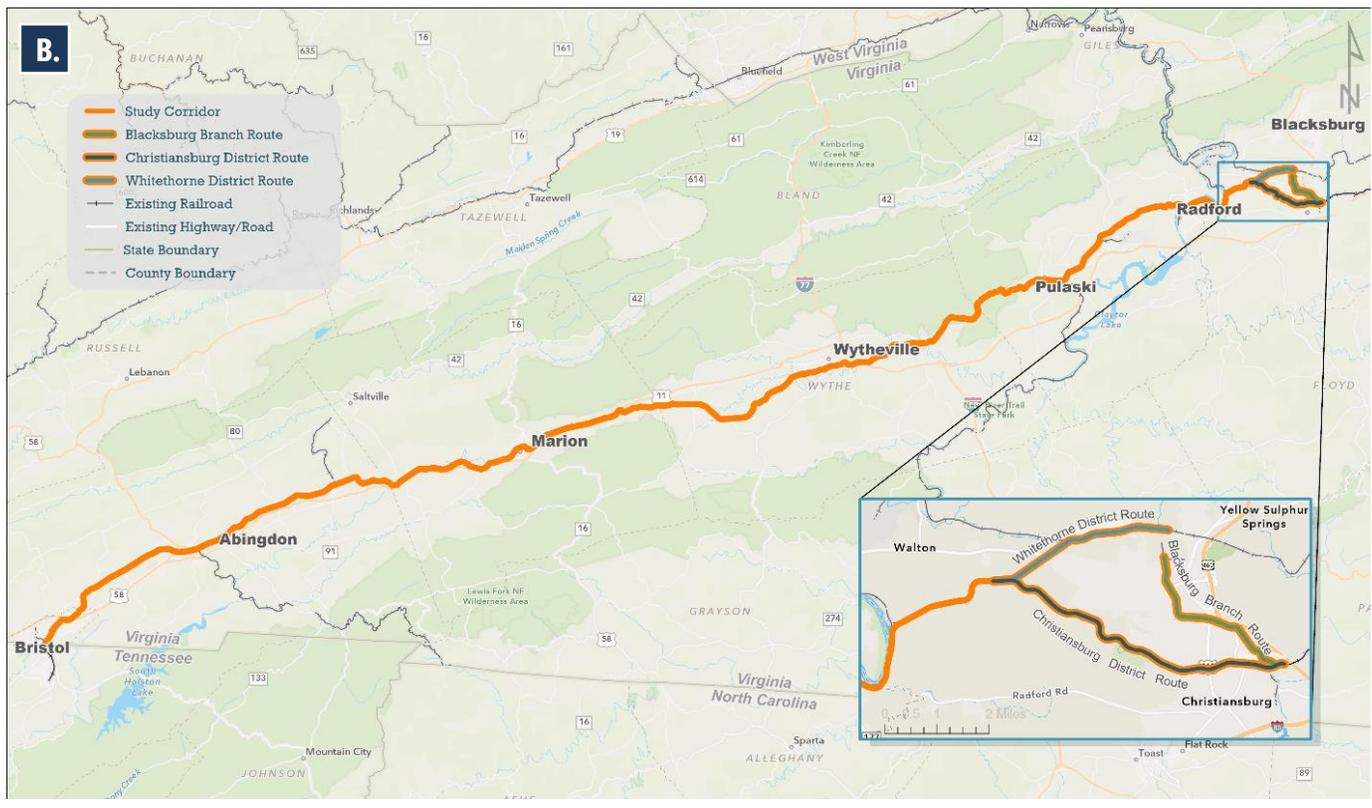Source: City of Bristol, VA; VDOT; TN Comptroller of the Treasury; US Census TIGER Lines

A.

TRANSFORMING RAIL IN VIRGINIA

Program Highlights Between Manassas and the New River Valley

RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW) AND TRACK ACQUISITION

Purchase of **28 miles** of Norfolk Southern-owned right-of-way and track from Salem Crossovers to Merrimac (Christiansburg)

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Additional round-trip Amtrak service between Washington, DC and Roanoke, VA

Extension of two Amtrak roundtrips from Roanoke to Christiansburg

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

New passenger station and platform near Merrimac (Christiansburg)

New maintenance and storage facility

Bypass track in the Roanoke Yard so passenger trains can get through the yard

Track improvements between Salem and Christiansburg

7-mile siding from Nokesville to Calverton

MANASSAS

Nokesville to Calverton Siding

CULPEPER

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Study of Potential Future Station at Bedford

Roanoke Yard Bypass

LYNCHBURG

NEW RIVER VALLEY (FUTURE)

SALEM

Maintenance and Storage Facility

ROANOKE

CHRISTIANSBURG

LEGEND

STATION

FUTURE STATION

RAIL CORRIDORS

Rail Improvements Corridor

V-Line Acquisition

N
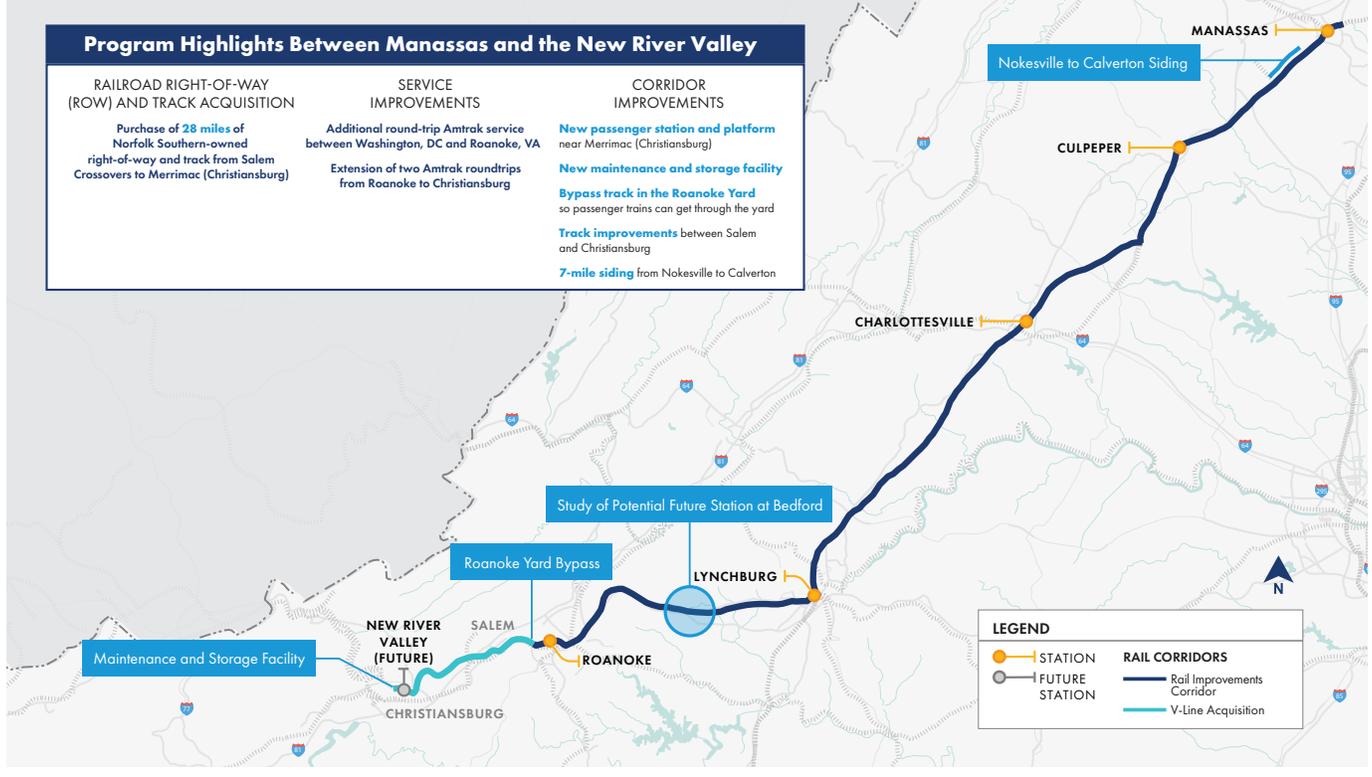
B.

Study Corridor
Blacksburg Branch Route
Christiansburg District Route
Whitethorne District Route
Existing Railroad
Existing Highway/Road
State Boundary
County Boundary

Blacksburg

Radford

Pulaski

Wytheville

Marion

Abingdon

Bristol

Virginia Tennessee

Virginia North Carolina

Whitethorne District Route

Yellow Sulphur Springs

Walton

Blacksburg Branch Route

Christiansburg District Route

Christiansburg

Radford Rd
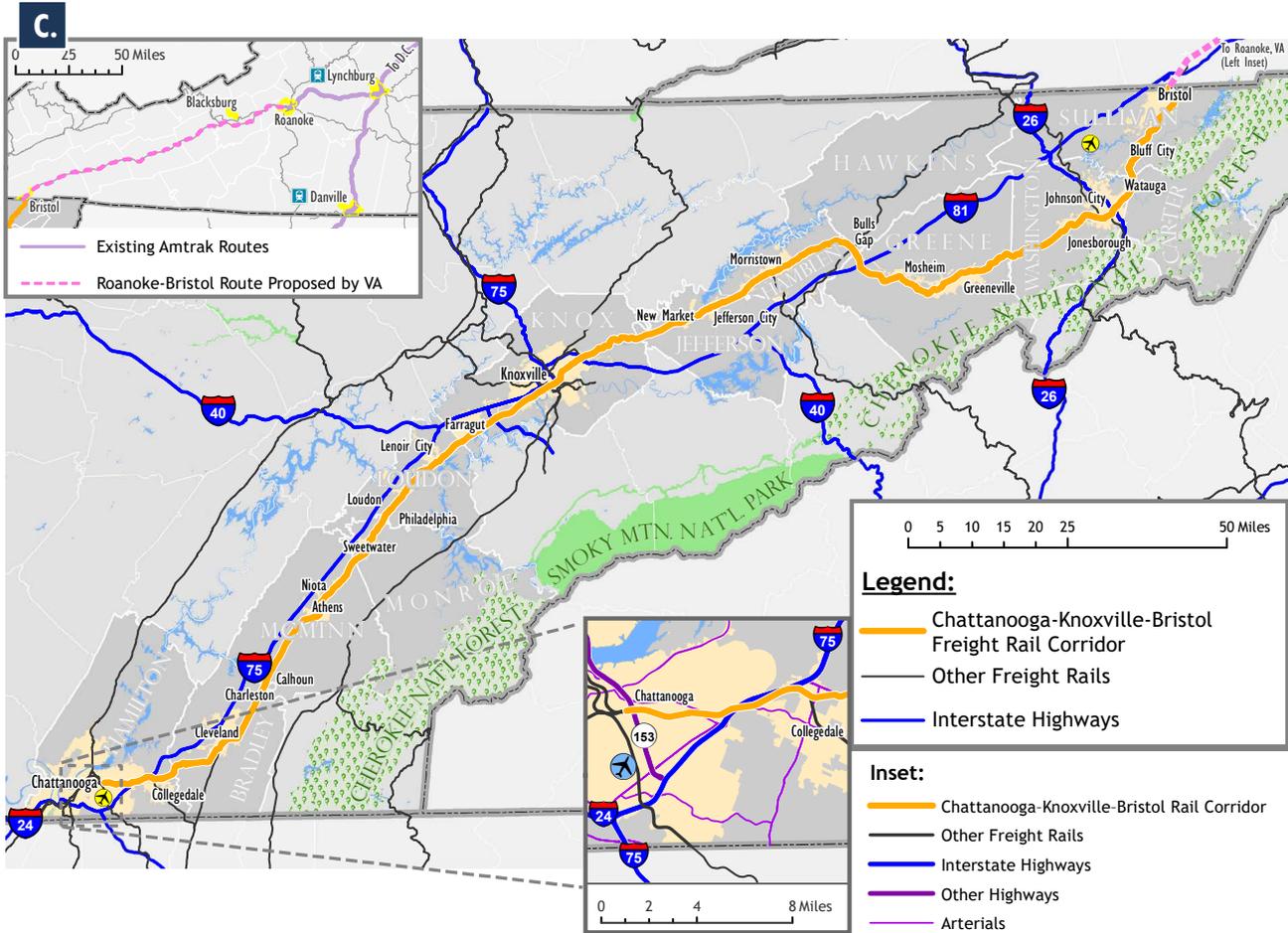
Figure 26. Passenger Rail Phasing. Bristol stands to benefit from passenger rail as Virginia and Tennessee expand their passenger rail lines through three projects: A) Virginia completes the New River Valley project to bring rail from Roanoke to Christiansburg, which expands the opportunity to extend rail along the B) Christiansburg to Bristol Corridor, from where passengers can travel in C) Tennessee along the Chattanooga – Knoxville – Bristol Rail Corridor.

