

# City of Galax, Virginia Comprehensive Plan



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Amended: 08 January 2024



## **Acknowledgments**

This planning document was prepared by the Galax Planning Commission, the Galax City Council, and the Citizens of the City of Galax. The background research, writing, and assembly of the document were completed by staff of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. The preparation of this document was financed by the City of Galax. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration or the Virginia Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

### **Galax Planning Commission**

Russell Austin  
Josepha Bolling-Thompson  
Brandon Boyles  
Janett Nuckolls  
Rita Reeves  
Sharon Ritchie  
Dana Sworsy

### **Galax City Council**

Willie Greene – Mayor  
Beth White – Vice Mayor  
Sharon Ritchie  
Martin Warr  
Evan Henck  
Hunter Bowers  
Kathy Burnett

### **City Staff**

Michael Burnett – City Manager

### **Technical Assistance**

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission





# Executive Summary

## Update

In 2023, staff and the Galax Planning Commission were been directed to undertake review and amendment of necessary plans and ordinances to move the city forward for a more competitive and resilient approach toward higher economic vitality and quality of life. Planning commission reviewed the Creekside Small Area Plan (Creekside SAP) through the lens of a city-wide approach, treating the process as a catalyst, part of a transition toward a more walkable, inclusionary city plan. The potential for the Creekside SAP to change the trajectory of the city was considered carefully at multiple levels of city governance, and, ultimately, the principals underpinning the Creekside SAP are appealing to the commission and staff – speaking in the general sense of urban planning. The requirements of establishing an urban development area were also explored with the intent to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, which contains much of the same planning principals as the Creekside SAP. The components below illustrate the simplified parts of the proposed minor amendment:

- Land Use
  - Allow for mixed-use/adaptive mixed-use
  - Promote the viability of the downtown
  - Promote more inclusionary land use policies
    - Increase overall resiliency
- Transportation
  - Establishment of an Urban Development Area(s)
    - Creekside (SAP), downtown, historic district – all overlapping
  - Incorporating traditional neighborhood design
  - Avoid patterns of induced demand
  - More focus on long-term feasibility of transportation network
  - Increased focus on bicycle and pedestrian

## Schedule

The Galax Planning Commission and staff began in-depth review of the 2022 Galax Comprehensive Plan and Creekside (SAP) in September 2023, focusing on incorporation of current city initiatives into public service, joining the Virginia Main Street program, City Council's 2020 strategic plan, the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts programming, and much more. The Planning Commission ultimately determined that the City needed to incorporate new urban planning principles into its policies, proposing the following comprehensive plan amendment. Understandably, this is not the end for the City's future planning process, just one more step forward.

## Action

City Council approved staff request to advertise for a joint public hearing on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to consider approval of the proposed Galax Comprehensive Plan amendment.





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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of the Galax Comprehensive Plan is to provide a guide or a “vision” for the future development of the city. Planning is an organized way of determining a community’s challenges and opportunities, then setting goals, objectives, and strategies to address those challenges and opportunities. Planning is a forward-looking process that bridges the gap between where we are today and where we want to go in the future. A comprehensive plan by its very name addresses a variety of often-interrelated public facilities and services, quality of life, economy, and transportation – just to call out a few.

A comprehensive plan is a tool to guide local government decisions pertaining to the provision of a better environment and efficient public services, both now and in the future. To accomplish these purposes the plan must be comprehensive, general, and long-range. A comprehensive plan should include surveys of existing conditions, an analysis of those conditions to determine what changes are anticipated to take place, and recommendations for action on strategies that will improve existing conditions in order to prepare for the future.

## Relationship to Other Plans

The comprehensive plan is a general plan and is not designed to stand alone as the sole guide for the development of a locality. However, the plan fulfills a number of specific purposes. It is the basis for a city zoning ordinance and serves as a sounding board for the examination of a rezoning application. It provides a comprehensive frame of reference for the review and evaluation of conditional use permits, subdivision plats, site plans, and developmental proposals. It gives official recognition to areas of natural, historical, geological, or archeological significance, thus ensuring their conservation and protection. The plan serves as a guide for efficient and coordinated improvements in public services. It identifies the assets of the city and outlines ways to preserve and leverage those assets.

The comprehensive plan may be implemented by zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and capital improvements programs. Other plans of importance to the Town in the development of this plan include the previous City of Galax Comprehensive Plans, the Mount Rogers Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Unit Plan, the City of Galax strategic plan, the Mount Rogers Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other plans of similar or relevant scope. Additional studies, reports, plans, policies, and initiatives would be built upon the adaptive framework of the comprehensive plan, complimenting the progress of each toward implementing the City’s vision.

## Definitions

“Comprehensive” means that the plan must include all the land within the city as well as be cognizant of all decisions which may have an impact on the land.





“General” means that the plan does not dictate specific locations or include the ordinances which are needed to put the plan into effect; rather a general plan provides the goals, objectives, and strategies to which decisions and ordinances of the local government can be directed.

“Long Range” means that the plan, while addressing current problems, also considers future situations and the impact of changes 10 to 15 years from now.

“Goals” are general statements or future conditions considered desirable to the city; they are ends toward which actions are aimed.

“Objectives” are statements of measurable activities to be accomplished in pursuit of the goals; they refer to some specific aspirations which are reasonably attainable.

“Strategies” or “recommendations” are specific proposals that directly relate to accomplishing the objective; they are the actions recommended to implement the plan. Strategies or sometimes called “policies” are recommendations which represent the “how we are going to get there” component of the Plan.

## Description of the Planning Area

Galax is an independent city situated between Carroll and Grayson Counties in Southwest Virginia. Approximately nine miles west of Exit 14 on Interstate 77, Galax is easily accessible via U.S. Highway 58. Galax is located 82 miles southwest of Roanoke, Virginia, and 64 miles northwest of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The City of Galax encompasses an area of approximately 8.2 square miles or about 5,262 acres with a 2010 population of 7,042 persons. The density of the population of Galax is 1.34 persons per acre or approximately 859 persons per square mile.

## Historical Background

Galax has a long tradition of organized planning and active citizen involvement in civic affairs. Galax had its origins in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when J.P. Carico and J.B. Waugh formed a land development company to purchase land from Major George Curin, one of the earliest settlers in the area. They wanted to build a town near the proposed site of the Norfolk and Western Railroad crossing. They contracted with Mr. Arnold and Mr. DeMot, engineers from Lynchburg, to layout the land into streets and lots in what is now Downtown Galax, on the company-owned land along the banks of Chestnut Creek. The first lots were sold in 1903, marking the beginning of the new town, which they called Bonaparte.

The community grew quickly with many businesses moving in from the nearby settlements of Blair and Oldtown. Many of the early settlers in the area were Quakers who had come from North Carolina after the Battle of Alamance in 1771. Soon after the railroad was built, in 1904, the name of the town was changed to Galax, after the name of an evergreen plant often used in floral arrangements, which grew in abundance in the area. In 1906, a town charter was established with a mayor-council form of government, and Galax was incorporated as a town. This was changed to a town manager form of government in 1922.





By the mid-1920s, the town was firmly established. Water and sewer had been installed in 1916, the volunteer fire department had been established in 1922, and a school system had been built on the land set aside for this purpose in the original layout of the town. In 1925, Dr. J.K. Caldwell initiated the building of the first hospital in Galax. Each improvement resulted from the local citizens uniting to initiate the facilities and services.

Soon after the town was formed, J.P. Carico and T.C. Felts promoted the "Great Galax Fair." Together with about 90 citizens, they formed the Galax Fair Association. A 22-acre tract of land, which is now Felts Park, was purchased and a fairground was built. In 1948, a group of citizens went to Washington, D.C. seeking federal assistance to alleviate the flooding issues along Chestnut Creek. The most severe flood had occurred in 1940, causing several million dollars in total damages. Their efforts were successful and by 1950 the Army Corps of Engineers had completed improvements necessary to relieve the problems. Chestnut Creek has not flooded since.

The city's early industrial base also resulted in part from local citizen efforts. J.S. Waugh, S.E. Wilkerson, and Creed Hawks established the first factory located on Virginia Street. Fire destroyed the building in 1907 and it was never rebuilt. No large-scale industrial growth occurred until after World War I. Soon after the war, local civic leaders met with John D. Bassett, another noted industrialist. The Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company resulted from their meeting. In 1923, the Vaughan Furniture Company was formed.

Industrial growth was rapid through the 1940s. During this period, Webb Furniture Company, the Galax Knitting Company, Dixon Furniture Company, the Galax Mirror Company, the Carnation Company, Dixon Lumber Company, Old Dominion Knitting Company (which became the Penry Manufacturing Company), and the Galax Weaving Plant of Burlington Industries was opened.

Early in 1952, Wonderknit Corporation, one of the city's largest industries, was established. By 1954, Galax had grown to a sufficient size to become a city, independent of the two surrounding counties. In 1955, Galax citizens raised over a million dollars in just 30 days to provide incentives for the Hanes Corporation to be located in their city.

For years, Galax was a leading center for the furniture manufacturing and knitting industries in Southwest Virginia. This was due in large part to the interested citizens who took the initiative using their own time and money to pursue and support industrial development and investment in Galax from the city's earliest days.

## Legal Status of the Plan

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

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

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

- improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens;





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

*Section 15.2-2223* specifically states that “the comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probably future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.”

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

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

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





## Chapter 2: Population and Trends

### Introduction

Galax is in close proximity to two of Virginia's most prominent highways: I-81 and I-77. I-81 provides access to over half of the east coast of the United States in a relatively direct line while I-77 connects SWVA to the Carolinas and is used heavily for interstate commerce travel. Despite the City's strategic location within a short distance of Virginia's most well-traveled highways, Galax is facing a problem that many small communities and towns around SWVA are facing, a declining population.

### Demographic Profile

The population in Galax City, Virginia was 6,517 per American Community Survey data for 2015-2019. The region has a civilian labor force of 2,839 with a participation rate of 54.8%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in Galax City, Virginia, 15.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 33.5% in the nation. The median household income in Galax City, Virginia is \$33,575 and the median house value is \$96,600.

**Table 2.1** shows a breakdown of various demographics as well as current populations and future predicted growth:

**Table 2.1**

	<u>Percent</u>			<u>Value</u>		
	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetro area	Virginia	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetro area	Virginia
<b>Demographics</b>						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	6,517	371,659	8,454,463
Male	47.4%	49.8%	49.2%	3,090	185,253	4,159,173
Female	52.6%	50.2%	50.8%	3,427	186,406	4,295,290
Median Age <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	45.0	45.5	38.2
Under 18 Years	21.7%	19.2%	22.1%	1,414	71,532	1,865,699
18 to 24 Years	5.4%	7.1%	9.6%	349	26,402	811,878
25 to 34 Years	9.1%	11.2%	13.9%	593	41,561	1,174,091
35 to 44 Years	13.9%	11.6%	13.0%	908	43,122	1,100,460





45 to 54 Years	13.2%	13.9%	13.5%	859	51,701	1,139,236
55 to 64 Years	14.4%	15.4%	12.9%	936	57,081	1,091,153
65 to 74 Years	11.7%	12.4%	9.0%	760	46,038	756,712
75 Years, and Over	10.7%	9.2%	6.1%	698	34,222	515,234
Race: White	89.6%	90.0%	67.6%	5,842	334,399	5,717,617
Race: Black or African American	7.5%	7.4%	19.2%	491	27,377	1,621,592
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0	741	23,873
Race: Asian	0.6%	0.5%	6.4%	42	1,891	541,133
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	16	128	6,179
Race: Some Other Race	1.7%	0.6%	2.6%	109	2,229	223,794
Race: Two or More Races	0.3%	1.3%	3.8%	17	4,894	320,275
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	14.5%	2.6%	9.4%	945	9,666	792,001
<b>Population Growth</b>						
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>	—	—	—	6,347	364,765	8,535,519
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	-0.9%	-0.7%	0.7%	-62	-2,842	60,958
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	770.3	63.5	216.1

As depicted in the chart above, the City of Galax has a rapidly aging population. Compared to the median age of 38.2 for the entirety of the state of Virginia, Galax has a median age of 45.5. Based on population growth, this trend suggests that the source of the city's population growth is the in-migration of working-age and older residents.

Throughout the City of Galax, the Hispanic and Latino population make up 14.5% of the city's population while Black or African Americans comprise 7.6% of the populace.

## Education Levels

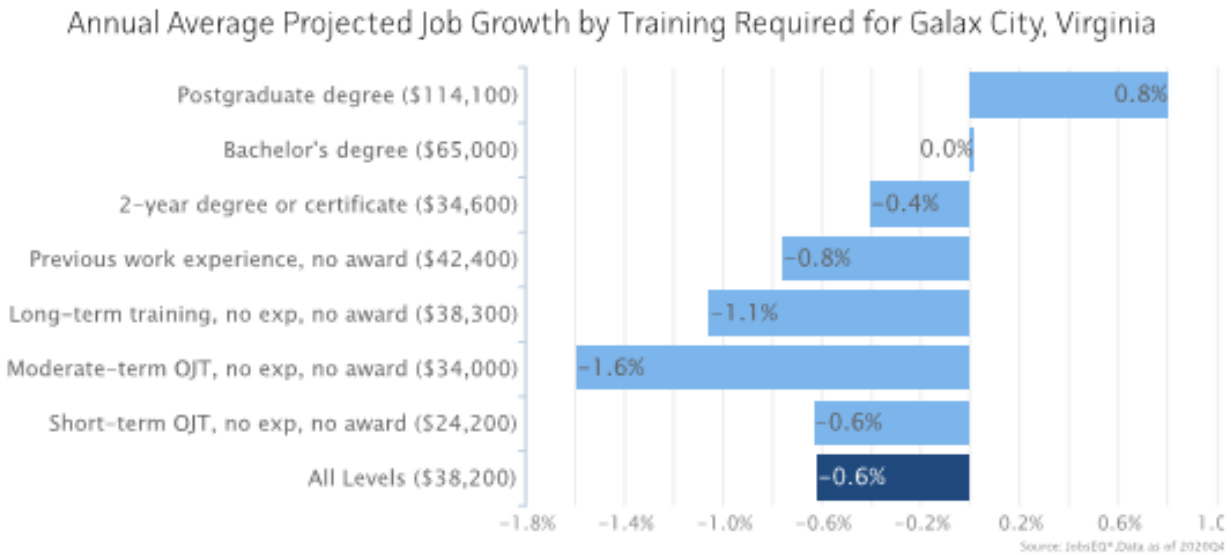
Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the City of Galax, Virginia is projected to decline 0.6% annually over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.8% per year. Careers requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 0.0% per year, and





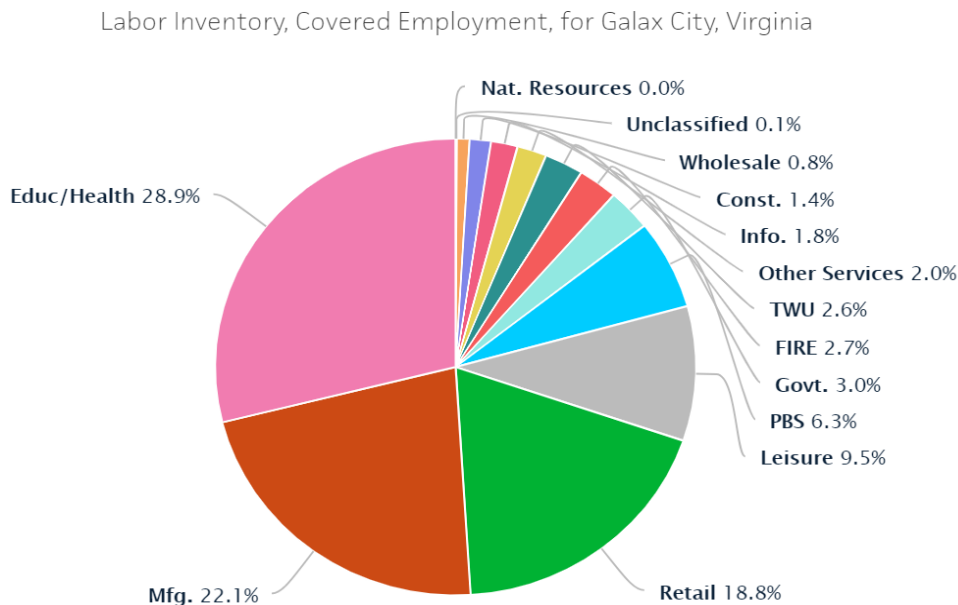
occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to contract 0.4% per year.

**Graph 2.2**



**Table 2.3** depicts the breakdown of labor inventory by sector for the City of Galax

**Chart 2.3**



**Table 2.4** shows a breakdown of social distribution for the City of Galax in comparison to the surrounding areas, as well as the state of Virginia.





**Table 2.4**

	Galax	SWVA Nonmetro*	VA	Galax	SWVA Nonmetro*	VA
<b>Social</b>						
Poverty Level (of all people)	23.8%	19.7%	10.6%	1,490	70,750	865,691
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	19.2%	17.0%	8.2%	510	25,578	259,639
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of the total population)	0.4%	1.0%	1.4%	25	3,756	114,768
Disconnected Youth <sup>3</sup>	0.0%	2.1%	1.5%	0	325	6,725
Children in Single-Parent Families (% of all children)	38.8%	38.4%	31.0%	529	24,949	549,076
Uninsured	16.2%	10.4%	8.6%	1,019	37,613	707,960
With a Disability, Age 18-64	23.2%	20.6%	9.5%	838	43,473	486,156
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	37.4%	25.7%	45.0%	313	11,171	218,843
Foreign Born	6.5%	1.6%	12.4%	426	6,039	1,051,559
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	4.9%	1.0%	5.9%	304	3,484	471,645

\*Non-Metro SWVA refers to Bland County, Russell County, Buchanan County, Smyth County, Carroll County, Tazewell County, Dickenson County, Wise County, Grayson County, Wythe County, Henry County, Lee County, Martinsville City, Patrick County, Norton City

Compared to the rest of the state and other communities throughout Southwest Virginia, Galax has a significantly higher poverty level as well as a slightly higher percentage of households that receive food stamps/SNAP. There is also a six percent higher rate of uninsured individuals throughout the city when compared to the rest of the surrounding region and that number rises when compared to the rest of the state.

## Cost of Living Index

The Cost-of-Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 14.4% lower in Galax City, Virginia than the U.S. average.





**Table 2.5**  
**Cost of Living Information**

	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Galax City, Virginia	\$32,841	85.6	\$38,361
Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	\$35,588	85.4	\$41,656
Virginia	\$61,837	115.4	\$53,598
USA	\$60,761	100.0	\$60,761

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2020Q4

Cost of Living per C2ER, data as of 2020q4, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

As with many of the communities throughout Southwest Virginia, the residents of the City of Galax experience a much lower cost of living which in turn allows for the population to have more spending power despite having significantly lower average annual salaries. The lower cost of living within the region should be promoted as a recruiting tactic to bring more employers to the region as well as a way to recruit remote workers to the area.

## Skill Gaps

As illustrated in the chart below, there is a significant gap in the trained candidates for specific jobs with specialized and required skills. There is an increasing number of specialized jobs that require more training and education than is currently available in potential job applicants. This information displays that there is a significant gap between the employers and the candidates applying for more highly specialized jobs. Moving forward, it will be a necessity to continue to develop and attract a workforce that has the education and training that will allow these sectors to fill vacant positions as well as facilitate future growth opportunities.





**Table 2.6**

Skill Gaps: Galax City, Virginia

Skill	CANDIDATES	OPENINGS	GAP
	#	#	#
Caregiving	4	8	-4
Patient Care	2	6	-4
Bilingual	1	5	-4
Personal Computers (PC)	7	10	-3
Medication Administration	4	7	-3
Spanish	5	8	-3
Lead Generation	0	3	-3
Woodworking	3	5	-2
Hospitality	3	6	-2
Electronic Medical Record System (EMR System)	1	3	-2
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	3	1	2
Keyboarding/Typing	13	11	2
Serving	4	2	2
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	15	12	2
First Aid Certification	6	4	3
Calculators	7	5	3
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	8	4	4
Cash Registers	13	8	4
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	15	8	7
Cash Handling (Cashier)	30	17	13
Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2021Q1; openings and candidate sample compiled in January 2021. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.			



## Chapter 3: Housing

### Introduction

The City of Galax has 3,327 total housing units. There has been a slight decline in housing over the last 5 years, with a reduction of approximately 200 housing units. As with many of the other communities in Southwest Virginia, limited housing resources have become a challenge in the City. An adequate supply of proper housing for an aging population as well as meeting the needs of those currently in the workforce is necessary for the City of Galax to remain sustainable.

### Housing Overview

The City of Galax is very comparable to the rest of the region in terms of median home value but is well below that of the state as a whole. This allows those with the goal of owning a home in the area the opportunity to achieve that goal within the City of Galax. A lower median home value than that of the rest of the state allows people of all income brackets the opportunity to participate in homeownership within the limits of Galax.

Moving forward, the City of Galax should continue to focus on providing high-quality, affordable housing to present an attractive environment for new businesses as well as the retention and growth of current businesses. With the opportunity for residents to find quality, affordable housing, there will likely be an increasing number of new long-term residents in the area.

**Table 3.1** shows a breakdown of various current housing characteristics for Galax and the surrounding area:

**Table 3.1**  
**Housing Characteristics**

	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	3,327	191,016	3,514,032
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$96,600	\$98,775	\$273,100
Homeowner Vacancy	6.2%	2.4%	1.5%	120	2,743	31,732
Rental Vacancy	15.2%	9.1%	5.4%	152	4,073	62,285
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	31.9%	26.6%	33.7%	849	40,073	1,063,334
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	15.6%	7.9%	6.1%	415	11,829	192,193

The City of Galax has experienced a much higher rate of homeowner vacancy when compared to the surrounding communities, as well as the state. Galax also sees a higher average number of rental vacancies and housing units occupied with no access to a vehicle. The lack of personal transportation as seen by this group hinders them from moving throughout the region and limits their ability to be an involved community member. Providing quality public transportation will be









key to ensuring that residents without transportation have the ability to get around the city efficiently.

## Historical Housing Information

The chart below shows housing information starting in 2010 carrying forward until 2019. In 2011 there was a large 300-unit jump in total housing units but since that point, there has been a steady decline leading to today's numbers. The median home value hit a peak in 2013 following the real estate crash that occurred in 2008; since then, values have seen a slight decrease to the current day market.

**Table 3.2** shows the housing trends within the City of Galax from 2010 to 2019 :

**Table 3.2**  
**Housing Trends**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Housing</b>																					
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		3,639	3,940	3,836	3,560	3,559	3,514	3,404	3,484	3,367	3,327
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		\$90,600	\$91,700	\$107,000	\$112,900	\$108,300	\$91,000	\$101,600	\$105,500	\$101,100	\$96,600
Homeowner Vacancy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	3.0%	3.1%	8.9%	9.3%	7.7%	6.2%		0	0	0	28	55	57	159	172	150	120
Rental Vacancy	11.6%	13.1%	13.4%	15.5%	10.9%	12.5%	13.5%	15.0%	13.9%	15.2%		160	196	184	197	152	173	190	209	152	152
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	36.7%	36.8%	35.4%	34.9%	40.8%	40.4%	43.5%	41.0%	34.4%	31.9%		1,221	1,298	1,186	1,053	1,211	1,196	1,203	1,163	943	849
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	11.8%	10.4%	11.5%	13.3%	13.6%	17.7%	17.4%	15.3%	13.0%	15.6%		391	365	386	402	405	525	481	433	357	415

## Current Housing Programs

Rooftop of Virginia, a private, non-profit organization with the goal of eliminating "poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by offering to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, the opportunity to live in decency and dignity." Rooftop manages several housing-related programs that serve low-income families, including Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation, Emergency Home Repair, Section 8 Rental Assistance Program, and a Weatherization program.





Programs such as this combined with a mindset to eliminate the blight within city limits will provide an opportunity for the revitalization of Galax's more troubled areas. Continuing to partner with groups to aid in this process will be critical moving forward as Galax grows and continues to look forward as a community.

## Housing Unit Breakdown

The chart below identifies that the dispersion of housing types has remained constant over the last five years throughout the City of Galax. As with a majority of communities throughout Southwest Virginia, the most prevalent housing type is a single-family residence, labeled as 1-unit Detached above. A large majority of single-family homes within a community can be a positive attribute when trying to attract long-term residents to the city.

**Table 3.3**  
**Housing Unit Type**

	Galax city, Virginia	
Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
▼ UNITS IN STRUCTURE		
▼ Total housing units	3,327	3,559
1-unit, detached	70.1%	69.2%
1-unit, attached	0.4%	0.9%
2 units	9.3%	3.1%
3 or 4 units	1.4%	3.8%
5 to 9 units	3.9%	2.3%
10 to 19 units	4.8%	7.1%
20 or more units	1.3%	4.0%
Mobile home	8.7%	9.6%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0%	0.0%

The percentage of 2-Unit buildings has nearly tripled in the most recent five-year grouping, growing from 3.1% to 9.3% in 2019. This number may be an indicator of an upward shift in demand for rentals in the City of Galax as opposed to the traditional single-family detached home. The remainder of the multi-family property types has remained relatively stable throughout the last 5-year reporting period.

## Real Estate Taxes

As of July 1, 2020, the real estate tax rate for property owners in the City of Galax is 92¢ per \$100 based on a 100% assessment of the real estate value. As of July 2021, the City of Galax released its list of delinquent real estate taxes and it totaled more than \$277,000. Communities





must collect on these debts as these dollars are critical to the function of city government and the ability to provide quality services to residents and visitors alike.

## Retention of Residents

The chart below shows the percentage of the population and when they moved into the current unit that they are living in. As represented below, many of the households became filled and have remained so since the year 2000. This is a good indication of Galax's ability to retain long-term residents. Throughout the most recent years, there has been a strong increase of individuals finding a home to purchase or rent and remaining in that location for several years.

**Table 3.4**  
**Resident Tenure**

Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
✓ YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT		
✓ Occupied housing units	2,663	2,968
Moved in 2017 or later	7.8%	(X)
Moved in 2015 to 2016	10.2%	(X)
Moved in 2010 to 2014	25.9%	24.8%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	28.1%	38.4%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	14.1%	12.4%
Moved in 1989 and earlier	13.9%	24.4%

## Rental Costs

Throughout the last ten years, Galax has been able to retain a very affordable rental market for those within the city limits that are looking to rent. The median monthly rental rate is \$574, and there has been an increase in the percentage of units that fall between \$500-\$999 which should result in an upward shift in of the median monthly rental rate. However, there has been a shrinking supply of units in the rental market with rates ranging from \$1,000-\$1,499.

**Table 3.5** shows the gross rent paid to the landlord, not including utilities (unless included by the landlord in the rent payment):





**Table 3.5**  
**Gross Rent**

Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
✓ GROSS RENT		
✓ Occupied units paying rent	792	1,112
Less than \$500	27.8%	41.1%
\$500 to \$999	65.2%	51.5%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	4.8%	6.4%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	1.1%	1.0%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0.0%	0.0%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	1.1%	0.0%
\$3,000 or more	0.0%	0.0%
Median (dollars)	574	574
No rent paid	57	99

There has also been a shrinking in the number of unpaid rents on a monthly basis. Throughout 2020 there were many efforts made to ensure that property owners had an opportunity to receive partial rental payment during the COVID-19 pandemic; these programs often resulted in assistance but in some instances were unable to provide a solution to those in need.

## Mortgage Creation and Payoff

**Table 3.6**  
**Homeowner Mortgage Status**

Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
✓ MORTGAGE STATUS		
✓ Owner-occupied units	1,814	1,757
Housing units with a mortgage	52.1%	51.6%
Housing units without a mortgage	47.9%	48.4%

In the last two years, there has been a decrease in interest rates for mortgages throughout the country. This has created an environment where many people are seeking homeownership for the first time, selling their current home to upgrade, or refinancing to get a lower interest rate. This period of time has proven to create a competitive real estate market and the above data shows that there was an increase in housing units with a mortgage.





The most recent data that is available only goes up to 2019, but it is believed that those numbers will have continued to trend towards more mortgages being created than paid off. This is a positive sign for cities that are looking to increase the number of long-term residents.

## Age of Homes

Based on the data below there was a very steady distribution of homes being built until 2009. Since 2009, only 1.2% of the current housing units were built, with over 62% of the housing units being built over 42 years ago it will be imperative for Galax to focus on keeping these homes updated and not allowing them to fall into disrepair and become a blight to the city. To ensure a well-maintained and safe housing stock in the city, Galax adopted part three of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code ("USBC"). This portion of the USBC is the Virginia Property Maintenance Code. Galax code officials are working closely with the police department and the department of social services to work toward identifying and addressing serious housing and blight issues.

**Table 3.7**  
**Year of Construction**

Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
✓ YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT		
✓ Total housing units	3,327	3,559
Built 2014 or later	0.2%	(X)
Built 2010 to 2013	1.0%	(X)
Built 2000 to 2009	10.4%	5.5%
Built 1990 to 1999	14.8%	11.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	10.9%	13.3%
Built 1970 to 1979	18.1%	22.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	12.4%	11.6%
Built 1950 to 1959	11.5%	15.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	9.7%	11.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	10.9%	7.4%





## Housing Affordability

As much of the country is facing increasing home costs and a restriction of housing inventory that makes becoming a homeowner more difficult than it has ever been. Galax has the benefit of being located in a region where individuals can often find affordable homes and in high-quality locations. In the chart above, find the distribution of the percent of homes, many of these homes are located in a price point where the average family has the ability to achieve homeownership.

**Table 3.8**  
**Property Value**

Label	2015-2019 Estimates	2010-2014 Estimates
▼ VALUE		
▼ Owner-occupied units	1,814	1,757
Less than \$50,000	15.3%	21.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	35.2%	23.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	23.5%	23.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.6%	16.8%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	12.0%	8.8%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	3.7%	4.6%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	1.5%	0.4%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.0%	0.7%
Median (dollars)	96,600	108,300





## Chapter 4: Economy

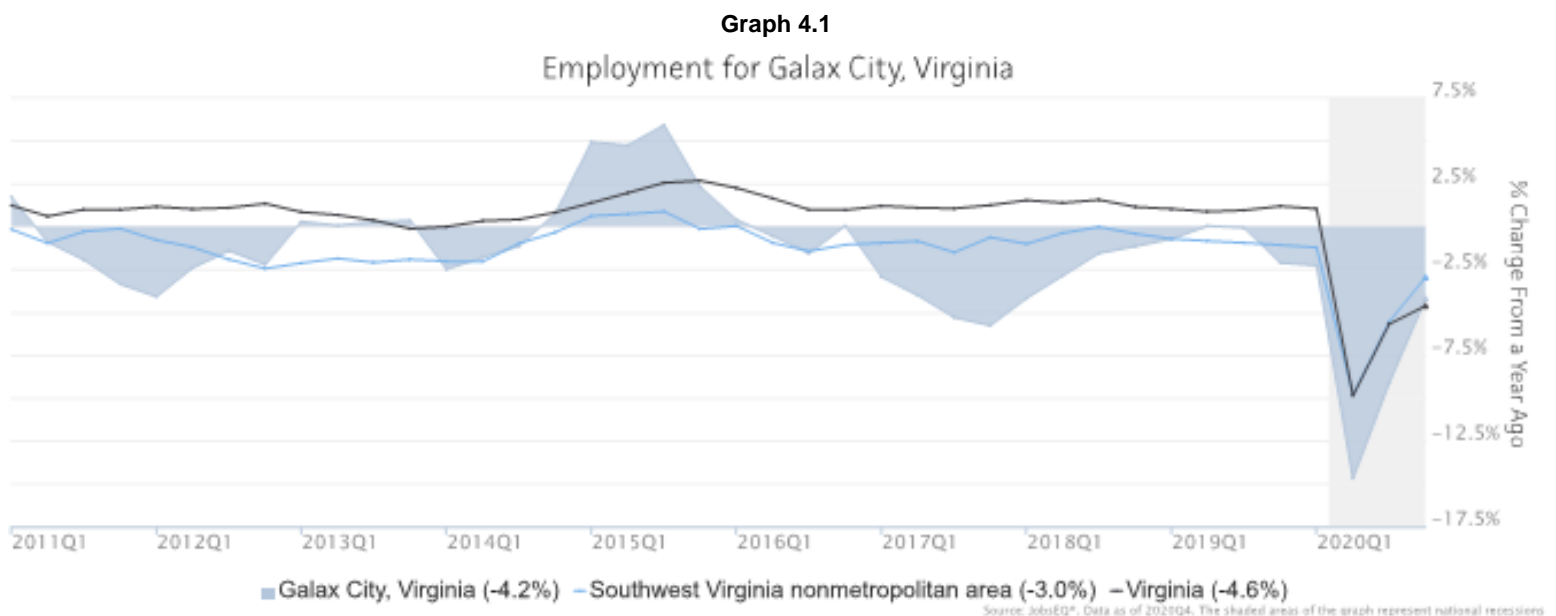
### Introduction

The City of Galax, Virginia has a unique and diverse economic profile that allows the city to appeal to many industries and provides employment opportunities to its residents. This chapter details statistical data and information pertaining to the City of Galax, including employment and unemployment trends, wage trends, and cost of living indexes. This information is essential to illustrate and understand the trends of the past, while also helping to determine how Galax can best position itself to improve its economic outlook moving forward.

### Employment Trends

As of 2020 Q4, total employment for Galax City, Virginia was 5,543 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2020 Q4, employment declined 4.2% in the region. With a total population of 6,517, it is apparent that the City of Galax is an economic engine for the region as it draws employees from the surrounding area into the city.

Employment data is derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data was updated through 2020 Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020 Q4.



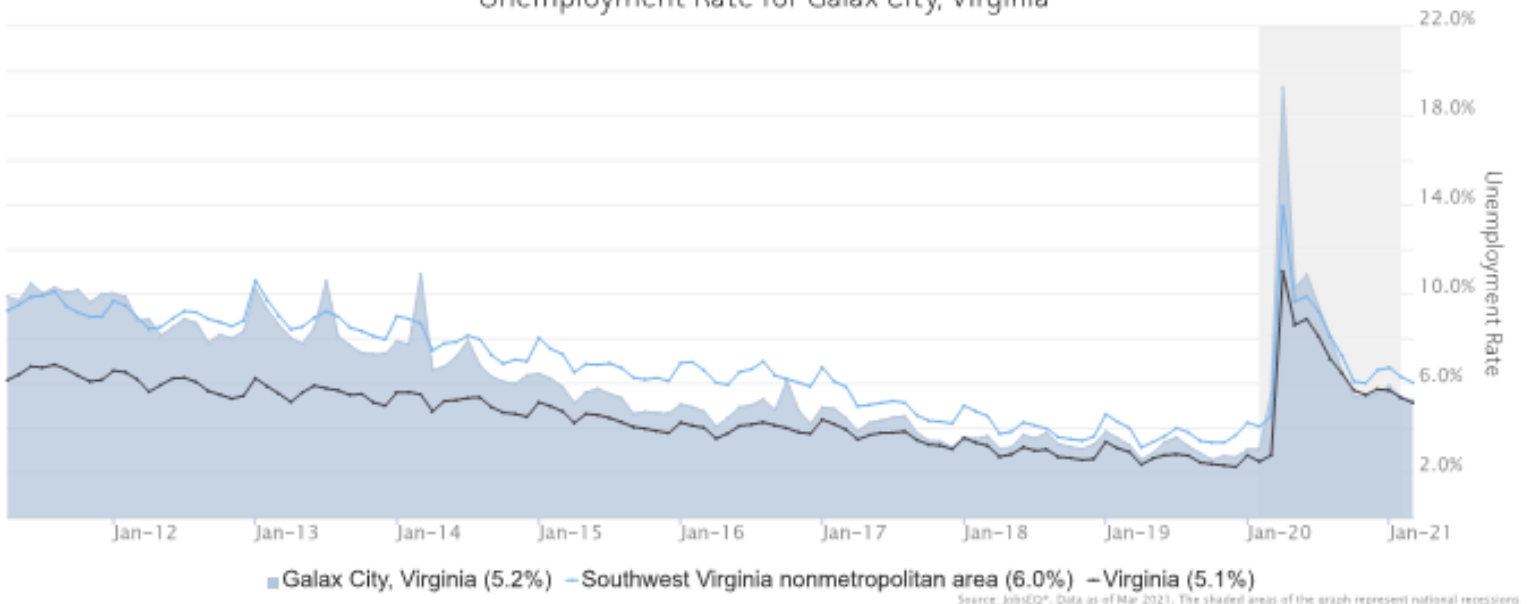


## Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate for Galax City, Virginia was 5.2% as of March 2021. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 6.2%. One year earlier, in March 2020, the unemployment rate in Galax City, Virginia was 5.5%.

Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through March 2021.

**Graph 4.2**  
Unemployment Rate for Galax City, Virginia



## Wage Trends

The average worker in Galax City, Virginia earned annual wages of \$32,841 as of 2020Q4. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.1% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$60,761 in the nation as of 2020Q4.

Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4.

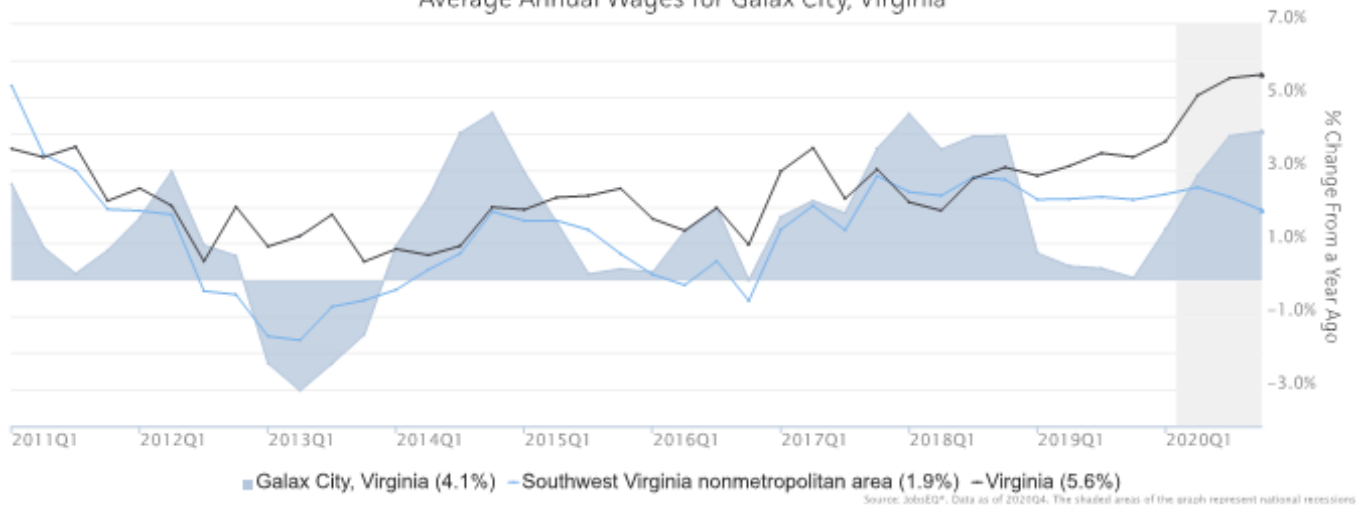
One wage trend that will have a major effect on the local economy is the increase of the State minimum wage. The minimum wage is established by the Code of Virginia § 40.1-28.10. The law establishes \$9.50 per hour as the minimum wage effective May 1, 2021. The minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$11.00 per hour on January 1, 2022, with another increase scheduled on January 1, 2023, to \$12.00 per hour. There may be additional increases on January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter if passed by the General Assembly.





**Graph 4.3**

Average Annual Wages for Galax City, Virginia

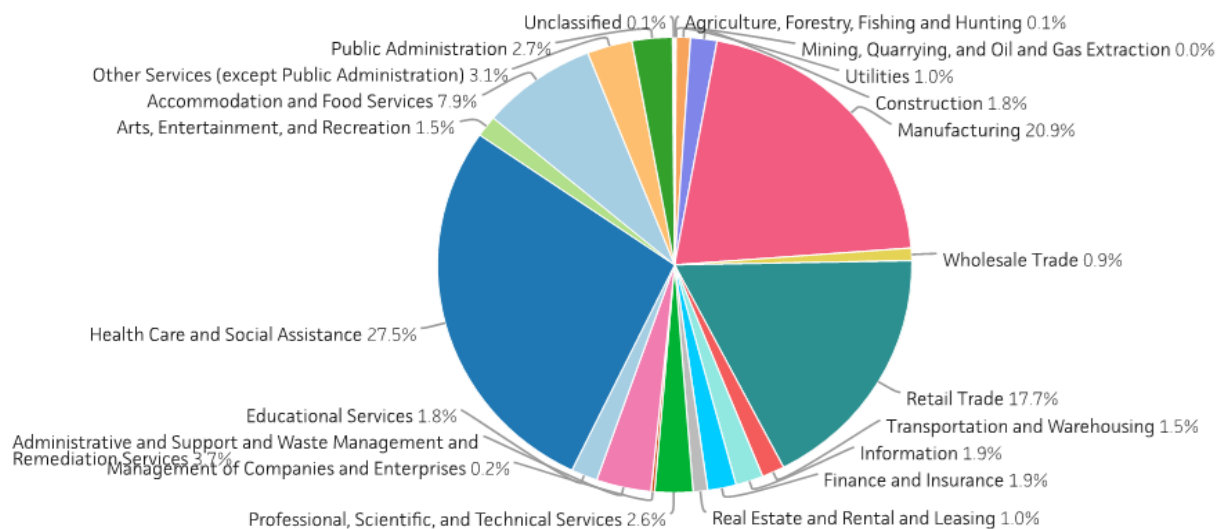


## Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in Galax City, Virginia is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 1,527 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Manufacturing (1,161 workers) and Retail Trade (981). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Manufacturing (LQ = 2.53), Health Care and Social Assistance (1.85), and Utilities (1.80).

**Chart 4.4**

Total Workers for Galax City, Virginia by Industry



Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4.