Figure 26 shows the various passenger rail planning efforts in Virginia that could affect Bristol's long-term transportation.

Air Travel

The Tri-Cities Airport (TRI) is located in Blountville, Tennessee. Until 2012, area cities and counties, including Bristol, operated and managed the airport, before transferring ownership to the Tri-Cities Airport Authority. The Authority is governed by a 12-member board of commissioners that includes one representative from the City of Bristol. According to the *Comprehensive Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2023*, the Tri-Cities Airport:[vi]

o Provides service to Orlando and St Pete/Clearwater in Florida, Charlotte, NC, and Atlanta, GA.

o Service has returned to pre-COVID-19 levels and is on the rise, serving approximately 422,000 passengers in 2023.

o People use the airport for both business and leisure travel.

Advertising quality access to air travel may aid in recruiting new Bristol residents. Access in also important to furthering Bristol's economic development efforts. In addition to TRI, the Virginia Highlands Airport is a general aviation facility that serves Washington County with a variety of air services. Quality air service should continue to be an important initiative for Bristol and the region.

Map 11. Airports Within 100 Miles of Bristol
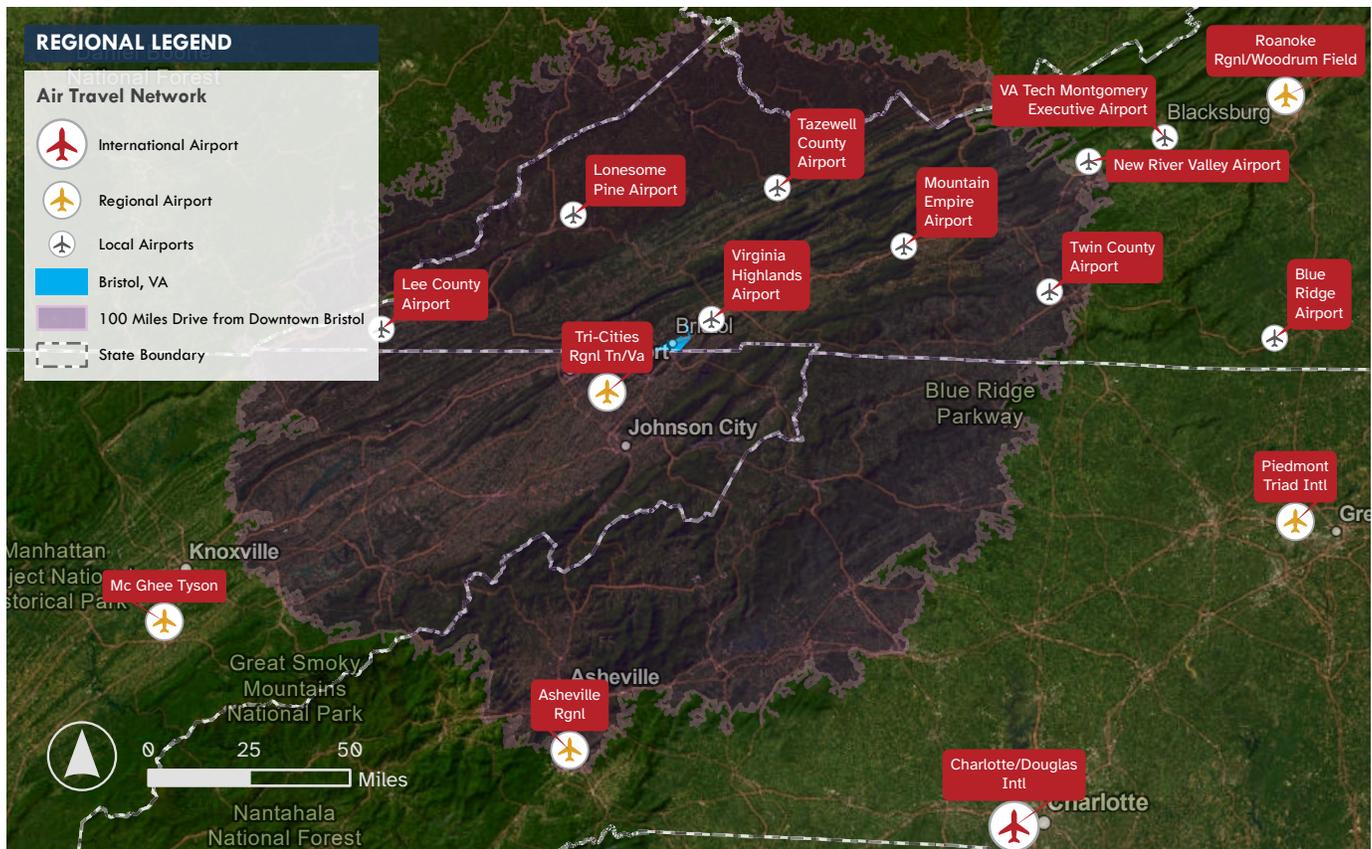
Map 11 shows the many airports in this region within driving distance of Bristol.

Park-and-Ride Locations

One park-and-ride lot is within the City of Bristol. Located on VDOT right-of-way at the intersection of Island Road and Lee Highway near I-81, the lot is operated by the City. It includes 22 parking spaces and is served by the Falls/Walmart BVT bus route and is also the pick-up/drop-off location for the Virginia Breeze. A similar sized park-and-ride lot is located near I-81 exit 14 in Abingdon.

Map 12 shows the convenient location of the VDOT park-and-ride lot near I-81.

Map 12. Island Road / Lee Highway Park-and-Ride Lot
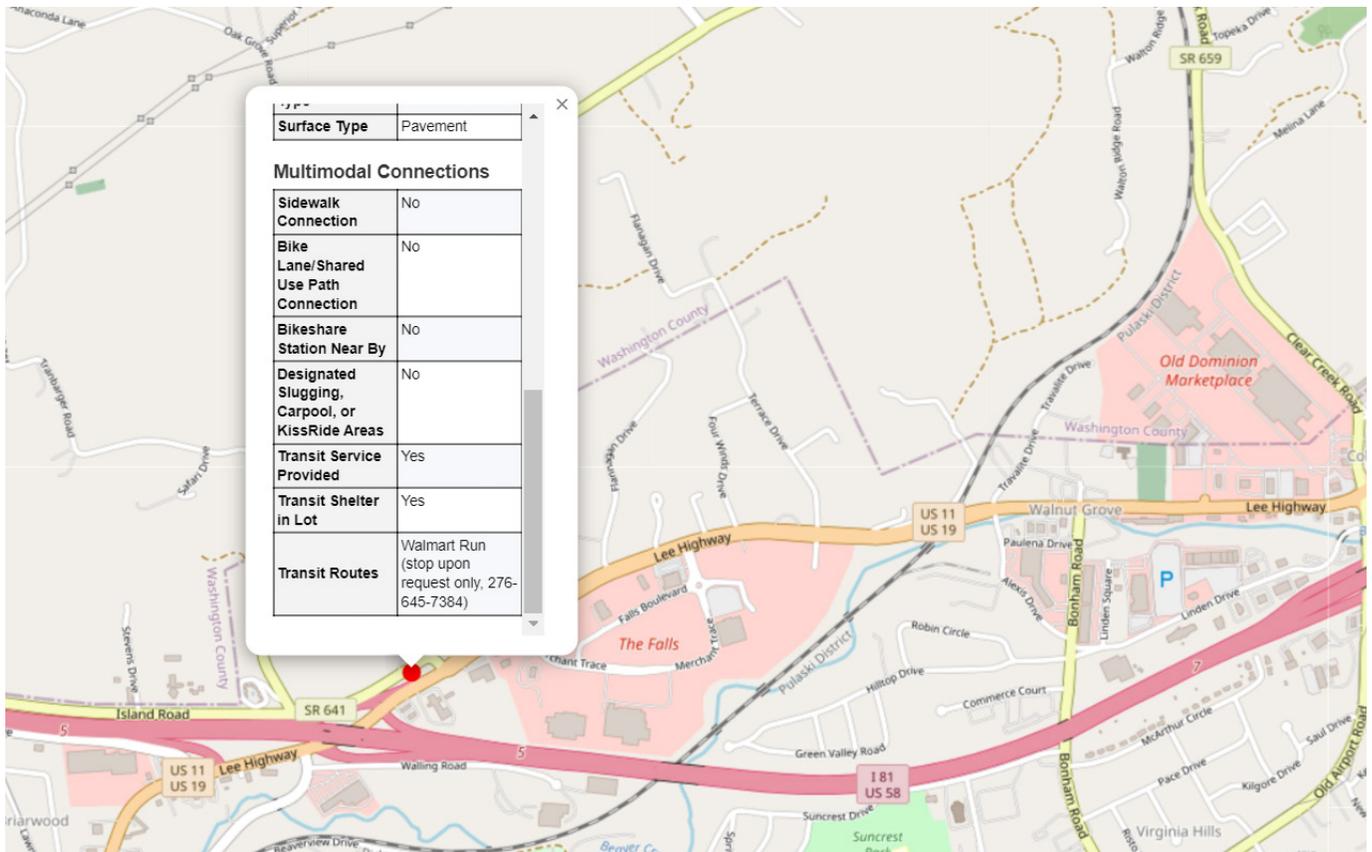
Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

PLANNED PROJECTS

SMART SCALE is Virginia's competitive funding process for transportation projects, evaluating and scoring applications based on their ability to address critical needs. The process occurs in rounds, with applicants (such as localities or transit agencies) submitting projects for consideration. Each project is scored using a rubric that assesses six key factors: safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, environmental quality, economic development, and land use (for urban areas). Scores are based on the project's cost-benefit ratio, with higher-scoring projects more likely to receive funding under the High Priority Projects Program (HPP) or District Grant Program (DGP).

HPP funding is allocated to projects that have a statewide significance or impact, such as major transportation corridors or improvements that benefit the broader region or state.

DGP funding is designated for projects that address specific transportation needs within each VDOT district, focusing on regional or local improvements that may not have statewide impact but are critical to district-level priorities.

Map 13 and *Table 1* summarize the SMART SCALE projects in the Bristol area.

Table 1. **SMART SCALE Projects.** Source: VDOT, Bristol MPO, City of Bristol

| ID	Description	Applicant	Cost/Funding Type	SMART SCALE Score
Round 6 11747	Old Airport Road at Bonham Road Intersection Improvements	Bristol, VA	-----	-----
Round 6 11748	Bonham Road at Suncrest Drive Turn Lane Improvements	Bristol, VA	-----	-----
Round 5 9173	Commonwealth Avenue & Euclid Avenue Intersection Improvements	Bristol MPO	$4.3 million HPP	21.8
Round 5 9118	MLK Jr Blvd, Birch St, and Moore St Inersection Improvements	Bristol, VA	$12.2 million DGP	4.5
Round 4 6859	Widen US Route 11 Western Section	Bristol, VA	$13.6 million DGP	1.5
Round 3 3836	Lee Highway and Euclid Avenue Roundabout	Bristol, VA	$2.8 million HPP	7.4
Round 2 1620	Intersection Improvements to US-11 at Old Airport Road	Bristol, VA	$3.3 million HPP, DGP	5.4
Round 1 625	Lee Highway Widening Phase 2 - Exit 5	Bristol, VA	$10 million HPP, DGP	3
Round 1 624	Lee Highway Widening Phase 1B - Exit 5	Bristol, VA	$5.8 million HPP, DGP	1.8

Map 13. SMART SCALE Projects

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 7
6859, (4)
1620, (2)
625, (1)
19
624, (1)
58
11748, (6)
Exit 3
11747, (6)
11
3836, (3)
9118, (5)
Exit 1
9173, (5)
421
113

0   0.5   1   1.5
Miles

DOWNTOWN AREA

There are no current Smart Scale projects in the downtown area.

TOPIC LEGEND

Smart Scale Projects

Project Status

- Funded
- Pending

Key = Project Number (Smart Scale Funding Round)

Source: VDOT, Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Smart Scale Dashboard
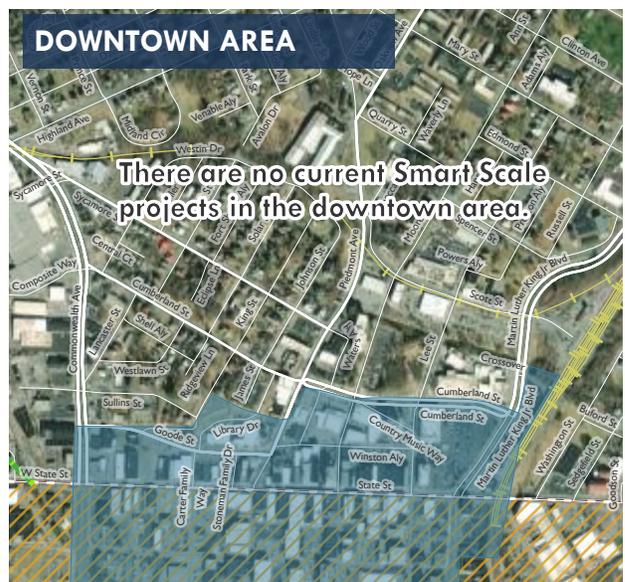
PLANNED PROJECTS

VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is an annually updated plan that outlines funding for transportation projects across Virginia over a six-year period. It covers a range of projects, including highways, transit, and rail, funded through federal, state, and local sources. Developed with input from the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), the SYIP prioritizes projects based on safety, congestion relief, economic development, and accessibility.

Map 14 and *Table 2* summarize the SYIP projects in the Bristol area.

Table 2. SYIP Projects. Source: VDOT, Bristol MPO, City of Bristol

| UPC	Description	Cost
105309	HB2.FY17 Widen Rte. 11 to 2 west bound lanes and 3 east bound lanes w/ landscaped median, turn lanes and sidewalk; widen I-81 south bound off and on ramps with dedicated right turn lanes; intersection improvements and signal replacement at I-81 south bound on/off ramps	$6.9 million
109508	Bonham Road/Paulena Drive sidewalk installation	$283,232
109509	Piedmont Avenue pedestrian signal heads and push buttons	$406,570
109514	Old Airport Road Sidewalk	$375,287
110799	SMART18 Intersection Improvement to US 11 at Old Airport Rd	$269,597
110875	Lee Highway 10' Shared Use Path - Overhill Drive to Clover Lane	$289,057
113879	SGR LAD (Locally Administered) Bridge Replacement Goodson Street over Beaver Creek - Structure 1802; Fed ID 19971	$3.8 million
113881	SGR LAD (Locally Administered) Bridge Replacement Oak Street over NS RWY - Structure 8010; Fed ID 19982	$5 million
113882	SGR LAD (Locally Administered) Bridge Rehabilitation on MLK Jr. BLVD over Beaver Creek - Structure 8002; Fed ID 20004	$2.4 million
115486	SMART20 Convert existing un-signalized intersection at the intersection of Lee Highway, Euclid Avenue, Euclid Avenue Ext. and Moore Street, to a roundabout (SMART SCALE App ID#3836)	-----
116946	Lee Highway 10' Shared Use Path - Overhill Road to Shipley Drive	$253,470
119428	SMART22 Continue the widening of US11 to a 4-lane, divided road from Alexis Dr to west of Dominion Place (SMART SCALE App ID#6859)	$443,247
120153	#I81CIP I-81 Fiber connections to ITS devices	$210,000
120636	Widen US 11 to a four lane divided road	$357,178
121136	SGR23LB Piedmont Avenue Bridge Beaver Creek Phase 1 VA #1809; Fed ID 20001	$99 million
124199	SMART24 Convert MLK Jr. Blvd/Moore St/Oakview Ave/Birch St into a roundabout; Convert Lee Highway/Euclid Ave/Moore St into a roundabout	$21 million
124241	SMART22 Intersection improvements at US 11 and Old Airport Road	$38 million
125199	SGR25LP Milling 2", paving 2", and restriping 0.059 segment of Euclid Ave	$58,276

Map 14. Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) Projects
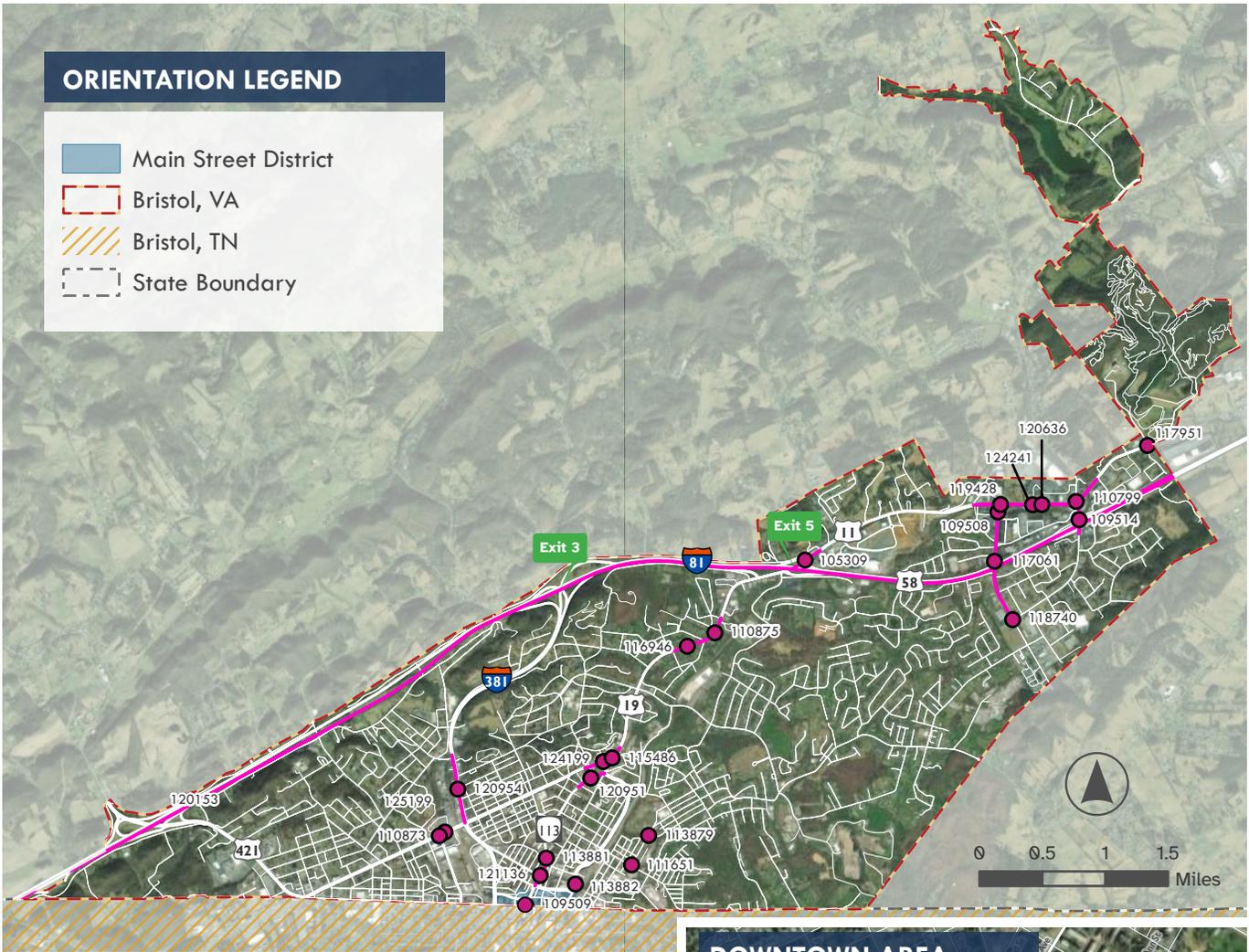
ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

TOPIC LEGEND

Six Year Improvement Plan (SYIP)

— Fiscal Year 2025 Final - SYIP Lines

● Fiscal Year 2025 Final - SYIP Points
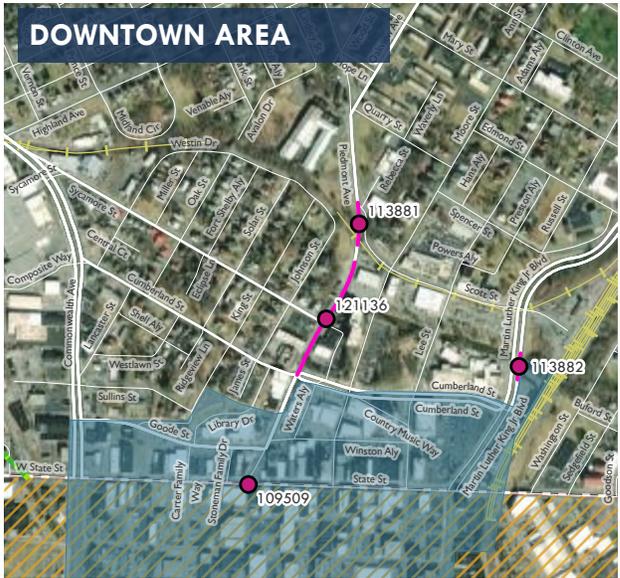
DOWNTOWN AREA

Source: VDOT, Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

PLANNED PROJECTS

The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Bristol Tennessee/ Virginia Urban Area MPO outlines the region's transportation vision and strategies through 2045. It focuses on developing infrastructure that meets future mobility needs, promoting economic growth, and enhancing quality of life. The plan addresses multiple transportation modes, including highways, public transit, and active transportation options like biking and walking.