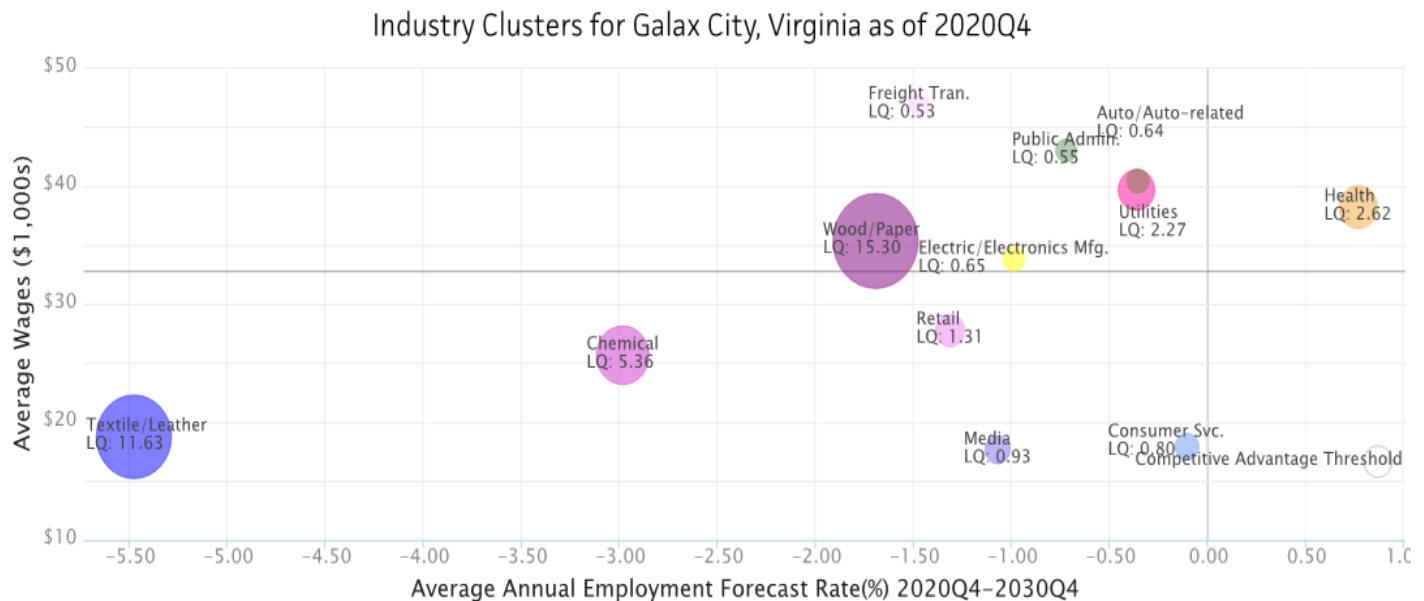
Sectors in Galax City, Virginia with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$66,103), Wholesale Trade (\$53,433), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$49,719). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Wholesale Trade (+5 jobs), Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (-4), and Public Administration (-5).

Over the next 5 years, employment in Galax City, Virginia is projected to contract by 168 jobs. The fastest-growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +0.8% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+60 jobs), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+2), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (+2).

## Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in Galax City, Virginia with the highest relative concentration is Wood/Paper with a location quotient of 15.30. This cluster employs 688 workers in the region with an average wage of \$35,364. Employment in the Wood/Paper cluster is projected to contract in the region about 1.7 % per year over the next ten years.

**Diagram 4.5**



Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2020Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.





## Detailed North American Industry Classification System Breakdown

**Table 4.6**

NAICS	Industry	Empl	Current Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5-Year History		Total Demand	5-Year Forecast		Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
					Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers		
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,527	\$38,170	1.85	-20	-0.3%	791	359	372	60	0.8%
31	Manufacturing	1,161	\$33,721	2.53	-300	-4.5%	439	211	360	-132	-2.4%
44	Retail Trade	981	\$25,853	1.71	-61	-1.2%	571	280	354	-63	-1.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	436	\$15,434	1.03	-123	-4.8%	348	155	196	-3	-0.1%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	207	\$25,162	0.60	-191	-12.2%	122	51	69	2	0.2%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	170	\$29,028	0.71	-27	-2.9%	93	44	52	-3	-0.4%
92	Public Administration	152	\$37,732	0.55	-5	-0.6%	63	29	39	-5	-0.7%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	144	\$49,719	0.37	-27	-3.4%	60	23	38	-1	-0.1%
52	Finance and Insurance	107	\$42,713	0.46	-14	-2.4%	44	19	30	-5	-0.9%
51	Information	105	\$33,610	0.95	-35	-5.6%	41	18	31	-7	-1.5%
23	Construction	100	\$29,585	0.31	-16	-2.9%	46	17	31	-3	-0.6%
61	Educational Services	99	\$31,405	0.22	-11	-2.1%	40	22	23	-5	-1.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	85	\$46,688	0.32	-71	-11.4%	38	19	25	-6	-1.5%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	83	\$16,605	0.92	-47	-8.6%	61	26	33	2	0.6%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	55	\$38,697	0.56	-4	-1.4%	24	12	15	-3	-1.2%
22	Utilities	54	\$40,673	1.80	-6	-2.3%	23	9	15	-1	-0.4%
42	Wholesale Trade	49	\$53,433	0.23	5	2.3%	22	9	16	-3	-1.2%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	13	\$66,103	0.15	-14	-13.7%	6	2	4	0	-0.3%
99	Unclassified	8	\$28,284	1.47	7	67.4%	4	2	2	0	-0.6%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6	\$14,100	0.08	-11	-18.8%	2	1	2	-1	-2.0%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>5,543</b>	<b>\$32,841</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>-970</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>	<b>2,805</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>-168</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.





## Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in Galax City, Virginia is Sales and Related Occupations, employing 719 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Production Occupations and Office and Administrative Support Occupations. High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Production Occupations, Healthcare Support Occupations, and Community and Social Service Occupations.

Occupation groups in Galax City, Virginia with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$89,700), Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$76,100), and Computer and Mathematical Occupations (\$73,900). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 2.2% among Community and Social Service Occupations to 14.5% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 5 years, the fastest-growing occupation group in Galax City, Virginia is expected to be Community and Social Service Occupations with a +1.9% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by the number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations and Community and Social Service Occupations. Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Sales and Related Occupations and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

**Table 4.7**

**Galax City, Virginia, 2020Q4<sup>1</sup>**

SOC	Occupation	Current					5-Year History			5-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
41-0000	Sales and Related	719	\$30,900	1.34	26	8.7%	66	-105	-2.7%	460	207	300	-47	-1.3%
51-0000	Production	710	\$30,100	2.18	22	7.3%	15	-213	-5.1%	289	136	231	-78	-2.3%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	700	\$30,600	0.98	17	5.7%	16	-259	-6.1%	350	161	227	-39	-1.1%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	530	\$23,100	2.13	11	5.2%	16	87	3.7%	363	162	175	25	0.9%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	462	\$76,100	1.42	5	2.7%	112	-24	-1.0%	140	60	72	8	0.4%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	458	\$21,700	1.10	35	14.5%	34	-109	-4.2%	389	160	232	-3	-0.1%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	455	\$30,600	0.97	17	8.3%	45	-88	-3.5%	242	99	172	-28	-1.3%
11-0000	Management	206	\$89,700	0.56	4	3.0%	14	-34	-3.0%	81	24	60	-3	-0.3%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	188	\$57,300	0.60	3	3.7%	5	-40	-3.7%	85	25	63	-4	-0.4%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	188	\$39,800	0.88	6	5.6%	8	-26	-2.5%	80	28	60	-8	-0.9%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	163	\$37,500	1.67	1	2.2%	33	-41	-4.4%	111	31	64	17	1.9%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	161	\$28,600	1.13	12	13.5%	4	-24	-2.8%	127	54	71	2	0.3%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	131	\$37,400	0.50	13	8.4%	3	-31	-4.1%	63	20	48	-6	-0.9%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	103	\$40,100	0.33	5	6.8%	7	-8	-1.5%	45	22	25	-2	-0.4%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	82	\$23,400	0.45	7	8.3%	9	-15	-3.3%	52	23	30	-1	-0.2%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	76	\$73,900	0.44	1	2.7%	1	-21	-4.8%	28	6	22	0	-0.1%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	60	\$66,900	0.62	1	4.3%	2	-1	-0.5%	20	7	16	-3	-1.1%

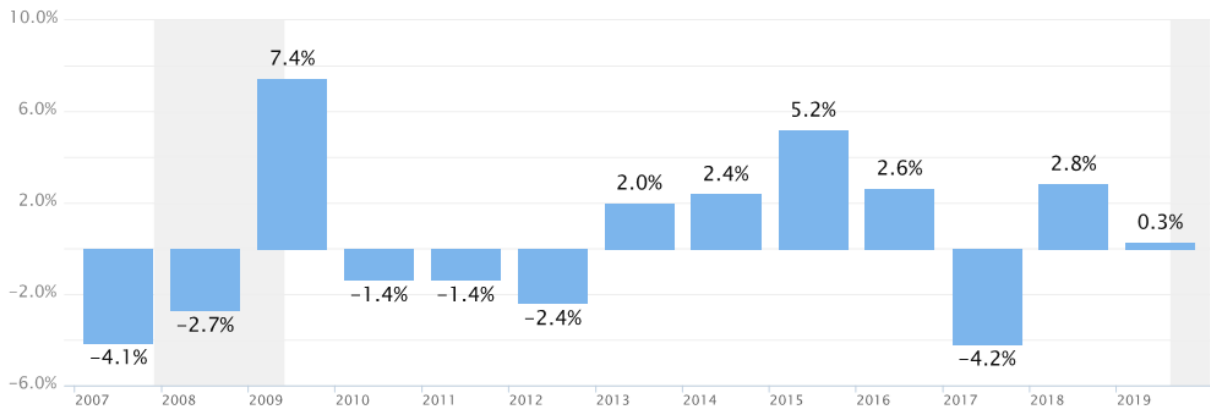


## Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2019, nominal GDP in Galax City, Virginia expanded by 0.3%. This follows a growth of 2.8% in 2018. As of 2019, the total GDP in Galax City, Virginia was \$367,864,000.

**Graph 4.8**

1 year % Change in GDP

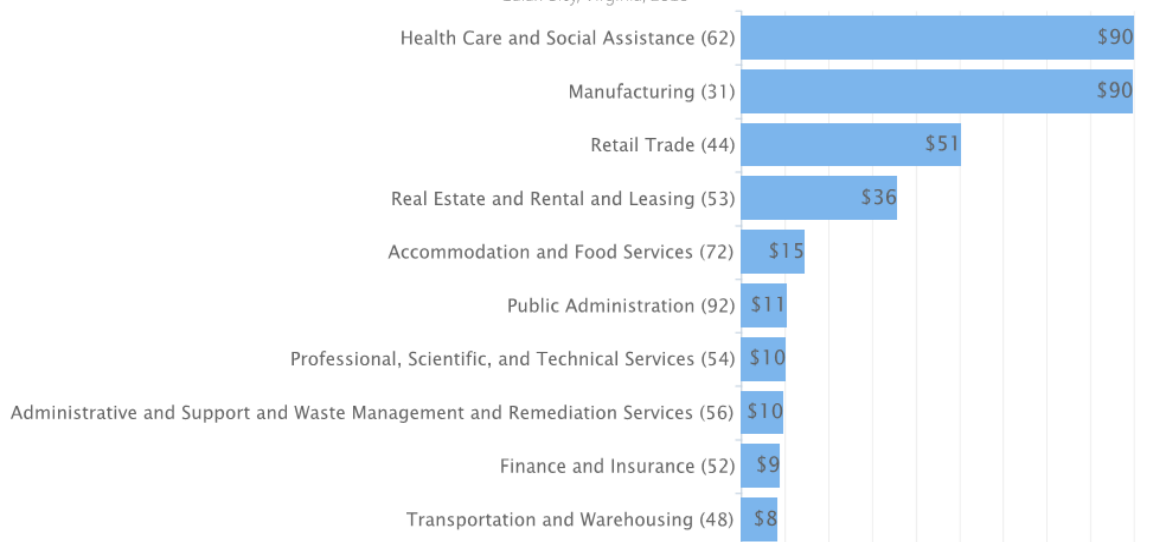


Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.

Of the sectors in Galax City, Virginia, Health Care and Social Assistance contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2019, \$90,040,000. The next-largest contributions came from Manufacturing (\$89,900,000); Retail Trade (\$50,558,000); and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (\$35,840,000).

**Graph 4.9**

GDP (in \$ millions)  
Galax City, Virginia, 2019



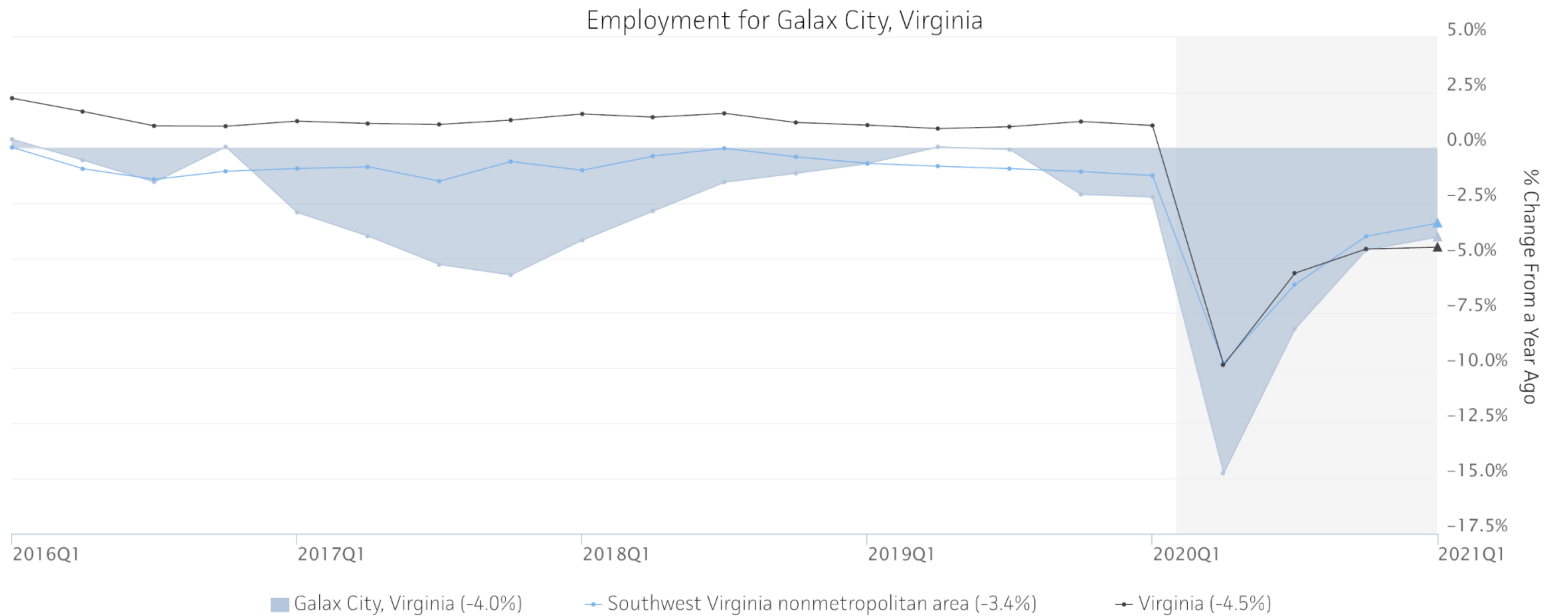
Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.





## Labor and Wage Trends

**Graph 4.10**



Over the last five years, in terms of long-term high-paying employment, there has been a stable labor and wage trend throughout the City of Galax, aside from a slight dip from 2017-2018 as seen in the above graph. The state of Virginia and surrounding nonmetropolitan areas in Southwest Virginia followed the same patterns. As of 2020, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was a steep decline in labor and wages. The City of Galax, based on data, was impacted approximately five percent more than the surrounding areas and relative to the state.





## Regional Commuter Workforce

**Table 4.11**

	PERCENT			VALUE		
	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia
<b>Commuting</b>						
Total Employed Population	—	—	—	2,443	125,811	3,876,497
Worked in Region of Residence	43.8%	77.0%	91.2%	1,069	96,921	3,533,908
Worked Outside Region of Residence	56.2%	23.0%	8.8%	1,374	28,890	342,589
Worked in State of Residence	93.2%	90.5%	91.2%	2,276	113,865	3,533,908
Worked Outside State of Residence	6.8%	9.5%	8.8%	167	11,946	342,589
In-Commuters	—	—	—	4,422	26,384	286,482
Out-of-State In-Commuters	—	—	—	434	10,028	286,482
Net Commuting	—	—	—	3,048	-2,506	-56,107

The City of Galax has a 43.8% retention rate of their workforce finding employment opportunities within the city. There are 56.2% that work outside of the region and 6.8% that travel outside the state. This information is important because these numbers can be used as a benchmark moving forward and the city can work towards retaining more of the available talent to the region by recruiting and retaining higher-paying opportunities for those that are currently seeking employment elsewhere.

**Table 4.12**

Union Membership	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia
Total <sup>4</sup>	3.0%	3.2%	4.1%
Private Sector <sup>4</sup>	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%
Manufacturing <sup>4</sup>	7.8%	7.7%	7.8%
Public Sector <sup>4</sup>	4.4%	4.1%	9.9%



## Galax City, Virginia Industry Characteristics

**Table 4.13**

Galax City, Virginia

NAICS	Industry	Employment	AVERAGE PER QUARTER			AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS	
			New Hires	Separations	Turnover	Stable Jobs	New Stable Jobs
22	Utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
23	Construction	80	15	17	14.6%	\$35,998	\$44,991
31	Manufacturing	1,305	175	222	7.7%	\$29,029	\$20,079
42	Wholesale Trade	45	4	2	0.0%	\$52,720	\$43,721
44	Retail Trade	941	149	156	9.8%	\$30,110	\$20,109
48	Transportation and Warehousing	87	11	13	10.8%	\$44,005	\$45,893
51	Information	124	12	18	8.0%	\$34,439	\$28,429
52	Finance and Insurance	111	8	8	4.9%	\$55,297	\$38,788
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	47	3	4	9.8%	\$49,531	\$33,439
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	140	23	28	6.9%	\$39,833	\$19,117
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	201	111	130	26.1%	\$24,481	\$22,516
61	Educational Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,651	178	214	8.3%	\$38,810	\$28,475
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
72	Accommodation and Food Services	493	167	197	16.4%	\$15,927	\$11,936
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	117	6	13	6.4%	\$30,980	\$14,537
92	Public Administration	155	12	16	6.2%	\$32,274	\$20,898
Total - All Industries <sup>1</sup>		5,783	955	1,156	9.6%	\$32,746	\$22,744

Source: JobsEQ®

Data are for the four quarters ending 2020Q1

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. Demographic details for NAICS 4851, 4911, 485 and 491 may be severely distorted due to limited source data availability.

1. Total industry figures don't reflect employment in unclassified industries (NAICS 9999).

As illustrated in the above table, the City of Galax has many industries that face significant turnover quarter to quarter. On top of significant turnover, many of these industries do not offer competitive pay as the data above shows based on the average annual earnings reporting. The city should begin to work toward stabilizing the workforce and raising the wages of these more troubled industries within the city limits. Doing so would allow for a stronger economic outlook for the city and bring in more long-term, younger residents. Some of the more stable and higher-paying industries are the wholesale trade, construction, finance, and insurance industries. Telework is also an industry that has had recent growth and affords Galax residents the opportunity for a high-paying job with the benefit of a low cost of living.





## Chapter 5: Land Use and Development

### Introduction

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

### Land Use Trends

Major factors that strongly influence the pattern of land use and development in the Galax area include topography, the roadway network, land ownership, real estate markets, utilities, and annexation of territory into the city. As the City of Galax was established, topographical constraints and land ownership interests tended to concentrate development along Chestnut Creek in and around the “old town” area. As road improvements and annexation occurred, development spread to the U.S. Route 58-221 corridor and a north-south corridor paralleling Chestnut Creek. Since then, residential development has filled in much of the available land suitable for development in the city. The U.S. Route 58-221 corridor continues to be the primary commercial zone in Galax.

Residential land uses are located in various areas throughout the city. Most residential development has been low- to medium-density single-family detached houses on lots generally in the range of a quarter acre to an acre in size. Single-family detached homes account for roughly 70% of the housing stock in the city, followed by two-unit housing comprising 9% and mobile homes at 8.5%.

Commercial land uses are concentrated along the U.S. Route 58 corridor and throughout Downtown Galax. Along U.S. Route 58, much of the commercial land has been developed in a “strip” pattern. This pattern is fostered by the desire of businesses to take advantage of the high traffic volumes on the major road corridors; however, strip development tends to create negative impacts on the community, including aesthetic degradation at the entrances to the city, traffic congestion, and safety concerns, and accessibility issues for commercial expansion.

Industrial uses are concentrated in the traditional industrial area paralleling the old railroad bed and Chestnut Creek, near the western border of the city, and along the north side of Glendale Road.

Public and semi-public land uses include recreational and community facilities, including schools, parks, churches, and public rights-of-way. There are small concentrations of these uses throughout the city, but no single major concentration.

Changes in the city’s land use during the period of 1970 to 2021 is shown in the following table, **Table 5.1**. Due to modifications in the categories and methods of surveying land uses during this period, various sub-categories have been consolidated into the larger classifications shown in the table. Further, for purposes of comparison, the changes in the land area are shown as percentages of the overall land area rather than as absolute acres.





**Table 5.1**  
**Comparative Land Use Trends**  
**City of Galax**  
**1970 - 2021**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1994**</b>	<b>2011***</b>	<b>2021***</b>
Residential	22.0%	36.3%	39.0%	39.9%	54.8%
Commercial	3.1%	5.0%	6.0%	7.1%	7.5%
Industrial	5.4%*	4.4%	4.0%	6.3%	7.3%
Public/Semi-Public	10.7%	11.3%	11.0%	9.7%	7.4%
Undeveloped	58.8%	43.0%	40.0%	37.1%	22.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: City of Galax Comprehensive Plan, 1985, 1996; Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

\* Due to survey discrepancies, this total is more accurately 4.1%, indicating a small expansion of industrial land between 1970 and 1983.

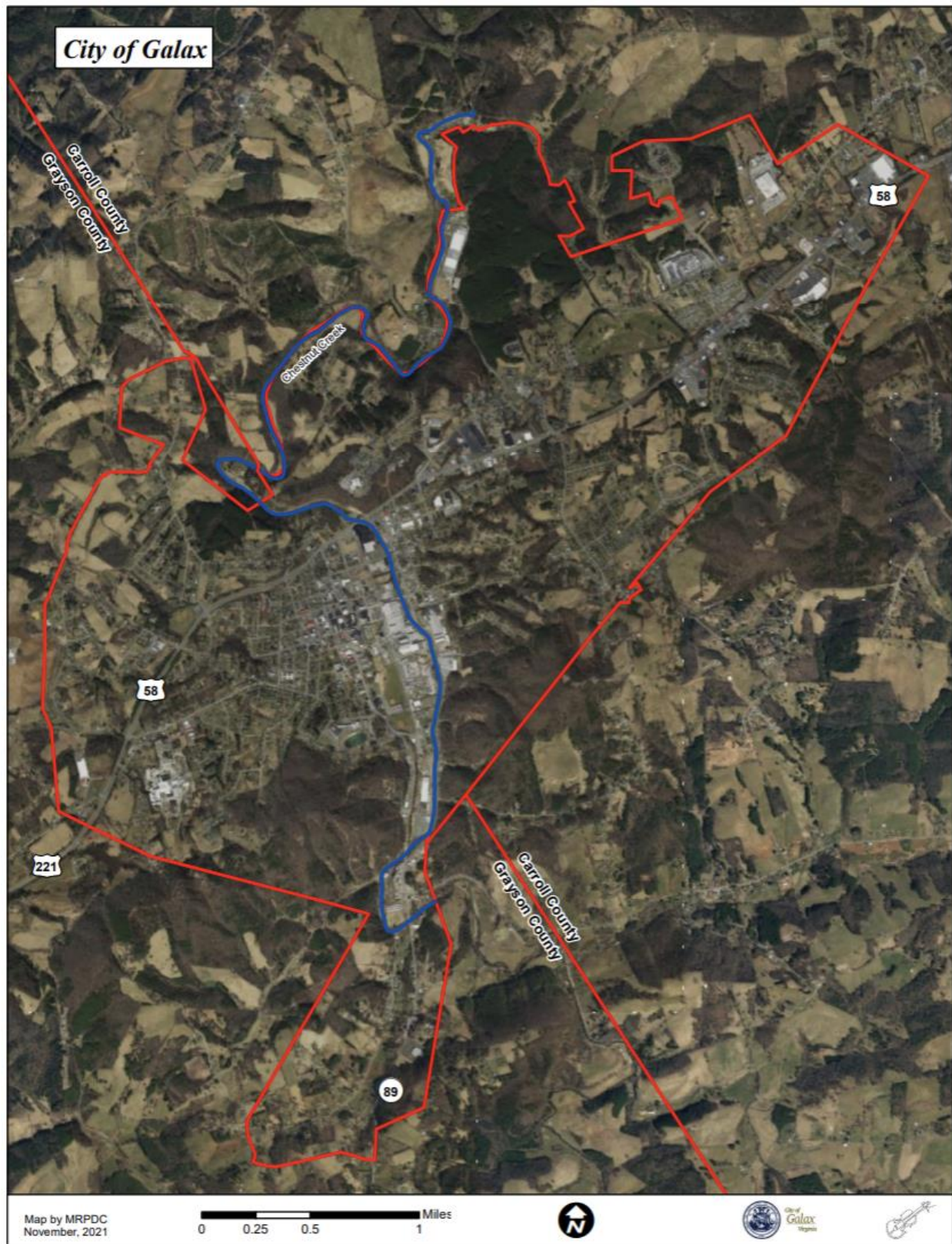
\*\* Estimated and rounded by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech, and Herd Planning & Design. \*\*\* Calculated based on current land use GIS layers by Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Numbers are rounded.

The above table shows that undeveloped land and residential uses continue to be the dominant land uses in Galax. However, the amount of undeveloped land within City limits continues its rapid decline, dropping by a total of 14.8% from 2011 to 2021. The combined proportion of these two uses appears to have decreased only slightly since 1970 as substantial amounts of vacant or undeveloped land have been converted to residential uses. In addition to the development of residential land in the city, land dedicated to commercial and industrial uses has increased significantly over the past 50 years. From 1983 to 2021, there has been a declining trend in the percentage of Public/Semi-Public land from a high of 11.3% down to 7.4%.





Map 5.2





## Current Land Use

The current distribution of land by type of use is shown in the following table, Table 6.2. This table presents a more detailed classification of land uses, including Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Public Semi-Public, Medical Arts, Undeveloped. Assuming the mixed-use category is mostly in residential and commercial uses, this table supports the estimate that roughly 77 percent of the city's land area is either in residential uses or is undeveloped, with over a third in single-family residential uses. Roughly one-fifth of the total area of the City is undeveloped land which indicates that there is adequate capacity within the city limits to absorb the expected needs for expansion, even though a significant amount (approximately a third) of the undeveloped land has constraints on development due to steep slopes and/or drainage conditions.

**Table 5.3**  
**Current Land Use**  
**City of Galax**  
**2021**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Acres*</b>	<b>Percent**</b>
Residential	2902	54.8%
Commercial	394	7.5%
Industrial	384	7.3%
Public Semi-Public	341	6.4%
Medical Arts	92	1.7%
Undeveloped	1,179	22.3%
Total	5,292	100.0%

Source: Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

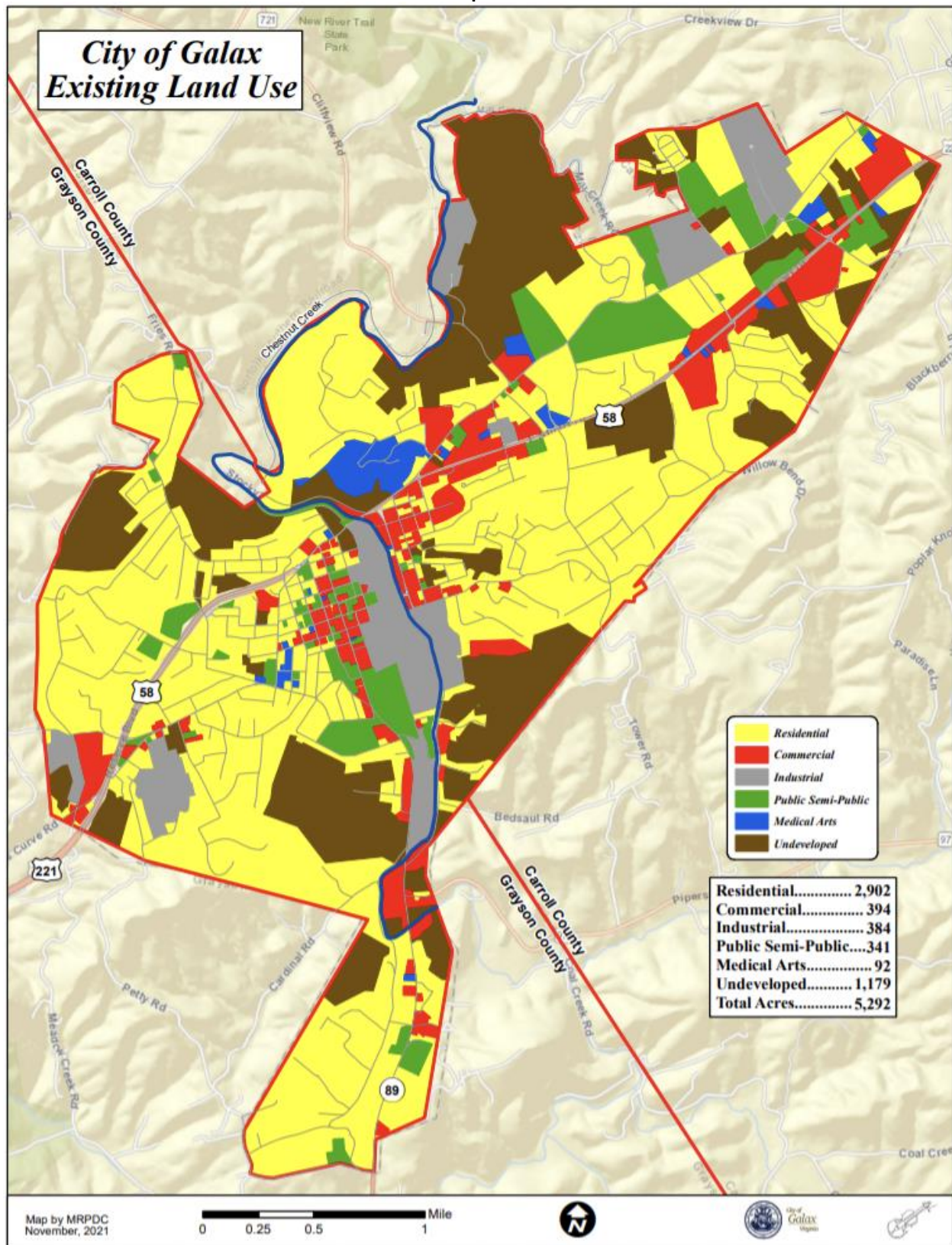
\* Calculated based on current land use GIS layers by Mount Rogers Planning District Commission.

\*\* Percentages are rounded.





Map 5.4





## Current Land Use Controls:

The current City of Galax Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map was adopted on November 12, 1985, with subsequent amendments. The intent of the city's zoning ordinance is to carefully balance the fundamental property rights and interests of the private citizens with the needs of the community as a whole, as outlined in the City of Galax Comprehensive Plan. Through the zoning ordinance, the City of Galax is authorized to provide for the establishment of districts within the corporate limits, in which the city may regulate, restrict, permit, prohibit, and determine:

1. The use of land, buildings, structures, and other premises for agricultural, business, industrial, residential, flood protection, and other specific uses.
2. The size, height, area, bulk, location, erection, construction, reconstruction, the alteration, repair, maintenance, razing, or removal of structures.
3. The areas and dimensions of land, water, and air space to be occupied by buildings, structures and uses and of courts, yards, and other open spaces to be left unoccupied by uses and structures, including the establishment of minimum lot sizes based on whether a public or community water supply or sewer system is available and used.
4. The excavation or mining of soil or other natural resources.

The Galax Zoning Ordinance would typically be classified as *Euclidean zoning*, and outlines ten unique zones, including:

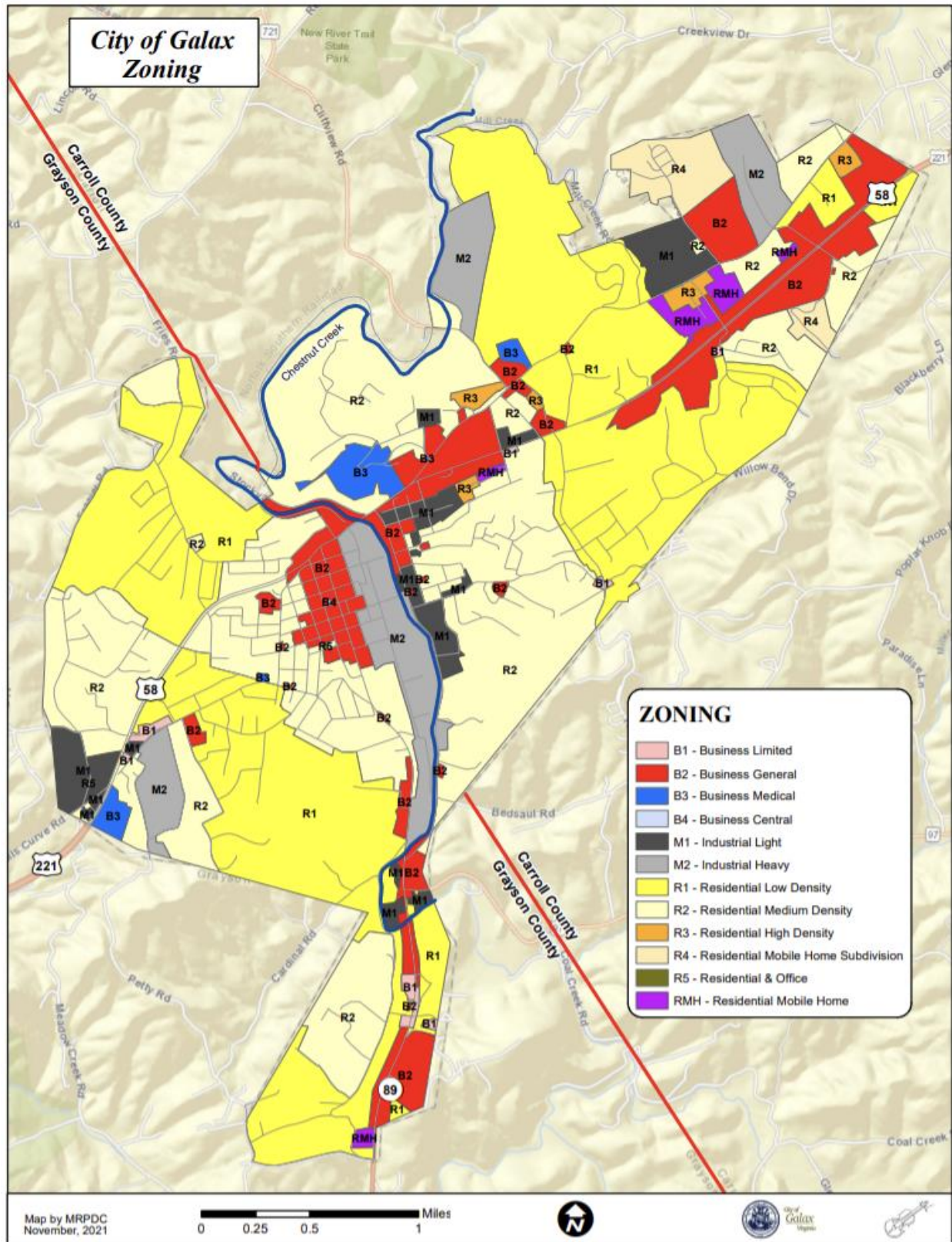
Residential Low-Density (R-1)  
Residential Medium-Density (R-2)  
Residential High-Density (R-3)  
Residential Mobile Home (R-MH)  
Residential Mobile Home Subdivision (R-4)  
Residential and Office (R-5)  
  
Business Limited (B-1)  
Business General (B-2)  
Business Medical (B-3)  
Business Central (B-4)  
  
Industrial Light (M-1)  
Industrial Heavy (M-2)

The purpose, uses, and requirements of these zones are described in the zoning ordinance, which serves as a flexible tool to guide the growth of the City of Galax, in coordination with the city's other regulatory tools.





Map 5.5





## Constraints to Development

### Slope

The greatest constraint to development in many Southwest Virginia localities, including Galax, is severely sloped terrain. As visible on **Map 5.6**, approximately 11 percent of the land in the city has slopes in excess of 20 percent, and a small portion of this land has been developed. For development purposes, steep slopes present a building challenge with potential environmental consequences. As would be expected where commercial, industrial, and public demands for land have suitable alternatives, practically all of this land is used for residential purposes. Approximately one-third of the undeveloped land in the City of Galax has steep slopes. Clearing, grading, and development of steep slopes can result in extensive erosion and encourage landslides or sloughing of soil and rock, excessive stormwater runoff, increased siltation and sedimentation, and degrading of aesthetic value. Steeply sloped land still has the potential to be developed successfully, however. Residential neighborhoods are one such development that has been of common use for the undeveloped land in the city of Galax. These residential areas can be planned to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the land and avoid unnecessary engineering problems associated with the effects of stormwater run-off from developed slopes.

### Floodplain

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate map identifies a 100-year flood plain, as shown in **Map 5.6**, that bisects the City of Galax along Chestnut Creek. The flood plain passes through an area of industrial and mixed uses and has historically been prone to heavy flooding. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Army Corps of Engineers installed measures to prevent flooding along Chestnut Creek, and since 1950, no significant flooding has occurred along Chestnut Creek. Although flooding has not been a major concern along Chestnut Creek since the 1950s, development in the area should be limited.

Though the City of Galax regulates building construction in accordance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), containing relevant portions of the floodplain management criteria contained in 44 CFR Part 60, and regulates soil erosion and sediment control in accordance with the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law (§ 62.1-44.15:51. Et. Seq.) the City is not currently a participating member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and thus is ineligible for certain types of federal assistance. The Act<sup>1</sup> provides that flood insurance shall not be sold under the program (NFIP) unless the community has adopted floodplain management regulations consistent with the minimum criteria. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is the state agency in Virginia responsible for coordinating state floodplain programs.

### Soil Associations

Certain soils and underlying bedrock may not be suitable for certain intensities and/or types of development. In Galax, the *Chester-Glenelg-Manor Association*, which is commonly found in the southeastern area of the city, can be poor soil for development. This type of soil is generally found on moderate to steep slopes and in some areas, these soils are associated with shallow bedrock. Without unique engineering and design, development on this type of soil can result in seepage, slippage, and other construction issues.

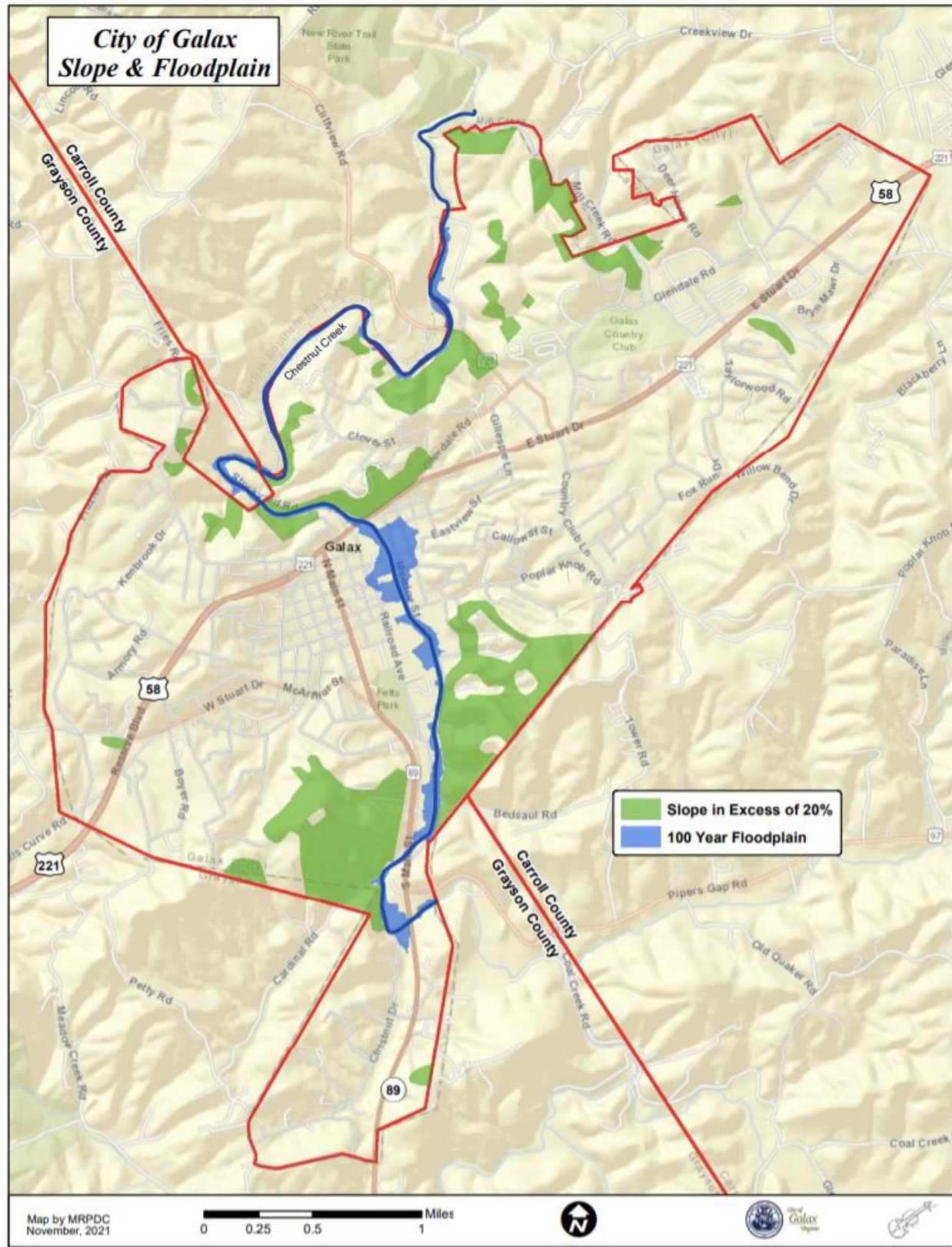
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<sup>1</sup> Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations – Emergency Management and Assistance





Map 5.6





## Development Opportunities

Though roughly one-fifth of the land area in the city is undeveloped, a significant portion of that is located on the outskirts where conditions of excessive slope limit the feasibility of much development. Areas within the floodplain, however, are heavily developed in most cases. These developments were typically industrial, and many such sites are still in operation. There are opportunities for the City to encourage redevelopment of sites that are no longer in operation in accordance with newer land management “best practices”. As cities like Galax redevelop and adapt to global, regional, and local challenges, new opportunities always exist alongside such challenges.