Developed through collaboration with local governments, agencies, and public input, the 2045 LRTP prioritizes projects that tackle congestion, safety, and accessibility. It includes a financial plan and performance measures, aligning with regional and state goals to ensure efficient implementation of transportation improvements as the area grows.

Map 15 and *Table 3* summarize the LRTP projects in the Bristol area.

Table 3. **Long Range Transportation Plan Projects.** Source: Bristol MPO,

ID	Description	Lead Agency	Cost
V1-1	I-81 Exit 1 off-ramp operational improvements	Washington County	$1.1 million (NCPP and State funding)
V1-2	Lee Highway widening	Bristol, VA	$16 million (STBG, HSIP, State, and Local funding)
V2-2	I-81 frontage road (new roadway)	Bristol, VA/ Washington County	$23 million (NCPP and State funding)
V-IL-17	Pinnacle Parkway (new roadway)	VDOT	-----
V-IL-2	Kings Mill Pike safety/geometric improvements	Bristol, VA	-----
V-IL-3	Kings Mill Pike/Old Jonesboro Road widening	Washington County	-----
V-IL-4	Lee Highway widening	Bristol, VA	-----
V-IL-6	Old Airport Road widening	Bristol, VA	-----
V-IL-7	West Mary Street Bridge reconstruction	Bristol, VA	-----
V-IL-8	Piedmont Avenue Bridge reconstruction	VDOT	-----
V-IL-5	Old Abingdon Highway reconstruction	Bristol, VA	-----
V3-2	MLK, Jr. Blvd/Moore Street roundabout operationa improvements	Bristol, VA	$5.2 million (STBG, HSIP, and Local funding)

Map 15. Long Range Transportation Plan Projects

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 7
V1-2
V2-2
Exit 5
11
19
58
Exit 3
81
V-IL-5
38
V-IL-4
V-IL-6
V-IL-3
Exit 1
V-IL-2
V-IL-17
V3-2
V1-1
113
421
V-IL-7
V-IL-8

0   0.5   1   1.5
Miles

TOPIC LEGEND

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

2045 LRTP Roadway Projects

— Fiscally Constrained

— Illustrative

2045 LRTP Intersection Projects

📍 Fiscally Constrained

📍 Illustrative

Source: Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

DOWNTOWN AREA

V-IL-8
T2-2
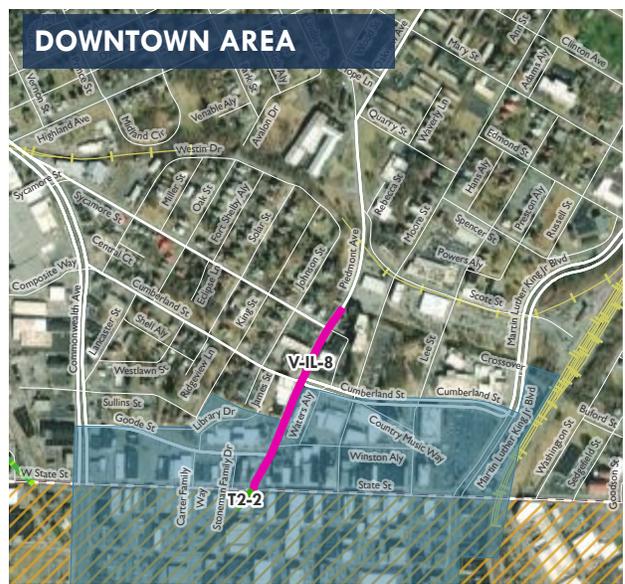
VTrans

VTrans is Virginia's statewide transportation plan, prepared for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). According to the VTrans website, the plan "lays out the overarching vision and goals for transportation in the Commonwealth and plans to achieve those goals." The plan includes several key components:

- Vision, goals, and objectives set by the CTB,

- Mid-term needs (0-10 years), which help screen funding applications for the SMART SCALE program and prioritize requests for VDOT's Revenue Sharing Program,

- Policies for developing and monitoring a Long-term Risk & Opportunity Register, and

- Strategic actions to guide business plans developed by OIPI, VDOT, and DRPT.

For Bristol, the most relevant aspect of the VTrans plan is the mid-term needs list, which identifies specific needs along the Corridors of Statewide Significance and the Regional Network, as defined by VDOT. The table below highlights the types of needs identified along roadway segments in Bristol. The city can explore these needs using the VTrans Mapping Tool and should regularly review the VTrans list when preparing project submissions.

Table 4 shows the mid-term needs identified in the VTrans plan.

Table 4. **VTrans Mid-Term Needs.** Source: VDOT

Mid-Term Needs Along Corridors of Statewide Significance	Mid-Term Needs Along the Regional Network
Congestion Mitigation	Congestion Mitigation
Transportation Demand Management (Limited Access)	Transportation Demand Management (Non-Limited Access)
Transportation Demand Management (Non-Limited Access)	Bicycle Access
Safety Improvements (Intersection)	Pedestrian Access
Safety Improvements (Segment)	Transit Access
	Transit Access for Equity Emphasis Areas
	Safety Improvements (Segment)
	Safety Improvements (Intersection)
	Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Guiding Plans and Projects

During the development of *Bristol Forward*, the planning team consulted several additional plans and projects that, while not referenced elsewhere in this document, were critical in shaping the overall strategy. These plans provided insights into regional transportation trends, infrastructure needs, and land use patterns, ensuring that *Bristol Forward* aligns with local and statewide objectives.

By incorporating these guiding documents, the plan addresses infrastructure gaps and supports future growth, promoting a comprehensive approach to improving multimodal connectivity, safety, and sustainability.

Table 5 shows several guiding plans that have will guide future transportation planning in Bristol.

Table 5. **Guiding Plans.**

Type	Plan	Key Takeaway
Study	*I-81 Frontage Road Corridor Study* (2020)	The I-81 frontage road has been submitted as a SMART SCALE project but has not yet secured funding. Despite its inclusion in previous applications, the project did not emerge as a high priority during *Bristol Forward*'s community engagement process.
Study/Strategy	*VDOT Carbon Reduction Strategy* (2023)	Given that Bristol Forward encourages a multimodal transportation vision, the VDOT Carbon Reduction Strategy presents an opportunity to align local efforts with statewide goals by promoting reduced vehicle emissions through expanded public transit, enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and support for alternative fuel vehicles.
Study	West State Street Corridor Study (2023)	The City of Bristol, TN commissioned this study identify strategies to support and encourage redevelopment along West State Street, particularly by identifying transportation-specific solutions. The City of Bristol, VA should continue to work with Bristol, TN to implement the strategies identified in this study.
Master Plan	Beaches to Bluegrass Trail Master Plan (2015)	The VA Department of Conservation and Recreation develop this plan to guide development of the statewide Beaches to Bluegrass Trail (B2B) which is envisioned as a share-use and multi-use trail that connects Virginia Beach to the Cumberland Gap. Bristol is along the trail and the Mendota Tail is part of the overall B2B network. Given the many benefits of economic and community benefits of trails, Bristol actively work with partners to implement the B2B.

Potential for Safety Improvement

VDOT's PSI (Potential for Safety Improvement) intersections are locations identified as having a higher-than-average potential for reducing crashes based on historical crash data. These areas are prioritized for safety improvements because they have significant crash rates, severity, or frequency compared to similar locations statewide. The PSI process allows VDOT to focus resources on high-risk areas where targeted interventions, such as signal upgrades, roundabout installations, or improved signage, can effectively reduce accidents and enhance road safety.

The PSI scoring system evaluates intersections and roadway segments by considering factors such as the number and type of crashes, traffic volume, and roadway conditions. Intersections with high PSI scores indicate a strong need for safety improvements, making them prime candidates for state or federal funding under programs like SMART SCALE. Improvements at these intersections aim to reduce not only the number of crashes but also their severity, particularly at locations prone to fatal or serious injury accidents.

Given the focus on multimodal transportation in *Bristol Forward*'s vision, ensuring that PSI intersections are upgraded with features like enhanced crosswalks or traffic calming measures can also support broader goals of increasing walkability and reducing emissions. By targeting these safety hot spots, Bristol can foster safer and more accessible transportation networks for all users.

Figure 27 shows the intersection of Lee Highway and Old Airport Road.

Map 17 shows the PSI intersections and segments in Bristol.

Figure 27. Lee Highway at Old Airport Road.

Map 16. Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) Intersections

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
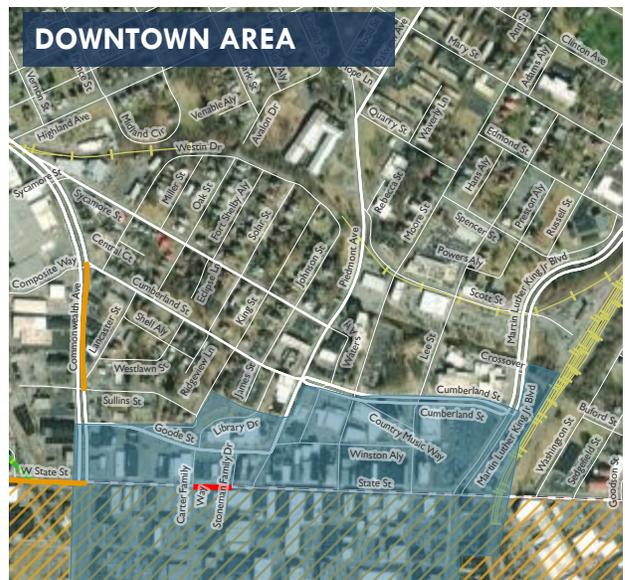- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

TOPIC LEGEND

PSI Intersections & Segments

Intersection Rank By Percentile	Segment Rank By Percentile
76 - 100	76 - 100
51 - 75	51 - 75
26 - 50	26 - 50
0 - 25	0 - 25

Source: VDOT

DOWNTOWN AREA

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents and visitors can safely and easily navigate the city and nearby region by walking, biking, driving, or using transit..