### Small Area Plans

Redevelopment plans focused on relatively small, specifically or otherwise identified areas of the city provide opportunity for the City to guide development patterns, thereby allowing more effective coordination with transportation, broadband, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater facilities, and the like, with other development/redevelopment initiatives.

For example, the final draft of the [Creekside Small Area Plan \(Creekside SAP\)](#) was submitted to the city for review in early 2023; the plan focuses on the redevelopment of a specific structure and the adjoining area. Though the Creekside SAP focuses on a specific property as the largest catalyzing component, transitioning from a large, blighted structure accompanied by significant impermeable surface to the gravitational center of a mixed-use neighborhood that is “original and energetic”. Additionally, this plan is intended to facilitate the creation of a healthy urban environment for the future, more resilient than what came before and which will compliment neighboring identified development areas. The elements of the Creekside SAP are study area, existing conditions, functional use diagrams and future land use, zoning recommendations, connections, and conceptual site plan renderings. Additionally, the Creekside SAP scope included preparation of documents necessary for community partners to solicit a developer(s) capable of implementing private sector portions of the plan.

Small area plans like the Creekside SAP, are designed to efficiently address the needs of the community in a specified, localized area, but also to incorporate connectivity to other plans and initiatives of the community. The City should and does continue to develop plans for the downtown, and initiatives which strengthen complimentary developments, initiatives, programs, and priority investments.

### Future Land Use Controls

As new challenges facing cities arise, cities must adapt. Planning for change and implementing those plans go hand-in-hand, but are not the same constructs. Small area plans often require changing zoning, subdivision, or other regulatory ordinances in order to facilitate developments similar to those conceptually envisioned. This Plan identifies implementation strategies necessary for future growth and resiliency. As the vision in the Plan continuously adapts to global, regional, and localized challenges, so to must the land use controls adapt to guide the city towards its vision.





The current zoning ordinance would typically be classified as *Euclidean zoning*, which is more often being referred to as “exclusionary” zoning since it is considered a *flat model*, separating use types into individual zones. Euclidean zoning is still the most common form of zoning practiced nation-wide; however, it is more and more commonly being replaced by *form-based zoning*. Form-based zoning allows for the mixing of uses, and is thereby considered a *hierarchical model* for allowing the layering of compatible uses. Shifting to a more inclusionary zoning type may create more resilient development patterns and correlate with an increase in quality of life for residents. This often creates redundant, more organic communities within the footprint of a locality, leading to numerous quantitative and qualitative benefits.

Examples of amendments to the City of Galax Zoning Ordinance and Map include:

- Incorporating additional zones which are more form-based and less Euclidean, allowing for more flexible, mixed-use developments. This may also include modification of existing zones.
- Adopting overlay zoning districts into the ordinance and map to encourage best practices and mitigate harmful developments in areas which may not be suitable. *Overlay zoning* is a regulatory tool that places a “district” over an existing base zoning designation, introducing additional regulatory provisions to the base district(s).
- More modern solar regulations and open space requirements.
- Considerations for accessory agricultural uses, with specific thought related to small-scale “agritourism” and “agroforestry”.

Examples of amendments to other regulatory codes include:

- Relaxing property maintenance requirements to allow for more resilient land use practices related to lawn maintenance, open space use, groundwater quality and capacity building, encouragement of native landscaping and discouragement of invasive plantings, and similar regulations. Deep-rooted plants provide for better stormwater retention and erosion control. Additionally, encouraging more resilient landscaping options can reduce the need for active enforcement of non-native lawn grasses, as well as open options for better use of undeveloped areas.
- Amend stormwater fee regulations to encourage specific open spaces and stormwater plantings for stormwater fee incentives/discounts.
- Amend environment regulations in accordance with zoning ordinance to more specifically address areas of the urban environment and create unique neighborhoods for which to live, work, play, and raise families.

Enacting, monitoring, and continuously updating special districts, such as enterprise zones, historic districts, special assessment districts, downtown districts, overlay zoning districts (including, but not limited to, conservation districts and floodplain districts), and the like allow communities more refined guidance of resources toward suitable areas and more advanced mitigation measures in areas that require special attention.

Planning for climate change, advancing equity and opportunity, creating new markets, and tackling the challenges of the built environment require active and forward-facing vision. The urban, built environment faces challenges unlike those of more rural areas, but also unique





opportunities. The most resilient communities lead through forward-thinking land use practices which both support new and established business markets, build organic and safe neighborhoods, and strengthen the locality against internal and external threats.

## Urban Development Areas

Urban Development Areas (UDA) were originally authorized by the Code of Virginia in 2007 (Virginia Code § 15.2-2223.1.) as a requirement for certain high growth localities to designate areas “sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 20 years.” Under the code designation, a UDA is an area designated by a locality in its comprehensive plan for proximity to transportation facilities, redevelopment/infill potential, and higher density development, specifically at least four single-family residences per acre, six townhouses per acre, or 12 apartment-style units per acre, and commercial development densities equivalent to at least a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.4. In 2012, however, the Code was amended to define UDAs more broadly and make them optional rather than mandatory. In addition, under the House Bill 2 legislation established in 2014, areas designated as UDAs in a local comprehensive plan may have an additional level of potential eligibility for transportation funding from the State.

The Code of Virginia also specifies that UDAs shall incorporate the principles of *Traditional Neighborhood Design* (TND)<sup>2</sup>. TND embodies classic characteristics of traditional communities such as walkable neighborhood centers, interconnected streets and blocks, diversity of land uses and easy access to jobs, housing and recreation by a variety of travel options (auto, bus, walk, bike, etc.). The Code of VA also recommends that the comprehensive plan describe any financial or other incentives for development in the UDAs.

The Code of VA recommends that the UDA(s) be able to accommodate the projected residential and commercial growth for the next 10-20 years. Although projections forecast a slight decline in population during the next 15 years, post-COVID numbers indicate a change in this trajectory. [The Weldon Cooper Center](#) showed a 0.9% increase in 2021. Additionally, focused revitalization and development is predicted to result in localized growth. Based on the Mount Rogers Regional Housing Study published by Mount Rogers Regional Planning District, the Twin County region needs 270 housing units.

*“It is evident that the Twin County Region’s existing housing stock is not meeting current demand. Due to the level of future job growth, the greatest existing housing need is for market rate, rental housing. The analysis also finds that the current new home sales market in the Twin County Region is essentially non-existent and is not providing home prices that are affordable to most prospective homebuyers. Moreover, the senior population is underserved. Thus, the initial recommended housing needs for the Twin County Region are as follows.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Emina Sendich, & American Planning Association. (2006). *Planning and urban design standards*. Hoboken, N.J. Wiley.





	<u>Units</u>
Market Rate Apartments	100±
Affordable General Occupancy Apartments	50±
Affordable Age-Restricted Apartments	40±
Patio Homes for Sale	40±
Townhomes for Sale	30-40±

Source: Mount Rogers Planning District Commission; Mount Rogers Regional Housing Study (2023)

The City has designated a series of areas as potential UDA candidates based on an analysis of their potential for new development and/or redevelopment through location, existing development patterns, zoning, and access to infrastructure. Two areas, specifically, currently meet and/or are anticipated to be developed to meet the state code provisions for UDA densities. They are the Galax Commercial Historic District (including the downtown) and the Creekside Development Area. A third area, being called the “Public Services Area”, may also be considered for UDA designation in the future.

Each potential UDA represents acceptable locations to accommodate targeted growth and/or capacity for adaptive re-use and/or new development – given the community’s vision – as well as representing areas readily offering the infrastructure capacity necessary to support successful TND projects. In general, these candidate UDAs have been located based upon enabling state legislation such that they feature:

- Proximity to existing transportation facilities;
- Availability of public water and sewer systems;
- Proximity to areas of existing development; and,
- Opportunities for new development or revitalization of existing development.

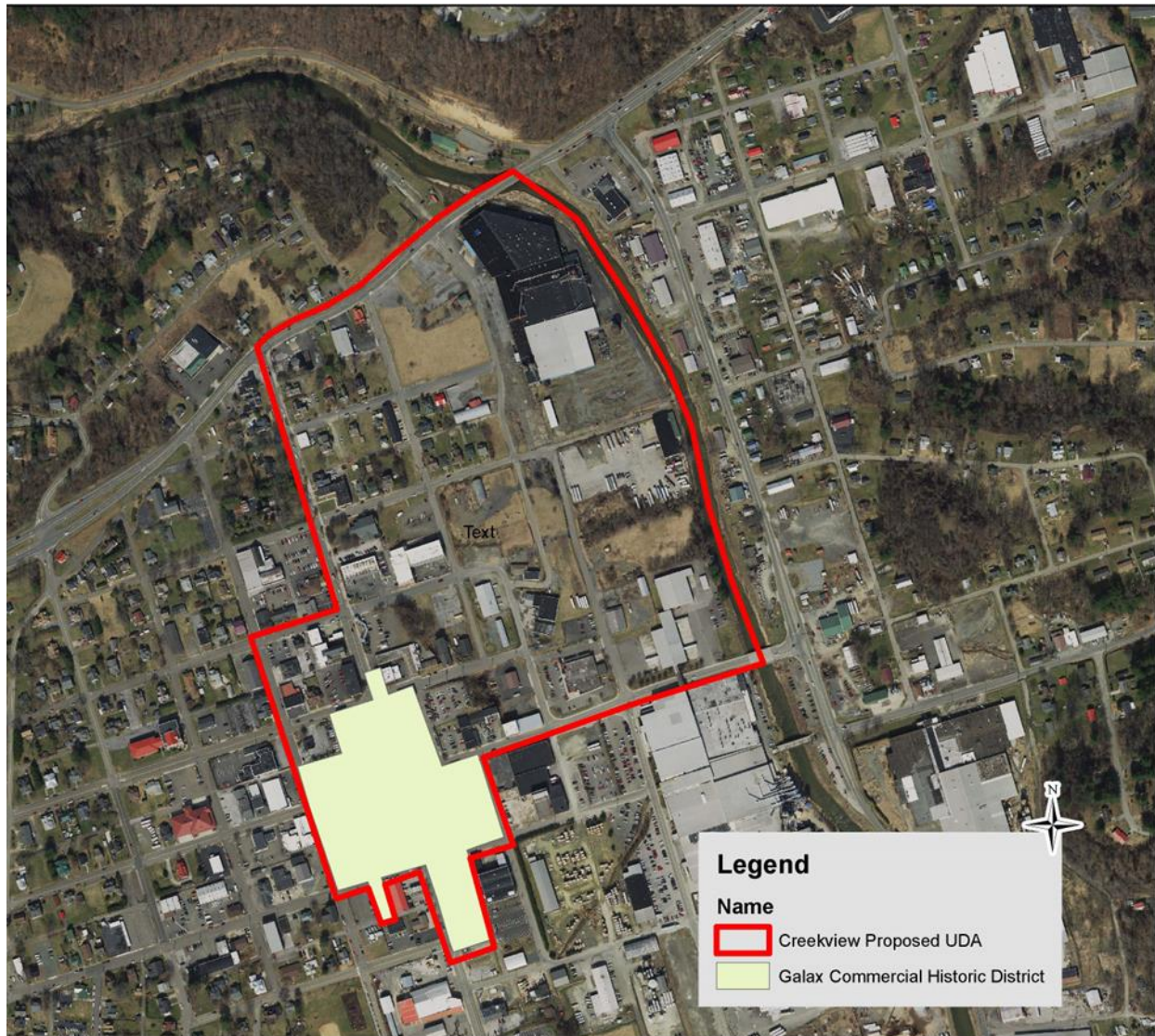
## UDA Locations

As noted, two initial UDA candidates have been identified – the Downtown area and the Creekside area – to take advantage of existing facilities and infrastructure, and to introduce TND in a way that best promotes the City’s vision for its future growth, with designated boundaries as shown on the **UDA Boundary Map**. However, the proposed UDA boundary will actually include both the Downtown and Creekside areas, merging the two and allowing for a unique transitional zone between both – this is mostly due to the compact nature of the combined area. The UDA shall be periodically reviewed and updated as needed through a public process, in addition to, or as part of the Comprehensive Plan review and amendment process.





**Map 5.7**  
**Urban Development Area (UDA) Boundary**



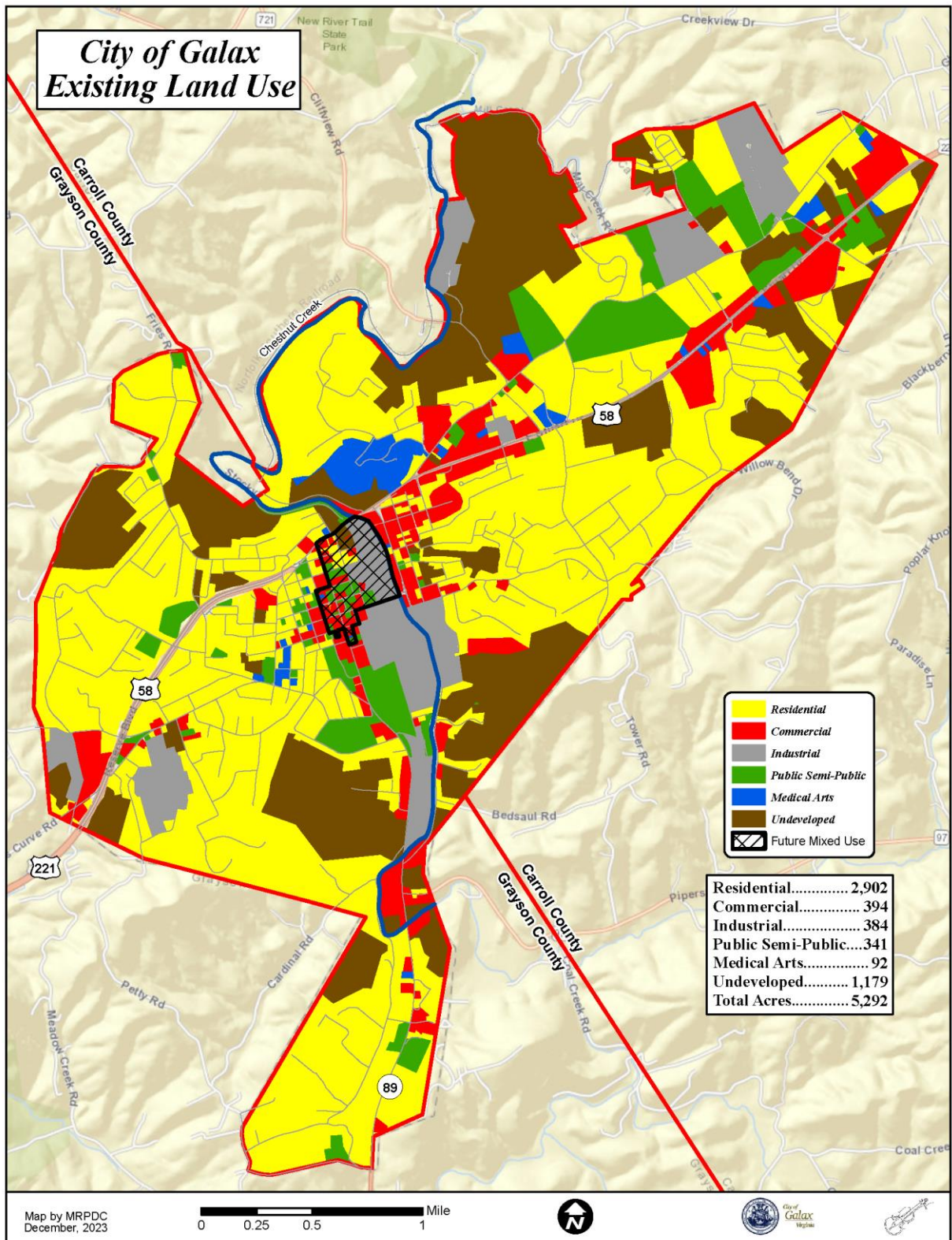
## Future Land Use Predictions

Following the implementation of urban development area(s) and more traditional neighborhood design principles, acceptance of mixed-use developments, and encouraging through planning and infrastructure investment more comprehensive bike and pedestrian transportation facilities, the future land use patterns of Galax could shift drastically around the downtown and Creekside areas. The below maps illustrate potential changes to the area based on land use and required zoning changes to be less Euclidean and exclusionary of overlapping uses.



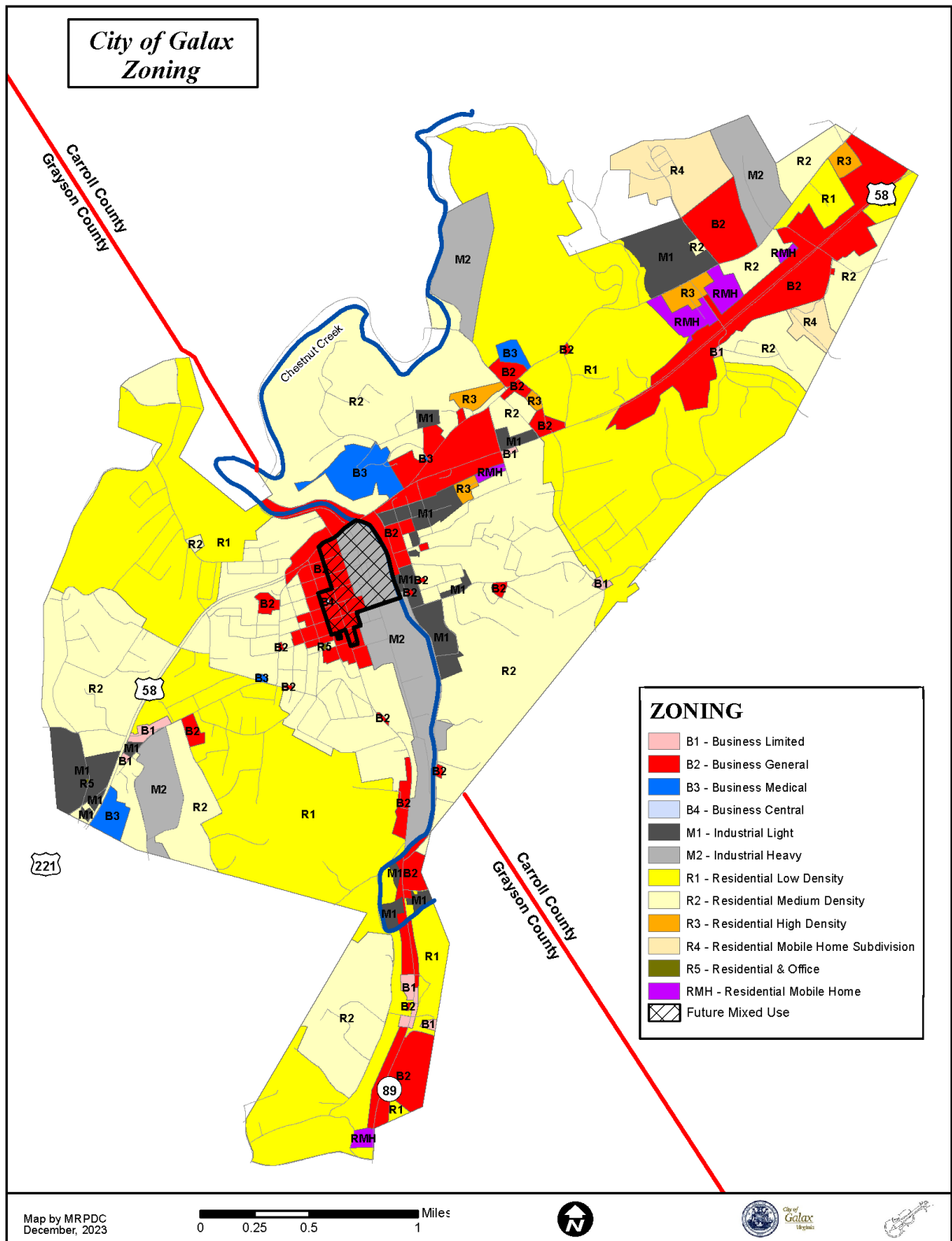


Map 5.8  
Galax Future Land Use Map





Map 5.9  
Galax Future Zoning Map





## Chapter 6: Transportation

### Highways and Streets

The pattern, amount, and character of land development and growth in a community are shaped to a large extent by the roadway system that serves that development. The road system provides the framework or “skeleton” around which buildings and other structures are placed. According to the Virginia Department of Transportation, there were approximately 60.39 miles of public roadway within the Galax City Limits.

The road network serves many more functions than simply carrying motor vehicle traffic. It also provides most of the public spaces and viewpoints from which citizens and visitors see and understand the community, and it establishes the visual and functional character of real property.

The direct effects of the road network can include:

- Density of development,
- Visual character of the streets, sidewalks, and open space areas,
- Convenience and safety of the area for driving, parking, bicycling, and walking,
- Efficiency of vehicular and pedestrian movement along with the road network, and
- Quality and character of physical access to a site.

The indirect effects can include:

- Air quality, which can be greatly reduced by excessive traffic congestions,
- The sense of community among residents, which can be affected by the efficiency, safety, and beauty of the streets and adjoining areas, and
- Economic prosperity, which can be affected by the visual attractiveness of the area for tourists and new residents, as well as the efficiency and capacity of business vehicular travel.

The core of the road network in Galax is a traditional grid pattern of interconnected streets, with major roads radiating from Downtown Galax. As with most urban grids, the Galax network is modified and disconnected in some places due to topography, Chestnut Creek, and other natural and man-made features.

While the topography of Galax presents challenges to extending or creating the grid pattern for new developments, the city has the opportunity to preserve the core grid as redevelopment and infill activities occur, and to extend or reestablish the grid in areas of new development when appropriate.

### State Highway Planning - VDOT

The Code of Virginia directs the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to create an inventory of all construction needs for all transportation systems in the commonwealth to be used in the development of Virginia’s Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, VTrans. To identify highway needs. VDOT develops the State Highway Plan.



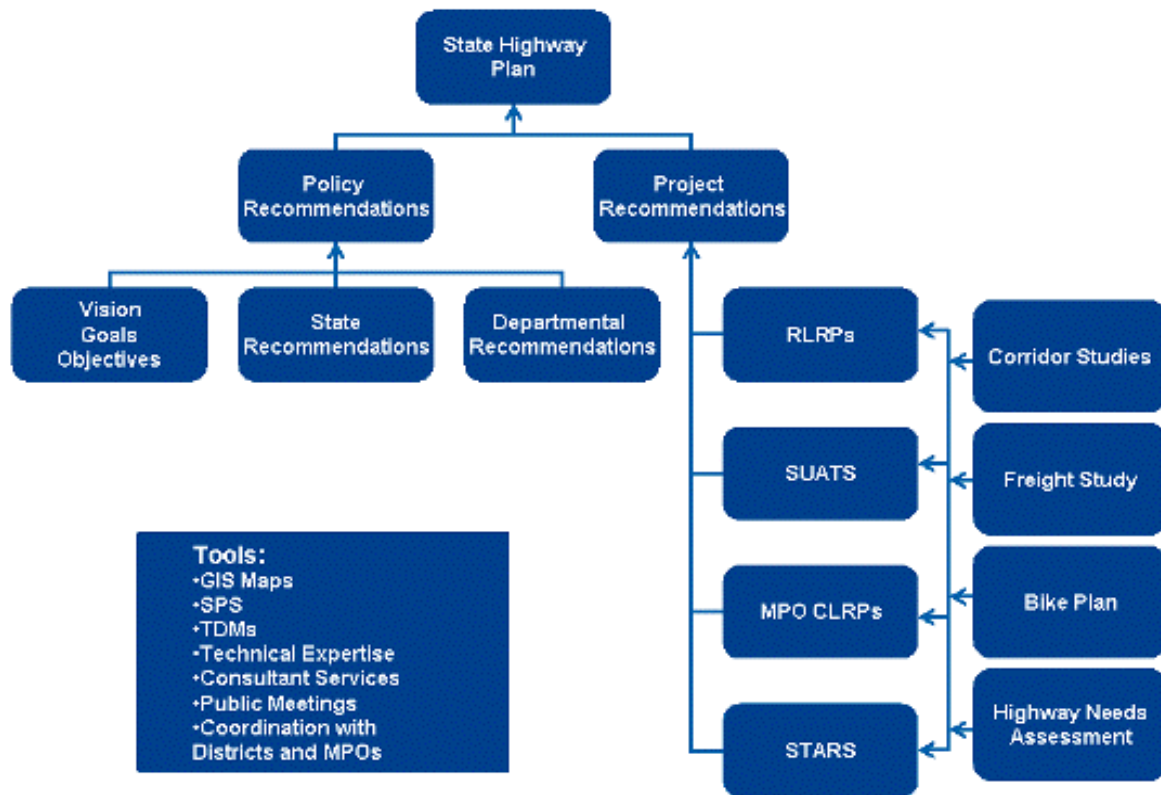


The State Highway Plan is reviewed every five years by VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division to ensure the plan contains the most up-to-date planning assumptions, analysis techniques, and recommendations.

The State Highway Plan is not a financially constrained plan. It is intended to provide an inventory of recommended improvements needed to address capacity and safety issues on the interstate and primary systems statewide, regardless of whether funding is available.

The State Highway Plan contains a list of recommendations for the interstate and primary highway systems, incorporating recommendations from existing corridor studies, county thoroughfare plans and comprehensive plans, Rural Long Range Plans (RLRPs), Small Urban Area Studies (SUATS), Metropolitan Planning Organization Constrained Long-Range Plans (MPO CLRPs) and the Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions program (STARS). The State Highway Plan incorporates pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit, intermodal connectors, and park and ride lots as essential components of the highway network.

Chart 6.1  
State Highway Plan Chart





## Methods of Transportation

### VDOT Highway Variations

**Interstates** - Interstate highways are limited access facilities designed for high speed, high volume, long-distance travel, with grade-separated interchanges. They have a minimum of four lanes, divided by a median strip. Galax is served by Interstate 77 (I-77), which passes Galax approximately 10 miles to the northeast, and Interstate 81 (I-81), which intersects I-77 approximately 25 miles north of Galax at Fort Chiswell. I-81 is a major interstate corridor that links Galax to numerous other regions and metropolitan communities to the northeast and southwest.

**Arterials** - Urban Principle Arterial roadways are designed to move heavy volumes of traffic between major centers of activity. They typically have partial control on access and are usually four-lane, divided roadways. Urban Minor Arterial roadways interconnect with and augment the urban principal arterial roads and are designed to place more emphasis on land access. Arterials tend to be subject to strong pressures for “strip” commercial development due to the high traffic volumes and relatively easy site access. Limitations on access, adequate entrance spacing, and similar controls are essential to preventing the strip pattern that can cause serious safety problems, peak-hour congestion, and lower overall traffic capacities. State Route 89 (Main Street) and U.S. Route 58-221 (Stuart Drive) are the local urban primary arterial roads serving Galax and are the main entrances to the city. Glendale Road, Piper’s Gap Road, Meadow Street, and Grayson Street are the local urban minor arterial roads serving the city.

In December 2009, The Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board identified U.S. Route 58 as a Corridor of Statewide Significance (CoSS). The CoSS includes major roadways, rail lines, airports, ports, and transit services across Virginia that hold significance in a state-wide, intermodal network of transportation options. U.S. Route 58 was designated the Southside Corridor.

**Urban Collectors** - Major collector roads are designed to provide land access and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. They typically have two to four undivided lanes.

**Local Streets** - All other roadways in Galax are local streets that serve individual sites and collect and distribute traffic to the collector system. Streets within the City of Galax are maintained by the city with partial funding provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

### Alternative Transportation Methods

#### Air Travel

Commercial air passenger service is available at Woodrum Field Airport, located 60 miles northeast of Galax in Roanoke, Virginia; Smith Reynolds Airport, located 60 miles southeast of Galax in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Greensboro Regional Airport, located 80 miles southeast of Galax in Greensboro, North Carolina; and Charlotte Douglas International Airport, located 116 miles southeast of Galax in Charlotte, North Carolina.

General aviation facilities are available at the Twin County Regional Airport, which is located 11 miles northeast of Galax in Carroll County. The airport is owned and operated by the Twin County Regional Airport Commission, and according to the Airport Manager, the facility handles between 8,000 to 10,000 takeoffs and landings per year. The airport serves a large number of both recreational and corporate flights; training flights and “Angel Care” medical flights are also flown out of the airport. Approximately 57 percent of the activity at the airport is transient pilots





and the remaining 43 percent of the activity is local pilots.

Several improvements and upgrades are planned at the Twin County Regional Airport over the next five to ten years, including a new terminal building, a new multi-use hanger, 12 new t-hangars for aircraft storage, and an extension of the runway to 5,100 feet. The Federal Aviation Administration classifies the regional airport as a B-II airport.

## **Rail Transportation**

During most of the twentieth century, a branch of the Norfolk Southern Railway served the City of Galax. The spur was discontinued during the early 1970s and the tracks were removed in 1975. The rail line has since been converted into the New River Trail State Park, a major regional recreation facility that connects Galax with the Town of Fries in Grayson County and the Town of Pulaski in Pulaski County.

## **Public Transit**

The City of Galax is a local government affiliate of the District Three Governmental Cooperative, which provides a range of services to elderly and disabled persons, including a local transit system marketed as *Mountain Lynx Transit*. The Galax Public Transit System is a mini-bus transportation system available to all members of the public. The public transit system operates Monday to Friday from 12:30 to 4:30 with stops in the Downtown area, at shopping centers and apartment complexes, and the Twin County Regional Hospital.

District Three Governmental Coop also operates the Mountain Lynx Transit system on a regional scale, so it runs between Galax and other towns and communities in the region, with hubs in Abingdon, Galax, Marion, and Wytheville. For residents who need to travel outside the District Three area for shopping or medical appointments, District Three operates a transit system called "New Freedom."

## **Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation**

Pedestrian transportation is limited in the City of Galax. Sidewalks are available in the core downtown area; however, there are no sidewalks or bicycle routes along the Stuart Drive-US Route 58-221 commercial corridor. This deficiency causes a disconnect between residential zones and the primary commercial zone along U.S. Route 58-221.

Currently, Galax has no dedicated bicycle facilities within the corporate limits other than the New River Trail (NRT). Although bicycles may be ridden on all streets and highways within Galax, there are no routes or paths designed specifically for bicycles, nor is there currently a designed corridor across E Stuart Drive to connect the NRT to the central business district and adjoining residential neighborhoods, parks, and public facilities. With the rising popularity of e-bikes, there is an ever-growing need for investment in the bicycle transportation network.

Potential bicycle routes are included in the Galax 2020 Transportation Plan. The Galax 2020 Transportation Plan seeks to address the need for basic bicycle transportation facilities between the major tourist, shopping, and employment areas within and adjacent to the City of Galax. The following thoroughfares were identified as the primary bicycle routes for the City of Galax: US 58/221 (East Stuart Drive / Reserve Boulevard), VA 89 (Main Street), and Meadow Street.

## **VDOT Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled Data**

The Traffic Monitoring System produces several reports of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) on the public roads of Virginia. There are many ways to slice and categorize the VMT data, and TMS has expanded its report library as requests have been received. The most prominent difference between families of VMT reports is the nature of the jurisdictions upon which the report is





based. Reports that summarize data by jurisdiction use either the physical jurisdiction or the maintenance jurisdiction. The primary function of the VMT reports is to provide the daily vehicle miles traveled for specific groups of facilities and vehicle types. For convenience, the reports also include the centerline road length in miles. The VMT reports are not the source system of record, nor are they the authority on road length values. The VMT reports road length values should be equal to the source system of record values, but this cannot be guaranteed.

"*Secondary*" includes those routes in the VDOT secondary system, (unnumbered) routes maintained by cities and towns.

"*Primary*" includes those routes designated as 'US', 'SR' (Virginia State Route), and Frontage Roads. "Primary" also includes the named federal parkways throughout the state.

The City of Galax experiences daily vehicle miles traveled of 56,933 on the secondary roads and a total of 85,539 miles of their primary roads for a total of all vehicle miles traveled of 142,471 miles according to the Virginia Department of Transportation in 2019.

The chart below shows the average annual daily traffic volume estimates by the section of roadway. The data was collected by the traffic engineering division of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Estimates provided are based on the most recent data collected from 2019.

**Table 6.2** identifies key segments of the existing roadway system with current traffic volumes. The key segments listed in the table are anticipated to receive the greatest pressure from traffic increases during the coming years. As development occurs within the City, it will be vital to examine the effects it will have on the existing infrastructure and additional thought will need to be given to maintain the capacity of the key links in the network, particularly the arterial and major collector roads.





**Table 6.2**  
**Key Segments of Existing Roadway System with Traffic Volumes**  
**City of Galax**

Route Alias	Link Length	Start Label	End Label	AADT
Reserve Blvd	0.47	WCL Galax	Greenville Rd W Stuart Dr	8800
Reserve Blvd; W Stuart Dr	1.10	Greenville Rd W Stuart Dr	Fries Rd	7600
W Stuart Dr	0.20	Fries Rd	SR 89 Main St	11000
E Stuart Dr	0.34	SR 89 Main St	Meadow St	14000
E Stuart Dr	1.81	Meadow St	Haynes Rd	19000
E Stuart Dr	1.10	Haynes Rd	ECL Galax	15000
Main St	1.26	SCL Galax	SR 97 Pipers Gap Rd	6000
Main St	0.90	SR 97 Pipers Gap Rd	Maroon Tide Dr	6200
Main St	0.16	Maroon Tide Dr	Oldtown St	4900
Main St	0.64	Oldtown St	US 58 Stuart Dr	3000
Pipers Gap Rd	0.11	SR 89 Main St	ECL Galax	2500
Reserve Blvd	0.47	WCL Galax	Oldtown Rd	8800
Reserve Blvd; W Stuart Dr	1.10	Oldtown Rd	Fries Rd	7600
W Stuart Dr	0.20	Fries Rd	SR 89 MAIN ST	11000
E Stuart Dr	0.34	SR 89 Main St	Meadow St	14000





E Stuart Dr	1.81	Meadow St	Haynes Rd	19000
E Stuart Dr	1.10	Haynes Rd	ECL Galax	15000
Calhoun St	0.07	Jefferson St	SR 89 Main St	1700
Fries Rd	0.58	US 58 Stuart Dr	Sherry Lane	1000
Fries Rd	1.03	Sherry Lane	NCL Galax	1300
Iron Bridge Rd	0.21	113-3 Fries Rd, Leonard Rd	38-607 NCL Galax	950
Branch St/Chestnut Dr	0.43	SCL Galax	SR 89 Main St	580
Greenville Rd	0.37	WCL Galax	US 58	950
Stuart Dr	0.48	US 58 Bypass	Alderman St	3500
Stuart Dr	0.29	Alderman St	Stanford St	3700
Mac Arthur St	0.19	US 58; W Stuart Dr	Circle Dr	2700
Mac Arthur St	0.31	Circle Dr	SR 89 Main St	2500
Lineberry Rd	1.21	SR 89 Main St	113-4056 Poplar Knob Rd	4700
Meadow St	0.59	Grayson St	US 58 E Stuart Dr	8100
Grayson St	0.38	113-4055 Jefferson St	113-4053 Meadow St	2200
Jefferson St	0.12	Calhoun St	Grayson St	520
Jefferson St	0.29	Grayson St	US 58 Stuart Dr	1000





Poplar Knob Rd	0.14	Meadow St	Oak St	2000
Poplar Knob Rd	1.08	Oak St	ECL Galax	1500
Country Club Lane	0.21	SECL Galax	Poplar Knob Rd	1100
Country Club Lane	0.78	Poplar Knob Rd	US 58 E Stuart Dr	2700
Larkspur Lane	0.32	US 58 E Stuart Dr	Glendale Rd	1300
Glendale Rd	0.62	US 58 E Stuart Dr	Cliffview Rd	7100
Glendale Rd	1.05	Cliffview Rd	Haynes Rd	6500
Glendale Rd	1.02	Haynes Rd	NCL Galax	4000
Cliffview Rd	0.39	Glendale Rd	NCL Galax	4300
Cranberry Rd	0.24	Glendale Rd	US 58 Stuart Dr	3800
Cranberry Rd	0.30	US 58 Stuart Dr	ECL Galax	2100
Calloway St	0.00	Eastview St	Hanks St	240
Clover St	0.00	Stanley Dr	Valley St	1100
Forrest Ave	0.00	Country Club Lane	Burwell St	110
Hospital Dr	0.00	Doctors Park	Valley St	3100
Kenbrook Dr	0.00	Pine Knoll Dr	Scotland Dr	240
Valley St	0.00	113-4058 Glendale Rd	Hospital Dr	4700
Valley St	0.00	Hospital Dr	Clover St	1300





## Recently Completed Project

### Detailed Project Description

The Cranberry Road project resulted in an improved two-lane facility that extends approximately 0.23 miles from Glendale Road to US Route 58 (East Stuart Drive) in the City of Galax. This is the connector road from Rt. 58 (a Corridor of Statewide Significance) to the Jack Guynn Industrial Park in Galax. The previous roadway consisted of two lanes approximately twelve feet wide with no shoulders. There were sight distance issues in one of the horizontal curves. The completed project provided some realignment, widened the travel lanes to thirteen feet and added curb and gutter on both sides. The connector road serves as the main connector from the industrial park to Rt. 58 and serves three (3) current industries within the park (Guardian/Consolidated Glass, MOOG, WeldBuilt), as well as two (2) shovel ready parcels that are listed on the VEDP website for potential industrial development. The connector also serves as the main access for the Sheetz store that has received an approved site plan and zoning permit. The connector serves the Cranberry Office Park, a private business park that has one tenant building (housing three (3) medical practices and one (1) financial counselor) and the possibility of two (2) or more additional tenant buildings. The connector also serves a commercial parcel across the street from Sheetz.

## U.S. Route 58 Corridor Development Program

### Project Description

The Route 58 Corridor Development Program is a construction project that encompasses approximately 680 miles of thoroughfare and finances planning, environmental, and engineering studies. Today, relatively 370 miles of the thoroughfare are four lanes or more, compared to 240 miles when the program was first established. Work began on the east coast and is moving westward at a progressive rate.

### Project Origination

The Virginia General Assembly established the Route 58 Corridor Development Program in 1989 to enhance economic development potential across this largely rural portion of the state. Travel is continuously being improved on the predominantly two-lane crooked road. Construction and improvements will soon be completed entirely through Henry County, Virginia.

### History

Route 58 is Virginia's longest roadway, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the southwest tip of Virginia. It traverses five Virginia Department of Transportation districts - Hampton Roads, Richmond, Lynchburg, Salem, and Bristol. This project will directly impact the City of Galax as U.S. Route 58 directly bisects the city and many of its primary corridors throughout.

## Six-Year Improvement Program

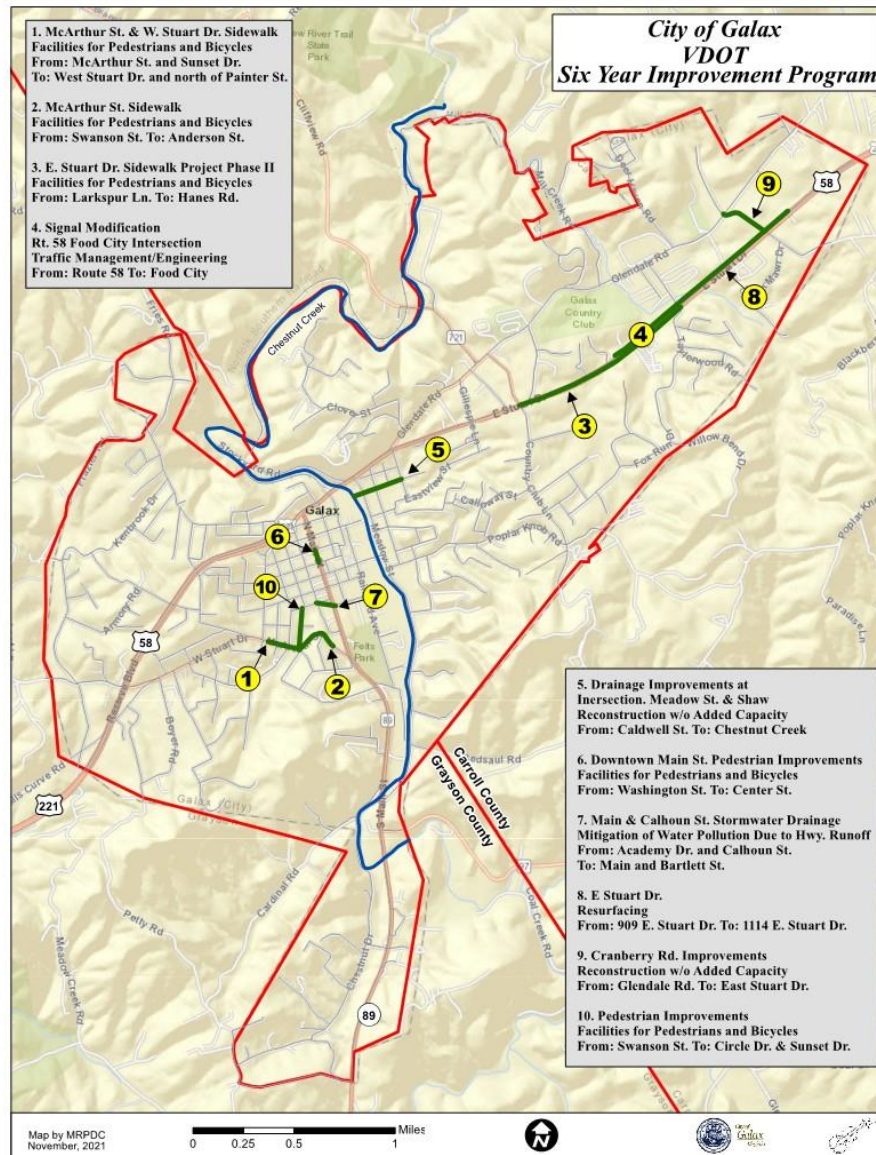
The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is a document that outlines planned spending for transportation projects proposed for construction development or study for the next six years.





The SYIP is updated annually and is how the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meets its statutory obligation under the Code of Virginia to allocate funds to interstate, primary, secondary, and urban highway systems, public transit, ports, airports, and other programs for the immediate fiscal year. The SYIP also identifies planned program funding for the succeeding five fiscal years. The CTB allocates funds for the first fiscal year of the SYIP, but the remaining five years are estimates of future allocations. Fiscal years start July 1 and end June 30.