This goal is further supported by the development of an integrated transportation network that prioritizes connectivity and accessibility. By expanding and enhancing sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit options, the city can create seamless links between neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks, and regional destinations, fostering greater mobility and economic growth.

Goal 3.1

Continue to Build a Roadway Network that is Connected and Safe

POLICIES

3.1.1 Continue to enhance street intersection safety, pedestrian crossings, and other traffic-calming measures through transportation network improvement projects.

3.1.2 Once the regional SS4A is complete, update the 2007 Traffic Calming Guide for Residential Streets to identify how to incorporate safety countermeasures into street calming projects.

3.1.3 Continue to partner with VDOT on transportation study mechanisms.

3.1.4 Closely monitor development activity along Gate City Highway near the Bristol Casino. Ensure that new development/redevelopment enhances, rather than hinders, the safety and comfort of all users. Consider a variety of tools (predictive safety countermeasures, video monitoring, pedestrian counters, before/after studies, etc.) to monitor use and plan for changes.

3.1.5 Consider in-depth corridor studies for Gate City Highway (I-81 to West State Street), Euclid Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, and Old Airport Road/Clear Creek Road to identify detailed roadway improvements for all users, with a special emphasis on safety.

3.1.6 View all new projects that impact the roadway network through a complete street lens and work with project developers to design roadway features that improve the safety and comfort level of all users, (e.g., street trees, green infrastructure incorporated with stormwater projects, vegetative buffers between bicycle and pedestrian facilities and motorized vehicle travel lanes, landscaped medians, landscaped parking lots, street furniture, public art, and sidewalks).

3.1.7 Use transportation improvement projects as an opportunity to create a sense of place through gateway features, decorative crosswalks, signage, plantings, and more.

"I love that Bristol is small and easy to commute and you can get to almost anything you need/ go anywhere in 10 minutes!"

-Bristol Resident

Goal 3.2

Expand Mobility Choices through Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

POLICIES

3.2.1 Use the upcoming regional multimodal transportation plan to identify community supported and implementable bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements. If Bristol's planning needs are not met through the regional multimodal plan, identify funds for a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails/ Greenways plan.

3.2.3 Continue to expand Bristol's sidewalk network, with priority placed on sidewalk in transit corridors (see transit recommendations) and connections to commercial and employment areas.

3.2.4 Develop and adopt an ADA Transition Plan for the Public Right-of-Way.

3.2.5 Consistently apply Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) standards to facility design to ensure that accessible curb ramps and other facilities exist at all pedestrian crossings where feasible.

3.2.6 Bristol has made great progress in incorporating pedestrian facilities in larger projects. Continue the pedestrian facilities progress and begin to apply that momentum to bicycle facilities as projects develop, using VDOT's bicycle and pedestrian policies to guide SMART SCALE and other projects

CATALYST PROJECTS TO CONSIDER INCLUDE:

o Complete design plans for the Mendota Trail Urban Connector to double as a trail connector and catalyst for Bristol's bicycling network.

o Identify 2-3 neighborhood bicycling routes (sometimes known as neighborhood greenways, slow streets, bicycle priority streets) that can be implemented at a low cost.

o Conduct a feasibility study for a bicycle or greenway connection between the Mendota Trailhead on Island Road to Sugar Hollow Park. Combined with the Mendota Trail Urban Connector, this could create a Cross-Town Connector linking downtown with Sugar Hollow; which can also be the "spine" of Bristol's bicycling/greenway network.

3.2.7 Identify strategies to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities through land use development. Examples include smaller strategies such as mandatory bicycle parking with new development / redevelopment or larger strategies such as requiring streetside and internal sidewalks with new development / redevelopment, implementation of a fee-in-lieu of sidewalk construction program, or a program to require easements for identified facilities in adopted plans (such as a multiuse path or a greenway identified in a future plan). Priority considerations include:

- Evaluate the impact of standards that require sidewalk development and other facilities in development/ redevelopment projects.

- Develop a corresponding fee-in-lieu of sidewalk construction program.

3.2.8 Work with community partners to conduct bicycling education / safe bicycling activities.

3.2.9 Use VDOT resources noted in this plan as tools to improve pedestrian safety using a safe systems approach.

Figure 28. Bristol Train Depot.

Goal 3.3

Advocate to Expand Passenger Rail Options

POLICIES

3.3.1 Continue to advocate assertively for passenger rail expansion (from Christiansburg to Bristol and from Bristol to Chattanooga).

3.3.2 Identify areas that are appropriate for transit-oriented development and new commercial uses which new rail service could support.

3.3.3 Promote rail in marketing materials to build local momentum and market rail as a Bristol asset to potential new residents and businesses.

Goal 3.4

Enhance Access to Public Transportation

POLICIES

3.4.1 Focus efforts to build new sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure (covered stops, signage, benches, trash cans) along bus lines, particularly in East Bristol (See Map 14).

3.4.2 Coordinate transit improvements through other planning efforts. Use the Microtransit Plan (under development) to identify expansion strategies that do not require the City to add new bus lines, particularly as it relates to evening and weekend service expansion.

3.4.3 Coordinate transit related bicycling and walking needs through the regional multimodal transportation plan, and coordinate safety concerns through a safe systems approach with strategies identified in the region's SS4A planning process.

3.4.4 Use the recently adopted Transit Development Plan to implement changes to expand transit services, particularly as it relates to evening and weekend service expansion, and other goal areas, particularly the land use recommendations.

3.4.5 Implement strategies to make transit an attractive and convenient choice for those who don't rely on it for transportation. Examples include transit promotions and education (e.g., "Ride the Bus with the Mayor"), hosting an annual "Transit Week" promotional event, and identifying incentives for those attending downtown events as service expands. Incorporate Bristol themes and branding on buses and stops, add public art on buses and at stops, and collaborate with employers to identify transit incentives.

3.4.6 Consider adding bicycle racks to buses to expand a person's transportation reach.

3.4.7 Identify the touchpoints to evaluate transit access during land use decisions to determine how development projects may enhance the transit network. Examples may include internal sidewalk connection from a planned stop to the business front, developer enhancements to transit stops, demand evaluation, etc.

3.4.8 Use the City's land development tools to require transit infrastructure along existing and planned transit routes (covered stops, improved signage, benches, trash cans, etc.). Prioritize transit enhancements in the 1/8 mile transit priority area.

3.4.9 Continue to collaborate with Bristol, Tennessee to expand transit service in coverage areas, particularly as new development affects transportation patterns.

3.4.10 Begin to implement microtransit using the Detailed Implementation Plan (Section 5.4) outlined in the 2024 Bristol Microtransit Feasibility Study.

Map 17. Sidewalk Priority Area

ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 7
Exit 5
Exit 3
Exit 1
Downtown Transfer Station

0   0.5   1   1.5 Miles

DOWNTOWN AREA

Downtown Transfer Station

TOPIC LEGEND

Transit Network

- Transit Stops
- East Bristol Route
- Falls/Walmart Route
- West Bristol Route
- Sidewalk Priority Area (1/8 Mile, Either Side of Bus Route)

Sidewalks

- Present
- Pending

Source: Bristol Tennessee – Virginia Urban Area
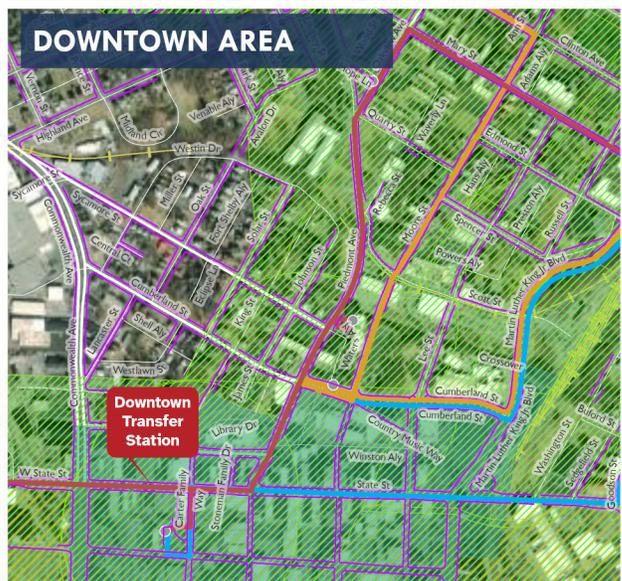Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), GTFS Data

Figure 29. Bristol Transit.

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOAL AREAS:

o Provide different types of transit service that meet community needs.

o Develop transit services that enhance the economy of the region.

o Market transit service to both residents and visitors.

o Operate services reliably and safely.

o Deliver services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

o Ensure accessibility for all users.

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN LAND USE RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

o Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

o Check transit coverage to the major commercial and industrial areas of the city.

o Ensure transit network connects residential areas with major shopping places and education centers in the city.

o Connect transit routes to local hotels and tourist attractions.

03

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bristol has numerous economic assets, including high quality events, stunning surrounding natural beauty, a historic downtown core with unique character, interstate freeway access, unique opportunity sites for investment, manufacturing jobs, and a new casino.

These assets provide the city with opportunities to build a thriving economy for its residents and workforce.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

This chapter provides guidance on issues of economic importance for the city, including goals and policies.

This policy direction should be used to guide decisions around public investments, city services, permits for private development, and planning initiatives.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Bristol is part of the larger Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol, TN-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA has seen an increase in its total real gross domestic product since 2020. The largest job sectors for Bristol residents and workers are accommodation and food services, retail, manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and public administration.

Bristol has long been a hub of manufacturing, a sector that has historically provided high wage jobs and served to expand local tax bases, and even maintained manufacturing jobs during the sector's nationwide decline.

Evolving and Adapting

Businesses are increasingly making locational decisions based not only on siting and financial criteria, but also on quality of life factors. Employers have to compete for top quality workers, and those workers are often interested in living in a vibrant, connected, healthy, and walkable environment that offers a broad range of housing, entertainment, recreation, and shopping choices.

Opportunities to engage in community in public spaces, are driving many businesses to locate in newer or revitalized mixed use environments where their workers will thrive. Bristol has been working to reinvent the city as a place for emerging industries and their employees.

Electro-Mechanical LLC on Goodson Street was founded in 1958 and is one of America's largest manufacturers of power distribution components.

What We've Heard

Leverage public, private, and nonprofit resources through public engagement.

Strong economy with thriving businesses; educated and motivated workforce.

Fewer disparities: income, education, housing, health.

A thriving art and culture hub working in conjunction with natural beauty, food, and accountable, responsive government team.

ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Resilience

Resiliency is defined as the ability to withstand or quickly recover from a disturbance. Resiliency is crucial for the economic health and well-being of any city or region. One important pathway towards resiliency is developing a diverse economy.

A community that relies heavily on a single industry is susceptible to serious and long-lasting economic disruptions. Conversely, an economy based upon a larger variety of industries will be more likely to withstand a recession or recover from a single closure. As Bristol continues working to build a strong economy and a new identity, economic resiliency should remain a high priority for the city

Business Development

Continuing to work with government and business leaders to create a business ecosystem that proactively supports the development of existing and new businesses should be a priority in Bristol. The city should capitalize on knowledge-based economic engines in the region by nurturing relationships between those institutions and business development.

A supportive business ecosystem can be achieved by connecting entrepreneurs to technical assistance, streamlining regulations, and providing industry-related resources, mentorship, funding opportunities, and other tools that help businesses thrive and provide high quality jobs for Bristol's workers.

The Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI) operates a high-impact program for Appalachian entrepreneurs in a once-abandoned furniture store.

YBI was founded in 2001 and has since developed successful digital businesses and furthered advanced manufacturing technologies in Ohio's Mahoning Valley. Their team raised $63 million in capital and generated $7 million in revenue as of 2020. YBI is expanding their support services to seven counties in Northeastern Ohio.

YBI helps Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) access capital, develop business plans, adopt advanced technologies to enhance operations,

The Bristol local economy offers a diversity of high-quality jobs, job training, and opportunities for creative entrepreneurship.

To achieve the vision of a thriving local and regional economy, Bristol needs to work collaboratively on a comprehensive approach that builds on existing assets to address housing, education, job training, and placemaking.

Goal 3.1

Jobs are accessible locally and residents can afford to both live and work in Bristol

POLICIES

3.1.1 Coordinate with regional partners, like Washington County, Bristol, TN, and the MRPDC, and nonprofit economic development partners to retain, recruit, and stimulate good local jobs.

3.1.2 Support home offices as a workspace for small businesses and start up firms.

3.1.3 Promote local hiring practices from Bristol employers and encourage employer-provided workforce training. Consider the use of development agreements.

3.1.4 Plan for the spatial and infrastructure needs of diverse industries Bristol intends to attract and retain.

Goal 3.2

A diverse, modern local economy that offers a variety of job opportunities

POLICIES

3.2.1 Support Bristol's existing independent businesses and ensure economic development resources are adequately advertised.

3.2.2 Attract and retain companies and ventures to the city that can draw on the existing industrial and infrastructural landscape of the region. Support the clustering of compatible industries that take advantage of Bristol's existing industries and economic assets.

3.2.3 Support initiatives that provide the knowledge needed to build new businesses, enhance horizontal collaboration, and promote a culture of openness and network building.

Goal 3.3

A local economy that meets the needs of Bristol residents

POLICIES

3.3.1 Recruit and retain businesses that offer living wages, quality worker benefits, and community benefits.

3.3.2 Support access to quality health care through new facilities, transportation, and program space.

3.3.3 Encourage energy efficiency in the design and construction of development.

3.3.4 Support accessible and affordable childcare and in-home care services throughout the city.

"Bristol needs a diverse economy with creative entrepreneurs and opportunities for young people to stay and engage."

-Bristol Resident

Goal 3.4

A city where workers receive the training they need for high quality jobs

POLICIES

3.4.1 Support institutions (like Virginia Highlands Community College) and initiatives in Bristol that partner with industries, incubate new businesses, and foster entrepreneurship.

3.4.2 Promote workforce training and outreach opportunities, with an emphasis on jobs that pay a living wage.

3.4.3 Collaborate with local employers and other partners to attract and expand employer-provided workforce recruitment. Encourage employers to hire locally so that Bristol can retain the talented residents in which it invests.

Goal 3.5

A renowned tourism destination

POLICIES

3.5.1 Support a tourism economy that attracts visitors and benefits local residents through placemaking initiatives, great parks and trails, marketing efforts, wayfinding signage, and locally-produced art.

3.5.2 Support the local food economy through farmers markets, local restaurants, food incubators, community gardens, and other initiatives.

3.5.3 Continue to support events of various sizes that draw in visitors.

04

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICES

The people of Bristol are the heart of this community and deserve high quality services. The City of Bristol seeks to support all of its residents and local businesses by providing excellent facilities, services, and programs that promote the health, safety, and welfare of Bristol community members.

As we strive to manage change and spur opportunity in our city and region, Bristol will provide quality services, be a responsible steward of city resources, and engage in coordinated planning efforts with partner jurisdictions and institutions. The city will be proactive in seeking opportunities to ensure that Bristol maintains high-quality services and a fiscal balance for this and future generations.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

This chapter provides guidance for ensuring the City of Bristol provides excellent government services and facilities.

This policy direction should be used to guide decisions around strategic planning, budgeting, and capital investments.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Providing public services is one of the core functions of municipal governments. The City of Bristol provides a variety of services that enhance Bristol residents' quality of life. These include services related to safety, health, critical infrastructure, cultural and recreational opportunities, education, among many others (see below).

Like all communities, Bristol needs to address how and where to extend services, maintain an affordable cost of living, and stabilize the city's long-term fiscal balance so that it can invest in facilities that enhance quality of life. Continued strategic planning, as well as collaboration with regional partners, will help align investment and service provision and provide adequate services.
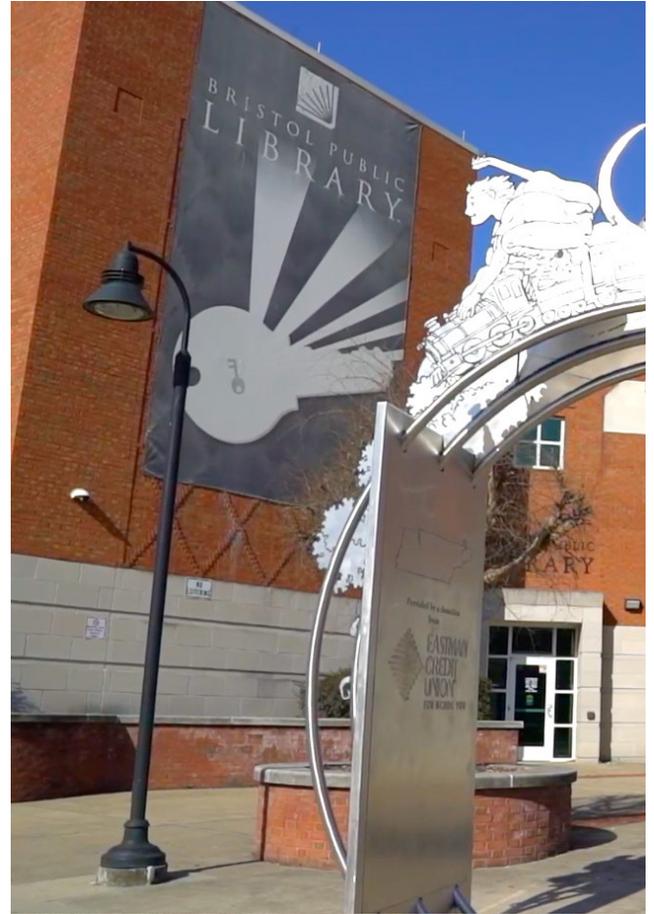
CITY OF BRISTOL SERVICES

The City of Bristol offers a variety of services that support the health, safety, and well-being of the Bristol community. Those include:

City Administration/Management	Parks and Recreation
Economic Development	Planning & Community Development
Education	Police Department
Electoral	Public Library
Finance	Public Works
Fire Department	Sheriff & Jail
Human Resources	Solid Waste
Maintenance	Transportation

This list is intended to provide general categories of services; for a complete list of departments and services, see the City's adopted budget

What We've Heard

Lead collaboration for SWVA and NETN for tourism, nature, and art.

What I love most about Bristol, VA is its residents. The people are the best resource.

By 2040, Bristol VA will have moved more people out of poverty.

By 2040, Bristol VA will feel like one community (vs. two cities) where diverse leadership is committed to equity, progress, and opportunity for all.

The City of Bristol provides excellent government services, facilities, and interjurisdictional collaboration that supports residents.

Bristol will practice good governance, using finite resources efficiently and providing excellent services to residents. All residents will have a voice, including those often under-engaged, like young people.

Goal 4.1

A city with high quality public services and facilities that promote the health and well-being of all community members

POLICIES

4.1.1 Continue to plan ahead to meet future needs for public facilities and services as the city's population changes. Seek to maintain levels-of-service for parks, recreation, education, fire, police, public works, planning, and other services.

4.1.2 Promote careful fiscal planning and sustainability to improve the city's capacity to offer high quality capital improvements and levels of service.

4.1.3 Aim for geographic distribution of services accessible across the city so that the city does not have "service deserts."

Goal 4.2

Bristol residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities

POLICIES

4.2.1 Plan ahead for the development of existing and future parks to meet the needs and preferences of Bristol residents.

4.2.2 Where possible, incorporate new public dedication of open space into future developments.

4.2.3 Aim to expand the proportion of residents living within a one quarter mile walk of a public park, playground, plaza, or greenway.

Goal 4.3

Bristol engages in regional planning and policymaking efforts that impact the city

POLICIES

4.3.1 Coordinate with regional jurisdictions on regional decisions, including Washington County and Bristol, TN. Find opportunities to plan collaboratively.

4.3.2 Coordinate on issues of growth, development, and transportation.

4.3.3 Collaborate with local community and institutional partners to enhance quality of life in Bristol.

4.3.4 Coordinate with local partners and the BVU Authority to maintain affordable, reliable, and high quality utilities.

Goal 4.4

Bristol residents have opportunities to engage on and influence community issues

POLICIES

4.4.1 Ensure governance and government decision-making is accessible and transparent to Bristol residents.

4.4.2 Promote neighborhood planning that proactively seeks area-specific targeted zoning, capital investment, and programmatic solutions.

4.4.3 Aim for engagement with residents most impacted by decisions, especially those who historically are hard-to-reach.

Goal 4.5

Bristol uses innovative practices to enhance public safety

POLICIES

4.5.1 Use data-driven approaches to law enforcement, such as using crash data to target enforcement of traffic laws at dangerous intersections.

4.5.2 Promote community-oriented policing by facilitating open communication between law enforcement and residents. Collaborate with community leaders in developing solutions.

4.5.3 Reduce burdens on emergency services for example with community drug intervention and diversion efforts.

4.5.4 Promote crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).

Goal 4.6

Bristol provides high quality public education to all its residents

POLICIES

4.6.1 Ensure Bristol provides great education and remains economically competitive with other jurisdictions.

4.6.2 Support free or affordable childhood educational, recreational, and care opportunities outside of traditional public school, such as daycare, preschool, before care, aftercare, and summer camps.