Map 6.3





## 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

**Table 6.4**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Deficiency</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	U.S. 58 (Stuart Dr) from Jefferson St to Main St	Segment Operational Deficiency	Long-term for potential improvements to address congestion issues
2	Grayson St from Jefferson St to Main St	Segment Operational Deficiency	Long-term monitor for potential improvements to address congestion issues
3	Glendale St from Jefferson St to Main St	Segment Operational Deficiency	Long-term widen the roadway to four-lane urban divided standards
4	Iron Ridge Rd from North City Limits to Fries Rd	Segment Safety Deficiency	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (10" lanes)
5	Cranberry Rd from US 58 (Stuart Dr) to East City Limits	Segment Safety Deficiency	Long-term reconstruct to urban two-lane standards. The project has been completed
6	Poplar Knob Rd from Oak St to East City Limits	Segment Safety Deficiency	Long-term reconstruct to urban two-lane standards
7	Country Club Rd from US 58 (Stuart Dr) to Glendale Rd	Segment Safety Deficiency	Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11" lanes)
8	VA 89 (Main St)/VA 97 (Pipers Gap Rd)	Intersection Operational Deficiency	Short-term install signal
9	US 58/221 (E Stuart Dr) Fries Rd	Intersection Safety Deficiency	Short-term install flashing beacons to warn drivers of upcoming intersections and install street lighting
10	Poplar Knob Rd / Country Club Ln	Intersection Safety Deficiency	Short-term maintenance and apply access management
11	Glendale Rd / US 58	Intersection Both Deficiencies	Short-term improvement intersection as per VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program
12	VA 89 (Main St) from South City Limits to Meadow St	Segment Operational Deficiency	Short-term widen the roadway to four-lane urban divided standards
13	Meadow St from Poplar Knob Rd to US 58/221 (E Stuart Dr)	Segment Operational Deficiency	Short-term widen the roadway to four-lane urban divided standards
14	Glendale Rd from Cliffview Rd to Cranberry Rd	Segment Operational Deficiency	Long-term widen the roadway to four-lane urban divided standards
15	Cranberry Rd from Glendale Rd to US 58/221 (E Stuart Dr)	Segment Both Deficiencies	Long-term widen the roadway to four-lane urban divided standards





16	Meadow St from VA 89 (Main St) to Poplar Knob Rd	Segment Operational Deficiency	Mid-term widen the roadway to four-lane standards. When the project is completed, re-designate Meadow St to urban principal arterial and demote Main St to urban minor arterial
17	US 58/221 (E Stuart Dr) from VA 89 (Main St) to Meadow St	Segment Safety Deficiency	Short-term implement coordinated signal system and install street lighting and pedestrian facilities
18	US 58/221 (E Stuart Dr) from Meadow St to Cranberry Rd	Segment Both Deficiencies	Short-term install street lighting and pedestrian facilities; Mid-term implement coordinated signal system; Long-term consider widening to six-lane urban standards
19	US 58 (E Stuart Dr) from Cranberry Rd to East City Limits	Segment Safety Deficiency	Short-term install street lighting and pedestrian facilities

Source: Virginia Department of Transportation, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission 2035 Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

On the following page, **Map 6.5** illustrates the known transportation network deficiencies as listed and described in **Table 6.4** (above) and categorizes them into two types, road segments and intersections, color-coded by deficiency type.





Map 6.5





## Urban Development Areas

Urban Development Areas (UDA) were originally authorized by the Code of Virginia in 2007 (Virginia Code § 15.2-2223.1.) as a requirement for certain high growth localities to designate areas “sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 20 years.” Under the code designation, a UDA is an area designated by a locality in its comprehensive plan for proximity to transportation facilities, redevelopment/infill potential, and higher density development, specifically at least four single-family residences per acre, six townhouses per acre, or 12 apartment-style units per acre, and commercial development densities equivalent to at least a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.4. In 2012, however, the Code was amended to define UDAs more broadly and make them optional rather than mandatory. In addition, under the House Bill 2 legislation established in 2014, areas designated as UDAs in a local comprehensive plan may have an additional level of potential eligibility for transportation funding from the Commonwealth.

The City of Galax has identified two unique areas that currently meet and/or are anticipated to be developed to meet the State Code provisions for UDA densities. They are the Galax Commercial Historic District and the Creekside Small Development Area. A third area, the “Public Services Area”, may also be considered for UDA designation in the future.

The Code of Virginia also specifies that UDAs shall incorporate the principles of *Traditional Neighborhood Design* (TND)<sup>3</sup>. TND embodies classic characteristics of traditional communities such as walkable neighborhood centers, interconnected streets and blocks, diversity of land uses and easy access to jobs, housing and recreation by a variety of travel options (auto, bus, walk, bike, etc.).

The purpose of implementing a UDA according to the Office of Intermodal Planning & Investment is primarily to improve the future efficiency of the locality’s transportation system, thereby enhancing safety, reducing expenditures, and creating a better quality of life. This is accomplished through creation of a distributed road network, arterials free of local traffic, mixed-uses, better routes for emergency services, and bike and pedestrian routes – generally, practicing the concept of *Traditional Neighborhood Design*.

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<sup>3</sup> Emina Sendich, & American Planning Association. (2006). *Planning and urban design standards*. Hoboken, N.J. Wiley.





# Chapter 7: Community Facilities and Government

## Introduction

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

## Public Water and Wastewater

The City of Galax owns and operates a municipal water and wastewater treatment system that serves residents of the city. Service from both of these systems is available to practically all areas within Galax City Limits.

## Water Supply and Treatment

Galax owns and operates the municipal water system that serves greater than 95 percent of residents and 100 percent of businesses and industries in the city. Carroll and Grayson Counties are also customers of the Galax Water System, purchasing water to serve the Tower Road water system in Carroll County and the Fairview and Oldtown areas in Grayson County. The water system was originally constructed in 1958 and has been expanded several times since. The Galax water system has a treatment capacity of 4.0 million gallons per day (mgd) and is operating at around 35 percent capacity.

The source of the City's drinking water is surface water as described below: The water source is Chestnut Creek which is made up of several smaller streams. The smaller streams are outflows of springs located in southern Carroll and Grayson Counties. A source water assessment of the system was conducted in 2019 by the Virginia Department of Health. The creek was determined to be of high susceptibility to contamination using the criteria developed by the state in its approved Source Water Assessment Program. The assessment report consists of maps showing the source water assessment area, an inventory of known land use activities of concern, and documentation of any known contamination within the last 5 years.





**Table 8.1**

**WATER QUALITY RESULTS  
Regulated Contaminants**

Contaminant (units)	MCLG	MCL	Level Detected	Violation (Y/N)	Range	Date of Sample	Typical Source of Contamination
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.59	N	-	2020	Water additive which promotes strong teeth
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	0.56	N	-	2020	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (ppm)	2	2	0.016	N	-	2020	Discharge of drilling waste; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine (ppm)	MRDLG = 4	MRDL = 4	1.43	N	1.10 – 1.70	2020	Water additive used to control microbes
Combined Radium (pCi/l)	0	5	0.8	N	-	2014	Erosion of Natural Deposits
Total Organic Carbon	NA	TT, met when $\geq 1$	1.00	N	-	2020	Naturally present in the environment
Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	NA	60	30	N	11 – 38	2020	By-product of drinking water disinfection
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	NA	80	39	N	13 – 66	2020	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Turbidity (NTU)	N/A	TT, 1 NTU Max	0.13	N	0.05 – 0.13	2020	Soil runoff
		TT, $\leq 0.3$ NTU 95% of the time	100%	N	NA		

**Table 7.2**

Monitoring Results for Sodium (Unregulated-No Limits Designated)			
Level Detected (unit)	Sample Date	Typical Source	Guidance
10.6 (mg/L)	9/9/2020	Naturally Occuring; Addition of treatment chemicals/processes	For individuals on a <u>very</u> low sodium diet (500 mg/day), EPA recommends that drinking-water sodium not exceed 20 mg/L.  Should you have a health concern, contact your health care provider.

**Table 7.3**

**Lead and Copper Contaminants**

Contaminant (units)	MCLG	Action Level	90 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	Date of Sampling	# of Sampling Sites Exceeding Action Level	Typical Source of Contamination
Lead (ppb)	0	AL = 15	2.09	9/24/2019	0	Corrosion of household plumbing system; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper, ppm	1.3	1.3	0.133	9/24/2019	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.

## Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The Galax wastewater treatment system was constructed in 1958 and serves the vast majority of the city. The collection system has been expanded several times and currently accepts sewer from the Gladeville/Cranberry wastewater system in Carroll County, which was expanded to serve the Woodlawn area, I-77 Exit 14 interchange, Wildwood Commerce Park area, Airport Road, and Fancy Gap. The Galax wastewater treatment plant has a treatment capacity of 3.0 mgd and is operating at just under 50 percent (%) capacity.





## Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

The City of Galax, through a partnership with Carroll and Grayson Counties, uses a regional landfill facility located in the Town of Hillsville. The Carroll-Grayson Galax Solid Waste Authority was formed in 1993 when Galax closed the Bedsaul Hollow Landfill that had been used by the city for years.

## Utility Services

The Appalachian Power Company, a member of the American Electric Power System, provides electrical service in the City of Galax. United Cities Gas Company, a division of Atmos Energy, provides natural gas service, while bottled gas, coal, and fuel oil are available from local providers. Local and long-distance telephone service is available from CenturyLink. Comcast provides cable television service, and satellite television is available from DirecTV and Dish Network. Internet services are available from several local providers, including CenturyLink and Comcast. CenturyLink and Comcast offer service bundles that include television, telephone, and Internet service.

The Wired Road Authority is a collaborative effort between private sector service providers, the local governments of Grayson County, Carroll County, and the City of Galax, and the Carroll-Grayson-Galax Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (dba Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority). Its purpose is to provide the critical enabling infrastructure to transform the regional economy into a dynamic, small business, and entrepreneurial economy.

The Wired Road network has been in operation for over ten years and is a true public/private partnership with 2 service providers offering last-mile services on the network. The Wired Road is open access, fully integrated fiber and wireless regional broadband network offering "big broadband" 100 megabit and Gigabit fiber connections and multi-megabit wireless connections in Carroll, Grayson, and Galax.

## Public Safety

The city's public safety facilities and services include the Galax Police Department, the Volunteer Fire and Rescue, and the Galax Grayson EMS.

## Law Enforcement

The Galax Police Department is located in the Harold Snead Public Safety Building at 353 North Main Street. The Department has a staff of 38 employees in five divisions: uniform enforcement, criminal investigations, community-oriented policing, services, and administration. The Galax Police Department is 1 of 33 departments in Virginia to be accredited by the state. The Galax Police Department received accreditation from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services in April 2001. State Accreditation requires that a department meet or exceed 215 standards that address police services and personnel policies.

## Fire Protection

The City of Galax Volunteer Fire and Rescue provides fire protection for the City of Galax and





provides mutual aid to various other agencies in Carroll and Grayson Counties in Virginia and Alleghany and Surry Counties in North Carolina. Galax Fire and Rescue is located at 300 West Grayson Street, which houses a considerable amount of fire and rescue equipment. In October 2021, there were 59 volunteer firefighters with Galax Fire and Rescue.

## Emergency Medical Service

Galax Grayson EMS provides E-911 Advanced Life Support (ALS), Emergency Medical Services, and Critical Care hospital to hospital transport services for citizens and visitors to the City of Galax and portions of Grayson County. Galax Grayson EMS also provides ALS support services for Grayson County volunteer rescue squads. Galax Grayson EMS currently utilizes five ambulances and one quick response vehicle, staffed by ALS certified or Nationally Registered EMT-Intermediate or NREMT-Paramedics.

## E-911 Service

E-911 services are located in the Galax Police Department communications center, which provides dispatch services for the Galax Police Department and houses the dispatchers who operate Twin County Central Communications, the E-911 center for Galax, Carroll, and Grayson Counties. The Galax Police Department serves as the administrative agent for the Twin County 911 Commission.

## Public School System

The City of Galax has two public school facilities, a high school with a middle school attached and an elementary school. All three of the schools have undergone capital improvement projects within the past 5 to 10 years that included route bus purchases, roof replacements, restroom renovations, and other improvements to school property.

Safe Routes to School is a grassroots program funded by VDOT, FHWA, and U.S. DOT. Galax City Safe Routes to School promotes a long-term healthy lifestyle by encouraging students to walk and bike to school. The Safe Routes to School Program offers Pedestrian Safety Training to students, civic and church groups, and anyone who wants to participate.

The high school was built in 1953 and is located on a 25-acre tract to the south of Downtown Galax. Enrollment at the high school during the 2020-2021 school year was 341 students in grades 9 – 12. Galax High School placed in the top 50% of all schools in Virginia for overall test scores (math proficiency is top 50%, and reading proficiency is top 50%) for the 2018-19 school year. The percentage of students achieving proficiency in math is 85-89% (which is higher than the Virginia state average of 82%) for the 2018-19 school year. The percentage of students achieving proficiency in reading/language arts is 80-84% (which is higher than the Virginia state average of 78%) for the 2018-19 school year. The student-to-teacher ratio at the High School is 12:1.

The middle school portion of the facility was constructed in 1974, and it shares athletic facilities with the high school. It is operating at capacity with a 2020- 2021 enrollment of 333 students in grades 6 – 8.

The elementary school is located on an 8.4-acre tract on South Main Street. It was built in 1937





and is operating below capacity with a 2020-2021 enrollment of 594 students in the K – 5-grade levels, and an additional 55 students in preschool programs.

The Galax Public School System offers many special programs for students including a Pre-K Program, Summer Transitional Program for fourth-grade students, Reading Program at the elementary school, and a Summer Feeding Program. Academic indicators from the Virginia Department of Education indicate a passing rate of 83 to 90 percent for all academic categories with an 80 to 84% graduation rate.

**Table 7.4** provides the educational attainment level of the primary workforce ages 25 to 64. Galax has a significantly higher percentage of people with no High School Diploma, 22.8%, than the entirety of the state 8.7%. This number is misleading, however, due to Galax's availability of industrial employment that affords the opportunity for those without a traditional education to gain employment. Which has resulted in an influx of workers who fit that demographic.

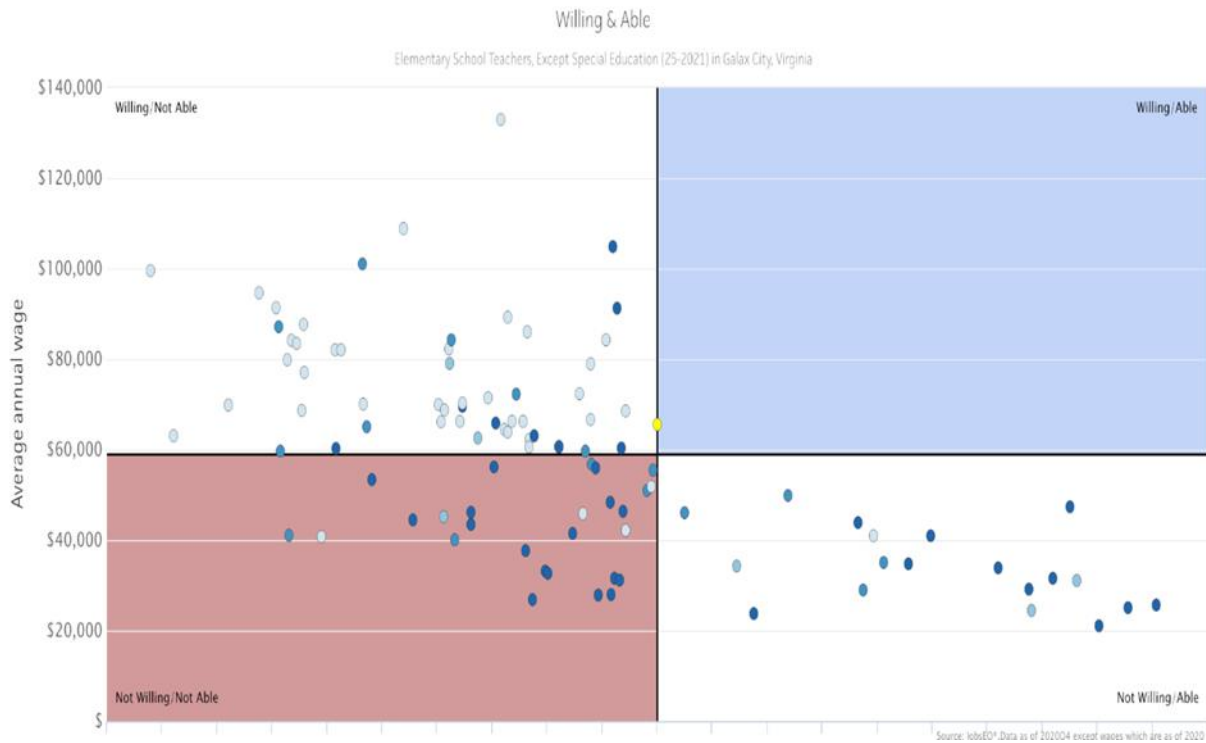
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64	PERCENT			VALUE		
	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia	Galax City, Virginia	Southwest Virginia nonmetropolitan area	Virginia
No High School Diploma	22.8%	15.4%	8.7%	751	29,759	392,543
High School Graduate	27.5%	35.5%	22.9%	908	68,673	1,029,408
Some College, No Degree	24.9%	22.3%	19.4%	820	43,115	874,977
Associate's Degree	9.1%	11.2%	8.3%	300	21,612	374,819
Bachelor's Degree	9.8%	10.4%	23.6%	324	20,203	1,062,466
Postgraduate Degree	5.9%	5.2%	17.1%	193	10,103	770,727

**Table 7.4** The graph below shows a breakdown of employment within the education sector during the time frame of 2016 - 2020Q1. As shown below, 2020 saw a large decrease in employment within the city, however, before that decline, employment rates stayed considerably constant. The large decrease in employment for Q1 of 2020 was likely caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, as schools across the nation stopped holding classes in person due to safety concerns. And while there is no available data beyond Q1 of 2020, there is a high probability that the employment numbers have recovered since then due to the reinstatement of in-person teaching.





**Graph 7.5**



## Higher Education Availability within Virginia

Galax residents who wish to further their education beyond the high school level may obtain a quality post-secondary education at any of the 38 public and private colleges, universities, vocational/technical, and community colleges located within an approximately two-hour drive of Galax. These are listed in the following table.

**Table 7.6**

Virginia	
Colleges and Universities	Miles from Galax*
Averett College (Private), Danville	106
Bluefield College (Private), Bluefield	72
Emory & Henry College (Private), Emory	76
Ferrum College (Private), Ferrum	72
Hollins College (Private), Roanoke	85
Radford University (Public), Radford	57
Roanoke College (Private) Salem	80
Virginia Tech (Public), Blacksburg	70





<b>Vocational/Technical Schools and Community Colleges</b>	
Jefferson College of Health Services (Private), Roanoke	83
National College (Private), Salem	82
New River Community College (Public), Dublin	47
Virginia Western Community College (Public), Roanoke	78
Wytheville Community College (Public), Wytheville	37
<b>North Carolina and Tennessee</b>	
<b>Colleges and Universities</b>	<b>Miles from Galax*</b>
Appalachian State University (Public), Boone, NC	71
Bennett College (Private), Greensboro, NC	94
Catawba College (Private), Salisbury, NC	88
Davidson College (Private), Davidson, NC	92
Elon College (Private), Elon, NC	108
Greensboro College (Private), Greensboro, NC	92
Guilford College (Private), Greensboro, NC	86
High Point University (Private), High Point, NC	83
Johnson C. Smith University (Private), Charlotte, NC	110
Lees-McRae College (Private), Banner Elk, NC	88
Lenoir-Rhyne College (Private), Hickory, NC	98
Livingstone College (Private), Salisbury, NC	90
North Carolina A&T State University (Public), Greensboro, NC	95
North Carolina School of the Arts (Public), Winston-Salem, NC	65
Queens University of Charlotte (Private), Charlotte, NC	114
Salem College (Private), Winston-Salem, NC	65
University of North Carolina (Public), Charlotte & Greensboro, NC	110 / 90
Wake Forest University (Private), Winston-Salem, NC	60
Winston-Salem State University (Public), Winston-Salem, NC	64
King University (Private), Bristol, TN	102
<b>Vocational/Technical Schools and Community Colleges</b>	
Forsyth Technical Community College (Public), Winston-Salem, NC	68
Guilford Technical Community College (Public), Greensboro, NC	87
Surry Community College (Public), Dobson, NC	32

Source: Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

\* Mileage is approximate





## Crossroads Rural Entrepreneurial Institute

The Crossroads Rural Entrepreneurial Institute is located at 1117 East Stuart Drive and opened in July 2005 to help improve the lives of people in southwest Virginia and beyond by providing an innovative educational and economic development engine that contributes to the revitalization of the region's economy. The mission statement of the Crossroads Rural Entrepreneurial Institute is to "Contribute to the continuing revitalization of the region's economy and offer a brighter future for our citizens through an innovative center for educational and economic development."

Throughout Carroll County, Grayson County, and Galax City, people are envisioning ways to improve their lot in life. If in some way, CREI can assist them and help their dreams come to be, CREI will have contributed greatly to the economic fortunes and future of our region.

The Crossroads Rural Entrepreneurial Institute, located in Galax, VA, opened in July 2005 to help improve the lives of people in southwest Virginia and beyond, by providing an innovative educational and economic development engine that will contribute to the revitalization of the region's economy while offering a brighter future for its citizens.

## Partnering Entities

**Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority:** Formed in 2008 among Carroll County, the City of Galax, and Grayson County, BRCEDA leverages the leadership capacity of these three localities to deliver coordinated economic development services to the region focused on small business development and related projects.

**Wytheville Community College:** A technology-enhanced educational center - including high-demand technical curricula and occupational programs for high school and college students, transfer programs, a university center, and a continuing education center for workforce skills including literacy, GED, workforce, and corporate training.

**Crossroads Small Business Development Center:** A center to assist small business development by providing business plan preparation, one-on-one counseling, financial analysis, sales marketing planning, and access to capital resources.

**The Crossroads Institute's Higher Education Center:** A facility outfitted with state-of-the-art technology, designed to offer educational and training opportunities to people in Southwest Virginia and beyond.

## Library

The City of Galax is served by the Galax Public Library, a branch of the Galax / Carroll Regional Library (GCRL), which is located at 610 West Stuart Drive. The GCRL Vision: to provide the best picks for information, hubs for community interaction, places to learn and grow. The GCRL Mission: providing a gateway to information, reading engagement, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning.

GCRL adopted a strategic plan approved by the Regional Library Board on November 19, 2018. This plan outlines goals for the library as well as key expansion and development efforts to be





made.

Some of the specific goals set forth are as follows:

- “Support development of early literacy skills in young children through investment in materials, services, and programs for families, childcare providers, and educators.”
- “Invest in more programs and services that advance digital literacy so that customers use technology to enrich their lives.”
- “Enhance strategic partnerships with organizations to better meet the unique needs of the community.”
- “Increase awareness of the library and its benefits through expanded promotion of programs and services.”

## Healthcare

Galax is served by the Twin County Regional Hospital, located at 200 Hospital Drive, just north of Downtown Galax. The hospital was constructed in 1973 and opened with 104 beds. A later addition added a fourth floor and increased the number of beds to 149. The hospital currently operates at 141 beds and provides general acute care for inpatient, outpatient, emergency services, and a range of specialized services. The city also has numerous general medical practitioners and medical specialists.

Twin County Regional offers many services to the community including women's services, cardiac rehabilitation, emergency room, urgent care, rehabilitation services, and behavioral health. Twin County offers many other great services to the community that can be found on their website. Public healthcare is offered by the Galax City Health Department located at 703 South Main Street. Alcohol and drug rehabilitation is offered by the Life Center of Galax. The Waddell Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Galax Health and Rehab Center – Blue Ridge provide certified intermediate care facilities for the elderly, with capacities of 130 and 120 beds respectively. Galax Health and Rehab Center also offer the community another nursing home and rehabilitation option.

## Parks and Recreation

The centerpieces of the city's recreation resources are Felts Park, a 28-acre public recreation facility, and the Galax Recreation Center located adjacent to each other at 601 South Main Street. Felts Park has several amenities, including five tennis courts, a one-half mile paved walking track, a 3,000-seat covered grandstand with a new stage facility, a 25-meter outdoor swimming pool, two multi-use baseball fields, a soccer field, an outdoor basketball court, and an outdoor sand volleyball court. Several events are held year-round at the 3,000-seat grandstand, including the Old Fiddlers Convention, tractor pulls, horse shows, church bazaars, and carnivals.

The City of Galax has the following Park and Recreational amenities:

- Galax Recreation Center specifically offers Indoor Pool, Indoor Rubber Track, Cardio Room, Weight Room, Community Internet Lab, 2 Full-Sized Gymnasiums, Senior Citizen Area & Fitness Room, Multi-Use Activity Room, After School Program Rooms.





- Mountain View Park offers a 9.5 Acre Park, 4/10 Mile Paved Track, 2 Multi-Use Baseball/Softball Fields, Baseball/Softball Batting Cage, and Covered Picnic Area.
- The Downtown Skate Park is open from 8 A.M. to dark and is located at the corner of Bartlett and Main Street, beside Standard Auto Parts. This facility provides participants the opportunity to skate on several different ramps, jumps bars, and boxes that vary in difficulty from novice to the most experienced skater.
- Knob Hill Playground is located off Middleton Street at the start of the Knob Hill Subdivision. The playground is open to the public each day from daylight to dusk.
- Galax Municipal Golf Course is located at 107 Country Club Lane and offers a 65-acre facility, 9-Hole Course, with 20 gas-powered golf carts available, as well as banquet room facilities.

## Social Services

The Galax Department of Social Services, located at 105 East Center Street, provides state-supervised, locally administered programs to the citizens of Galax per the Code of Virginia. A variety of services are available to low-income families, including disaster assistance, energy assistance, food and nutrition assistance, medical assistance, child care assistance, and foster care. The Galax Department of Social Services also acts as a referral agency for other available services and resources.

Other social services offered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is a state-supervised and locally administered social services system responsible for administering a variety of programs including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Adoption, Child Care Assistance, Refugee Resettlement Services, and Child and Adult Protective Services. These services, provided throughout the state, serve as a major key to the success of our communities.

## Cultural Amenities

The City of Galax has a plethora of cultural amenities, festivals, and events. Bluegrass and Old-Time Music have been a staple of the city's cultural heritage, and many events and attractions in Galax have roots in this musical tradition. The city has been the home to the annual Old Fiddlers Convention for 85 years. The Old Fiddler's Convention is a weeklong event that draws up to 40,000 visitors each year. Other musical events in the City of Galax include Houston Fest and a plentiful amount of local jam sessions. The historic Rex Theater is a music venue that hosts the live radio show Blue Ridge Backroads. The Galax Downtown Farmer's Market is located at the corner of Washington Street and Main Street and was originally constructed in the 1980s. The farmer's market has become a "place of neighborly interaction" where families and community members gather to buy local goods and participate in seasonal events. The farmer's market is also available for cooking demonstrations, concerts, and annual events. The city is also home to a professional cooking competition named Smoke on the Mountain which is held each year in Galax, VA. This competition, held every third weekend in July, is Virginia's official





state barbecue championship.

## Government Administration

The City of Galax is an independent city, incorporated in 1953 as a separate and distinct jurisdiction from its adjoining county governments, under the unique provisions for local government charters in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The city is governed by a City Council composed of seven members who are elected at large with staggered four-year terms.

Galax operates under the council-manager system in which the City Council establishes policies and directs governmental services. The chief administrative officer is the City Manager, who is appointed by the City Council and serves at its pleasure. The City Manager is tasked with the responsibilities of preparing the city budget, directing the operations of the city departments, and implementing the policies of the City Council.

The city shares the circuit court system with Carroll and Grayson Counties, including the constitutional officers of Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, the Commonwealth Attorney, and the Circuit Court Judge. These judicial services are shared within Galax in accord with the original boundary between the two counties. Costs for these judicial activities are also shared between the jurisdictions.





## Chapter 8: Summary of Conditions

### Introduction

This Summary of Conditions is intended to be used to better outline and understand key action items that have been identified as (1) an important development, and (2) societal goals moving forward for the City of Galax. These goals have been expressed by those from within the local government (elected, appointed, and staff) and community and will be used as a guiding element of city life in Galax. The goals are meant to be long-range, ideal targets for future achievements. Ideally, these goals will be met and adopted in the coming years providing a betterment to the community not available or envisioned in the past.

### Mission

The city seeks to preserve its most valued historic and natural features while achieving effective, efficient, sustainable, and diverse economic, community, and land use development, so as to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens, thereby providing a desirable living environment for this and future generations.

### Population Trends and Housing

#### Situation Summary

The City of Galax, over the last ten years, has experienced a slight but steady decline in population. Dating back to 2014 the City of Galax had a population of 6,981 whereas in 2019 the population was 6,517. Looking to the future, much of the population decline in Galax will likely continue based on Census data and projections from information gathered in 2019. United States Census data for 2020 estimates that the population in the City of Galax is at 6,296. As the population ages and as retirees move to Galax, the demand for services for this population group will continue to increase. This represents a challenge to the city government and private institutions to maintain and expand services and facilities but also represents a potential net economic benefit to the community. In many cases, retirees will be “importing” dollars into the local economy from sources outside the city.

Housing in Galax is predominantly single-family detached, although the proportion of single-family units has steadily declined over the last ten years. These trends reflect escalating housing costs, and housing market competition in surrounding jurisdictions. Beginning in Q1 of 2020 the United States saw an extreme increase in the competitiveness of the housing market based on high demand secondary to record low-interest rates being backed by the federal government. Housing affordability has seen a rapid decline as the cost and value of housing for both owners and renters has increased at a much faster pace than family income over the past decade. Maintaining and improving the affordability of both housing prices and rents requires critical consideration as Galax officials plan for the future. The quantity of the city’s housing stock appears to be low but housing appears to be available in a majority of price ranges. The city should continue to implement housing rehabilitation projects to improve the quality and availability of low to moderate-income units while encouraging the supply and diversity of all housing types.





## Economy

### Situation Summary

While employment levels have declined dramatically since the late 1990s, the Galax economy has become more diversified by the recruitment of new businesses in various sectors. The city has focused on strengthening its tourism industry and promoting small business and entrepreneurial growth. Going forward, Galax must continue to focus on both traditional and non-traditional industrial recruitment, retain existing industries, continue to develop commercial opportunities city-wide and provide continuing entrepreneurial opportunities. Several of the city's key resources are closely related to industrial recruitment and economic development, including housing. Many communities across the nation have suffered constraints on economic development due to imbalances between their job bases and their housing stock. Such an imbalance would threaten the long-term economic expansion of Galax.

## Land Use and Development

### Situation Summary

Generally, there is an adequate amount of land zoned for most uses, with the possible exception of high-density residential. The current zoning pattern is in general concurrence with the existing Land Use Map found in this Comprehensive Plan, which reflects a blend of desired growth patterns, traditional or existing patterns, and patterns created inadvertently by the desire for convenient vehicular access to commercial uses.

As with many historic downtowns, Downtown Galax is under continued competitive pressure from automobile-oriented commercial development located along the major road corridors in the city and Carroll County. To remain viable, the city must continue the downtown revitalization efforts that have taken place thus far and work toward making Main Street a pedestrian-friendly attraction. Galax must continue to adapt to the changing economy through a focused marketing effort. Downtown Galax will continue to rely on the expanding tourism economy in Galax and the region, so marketing should be directed toward tourism-related business and attractions. Being able to maintain an appealing visual appearance is important for economic development and the overall quality of life and sense of community pride. Encouraging the maintenance of older housing stock, buffering industrial sites, screening the expansive parking lots associated with "strip" commercial development, and controlling the visual appearance of signs, are among the strategies that the city can initiate to improve its aesthetic quality.

## Transportation

### Situation Summary

The pattern, amount, and character of land development and growth in a community are shaped to a large extent by the roadway system that serves that development. The road system provides the framework or "skeleton" around which buildings and other structures are placed. According to the Virginia Department of Transportation, there were approximately 60.39 miles of public roadway within the Galax City Limits. The core of the road network in Galax is a traditional grid pattern of interconnected streets, with major roads radiating from Downtown Galax. As with most urban grids, the Galax network is modified and disconnected in some places due to topography, Chestnut Creek, and other natural and man-made features.





The road network serves many more functions other than simply carrying motor vehicle traffic. It also provides most of the public spaces and viewpoints from which citizens and visitors see and understand the community, and it establishes the visual and functional character of real property.

The greatest area of concern in terms of transportation is the effect of strip commercial development, especially along Route 58. Strip commercial development is both a current and long-term concern to the city, both in terms of traffic capacity and safety. It is also a detriment in regard to scenic and visual quality and tourism attraction. Maintaining the traffic capacity on U.S. Route 58 and VA Route 89, especially at peak hours, is linked with the issue of strip commercial development. Ensuring that arterial roads have the maximum possible consolidation of access points will help preserve their critical function. Implementing more modern parking-related regulations and practicing more traditional neighborhood design may prevent further induced demand on the road network.

## Community Facilities and Government

### Situation Summary

The City of Galax is no different than many of the other communities within Southwest Virginia in regards to the variety of challenges that the city government is facing. These challenges will likely be grounded in the continuing fiscal pressures associated with increasing standards and requirements for public facilities (water quality, education, etc.), an aging and diversifying population, increased economic competitiveness locally, statewide, and nationally as well as internal governmental pressure to better develop and grow their economic footprint across many industries. To achieve the goals set forth by those in local government, the City of Galax will need to provide effective, low-cost services by continuing to work with local and regional partners such as Carroll and Grayson Counties by way of the regional landfill authority and airport authority, Mount Rogers Regional Partnership, Twin County Chamber of Commerce, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, and the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority. By utilizing these relationships, an economy of scale can be realized and the City of Galax can best provide services to its citizens.





## Chapter 9: Goal Implementation

The City of Galax Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide the actions and decision-making of our city's elected and appointed officials, staff, and community stakeholders; to monitor our progress, and to celebrate our success in accomplishing our Plan's goals and vision. Annual reviews will enable City staff and members of the Planning Commission, and City Council to measure our progress, refine our priorities, and ensure adequate funds and other resources are allocated to accomplish our implementation goals during each budget cycle. To assist ongoing monitoring, the Plan's goals and strategies are summarized below in an Implementation Matrix outlining Implementation Priorities, Funding, Timeline, and Responsible Parties.

### Definitions and Symbols

**PRIORITY** - A priority ranking of HIGH, MEDIUM, and LOW is assigned to each strategy, to help guide the allocation of funding and other resources. As community needs or interests change or funding ebbs and flows, the priority of some strategies may also change.

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

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

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

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

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES** - Indication of key partners needed to accomplish each strategy.

CC	City Council
PC	Planning Commission
CS	City Staff
CG	Citizen Groups
BRCEDA	Regional Economic Development Commission
GTD	Galax Tourism Department
CoC	Twin County Chamber of Commerce
GDA	Galax Downtown Association
MRPDC	Mount Rogers Planning District
DEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
PS	Private Sector Developers, Businesses & Property Owners





## Population & Trends Goal

*Strive to stabilize current population levels and work toward growth that will ensure support for the city moving into the future while upholding the heritage and historical values of the area.*

**Objective 1** - Create a community that continues to provide opportunities for younger generations that will incentivize retention and migration to the City of Galax while continuing to appeal as a destination for retirees.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 1.1</b> - Market Galax as an area of opportunity within Southwest Virginia with sustainable and growing career opportunities.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	GTD, CoC, GDA
<b>Strategy 1.2</b> - Pursue objectives that create a high quality of life in Galax, such as diversifying the local employment and industrial bases, ensuring educational opportunities for all citizens, developing cultural and recreational amenities, recruiting businesses for improved shopping, dining, and entertainment, and supporting the expansion of healthcare services.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, CS
<b>Strategy 1.3</b> - Promote the heritage of Galax through local and regional events.	High	\$	Ongoing	GTD, CoC, GDA





## Housing Goal

*Ensure that the current and future housing stock of the City of Galax is well diversified and affords housing opportunities across all demographic and socioeconomic levels.*

**Objective 2** - Encourage the expansion of high-quality, affordable, housing, including participation in regional housing efforts.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> - Encourage housing rehabilitation through available grant programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant program, USDA Rural Development, and the Virginia Housing programs.	Medium	\$\$	Intermediate	CC, CS, MRPDC
<b>Strategy 2.2</b> - Encourage expanded homeownership among residents by providing incentives and assistance to prospective homeowners; utilizing city-owned property as developable land for housing units.	High	\$\$	Short-term	CC, CS, MRPDC
<b>Strategy 2.3</b> - Promote the development of cooperative housing projects targeted at the retired population	High	\$\$	Short-term	CC, CS, MRPDC





## Economy Goal

*Encourage an expansion of economic diversity that promotes strong employment opportunities for all residents of the city and allows for those outside the area to find employment within the City of Galax.*

<b>Objective 3</b> - Facilitate new and existing business/industry expansion that provides quality employment opportunities within the city.				
<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 3.1</b> - Participate in the regional economic activities of the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority, including the development of Wildwood Commerce Park.	Medium	\$	Ongoing	CC, CS, BRCEDA
<b>Strategy 3.2</b> - Facilitate workforce development by partnering with the Crossroads Rural Entrepreneurial Institute and the Galax Public School System to implement training strategies.	Low	\$	Ongoing	CC, CS
<b>Strategy 3.3</b> - Continue to market the city's enterprise zone and the incentives available to businesses that locate or expand in the enterprise zone.	High	\$	Ongoing	CC, CS

<b>Objective 4</b> - Promote Galax as a destination location for visitors and new residents.				
<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 4.1</b> - Continue to support tourism, in conjunction with local businesses, on a regional scale with organizations like The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail and 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network, in cooperation with the state.	High	\$	Ongoing	GTD, GDA
<b>Strategy 4.2</b> - Advertise the New River Trail State Park as a community asset and capitalize on the benefits the trail provides for residents and as a tourism attraction.	Medium	\$	Ongoing	GTD
<b>Strategy 4.3</b> - Support efforts to market the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts as a regional heritage tourism destination.	Medium	\$\$	Ongoing	CCSA, GTD, GDA





<b>Strategy 4.4</b> - Support the continued success of the historic Rex Theater, the Old Fiddler's Convention, Smoke on the Mountain BBQ championship, and other cultural attractions and events.	Medium	\$\$	Ongoing	GTD, GDA
<b>Strategy 4.5</b> - Support joining the Virginia Main Street program administered by DHCD and follow the Main Street America Approach.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, CD, GDA





## Land Use & Development Goal

*Establish a sustainable development plan to promote reasonable growth while recognizing the importance of historic significance without sacrificing the public health, welfare, and safety of the community.*

**Objective 5** - Provide opportunities for the effective and responsible development of commercial parcels while ensuring that new developments are well planned, orderly, and attractive.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 5.1</b> - Encourage planned commercial developments to locate in strategic, clustered locations rather than continual strip development along arterial roads.	Medium	\$	Short-term	CC, CS, PC
<b>Strategy 5.2</b> - Ensure that zoning regulations protect neighborhoods from the encroachment or indirect impacts of incompatible land uses.	Medium	\$\$	Short-term	CC, CS, PC
<b>Strategy 5.3</b> - Enforce the maintenance of vacant lots and buildings, particularly in the historic downtown area, to enhance the value of all adjacent properties.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, CS
<b>Strategy 5.4</b> - Promote infill development as a top priority for small-scale businesses and industries.	Medium	\$	Intermediate	CC, CS, PC
<b>Strategy 5.5</b> - Promote the reuse and redevelopment of existing sites and structures as a higher priority than developing open space.	Medium	\$	Short-term	CC, CS, PC
<b>Strategy 5.6</b> – Encourage development of mixed-use areas, increasing adaptive reuse potential, and reducing infrastructure impacts.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, PC, CS

**Objective 6** - Enhance Galax as a major tourism destination, focusing on its traditional heritage, natural beauty, outdoor recreation, and overall quality of life.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 6.1</b> - Ensure that the entrance corridors to Galax are attractive and harmonious.	High	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, CS
<b>Strategy 6.2</b> - Maintain and enhance vehicular and pedestrian access to downtown Galax.	Medium	\$\$	Intermediate	CC, CS, VDOT





## Transportation Goal

*Advance existing transportation systems to promote safety and efficiency within the city while ensuring the most effective use of city resources.*

**Objective 7** - Ensure that all new roadways are designed to balance the multiple functions of the road; serve motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic; and be visually and environmentally compatible with surrounding land uses.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 7.1</b> - Encourage new roads and road extensions that will connect to the existing road network to balance traffic loads and provide alternative routes for traffic flow.	Low	\$\$\$	Long-term	CC, CS, VDOT
<b>Strategy 7.2</b> - Work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to monitor the traffic flow and safety conditions of the city's roadway system and maintain a list for system improvements.	Low	\$\$	Short-term	CC, CS, VDOT
<b>Strategy 7.3</b> - Ensure that new developments are sized and designed to be compatible with the function and capacity of the adjacent roadways that will serve them.	Medium	\$	Long-term	CC, CS, PC
<b>Strategy 7.4</b> - Improve upon existing pedestrian infrastructure, while also expanding sidewalks into residential areas throughout the City.	High	\$\$	Long-term	CC, CS, PC, VDOT
<b>Strategy 7.5</b> – Improve the future efficiency of the transportation system through implementation of urban development area(s), incorporating principals of traditional neighborhood design.	High	\$	Ongoing	CC, CS, VDOT, GDA





## Community Facilities and Government Goal

*Maintain and improve the city's infrastructure while continuing to develop a system of open space, recreational facilities, and cultural opportunities for the benefit and enrichment of all citizens.*

**Objective 8** - Provide an infrastructure of local government facilities and services that is modern and adequate to meet the needs of present and future citizens, while striving to maintain a reasonable and competitive city tax rate.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Parties</u>
<b>Strategy 8.1</b> - Ensure that infrastructure is modern and adequate to meet the needs of present and future citizens by utilizing green and sustainable means.	High	\$\$\$\$	Intermediate	CC, CS, DEQ
<b>Strategy 8.2</b> - The city should continue to upgrade and expand the water and wastewater systems using federal, state, regional, and local funding sources, such as the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission Water/Wastewater Fund.	High	\$\$\$\$	Intermediate	CC, CS, DEQ
<b>Strategy 8.3</b> - Expand the academic and vocational course offerings of the public schools as required to ensure that all needs are adequately met.	Medium	\$\$	Long-term	CC, CS
<b>Strategy 8.4</b> - Maintain and improve the capabilities of the professional police force, professional EMS, and volunteer fire through additional training, modern equipment, and innovative programs.	Medium	\$\$	Ongoing	CC, CS