4.6.3 Explore opportunities to continue and expand free lunch programs.

05

PUBLIC HEALTH

Residents and visitors of Bristol, regardless of wealth, deserve the opportunity to live a healthy life and active lifestyle. Residents need access to healthy foods available in grocery stores, farmer's markets, and community gardens. Sidewalks, greenways, protected bike lanes, and land use planning promote active living and travel by connecting housing to jobs, recreation, healthy foods, and shopping. Parks will be destinations and offer respite, activity, and leisure.

Furthermore, residents and visitors need access to top notch public health and health care resources to ensure a healthy, thriving community. A diverse array of health care services need to be present, as well as physically and financially accessible.

By ensuring residents live in a community with clean air and water, can live healthy lifestyles, and have access to health care needs, residents will be able to age in place in Bristol.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

This chapter provides guidance on issues of health importance for city residents and visitors, including goals and policies.

This policy direction should be used to guide decisions around public investments, city services, permits for private development, and planning initiatives.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

Health in a city is not to be taken for granted. Intentional planning can impact the health of residents by providing them with convenient healthy options as they carry out their daily routines. In addition to opportunities for improving physical activity, the city can also plan for improved accessibility to food, services, community resources, and green space, while working to protect clean air and clean water.

Bristol is part of the Mount Rogers Health District which issues annual reports which can be found on the Virginia Department of Health website.

The Opioid Epidemic

The Opioid Epidemic has had a significant impact on communities across the country, especially throughout Appalachia. According to the Mount Rogers Annual Report, the total the cost of the opioid epidemic in 2021 was estimated at almost $96 million across the eight localities

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being
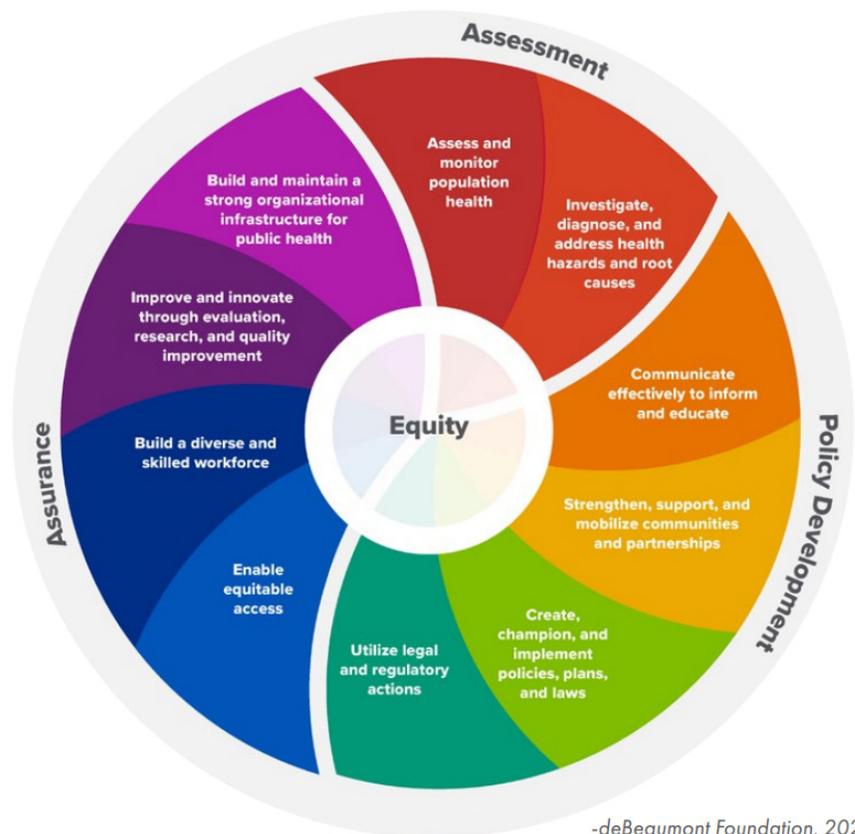
-deBeaumont Foundation, 2022

What We've Heard

Add more green space to Bristol.

Need more parks and downtown recreation.

Address issues around drug use and homelessness.

What I love most about Bristol is that it is close to natural areas, with commitment to preservation of green spaces.

KEY ISSUES AND TOPICS

Promoting Active Living

Physical activity is directly tied to personal health outcomes. Generally, increasing everyday physical activity leads to healthier individuals by addressing the risk factors for some common ailments. The Center for Disease Control lists as benefits to physical activity: controlling weight, reducing risk of cardiovascular disease, reducing risk of type-2 diabetes, reducing risk of some cancers, strengthening bones and muscles, improving health and mood, and improving ability to do daily activities and prevent falls. The form of the built environment and the amenities of a city can have an impact on what options for physical activity are available.

Clean Air and Water

Growing a healthy city requires attention be paid to even the most basic needs. Clean air and water protect the health of residents and visitors alike. Pollution of either can lead to acute or chronic harms. Managing stormwater runoff is an important way of ensuring a clean and healthy watersheds. Some strategies for green stormwater techniques are illustrated below.

Addressing Food Deserts

Food deserts are areas where food is not easily accessed. Food deserts can be eliminated by providing new food amenities within a neighborhood or by providing good connections to other parts of the city with affordable healthy food. Some communities provide incentives to bring grocery stores into underserved areas. Others, at a minimum, make sure there are not barriers to developing these uses where they are needed.

Examples of low impact development stormwater practices

Green Roof

Water Harvesting

Permeable Pavement

Bioretention

Bristol is a green, resilient, and healthy community with clean air and water, active living for all generations, and accessible food options and health care services.

With clean air and water, a healthy living environment, and access to health care needs, Bristol residents will have more opportunity to live healthy, productive lives.

Goal 5.1

Residents in all of Bristol's neighborhoods have easy access to healthy foods

POLICIES

5.1.1 Eliminate food deserts and aim to expand the proportion of residents living within a half mile travel distance of a grocery store.

5.1.2 Support and promote farmers markets as ways of offering fresh foods and supporting food and farmers, produced within the region.

5.1.3 Support and promote community gardens.

5.1.4 Support residential gardens, including in front yards, and ensure there are not unnecessary regulatory barriers.

Goal 5.2

Plentiful green spaces connected together and interwoven by green corridors

POLICIES

5.2.1 Protect and restore natural stream buffers of 50-200 feet on either side. Where possible, find opportunities to daylight underground streams.

5.2.2 Promote the use of green roofs, green walls, street trees, and other creative green and energy-efficient strategies.

5.2.3 Invest in and transform existing underutilized spaces to enhance the quality and amount of the city's green spaces and biodiversity.

5.2.4 Continue to engage with the community to identify and prioritize areas for green space.

Goal 5.3

A city where active modes of transportation are safe, comfortable, and realistic

POLICIES

5.3.1 Promote active modes of transportation in the built environment.

5.3.2 Ensure that as streets are built and redeveloped, they incorporate design elements that make walking and biking comfortable and safe.

5.3.3 Where infrastructure is automobile-oriented, seek to enhance the safety of all users through physical separation between bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles, and using complete streets and vision zero strategies to reduce vehicle speeds where appropriate.

Goal 5.4

Community resources are accessible

POLICIES

5.4.1 Seek to ensure key public and private services and resources are geographically distributed and accessible across Bristol, including child care, food, medical and dental services, and playgrounds.

5.4.2 Promote financial accessibility of community services and resources by keeping services affordable.

5.4.3 Support initiatives to provide services and permanent supportive housing for the homeless, such as the King's Mountain Supportive Housing project.

Goal 5.5

Residents benefit from a city that values mental health

POLICIES

5.5.1 Promote mental health awareness and services among city staff and across the community.

5.5.2 Explore crisis intervention and response programs for handling mental health emergencies.

5.5.3 Protect natural areas for the mental health benefits of nature-based recreation at a variety of scales.

5.5.4 Promote access to community-based mental health services through funding and partnerships, and ensuring they are well-coordinated with other social services.

Goal 5.6

A city working holistically to address substance abuse disorders

POLICIES

5.6.1 Continue to promote enhanced and expanded access to treatment and rehabilitation programs such as medication-assisted treatment and specialized rehabilitation programs.

5.6.2 Explore the potential of supporting comprehensive harm reduction strategies that reduce spread of infectious diseases and offer opportunities for individuals to engage with support services and transition to treatment.

5.6.3 Explore ways of supporting public education campaigns aimed at preventing drug use, in schools, community workshops, and media.

06
APPENDIX - IMPLEMENTATION

APPENDIX 1 - IMPLEMENTATION

A.1 **Update the Zoning Regulations**
- o Update the zoning, development, and signage regulations to align them with the comprehensive plan
- o Develop residential and commercial design standard guidelines, through new ordinances or incentives, that can provide guidance to property owners and developers. These should include, but not be limited to, landscaping, street lighting, utility location, sidewalk construction, dumpster placement and parking regulations
- o Preserve and restore historic structures through code amendments
- o Encourage the development of a range of housing options, including multi-family developments and age in place options, on sites with close proximity to community facilities and amenities. Implement regulatory guidance from the Housing Needs Assessment and develop new mixed use zoning districts
- o Create an overlay district along Gate City Highway for the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino
- o Add landscaping standards for new development
- o Ensure adequate bicycle parking in new development
- o Evaluate opportunities to simplify existing regulatory and permitting processes to make them more predictable and user-friendly

A.2 Target Areas for Redevelopment

o Identify additional areas where large tracts or vacant buildings can be redeveloped with flexible zoning regulations.

o Work with property owners, developers, lenders to demolish structures that are abandoned or represent a threat to public health and safety

o Continue to work on blight elimination that prioritizes areas for public investment

o Beautify and improve the infrastructure of key corridors and enhance gateway features at key locations to announce entry into the City of Bristol. Also work to enhance gateway features into specific areas of Bristol such as Downtown, Gate City Highway and others. Implement the Believe in Bristol Small Area Plan.

o Continue to promote and support residential units Downtown and consider incentives targeted to the conversion of office and/or vacant upstairs space into contemporary, market rate residential units.

o Identify potential development groups to assist in reducing the number of vacant properties in the downtown district.

o Continue to work on identifying a site for a downtown parking garage.

o Attract developers for new development: adaptive reuse of buildings in opportunity areas, housing diversity

o Leverage incentives and financing tools to promote reinvestment along Euclid Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, West State Street, and Lee Highway. New mixed use zoning districts.

o Encourage new infill development along State Street, particularly underutilized surface parking

A.3

Conduct and Implement Priority Planning

o Implement the actions in the Housing Needs Assessment

o Create a sidewalk master plan which will identify and prioritize current sidewalk infrastructure for repair. This plan would also identify areas for new sidewalk construction, prioritized by need.

o Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that can establish a vision for the park's system, assess quality of existing facilities, forecast park needs over the course of the next ten years, prioritize expansions, and identify needed site improvements.

o Implement the recommendations within the City's Transit Development Plan and ensure that the provisions of transit services are accessible to all population groups within the City of Bristol. Transit Development Plan and Microtransit Feasibility Study

o Complete design plans for Mendota Trail Urban Connector

A.4

Economic Development Actions

o Develop an economic development strategic plan

o Identify target sectors and industries to help focus and guide business recruitment and retention

o Market and promote Bristol's low cost of living, transportation infrastructure, and proactive business climate to prospective employers.

o Continue to host large-scale music festivals and concerts, such as Rhythm & Roots or traveling acts or major bands, in the Downtown area.

o Adopt and continue to monitor and assess a public incentives framework

A.5

Additional Implementation Actions

o Continue rental inspections to ensure that units are safe and habitable and that landlords are properly adhering to building code regulations.

o Budget for and continue to support the undertaking of consistent and effective code enforcement

o Improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure along commercial corridors to increase connectivity between residents/consumers and local businesses. Create a Bike and Pedestrian Plan

o Extend the current Historic Overlay district to the Virginia Hills and Euclid Avenue Historic Districts to protect Bristol's historic structures from demolition.

o Work with property owners in historic districts to develop construction and rehabilitation guidelines to prevent significant alterations while encouraging and incentivizing the adaptive re-use of Bristol's vacant or underutilized historic structures.

o Restore modernized and covered up facades of historic buildings to their original architectural design

o Continue to add public art, including murals and sculptures, throughout Downtown to improve its unique sense of place

o Improve pedestrian access by enhancing the striping of crosswalks, adding pedestrian signal heads, and evaluating opportunities for bike lanes and bike parking

o Budget for on-going maintenance and repairs of City owned streets and bridges as part of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan. CIP

o Continue to work with Bristol Virginia Utilities to determine future needs so that lack of utilities do not constrain new residential and commercial development.

o Explore opportunities for new mini-parks or neighbor- hood parks in older, developed neighborhoods. Parks Master Plan

o Use creative strategies to address traffic within proximity to intermediate schools

APPENDIX 2 - CODE OF VIRGINIA, TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The comprehensive plan shall be **general in nature**, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any **road improvement and any transportation improvement**, shown on the plan and shall indicate where **existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be**.

B. 1. As part of the comprehensive plan, each locality shall develop a transportation plan that **designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations** that include the designation of **new and expanded transportation facilities** and that **support the planned development** of the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, **roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, freight corridors, and public transportation facilities.** The plan shall recognize and differentiate among a **hierarchy of roads** such as expressways, arterials, and collectors. In developing the plan, the locality shall take into consideration how to **align transportation infrastructure and facilities with affordable, accessible housing and community services** that are located within the territory in order to

facilitate **community integration of the elderly and persons with disabilities.** The Virginia Department of Transportation shall, upon request, provide localities with technical assistance in preparing such transportation plan.

2. The transportation plan shall include a map that shall **show road and transportation improvements**, including the **cost estimates** of such road and transportation improvements from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the **current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.**

3. The transportation plan, and any **amendment** thereto pursuant to § 15.2-2229, shall be **consistent with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Statewide Transportation Plan** developed pursuant to § 33.2-353, the **Six-Year Improvement Program** adopted pursuant to subsection B of § 33.2-214, and the **location of routes to be followed by roads comprising systems of state highways** pursuant to subsection A of § 33.2-208. The locality s**hall consult with the Virginia Department of Transportation to assure such consistency is achieved.** The transportation plan need reflect only those changes in the annual update of the Six-Year Improvement Program that are deemed to be significant new, expanded, or relocated roadways.

4. Prior to the adoption of the

transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan, the **locality shall submit such plan or amendment to the Department for review and comment.** The Department shall conduct its review and provide written comments to the locality on the consistency of the transportation plan or any amendment to the provisions of subdivision 1. The Department shall provide such written comments to the locality within 90 days of receipt of the plan or amendment, or such other shorter period of time as may be otherwise agreed upon by the Department and the locality.

5. The l**ocality shall submit a copy of the adopted transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan to the Department for informational purposes.** If the Department determines that the transportation plan or amendment is not consistent with the provisions of subdivision 1, the Department shall notify the Commonwealth Transportation Board so that the Board may take appropriate action in accordance with subsection F of § 33.2-214.

6. If the adopted transportation plan designates corridors planned to be served by mass transit, as defined in § 33.2-100, a portion of its allocation from (i) the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority distribution specified in subdivision B 1 of § 33.2-2510, (ii) the commercial and industrial real property tax revenue specified in § 58.1-3221.3, and (iii) the secondary system road construction program, as described in Article 5 (§ 33.2-351 et seq.) of Chapter 3 of Title

33.2, may be used for the purpose of utility undergrounding in the planned corridor, if the locality matches 100 percent of the state allocation.

7. Each locality's amendments or updates to its transportation plan as required by subdivisions 2 through 5 shall be made on or before its ongoing scheduled date for updating its transportation plan.

APPENDIX 3: FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION DESCRIPTIONS & EXAMPLES

1. Interstate / Freeway (high volume, low access at designated access points)

These roads are designed to carry many vehicles through an area as efficiently as possible and to provide for longer distance travel. Direct vehicle access to land uses from this class of roadway is not typically served (a designated exit serves the purpose of accessing land use). In general, roads in this class do not have dedicated multimodal facilities had have limited use in public transportation.

Examples in Bristol: I-81 and I-381.

2. Arterial (high volume, lower degree of access)

When compared to interstates and freeways, the intents of arterials are to move many vehicles over moderate lengths and provide greater access to land uses along the roadways. Arterials often provide public transportation access but tend to be without dedicated multimodal facilities. However, some communities have

begun to plan for or have developed multimodal facilities along arterials when there is a high need for access to jobs and services and to support changing land uses (like more mixed-use development).

Examples in Bristol: Gate City Highway (US 421), Lee Highway/Euclid Avenue (US 421 and US 11W), Commonwealth Avenue (VA 381), Lee Highway (US 19 and US 11).

3. Collectors (balance between volume and access)

Collector roads gather traffic from local roads (as described below) and funnel it to the arterial network. Collectors have the dual purpose of providing land access and moving a moderate level of traffic through an area. Collectors are prime candidates for dedicated multimodal transportation facilities and often provide public transportation access today.

Examples in Bristol: Moore Street, Bonham Road, Piedmont Avenue, Valley Drive, and Randolph Street are examples of Major Collectors. The only minor collectors in Bristol are Vance, Catherine, Osborne, and Page Streets.

4. Locals (low volume and high access to neighborhoods and other streets)

Most roadways in Bristol are local roads; these tend to be the roads that people live along. They are not intended for long- or medium-distance travel and their primary purpose is access to residential land use, although they may also provide access to smaller scale commercial areas. Local streets are an excellent location for

dedicated multimodal facilities because the are typically roads that are more comfortable for people walking or biking. Public transportation typically does not travel on local streets, but pedestrian and bicycle access along local roads is a higher consideration when the local street directly connects to a collector street that serves a public transportation system.

Examples in Bristol: Pearl Street, Bellehaven Drive, Mayfield Lane, Oak Street, and Wagner Street are a example of the many local streets (or Urban Streets) found across the City.

The map to the right shows Bristol's roadways and their functional classification.

Map 18. Roadway Functional Classification
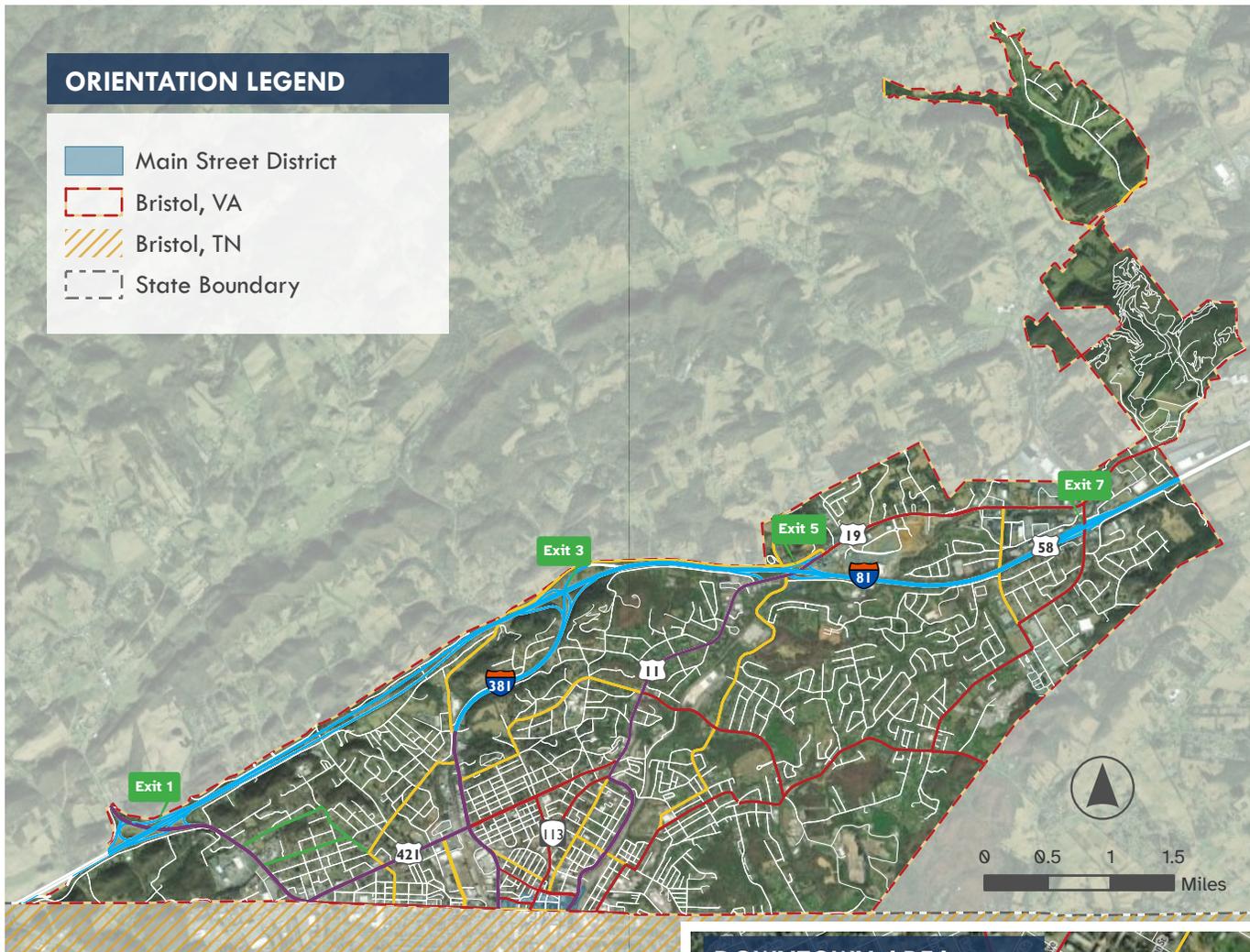
ORIENTATION LEGEND

- Main Street District
- Bristol, VA
- Bristol, TN
- State Boundary

Exit 3
Exit 5
Exit 7
Exit 1

TOPIC LEGEND

Functional Classification

- Interstate
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation
Functional Classification on LRS 22.1

DOWNTOWN AREA

Endnotes

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